Understanding The Five Dysfunctions Of A Team & How It Applies To Your ITIL® Journey
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1) INTRODUCTION

An important consideration for every ITIL journey is to understand the impact teams will have throughout the process development, implementation and ongoing operation of your ITIL processes.

Every process improvement initiative has multiple risks; but, one that is often overlooked is the risk of how well teams function together. It is not uncommon to see well defined team structures where there is a sense of sharing, learning, contributing and growing together; however, for each success story there are many more where the teams are in a total dysfunctional mode. There is no teamwork or accountability, but plenty of finger pointing and placing of blame as to why something is not getting done.

This paper is based on the book, *The Five Dysfunctions Of A Team*, by Patrick Lencioni¹, brought to life through real world examples of team dynamics. Supplementing these ideas will be techniques and methods to overcome the dysfunctions that can seriously hurt your ITIL journey.

1.1 Implementing Process Changes Everything

As the below figure shows, whenever an organization has started its ITIL journey, changing the process is only one area that truly changes. It is essential to also consider the required changes for each of the points that are shown below: process, people, technology and management. The people component is where there is a shift from an individual hero mentality to a shared team responsibility mentality. In other words, the people component is probably the biggest change area, employees including management and staff are asked to change their behavior. Many people call this cultural change, and it does become that over time; but, initially it is the change in individual behaviors.

From a management perspective, what gets rewarded gets done, and it is important that job descriptions are updated to include process activity. Performance plans and appraisal systems need to include employee recognition for following the process procedures and using the support IT Service Management (ITSM) tool correctly.

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Understanding The Five Dysfunctions Of A Team & How It Applies To Your ITIL Journey

Figure 1

- Single point of accountability
- Logical group of activities
- Cross-departmental
- Defined procedures
- Repeatable, consistent
- Global standards

- Mgmt. commitment
- Mgmt. participation
- Compensation / rewards
- Values / beliefs
- Coaching / enabler
- Career opportunities

- Enhanced skills
- Multi-functional teams
- Values / beliefs
- Cultural biases
- Training
- Career development

- Teamwork enabled
- Service Management Tools
- Integrated Data Sharing
- Knowledge Management
- Management Information

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2) TYPES OF TEAMS

There are different types of teams used in developing and implementing processes that an organization needs to be aware of for a successful ITSM journey. After process implementation, there will also be functional and process teams that will be responsible for the execution of the process procedures. Another team, the Governance Team, is responsible for ensuring that Continual Service Improvement (CSI) is ongoing, proper management reporting is being done and there is process compliance.

2.1 Hierarchical Teams

Hierarchical teams are the teams defined within an organization structure and are typically represented in an organizational chart. Hierarchical teams normally have a direct reporting relationship to a manager. The hierarchical teams are often then subdivided into functional teams described below.

2.2 Functional Teams / Groups

Besides the Service Desk, ITIL v3 has introduced three new functional groups. These functional groups are called: Technical Management, Application Management and IT Operational Management.

Each function in an IT organization is specialized to perform a certain type of work and is responsible for specific outcomes. Each function has its own capabilities and resources. Functions build their own body of knowledge through ongoing experience.

The staff represented within these teams will wear many hats in regards to ITIL, and will often be responsible for executing multiple process activities. It is not uncommon that a functional team member will support multiple processes within one day. A team member within the Technical Management group could have an incident assigned to him or her in the morning, work on root cause analysis in support of Problem Management later in the morning, and then be responsible for change activities later in the day.
2.3 Core Program Team

For larger ITSM programs, some organizations will create a Core Program Team that will help develop the overall ITSM program. This would include defining the scope, goals, objectives and resource requirements and will also support the different projects that are a part of the program, such as Incident, Change and Service Level Management.

Key roles often associated with a Core Program Team are the Program Manager, Project Manager(s), Communication Lead, Training Lead, Organizational Change Lead and Implementation Lead. These are often full time roles for larger organizations, but could be part time roles for smaller organizations.

