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Identifying & Implementing Quick Wins

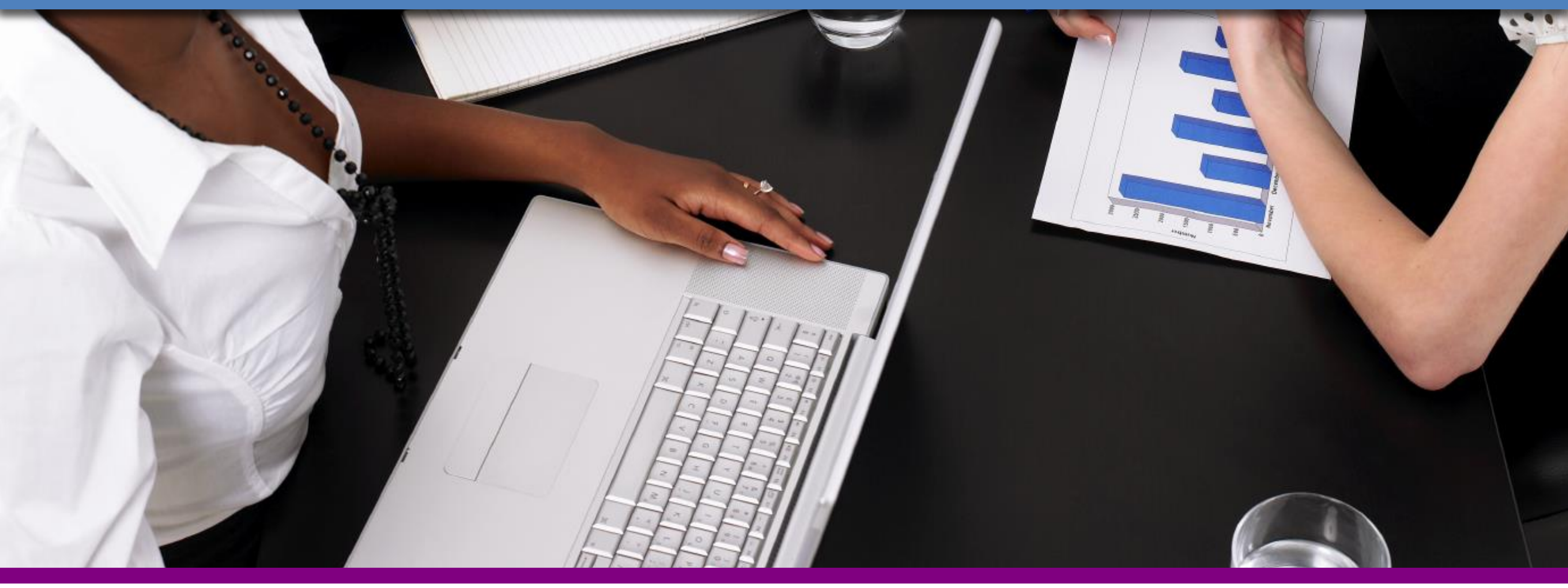

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

One of the goals of IT Service Management (ITSM) is to identify and implement improvement opportunities to ensure alignment and realignment with the Business needs and requirements. However, many senior managers look for continual improvement opportunities that will deliver value sooner than many of the longer term ITSM projects. Many formal projects can take 4-6 months or longer, to design, test and deploy a process and quite frankly, many managers don't have the time to wait this long to show improvements.

Organizations often have the following constraints they need to consider as part of any ITSM initiative:

- Staff limitations required for long term ITSM project work
- Lack of funding for large projects
- Commitment to change issues within the organization
- Organization is not ready for a fully documented process

Given these common constraints, another approach is to look for Quick Wins, i.e., improvements that can be implemented in a matter of weeks instead of months, but still provide improvements that are noticed by IT and the Business. In fact this is taking a Lean Agile approach to implementing ITSM.

Professor Kotter's Eight Step Transformation Model shown below includes short-term / Quick Wins which are important to provide Quick Wins to support any transformation / change initiative:

1. Establish a sense of urgency
2. Creating the guiding coalition
3. Developing a vision and strategy
4. Communicating the change vision
5. Empowering broad-based action
6. Generating short-term / quick wins
7. Consolidating gains and producing more change
8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture

Executive Summary

This paper will discuss key steps for successful Quick Wins as well as different type of Quick Wins that include:

- People
- Process
- Product / Technology
- Management Reporting

2) Introduction

> *When getting started, the Quick Win work may have limited visibility but once the Quick Win is implemented the visibility begins with a change in results*

It is important to ensure that Quick Wins once implemented will be visible to the Business, Customers, IT Management and Functional Groups such as the Service Desk. In some cases a Quick Win may only be visible to IT, but there should be a direct link to showing future improvement to the business.

