

Thought Leadership eBook

Industry Expert Analysis

— What ITSM Professionals Should Focus on in 2023 and Beyond

So much has changed in the world in the last few years that it's inevitable that businesses and IT service management (ITSM) have changed or need to change too. If your organization has already changed to reflect the new social and economic climates (and we're betting it has), how have your ITSM capabilities responded?

Whether it's the increased velocity of digital transformation or specific changes to products and services, customer engagement methods, or ways of working, there has been much for ITSM professionals to adapt to. For example, the increased reliance on technology availability and performance for product/service success, improving the customer experience, or enabling employees in the work they need to do in what is perhaps now a remote working situation.

All of these changes drive ITSM change. Additional factors for consideration include technology change and the evolution in service management thinking. As a result, the increasing complexity of business needs and technology infrastructure would appear to require increasingly complex ingredients for success for your corporate ITSM capabilities.

To help, we asked eight ITSM industry authorities to share their thoughts on the three key things that ITSM pros should focus on for 2023 and beyond. Their guidance is detailed in this eBook, but first, here's a summary of the key focus areas.

High Level Overview - ITSM Focus Areas for 2023 & Beyond

The submissions by the eight industry professionals were reviewed for commonality in their responses. Unusually for crowd sourced papers of this nature, the overlap between the insight and guidance each industry expert provided was minimal. The lack of overlap could be attributed to the diversity in the individual perspectives of each professional as well as the openness and breadth of the question. As a result, topics covered in the responses include personal knowledge and skills, business needs, industry trends, newer ITSM practices, technologies, strategies and approaches, underserved ITSM capabilities, and more.

While there is little commonality across the responses, there is an uncommon breadth and diversity in expert opinions that can be leveraged and applied to a variety of situations, and more importantly, to your specific circumstance as you progress through 2023 and beyond.

ROY ATKINSON - Clifton Butterfield LLC

1. Experience focus

The view of service management will continue to morph as experience continues to grow as an arbiter of performance. This change requires a shift in perspective since experience is measured from the point of view of the receiver of services, not the—for lack of a better word—provider. Those responsible for the management of services (should we still call it "ITSM"?) should understand that experience is co-created in similar ways to value. We do what we can to deliver at a level that the organization and its customers need; ultimately, they (and the business results they achieve) are the judges of how well we're doing.

2. Business knowledge including language

As IT becomes less a department and more a capability of the organization, service management leaders should continue to learn the language—and therefore the concepts—of business. Fortunately, as digital transformation continues, business language and concepts are increasingly influenced by the language of technology, setting the stage for fusion.

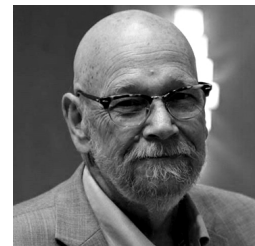
3. Technology knowledge

In a world of growing containerization, even more use of cloud technologies, and the growth of edge computing, service management takes on new meanings. Service management leaders should, of course, be conversant with emerging technologies and prepared to discuss whether and how they can or should be applied and integrated into their organizations. If they understand how technology can serve the needs of the organization, they'll be successful.



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Roy Atkinson,
Clifton Butterfield LLC



CHRISTOPHE DE BOECK - Te Whatu Ora - Health New Zealand

1. Doing the right thing

In the next couple of years, the many practices in ITSM can be expected to take a new step toward providing meaningful work rather than setting rules and controlling them. More and more organizations will embrace the building of teams in support of a particular mission – or products that aim to achieve a part of that. These teams have clear objectives, and they understand what it means to "do the right thing." ITSM practitioners will have to further abandon the role of process guardians and improve their understanding of purpose so they can better support teams to do the right thing. What is "right" should be defined at an organizational level, not left to the individual's interpretation. I'm convinced ITSM can play a role in sharing and communicating a mission for the organization and the teams within it, and help people understand their role in the bigger picture.

2. Wellbeing of colleagues and customer

ITSM can create the space for colleagues to discover themselves and others as well as, demonstrate their strengths and flaws without fear of being reprimanded or mocked. To date, the management of services has predominantly concerned the technical aspects of the services. At the same time, there is a rising concern for people's mental wellbeing. ITSM should start seriously addressing the human side of service creation, delivery, and support by articulating the psychological duties more clearly. In this context, "sustainability" must not be reduced to hardware and software any longer, and the effects of the investment in people (or lack thereof) should become a priority in reporting and evaluation. Ultimately, creating wholeness in workplaces is vital for the long-term improvement of services; we should not accept losing more brilliant colleagues to stress

and exhaustion. Because of its established position in many organizations, ITSM practitioners can take a leading role in demonstrating the true pain points.