2.4 Process Design Team

Process design teams are one of the more critical teams in support of an ITSM improvement initiative. One of the keys to implementing ITIL properly is to remove silos within the IT organization. To that end, staffing your design teams can be a move in the right direction. From a design perspective, it is important that the design is a collaborative effort and that there is a sense of ownership in designing a single core process that will be implemented across the IT organization.

2.5 Process Implementation Team

This team is responsible for ensuring that new process training and the process-enabling ITSM tool has been properly developed and delivered to those who will be responsible for working within the new process. This team is also responsible for ensuring that proper coaching and mentoring is provided during the process rollout.

One of the keys to implementing ITIL properly is to remove silos within the IT organization.
Both the process design team and the process implementation team are change agents in their functional areas. These team members need to continue to update their functional areas on what is happening, when it is happening and how they will be impacted. These teams also need to listen to what their colleagues are saying, and provide this information back to the program team for consideration in the communication plan.

2.6 Matrix Process Team

The process team is responsible for executing the activities and procedures described in a process. A process team for Incident Management will include staff members within the Service Desk, Technical Management, Application Management and IT Operational Management who have been allocated a process role. These functional roles may be embedded within the actual organizational structure that has been documented for your organization. Each of the above functional groups will have process roles embedded within the functional group. The members of a process team not only have a direct reporting relationship to their manager, but also have a dotted line reporting relationship to the Process Owner and the Process Manager.

When implementing processes within your organization you often become a matrix organization by default. Some organizations build process teams as independent units within an organizational structure, but there is some risk in doing this. Dedicating an entire group to only support a single process means that new silos have been built – remember that implementing ITIL is about tearing down silos.

Between the functional groups whose team members form the process team, Operational Level Agreements (OLAs) are often used among process teams to underpin any Service Level Agreements (SLAs) or defined Service Level Targets.

As the below figure shows, a process will flow across the entire IT organization. Each unit within IT will have process responsibilities, such as supporting Incident and/or Change Management.

It is important that job descriptions, performance plans, performance appraisal systems and compensation plans all recognize this. They should be updated to reflect that performing process activities is just as important as the tasks assigned within the functional groups.
Figure 2

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3) THE FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM

Patrick Lencioni has defined five dysfunctions of a team that directly impact the ability of a team or teams to achieve its stated goals and objectives. The figure below lists the five dysfunctions. The rest of this paper will go into detail about each dysfunction, how they can impact an ITSM program and what methods and techniques can be used to overcome the dysfunctions.

![Diagram of the five dysfunctions]

Figure 3
3.1 Absence Of Trust

Trust is a basic foundation for any team to be successful. Trust allows teams to be open and honest with each other. Teams that have a level of trust feel comfortable about sharing their feelings, identifying areas of disagreement, and discussing their weaknesses and concerns without fear of repercussions. Without a sense of trust, your team will not be able to achieve the desired results.

Does your process design team engage in constructive debates on process activities, policies, or role and responsibilities? Even though your organization has selected ITIL as the ITSM framework of choice, it should also be understood that ITIL is not one size fits all – it needs to be adapted to an organization. This doesn’t happen without some healthy discussion and debate during the design phase, and doing this successfully is a sign that there is trust within the process design team. If this doesn’t take place, there is a risk that when the process is implemented, some of the team members will say things such as, ‘I didn’t agree with that’ or ‘I didn’t know it was done that way’, etc. A lack of trust will manifest itself as a sign of resistance over the long term.

A clear sign that there is an absence of trust is when there is a lack of understanding and the willingness to open up with other team members.

Even after a process has been designed, trust is important for the matrix process teams. Using Incident Management as an example, there must be a sense of trust between the Service Desk and the rest of the support organization that participate in the Incident Management process. Does your second level support group trust the Service Desk? If not, why?