When getting started, the Quick Win work may have limited visibility but once the Quick Win is implemented, the visibility begins with a change in results such as:

- Staff and Management exhibiting new behaviors
- Process Output having improved quality, performance and consistency
- Product / Technology such as your ITSM Tool Suite provides improved speed through automation of process activities, improved quality such as better foundational data used for prioritization and categorization of incidents, problems etc.
- Improved communication with your customers
- Improved data quality used for reporting purposes
- Improved decision making thanks to improved reporting
- Improved service availability
- Improved ability to meet Service Level Agreements
- Improved quality
- Reduction in recurring incidents
- More consistent prioritization and categorization
- Improved resource utilization
- Improved Management reporting and decision making
- Improved customer satisfaction

Once Quick Wins have been identified and agreed to, it is important to ensure they are planned, scheduled and the required resources to develop and implement are allocated.

It is also important to communicate the implementation and results of Quick Wins. Often IT's only visibility is when things go wrong, so it's key for IT to market their successes and continually provide updates on the Quick Win initiatives.

Quick Wins can support an overall ITSM Program in the following ways:

- Provides change agents credibility
- Helps obtain buy-in from those who are against the change
- Success makes it hard for people to block the change initiative
- Success breeds success
- Provides opportunity to market success
- Provides Senior Management and the guiding coalition data on the viability of the program/project
- Justifies the costs involved
- Assures management and staff that the effort is worth it
- Creates many milestones with multiple deliveries of new value

3) Key Steps to Quick Wins

Below are recommended steps to identifying and implementing Quick Wins.

Even though Quick Wins don't require a formal project, it is important to manage Quick Wins with some level of project discipline.

1. Identify potential Quick Wins based on one or more of the following inputs:

    - A process maturity / capability assessment that has been conducted
    - Customer satisfaction surveys
    - Input from Business Relationship and/ or Service Level Managers
    - Service Level breaches
    - Poor data quality
    - Tools not being used correctly
    - Lack of effective reporting
    - Process gaps that create incidents and service requests fallen in a black hole
    - Processes not being followed
    - New opportunities that should be leveraged

2. Develop, document and get agreement on Quick Win
3. Test Quick Wins
4. Configure in the ITSM tool (if applicable)
5. Train staff on Quick Wins (process and tool if applicable)
6. Deploy Quick Wins

Even though Quick Wins don't require a formal project, it is important to manage Quick Wins with some level of project discipline:

- Document Quick Wins in your project schedule
    - o Don't hope they happen – plan them
- Assign ownership to ensure they are obtained
- Insist on a status update
- Manage as a sub-part of the project (if applicable)
- Create a milestone around the Quick Wins
- Build multiple quick wins into the project schedule (when applicable)

4) Sample Quick Wins

Below are some common Quick Wins for People, Processes, Products/Technology and Management Reporting. Each organization will have to determine what Quick Wins they wish to pursue given their constraints, pain points and business requirements.

> *Each organization will have to determine what Quick Wins they wish to pursue given their constraints, pain points and business requirements.*

4.1 People Quick Wins

Often the IT staff simply want to know what they are supposed to do. Many staff members will receive some level of ITSM tool training but often no or limited process training.

- Identify a Process Owner who is accountable to ensure a formal or informal process is documented, deployed and improved
- Create and communicate a high level process roles and responsibilities document
- Create and communicate a high level RACI matrix that maps process activities to the process roles and shows which role is Responsible (for executing a process activity), Accountable, Consulted or Informed. Keep in mind that only one person can be accountable, however multiple roles can be responsible
- Identify and fill key roles to help support key activities that may already be documented or at least being executed, but lack defined resources. Examples could include Problem Manager, Problem Analyst, etc.
- Develop and deliver specific role based process and tool training on existing process

4.2 Process Quick Wins

Every organization is executing certain activities whether they are formally documented or not. Often the activities may not be consistently done, or if they are done, they have not had the same level of quality associated with them. Below are some common Quick Wins for some of the key processes for most IT organizations.

4.2.1 Incident Management Quick Wins

As input into Incident Management Quick Wins, it is a good idea to conduct a quality audit on incident tickets. A quality audit should check for:

- Proper incident descriptions
- Proper prioritization
- Proper categorization
- Following the escalation procedures
- Use of existing knowledge articles
- Proper resolution descriptions

The results of the audit may highlight areas to focus on to improve consistency of tickets as well as training and communication opportunities.