3. Move away from authority

Building on my two previous points, ITSM should accelerate the move away from authority toward a model of connection and interaction. Increasingly, workflows are generated from shared vision and values. “Work” is no longer a top-down command but is rooted in ongoing, intensive human interactions. Depending on the subject, different members of an organization will take on a leading role, not just the “manager.” The organizational chart is a compliance requirement for the people who do the work to be administratively supported by a manager. ITSM needs to recognize that this compliance structure is separate from the web of connections through which value is created. Hence, ITSM practitioners need to move away from injecting the compliance structure into the workflow and demonstrate that work is organized around a shared vision and purpose. There is a role for ITSM to play in establishing and sharing this vision by focusing on the human aspects of technology.



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Christophe De Boeck
Te Whatu Ora - Health New Zealand

PHYLISS DRUCKER - Independent

As ITSM and the tools used to support practices improve, in my opinion, there are three areas of focus for service and support:

- Configuration management and AI with a purpose
- Automated identity access management (AIM)
- Portal experience and true omnichannel support

Two of these areas help secure the enterprise configuration management by assisting in vulnerability management and patching down to the user device level as well as role-based provisioning by ensuring Human Resources (HR) changes are managed immediately—closing a critical gap that occurs when IT has not automated this process. All three help transform the employee/customer experience, which is crucial for meeting expectations and improving productivity.

1. Configuration management

This area is still the redheaded stepchild of IT. Even with integrations and discovery tools, many organizations shy away from building and maintaining a configuration management database (CMDB) that can help them support the enterprise. Two key improvement areas come to mind:

- Knowledge of all components and their service relationships assists in vulnerability management, a critical aspect of a robust security practice. It's impossible to know which of the thousands of known vulnerabilities could impact the enterprise without strong configuration management.
- Combining monitoring, discovery tools, and artificial intelligence (AI) to enable today's service management tools to derive a "health score" for configuration items.

2. Automated identity access management

Why do we still expect managers to submit lengthy onboarding and transfer requests or contact IT when someone leaves the organization? This area represents a gap not only in the employee experience but also puts the enterprise at risk when access is not promptly terminated as roles change and people leave the organization. For these reasons, implementing identity access management solutions integrated with HR talent management systems is a key need for ITSM pros in 2023 and beyond. In addition to improving the manager experience, this also improves the employee experience while streamlining the fulfillment of everything needed to onboard or transfer an employee.

3. Portal experience and true omnichannel support

Our user support experience is broken. It's designed for IT and IT alone. IT often ignores the rest of the enterprise (much of the time, but not always) and designs portals to make things easier for themselves. In 2023 and beyond, we must do better.

The portal needs to be transformed:

- An enterprise portal design that sets the portal up as a communication tool and entry point for access to corporate applications information, and support.
- A service catalog experience that is modern and works like Internet shopping sites (how many IT organizations disable shopping cart functionality because people don't understand it?)
- Genuine omnichannel support: cross-channel integration that enables the customer journey to start via phone, chat, or the portal, but the employee can traverse channels as needed without having to start the journey over.



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It's designed for IT and IT alone.***

Phylliss Drucker
Independent



JOHN CUSTY - JPC Group

Before I list the three things that I think ITSM professionals need to focus on in 2023 and beyond, I believe it's essential to state the assumptions I'm making to provide context to my recommendations. First, we need to differentiate between ITSM, enterprise service management (ESM), and service management (SM), as each has a different scope. Unfortunately, some people use the terms interchangeably. For me, ITSM is a limiting term. Its primary focus is the underlying technology that enables users and customers to co-create the value needed for successful business outcomes. ESM seems more focused on all the roles (business and service provider) required to provide the desired results. Service management treats all service provider roles similarly (not focused on IT), focusing on successful outcomes. Service management references typically appear more in hospitality, where this term has been used for many years. They seem to understand better the importance of employee experience in providing outstanding customer experiences.

1. Customer experience

The ITSM professional needs to understand what is essential to the customer, and depending on the type of service, it may be the person who is the direct or indirect recipient of the service. More and more, the customer will be the direct recipient of the service with the growth of self-service and apps, though, in some cases, it can be another person (typically an internal to the same organization or a partner) who may be the direct user of the service. In either case, the ITSM professional needs to understand the desired outcomes and the value of the interaction in the value stream. So, the ITSM professional needs to understand that the customer experience is critical and that a positive customer experience must be considered in the design, operations, and product or service support. The ITSM professional needs to understand the user, their knowledge level, and their technical acumen when designing the user interface and outputs of the services, which are all essential in delivering a positive customer experience. Continual improvement be at the core of everything done.