I worked in one organization many years ago where the Help Desk and second level support didn’t talk with each other and literally did not like each other. When I asked why, no one could really explain it other than that the previous managers of the two groups didn’t get along and even though both of these managers were long gone, the relationship had never changed. This lack of trust had a direct impact on the Incident Management process team and delivery of quality service as more energy was devoted into not liking another group than energy devoted to making a process work.
The Incident Management process owner and process manager must play a key role in helping build a level of trust. This can be accomplished in the design phase by having representation from both the Service Desk and various second level support groups involved in the process design. During the design team meetings, it is important that trust continues to build and that the process owner encourages team members to speak up and engage in healthy debate and discussion on the process design. It is also important that no repercussions for speaking up take place.

After a process has been implemented, it is still important that there are process meetings between the key process roles that are supporting a process and that the level of trust is monitored. Building trust will not happen overnight, but it is achievable with the right leadership.

3.2 Fear Of Conflict

In the absence of trust, a team most likely doesn’t manage conflict well. Due to personalities and differences of opinion, it is inevitable that conflict will occur. If there is no sense of trust among team members, then these conflicts can be very damaging to the team and often result in team members choosing sides (us against them). When this happens it becomes a distraction to the whole team and unfortunately, it is not only IT that pays a price but also the customers.

Whether it is the design team, implementation team or process team, conflict will happen – there is no escaping it. It is best that we accept that fact and have a plan on how to effectively manage conflict so that conflict does not manage us. Whenever conflict is not managed well, there is a great risk that the team will not be able to achieve its goals and objectives. There is also a large risk of creating some hard feelings between individual team members.
While most people do not like conflict, it can actually be healthy for teams as long as it is handled correctly. Design teams can actually grow and become stronger than when the team was first formed. Team members can also learn to respect one another, as well as individual opinions.

Those in a leadership capacity need to ensure that when conflicts arise, each party has a chance to state the facts. It should be recognized that feelings are always involved, but the team needs to know that managing conflict will be based on facts and not necessarily feelings or emotions.

The team lead will have to make a decision that may not make one person happy, but the team lead needs to remind everyone about the objectives and that it will take the whole team working together to achieve the desired end state.

### 3.3 Lack Of Commitment

Commitment can be defined as making a decision and following it through. A lack of commitment to a plan or decisions can be very costly to an organization implementing ITSM. Process design does not happen without an investment of staff time for the development and implementation of the process. The longer it takes to design the process, the higher the design costs become. Cost can also be measured in the lack of delivering quality service, such as when IT staff don’t follow the Change Management process and this leads to a major incident.

Commitment must be gained at all levels within the organization. As an example, if senior management doesn’t follow the newly deployed process policies, then they have given permission to everyone else within the organization to bypass the process. If the staff feels that senior management isn’t committed to following the process, then they will ask themselves, “why should I?”

It is much easier to gain commitment if people have a sense of ownership in the decisions that have been made. Again, this can start by building a design team that consists of staff and management from across IT. You can also use focus groups and staff meetings as a way to socialize and get feedback on the process design. Having this sense of ownership also comes from the feeling that people have been heard and their concerns, issues and recommendations have been taken into consideration.
It is also important to remember the WIIFM (what’s in it for me) approach. Gaining commitment is easier if people understand the benefits for them, such as how this will make the day to day job easier, or how following the change process will reduce the amount of rework due to failed changes.

Keep in mind that gaining commitment is NOT about gaining consensus. Not everyone will agree with certain aspects of the process design or what they will be required to do; however, there must be a commitment that they will follow the process, use the ITSM tool appropriately and support the decision that has been made. It may be necessary to say, “I know you don’t agree with what we have designed, but I need you to support it. Do I have your support?”

Organizations will often work toward gaining a consensus on process design in order to please everyone. Even though this sounds like a noble effort, it can be very time consuming and may still not end up pleasing everyone. Trying to get a consensus can often drive organizations into analysis paralysis.

Process design teams that work toward consensus can take up to four times longer to design a process than a team that does not want to work toward consensus. This is due to the fact that if a decision is made while one or more team members are absent from the team meeting, at the next meeting those who were previously absent say they don’t agree with that decision – so the process starts all over again. This is not productive and can become very costly. The process owner needs to take charge and make a firm decision to move forward. After all, that is what Continual Service Improvement is all about.