The following are some Incident Management Quick Wins:

- Ensure staff clearly understand the difference between Incidents, Problems and Service Requests
- Ensure staff are referring customers and users to the Service Desk as their single point of contact
- Begin logging all incidents and services requests – it's still amazing how this is not always done. It is best to have all incidents go through the Service Desk, however if customers and users are contacting 2nd or 3rd level support groups directly, it is important to ensure those incidents are being logged as well

- Separate the logging of incidents and service requests as they are different and should be monitored, measured and reported on separately
- Identify which group owns incidents throughout the incident lifecycle. (Typically this is the Service Desk)
- Develop and communicate requirements for handling a Major Incident
- Review and modify criteria for a priority model and if changes are made, be sure to communicate and train the staff on the new criteria
- Review and modify the categorization model and if changes are made, be sure to communicate and train the staff (depending on how out of date your categorization model is, this may not be a Quick Win)
- Identify what should be reported on. Understand the needs of the business, Senior IT Leadership, Process Owner, etc.
- Run reports based on target audience needs
- Define, get agreement and communicate escalation procedures
- Invite Subject Matter Experts from 2nd level to share their knowledge and information on resolving incidents with the Service Desk so knowledge can move from 2nd level to the Service Desk

Prioritization and categorization Quick Wins mentioned above will cross over into the Product / Technology Quick Wins. Again, depending on the amount of work required to do the modifications and configuration within the ITSM tool, these two activities may not be good candidates as a Quick Win.

4.2.2 Problem Management Quick Wins

- Communicate the difference between Incidents, Problems and Service Requests
- Start logging Problems separately from incidents and service requests
- Every month create a top 5 – 10 list based on the incident data
- Pick 1 or 2 of the recurring incidents from the list to perform Root Cause Analysis (RCA) on:
  - Create workarounds / knowledge articles on the top 5-10 list items if they don't exist and be sure to provide / communicate these to the Service Desk
  - Identify Subject Matter Experts (SME) to perform the RCA – be sure to allocate the appropriate time for the SME to conduct the RCA. This may mean taking them out of the Incident Management loop
  - Identify permanent solutions and get agreement on implementing the permanent solution to reduce recurring incidents
  - Provide an RCA workshop so everyone has an understanding of RCA methods and techniques

> *If the Change Management process is not efficient, staff will see the process as being bureaucratic and non-value added and if the process is not effective it creates a risk to the production environment.*

4.2.3 Change Management Quick Wins

One of the keys to Change Management is having both an efficient and effective process. If the process is not efficient, staff will see the process as being bureaucratic and non-value added and if the process is not effective then it creates a risk to the production environment.

Also remember that Change Management and Release and Deployment management are two different processes with different goals. Change Management is the control process that is responsible for looking at one change in relation to all the other changes. It looks for conflicting changes and/or dependency of changes. Release Management is the process that will build, test and Deploy the Release into the production environment under the guidance of Change Management. Both processes are responsible for minimizing risk and protecting the production environment.

Below are some common Change Management Quick Wins:

- Create a common RFC template
- Create a Change Advisory Board (CAB) and begin holding meetings to discuss, assess and approve changes. The CAB should have permanent members
- Define and communicate criteria for standard pre-approved changes
- Approve standard pre-approved changes
- Create a risk model (set of questions) that will help determine the risk and impact of a change
- Develop criteria for defining low, medium and high risk changes
- Define the criteria for emergency changes
- Define a process for handling emergency changes
- Appoint 1 or more Change Managers who have the authority to assess and approve low risk changes
- Create and share a Change Calendar that shows the upcoming changes
- Begin conducting Post Implementation Reviews to identify improvements

4.2.4 Release and Deployment Quick Wins

As mentioned in the Change Management section, it is important to remember that Change Management and Release and Deployment management are two different processes with different goals. Change Management is the control process that is responsible for protecting the production environment, while Release Management is the process that will build, test and Deploy the Release into the production environment.

- Develop and communicate a Corporate Release Policy (this could be freeze or control periods, maintenance windows, how often the organization wants to have a major release of their core applications such as having a major release once per quarter or two times per year
- Develop and communicate Business Unit specific Release Policy (usually referencing application releases)
- Develop and communicate criteria for Release Types
- Define key documentation required for the different Release Types
- Define key criteria the CAB will need to approve release to production
- Define some basic testing criteria and plans
- Evaluate test results and use this as input in making a decision on whether a release should be moved to production or not
- Define deployment strategies
- Participate in Change Management Post Implementation Reviews

"Change Management is the control process that is responsible for protecting the production environment, while Release Management is the process that will build, test and Deploy the Release into the production environment."