2. Knowledge importance

Many of the repetitive tasks performed today by ITSM professionals will be completed by automation. Eliminating these tasks for the ITSM professionals will result in them dealing with more complex and complicated issues (support/maintenance) or designing and developing/acquiring services that will reduce their repetitive tasks, requiring a more in-depth understanding of the business processes and needs. The ITSM professional will need to understand how to acquire the necessary knowledge, whether from training, education, or experience. The successful ITSM professional of 2023 will be a knowledge worker, understanding the value of creating, reusing, improving, and sharing knowledge across the organization. Knowledge will be a product produced by ITSM professionals, justifying the investment in ITSM.

3. Superior interpersonal skills

The ITSM professional will need many of the skills they need today, though at a higher level. Interpersonal, written and verbal communication, questioning, problem solving, analytical, reasoning, and common sense. They'll need to work more closely with other ITSM professionals, both within the organization and with the partners and suppliers who provide critical components of the services used by their customers. ITSM is an art and a science. It takes understanding the business, its goals, objectives, challenges, threats, and opportunities to balance the demands, changes, and improvements to optimize the results for the customer, the staff, and the organization. The ability to work independently (leveraging organizational knowledge), collaboration, and teamwork are needed for ITSM professionals to continue delivering the necessary results for them, the organization, and their customers to be successful and thrive.



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John Custy
Te Whatu Ora - Health New Zealand



SOPHIE HUSSEY - The Workshop

1. Collaboration and holistic thinking

While organizations desire to work cohesively, siloed working still exists. There may be a central strategy for the organization, however, each function will have different roles in delivering on that strategy and its objectives. Service management professionals are ideally placed to have a holistic view of activities that exist and are taking place throughout the service pipeline across the organization. This position can be utilized to foster open, transparent behaviors and increase visibility and engagement with multiple parties across different business functions. Collaboration must include, but go beyond, the internal functions of an organization and extend to the customer. Whether your customer is external to the business or internal, you must work to achieve a level of strategic cohesion that results in the successful co-creation of value, where both the service provider and customer realize the benefit.

2. Delivering value with a customer and service-driven focus

Since the pandemic, we've seen a global impact on the economy and generally increased costs. It's therefore important to ensure that we're delivering services that provide value to the customer, which is more than just maintaining service availability and the consistent delivery of quality services. Beyond the financial terms of value, value can also be found and added through good experiences, satisfaction, and quality. The new normal post-pandemic has seen a rapid increase in hybrid working, and within this norm, it's vital to continue enhancing the user experience. To achieve or maintain a customer and service-driven focus to continually deliver value, ITSM professionals must foster and sustain a partnership with their customers to ensure that services are effective and efficient and to identify areas where waste, such as duplication of effort, can be eliminated to increase the value being provided.

3. Thinking digitally first but not forgetting the past

Technology has evolved at a tremendous pace, with organizations utilizing the digital space to interact with their customers. The marketplace is full of tools that can support a business in achieving its goals, such as automation, cybersecurity, and ITSM tools. There are a wealth of choices available. This choice is also valid for the approach to delivering services and the range of frameworks available to guide an ITSM function, such as Agile, DevOps, ITIL, COBIT, and Lean. These solution capabilities and methodology frameworks are now very mature and can be harnessed to ensure a pragmatic, realistic approach is taken to a "digital first" strategy. For example, the evolution from ITIL v3 to ITIL 4 has addressed a change in thinking and approach to service, value, and collaboration between IT and business functions. While some of the names have changed, the processes from ITIL v3 still exist but have evolved to better fit the current environment in the form of ITIL 4 practices. ITSM professionals must utilize corporate memory and ensure one foot is kept on the ground, using lessons previously learned. They must work across the organization's functions to understand the value and the foundations being worked from. This approach will help organizations understand how to adopt and adapt these solutions and frameworks to meet new demand and take the leap into new markets and innovative technologies, delivering new services, strategies, and objectives.



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Sophie Hussey
The Workshop



VAWNS MURPHY - i3Works Ltd

For me, 2023 will be the year of AITSM. Gartner first used the term "AITSM" to describe the application of AI in the service management ecosystem. There are four tenets of AITSM:

1. AI can be used to correlate information, allowing for intelligent and automated IT support via machine learning and natural language programming (NLP). Machine learning learns from data patterns to make decisions or recommendations, such as logging and routing incidents and requests.
2. Analytics complements AI when there's a high volume of information spread across multiple data sources. AI identifies the best information to address an issue, while analytics provides historical information on the best-performing outcome.
3. Automation can be used to automate common service desk tasks such as frequently logged incidents, service requests, and standard changes.
4. Agent intelligence, where virtual agents can supplement the service desk team by providing solutions drawn out of data models and previous interaction histories. This capability also facilitates self-service and a more consistent customer experience.