When implementing ITSM, there are three different types of meetings that can be held, and it is important for the team to know exactly what the objective of each meeting is:

- Information meetings
- Fact finding and knowledge sharing meetings
- Decision making meetings
The process owner should clearly communicate beforehand what type of meeting it is and what the objective is. The decision making meetings are set up to gain commitment. The other meetings provide input and facilitate information sharing that can be used in the decision making meeting.

**Remember, there is nothing wrong with asking for a commitment from someone.**

### 3.4 Avoidance Of Accountability

If no one is accountable for a final outcome, there is a good possibility the team will never reach the stated goals and objectives. For the purposes of this paper, accountability and responsibility will be discussed.

When working with organizations there are typically three types of accountability issues that are visible.

First is where someone has decided Bob will be accountable for a Process, however Bob has never been told that he is accountable.

The second accountability issue we find is when Bob is the accountable person, but he has not been given any authority. This creates a huge risk in being able to influence others.

The third type we see is where Bob has been told he is going to be accountable and Bob has chosen not to accept the accountability, and no one is addressing the lack of accepting accountability and thus creates a risk in that they may not be a good role model.

The lack of accountability and responsibility can cripple any of the above described teams from the very beginning. Once the team achieves clarity and buy-in, it must hold itself accountable and responsible for high standards of performance and behavior.
This applies to all the different team types, but it is critical to understand the level of accountability and responsibility after a process has been deployed and is in the operational environment. This is when the process teams become important, as the process must be followed and the appropriate ITSM tool must be used correctly.

No matter what type of team one serves on, a major part of developing and implementing ITIL processes is empowering team members to make decisions, to carry out assigned duties, or both.

A key activity is to document the roles and responsibilities for the ITSM project as well as each of the ITIL process roles. An effective means of defining accountability and responsibility is to map activities to roles. This is often done in the form of an authority matrix which is often called a RACI authority matrix. RACI stands for the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R</th>
<th>Responsible – correct execution of process activities and procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Accountable – ownership of quality and end results of the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Consulted – involvement through input of knowledge and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Informed – receiving information about process execution and quality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the RACI matrix as an example, there is only one person accountable for an activity, although several people may be responsible for executing parts of the activity. In this model, accountable means end-to-end accountability for the process. If no one has been identified as the accountable person, often team members think that it is not me, so it must be someone else. When this happens, there truly is no one accountable and everyone avoids this ownership.
Below is an example of a process authority matrix. The authority matrix is effective for mapping process activities to process roles within an organization. Even though in the example the table is completely filled, this is not always necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0 Determine Vital Business Functions</td>
<td>Customer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 Define Business Requirements</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 Perform Gap Analysis</td>
<td>C/I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 Determine If Changes Are Required</td>
<td>C/I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0 Define Monitoring Requirements</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0 Produce Or Update Availability Plan</td>
<td>C/I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0 Design For Availability &amp; Security</td>
<td>C/I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.0 Monitor &amp; Data Collection</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.0 Reporting</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After the process is developed and deployed, there are certain activities that need to be conducted on an ongoing basis. Developing a RACI matrix for these activities is also a good idea, as it takes a commitment of Senior Managers to ensure that the process is followed, staff is trained, and the process is continually improved upon.

### Peer To Peer RACI Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process Owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigning process roles</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring staff is trained</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modifying process</td>
<td>A/R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modifying ITSM tool</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring process compliance</td>
<td>A/R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure monitoring and data collection is done</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure data is analyzed</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure proper reporting is produced</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring Continual Service Improvement activities take place</td>
<td>A/R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For example, organizations will develop and implement a single process such as Change Management across the IT enterprise and embed the process in an ITSM tool suite. Process activities will be distributed worldwide. This requires key roles such as local Change Managers who will have a level of authority to assess, authorize and coordinate low risk changes. As part of the process, Change Managers are empowered to make these decisions and to be accountable for their decisions.