4.2.5 Service Asset and Configuration Management (SACM) Quick Wins

If SACM hasn't been started then consider:

- Conducting an AS IS assessment to identify what hardware and software information is currently available. This could be in the form of spreadsheets, databases, drawings, etc. Then identify:
  - Who has it?
  - How is it stored?
  - Is it accurate?
  - If the data is accurate then find a way to share with key process activities such as Change Management for assessing the risk and impact of changes

- Developing a Management Plan to gain approval to move forward. This would include defining:
  - Initial scope, objectives and benefits
  - Types of Configuration Items (CIs) to control within the Configuration Management Database (CMDB)
  - Mandatory attributes to track
  - Relationships to help understand the upstream and downstream impact

- If auto discovery tools are currently being used, find out where this data is being stored and research the capability of what data could become part of the CMDB

If SACM has been started and a CMDB contains Configuration Data on Configuration Items (CIs), Attributes and Relationships then:

- Be sure other processes (especially Change Management) are using this data as many organizations have good data in the CMDB but no other processes are using the data to help with risk and impact assessment, decision making, root cause analysis, planning etc.
- Conduct an audit and verification if not recently done to determine the accuracy of CI data within the CMDB
- Evaluate if all the attribute data being captured (especially if done by Auto Discovery) is value added and needs to be controlled within the CDMB

4.2.6 Service Level Management Quick Wins

- Appoint one or more Service Level Managers
- Begin conducting internal service review meetings to discuss Service Level Achievements as well as identify improvement opportunities
- If the organization does not have any Business Relationship Managers or other staff meeting regularly with the Business, then the Service Level Manager should start holding these customer meetings to discuss Service Level Achievements specific to the customer group
- Develop, get agreement and communicate Service Level Agreement (SLAs) and Operating Level Agreement (OLA) templates
- If there are no SLAs in place, then ensure there has been agreement internally on what the Service Level Target is for each service and then communicate this to the customers if they are not aware of the Targets
- Identify any gaps between SLAs and Underpinning Contracts
- Negotiate OLAs between key internal functional groups in support of one or more services and/or processes
- Develop a Service Improvement Plan template
- Identify one or more improvement opportunities and work with Continual Service Improvement if needed to get buy-in and approval to implement the improvement (remember that these could be other quick wins)
- Identify what IT is currently monitoring from a component and/or service perspective
- Prepare basic reports on service availability - use Incident Data if necessary and discuss the reports in the internal and external service review meetings

4.3 Product / Technology Quick Wins

Quick Wins with the ITSM tool is usually more challenging based on how the tool was originally configured and perhaps customized. The tool team may be called upon to support the Process Quick Wins that an organization identifies such as:

- Identifying available tool functionality that is not being used at this time, but could improve process efficiency and effectiveness through automation of process activities
- Reviewing and modifying the priority and categorization model as previously mentioned for Process Quick Wins
- Improving reporting capability based on reporting Quick Wins shown below

> *Management reporting is a key part of IT Service Management as it provides us with information on the health of our processes and services, as well as allows the organization to identify improvement opportunities*

4.4 Management Reporting Quick Wins

Management reporting is a key part of IT Service Management as it provides us with information on the health of our processes and services as well as allows the organization to identify improvement opportunities. Having said this, there are organizations running reports every week and month that no one even looks at so the key is not necessarily the production of reports, but creating value added reports that improves the ability to make better strategic, tactical and operational decisions.

- Identify all the reports being produced today
  - What are they?
  - Who gets them and what decisions are made from the reports?
  - How are they produced and how long it takes to run / create the reports?
  - Identify reports that can and should be retired

  - Document the gaps between what is needed and what is currently being produced

- If there are no reports currently being produced then meet with the Business and Senior IT Leadership to discuss and get agreement on what is important to them and what content they would like to see in the reports
- If there are existing reports then meet with the Business and Senior IT Leadership to identify what reports they pay attention to and what they are looking for but not getting
- Define and get agreement on a couple of Critical Success Factors (high level goals) and 2-3 Key Performance Indicators along with some key activity metrics for a single process
- Implement a pilot for this reporting
- Define your reporting policies
- Identify the target audience for different types of reports
- Create a template that needs to be completed by those who want reports that request information such as:
  - Who is the target audience?
  - What is the purpose / objective of the report?
  - What strategic, tactical or operational decisions will be made from the report?
  - How often does the report need to be run?
  - Where will the data for the report come from?
  - Etc.

5) Conclusion

Remember that Quick Wins must deliver value and should contribute to the improvement of process and service results in the form of greater efficiency and effectiveness, improved consistency and quality of output.

Identifying and implementing Quick Wins can be very supportive of any change initiative as it can show that making a change provides tangible positive results.

Don't overlook the importance of Communication and Training as these two areas can lead to real improvements immediately

Below are some key reminders for identifying and implementing Quick Wins:

- Analysis should be done to ensure the objective can be met in a matter of weeks and not months.
- Quick Wins must be planned
- Quick Wins must be visible
- Quick Wins must add value
- Must be communicated
- Must be meaningful
- If successful, must be celebrated

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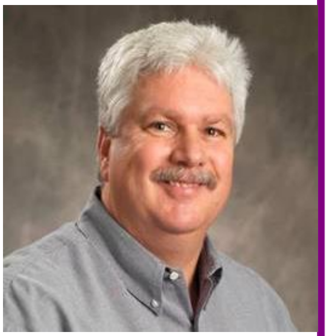

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