The common applications of AITSM include:

- Incident and request models, which take your most commonly-logged tickets and template them
- The use of virtual agents and bots to free up service desk analysts for more - complicated, higher-value tasks
- Using machine learning to preset the category and priority of incidents
- The automated creation of knowledge responses based on end-user input
- Proactive identification and remediation of faults and the use of self-healing technologies



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Vawns Murphy
i3Works Ltd



DOUG TEDDER - Tedder Consulting

Many think ITSM is nothing more than implementing a tool or application, enabling a few out-of-the-box workflows, and calling it "done." This approach has some value as it can provide some operational capabilities. But such an approach rarely (if ever) enables long-term efficiency or effectiveness. Good ITSM is more than tickets, escalations, and struggling with ambiguous and poorly defined processes. Good ITSM should make it obvious to stakeholders how technological investments result in business value and outcomes. Good ITSM enables humans to be human beings, not human doers. Good ITSM elevates an IT organization from a necessary expense to a key enabler for business strategy. And with organizations' increasing demand for technology-enabled outcomes, such as high-quality customer/employee experiences and digital transformation, good ITSM is a critical component for enabling these outcomes and more. But it's challenging to consider how to deliver these technology-enabled business results when an ITSM implementation is missing critical bricks in its foundation.

If this sounds like your ITSM implementation, don't give up hope. Focusing on shoring up some missing elements in 2023 will enable you to get back in the game and deliver good ITSM. This need drives my recommendations for where ITSM professionals should focus in 2023.



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Doug Tedder
Tedder Consulting



1. Organizational MVG

Both the organization and IT must understand how technology enables business results. Organizational MVG, or Mission, Vision, and Goals, provides the critical guideposts by which both the organization and IT can evaluate the results of technology investment. When ITSM professionals can map how IT products and services contribute to the achievement of MVG, it elevates the credibility of both the IT organization and the value of good ITSM.

2. Defining services

In my experience, defining services continues to be the most challenging aspect of service management for ITSM professionals. Many IT organizations cannot illustrate how they contribute to business outcomes and business value. Instead, these

organizations are stuck on measuring and reporting operational metrics that matter only to IT. Good ITSM delivers properly defined services that clearly depict how IT facilitates business outcomes and enables value-based measuring and reporting.

3. A maniacal focus on continual improvement

In an always-on, always-connected, work-from-anywhere world, continual improvement must be a way of life. Continual improvement removes friction and toil from daily work. Continual improvement identifies how IT services and products can be leveraged or updated to respond to ever-changing business and marketplace conditions. Good ITSM means continual improvement.

STEPHEN THAIR - Amdocs

In my opinion, of the three things that ITSM pros should focus on in 2023 and beyond, two have been around for a while, and the other is growing rapidly.

1. You can't ignore the cloud

If you don't have cloud skills, you need to get them. Now. All the "hyperscalers" have extensive learning materials and certification pathways available online for free, so the only real expense is your time and effort, and maybe an exam fee. Regardless of your role, you'll be expected to support cloud-hosted applications, manage cloud migration projects, and manage the complete lifecycle of services in the cloud. Therefore, solid cloud skills are a must!

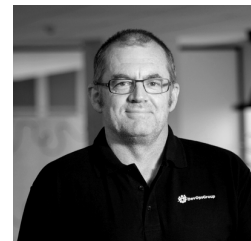
2. Programming skill

Again, regardless of role, we're moving into an "as code" world, driven by widespread DevOps adoption and the rise of low-code/no-code platforms. The line between developers and everybody else is blurring fast, so understanding the Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC) end to end, knowing your way around an Integrated Development Environment (IDE) like VS Code, and understanding source control (like Git) are vital skills. Which programming language (or low-code/no-code platform) you choose to learn is up to you.



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Stephen Thair
Amdocs



3. Operational resilience

The UK financial regulators led the way here with a series of joint papers on "Operational resilience: Impact tolerances for important business services." Starting with a discussion paper in 2018, and now with policy taking effect in 2022. This policy aims to "improve the operational resilience of firms and FMI and protect the wider financial sector and UK economy from the impact of operational disruptions." Regulated organizations must identify their important business services, set tolerances for each (essentially RPOs and RTOs), and then ensure they can continue to operate in the face of severe disruption, i.e. they must be resilient. As you can imagine, highly available, fault-tolerant IT systems are a key part of operational resilience. If you're not in financial services, you might wonder what this has to do with you. Well, historically, this type of regulation bleeds out from financial services into the broader business landscape. It becomes "industry best practice" that internal or external auditors come to expect from everyone. We've seen this pattern before with cybersecurity, personal data governance (e.g. GDPR), etc. So expect to hear "operational resilience" in conversations more over the next five years. Top tip – if you get good at 1 and 2 above (cloud and programming, including DevOps automation), you'll be well placed to answer the challenges of 3 (operational resilience)!

Next steps

We hope the insights and guidance all eight industry authorities provided will help inform your organization's specific ITSM focus for 2023 and beyond. Contact SymphonyAI Summit to learn more about how to address the opportunities and challenges covered here.

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