To do this, organizations need to ensure that accountability and responsibility is built into job descriptions, performance plans and performance appraisals. The organization also needs to recognize and reward people for handling their accountability properly.

Be sure to train your staff on the new process and the supporting tool before the process goes live. This is the only way staff will know about accountability and responsibility.

There are two sayings that help support accountability and responsibility.

A) **You get what you inspect – not what you expect:** We can expect our staff to do the right thing, but unless we continually inspect what is being done, we may be caught off guard. As a leader be sure to meet with those who are accountable for processes and/or activities. Observe how they work and their interaction with others. Utilize ongoing process maturity assessment and reporting as a way to measure the health of a process in the following four categories:

- **Compliance** – Are we following the process and using the ITSM tool?
- **Quality** – How well are we doing it? It is not enough to just be following the process, but to ensure we have quality built in
- **Value** – Are we making a difference? Can we show that the process enables one or more business outcomes?
- **Performance** – How fast can we do it, but maintain effectiveness?

Performance is often a major hurdle for Change Management. You want to have a process that is efficient, in other words be able to handle a large number of changes but also maintain the effectiveness (i.e. reduce the number of failed changes)
A lack of accountability will typically show up in the metrics, maturity level and through observations. You can expect someone to be accountable, but unless you check to see if someone is actually taking accountability, you will never know.

B) What gets rewarded gets done – If you continue to reward for old behavior, then this is exactly what you will get. Be sure to update your performance plans and compensation programs to reward for the right behavior.

Again, you need to make sure that those who are held accountable get recognized for this.

3.5 Inattention To Results

This is the ultimate dysfunction of a team. Inattention to results exists when team members seek out individual recognition at the expense of the collective results of the team and what the team should achieve. Let’s take a real life example that has been encountered at the Service Desk more than once. If management measures individual success at the Service Desk by the number of calls that are answered by each Service Desk analyst and rewards accordingly, then this will drive individual behaviors that might be contrary to the overall team results. Rewarding high call volume could cause individuals to sacrifice call service quality to get the “numbers up”, which then sacrifices service levels, the quality of service and the cost of the service. There have been Service Desk analysts who have been viewed as top notch because they answer more calls than anyone else. Yet, upon closer scrutiny it was found that the analyst would simply pick up the phone and hang up. Yes, it counted as a call answered. We can fault the analyst all we want, but in reality the analyst delivered exactly what was being measured and rewarded.

If you are not getting the results you want and there is an individual only looking out for him or herself, you may need to consider sacrificing one for the good of many. This is always a harsh and difficult decision to make, but the team must come first. As managers we need to ensure that we work with individuals to be successful so that the team is successful.
Creating a Management Framework is one way to provide visibility into results. The below figure shows that there are different levels of measurement required to support business strategies. Often, organizations only capture data / metrics at the bottom level and do not roll them up to KPIs, goals and objectives to finally show business value.

From Strategy To Measure

What is our vision?

What will success mean from these perspectives?

1. 2. 3.

What are the goals and CSFs?

1. 2. 3.

What are the KPIs?

1. 2. 3.

What are the critical metrics and measures?

1. 2. 3.

Financial Perspective

Customer Perspective

Internal Perspective

Innovation & Leaning Perspective

1. 2. 3.

Copyright © AXELOS Limited 2011. Reproduced under license from AXELOS. Figure 4.16 CSI, page 78.
In the world of ITSM, the quality of service is measured by how the customer experiences the provided services. Results are expected when a customer hits the enter key. These results are measured in an end-to-end service that is being offered, that enables a business outcome, and that is not about an individual keeping a server up and running.

As the figure shows below, it takes many components of an IT organization to provide an email service. It does not matter if a server is up 100% of the time if customers cannot get to the server. In this case, it is important to understand that the collective service results are important – not those of individual components. In the case of email, the customer does not care about the servers, routers, application, etc. They care about the end-to-end email service being delivered.

![Diagram of Technology Domain vs. Service Management]

**Technology Domain vs. Service Management**

- **Technological Domain**
  - Server (Availability: 97.5%)
  - Router
  - Mainframe
- **Service Management**
  - Availability = Ops x WAN x LAN x Desktop
  - Total Availability of Email Service = 91.69%
  - Service Availability = 91.69%

**Figure 5**

Copyright © AXELOS Limited 2011. Reproduced under license from AXELOS. Figure 4.12 CSI, page 70.
Using the Continual Service Improvement model is a good way to stay focused on building the right metrics and results. This will help drive behavior and decrease inattention to results.

The model is based on understanding the business vision, strategy, goals and objectives. This initial focus on the business clearly establishes what is important (and what is not) from a customer perspective.

Once this is done, it is important to understand how current services and service management processes are performing against expectations. This measurement is the initial baseline assessment.

Setting future measurable targets is about setting the service targets and/or service management process targets at (or above) customer expectations. Again, this should be a team (or customer) focus and not an individual (or specific technology) focus.

Defining your service improvement initiative and creating and implementing your project plan addresses the important question, “how do we get there?”

Then, as a part of Continual Service Improvement, reassessment needs to occur to ensure that the original goals and objectives are being met.

*Setting future measurable targets is about setting the service targets and/or service management process targets at (or above) customer expectations.*
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Continual Service Improvement Model

What is the vision?

Business, vision, mission, goals and objectives

Where are we now?

Baseline Assessments

Where do we want to be?

Measureable Targets

How do we get there?

Service & Process Improvements

Did we get there?

Measurements & Metrics

How do we keep the momentum going?

Figure 6

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4) CONCLUSION

The success of any organization’s ITSM program will heavily depend on the success of the teams involved in the development, implementation and operation of the processes in support of enabling business outcomes.

As you set out on your journey be sure to develop an understanding of what success looks like and how you will measure and report against it.

The five dysfunctions of teams described in this paper can be overcome with some planning around who makes up the team, how the team is implemented and also with measurement to ensure the team is meeting the stated objectives.

Good luck on your journey!
5) ABOUT PINK ELEPHANT

Operating through many offices across the globe, Pink Elephant is the world’s #1 provider of ITIL® and IT Service Management (ITSM) conferences, education and consulting services. Pink Elephant is proud to be celebrating nearly 25 years of ITIL experience – more than any other service provider. To date, more than 350,000 IT professionals have benefited from Pink Elephant’s expertise. Pink Elephant has been championing the growth of ITIL worldwide since its inception in 1989, and was selected as an international expert to contribute to the ITIL V3 project as authors of V3’s Continual Service Improvement book and through representation on the International Exam Panel.

Service Lines

Pink Elephant’s service lines each provide different, but complementary business solutions:

• **PinkEDUCATION**: Pink Elephant is the most prolific creator and widespread distributor of ITIL and ITSM training. We offer training for: ITIL, ISO, COBIT®, Lean and other ITSM best practices. Pink is internationally accredited with EXIN, APMG, and PEOPLECERT, independent examination institutes that manage the ITIL certification program. The Project Management Institute (PMI) also recognizes Pink as a Registered Education Provider

• **PinkCONSULTING**: Using ITIL and other best practice frameworks and approaches, Pink Elephant provides end-to-end solutions – from assessments, to strategic planning to implementation, continuous improvement and beyond. Experienced consultants work hand-in-hand with our customers every step of the way

• **PinkONLINE**: We offer many online course options for education, and many online tools to help with your ITIL and ITSM process improvement projects, including PinkATLAS™, which contains hundreds of process deployment documents

• **PinkCONFERENCES**: Pink Elephant is the world’s largest producer of ITSM conferences and delivers several major events per year to thousands of IT professionals

• **PinkVERIFY™**: Pink Elephant’s internationally recognized “ITSM Tool Suite Stamp Of Approval” validates toolsets that meet a set of functional requirements as defined by ITIL best practices