# Intrinsic Service Operations Centre

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**AXELOS.com**

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# 1   Introduction

**My name is John Wallworth. I work for Intrinsic, a business communications company based in Haydock, near Liverpool, and London. I am the Service Transformation Manager for the Intrinsic Service Operations Centre. My role entails driving service management maturity within the four Ps[1] (people, product, processes and partners) for the whole company.**

The Intrinsic goal is to 'be the best'. With the application of mature service management, we are delivering this to our customers, both internal and external. Our services include building secure platforms which provide required levels of security and facilitating Secure Intelligent Communications.

Recently, we embarked upon a programme to educate our non-operational teams in the key ITIL® practices. We called it 'ITIL beyond IT'. This was to introduce the principles of service management to non-IT functions, such as HR, sales support and so on. The benefits of ITIL are self-evident, and the principles behind it support a function that operates well and adapts to the ever-changing world of business. We hope to discuss this initiative in a further Case Study.

## 1.1 DESCRIBE YOUR TEAM AND THE WORK YOUR TEAM DOES

My team, the Service Operations Centre management team, comprises four people:

- Stuart Lenton, Head of Service Operations
- Chris Sharp, Service Manager, responsible for network operations and the service desk
- Martin Rourke, Operations Manager, responsible for managed services engineering
- Myself, Service Transformation Manager, responsible for systems and governance.

Image 1.1 Stuart Lenton      Image 1.2 Chris Sharp      Image 1.3 Martin Rourke      Image 1.4 John Wallworth

We manage the service operations function, which covers the support services that Intrinsic offers, including:

- the network operations centre, based in the UK, which functions 24/7
- the service desk
- the service management team
- the tiered engineering department.

The engineers are spread across the United Kingdom, with an operations centre based in Haydock. We cover all areas of support and work across the entire ITIL lifecycle, offering advice and guidance to the relevant steering groups and the management team for strategy, design, transition and continual improvement. The way we manage the service involves one of the most innovative approaches I have seen. I am very proud to be a part of it.

# 2     Adopting and adapting ITIL

## 2.1 HOW DID YOU COME ACROSS ITIL?

I came across ITIL through a previous employer who believed in ITIL and the benefits it brings. The organization ensured their service operations management staff all had ITIL V3 Foundation certification, as a minimum. This brought a level of maturity to their service management which allowed a large volume of work to be controlled by a small, focused team who understood the outcomes required and how to deliver them in a shared service model.

## 2.2 WAS ITIL ALREADY ADOPTED BY INTRINSIC WHEN YOU JOINED?

ITIL had not been adopted to any great degree when I joined Intrinsic. While people were aware of it, the accepted view was that it brought unnecessary processes, procedures and managers. Having moved from an ITIL-aligned services organization, I was shocked that ITIL had not been adopted. The Intrinsic processes could be mapped to V2; however, V3 had been published for some time and the opportunity to mature the business processes was there to be embraced.

## 2.3 WHAT BUSINESS AND TECHNICAL CHALLENGES WERE YOU FACED WITH?

We had immature systems and processes that, although suitable, did not offer the potential return we would have had if we had adopted an ITIL V3 system and approach to working.

Image 2.1 Lab & Build area

## 2.4 WHY ITIL? HOW DID IT HELP OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES?

ITIL is a collection of the experiences of a large and varied group of people refined to deliver the tried, tested and validated best way to achieve service excellence. A good analogy is the Hippocratic Oath doctors take to confirm (amongst other things) that they will pass their learning on to the next generation. ITIL is no different: when you are starting on a journey of improvement, why would you not take advice from those who have travelled that road before you?

## 2.5 WHICH PROCESSES DID YOU ADOPT FIRST? WHY?

Incident and request management were the first processes that Intrinsic adopted. This was due to the nature of Intrinsic's business model. 'Intrinsic: enablers of business agility' provide a design, installation and support service for many technology streams. The Services Operation Centre focuses on the support of customer estates, where the primary function is responding to interactions from a customer. More often than not, this is a request to support changes to and resolve incidents on their data network infrastructure, security infrastructure or unified communications infrastructure. This drives a response service that is positioned to support multiple customers, across different technologies, with varying implementations. This is challenging. Therefore, a scalable model which afforded responsiveness was the first focus area for Intrinsic.

## 2.6 WHAT PROCESSES DIDN'T WORK FOR YOU, IF ANY? WHY?

Release management was a challenge for us. Not all of Intrinsic's customers subscribe to the patch management service. Some customers have access to patch and upgrade their software at their discretion. This means that, while a release may be available, not all customers will receive it. We overcame this by driving known errors into the service management toolset, which helped with incident resolution, as the issue may be easily rectified.

## 2.7 WHAT PROCESSES DID YOU ADAPT TO SUIT YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES?

The largest customization we made was to the link between incident, change and problem management. This was due to the nature of the support models chosen by Intrinsic's customers. Many have their own service management processes and utilize Intrinsic as a third line technical support function. This means that sometimes we are not consulted about changes, known errors, problems and so on. Adapting the processes to support a reactive approach where necessary has led to a capable and scalable model that can react quickly to customer's needs.

## 2.8 WHAT PUSH-BACK DID YOU GET, IF ANY?

The biggest challenge (it wasn't a push-back, more of a culture change) was a natural inclination to carry on with how things were done previously. To me, one of the most dangerous and destructive mind-sets is 'that's how it has always been done'. Once people saw the benefits of improved service management, adoption rates grew exponentially.

# 3 Could you give more detail around your adoption of ITIL?

## 3.1 WHAT WERE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES?

The biggest challenges were culture, understanding and adherence. People understood why things were done in a certain way, and they worked, so why change them? Helping people through the change was and always will be a challenge until the culture of continual improvement becomes embedded across your organization.

## 3.2 WHAT WENT RIGHT?

We made a point of adopting mature processes on the principle of 'greatest return first', which proved a good idea. Accordingly, and due to the nature of the support model Intrinsic uses, we deployed incident and service request process improvements first. Customer feedback and perception is the acid test, and we regularly receive positive feedback and compliments from customers as to how the service has matured.

## 3.3 WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

Hindsight always affords 20/20 vision. If I were to do it all again, I would make ITIL Foundation mandatory for all staff. Similarly, I recently passed the ITIL Practitioner qualification, and it made me wish the qualification had been available earlier, as organizational change management is always a challenge and ITIL Practitioner would have re-enforced the skills and tools to overcome it.

Although people accepted the need to improve, changing culture is always a challenge. If you are versed in and appreciate the benefits of good service management, then adoption and improvement become organic. I would also have set up a test environment for the new service management toolset we utilized to drive improvements. It is easy to understand the reasons for driving improvements across a business but it's a challenge to do, due to the wide and varied range of improvements that are often required. This can dilute the improvement process and force you to apply continual service improvement to a much larger scope. This can make you less iterative than you might be, which can slow progress.



Image 3.1 Intrinsic Service Operations

## 3.4 WHAT OTHER SOLUTIONS DID YOU CONSIDER?

I utilized business process modelling and a few areas of six sigma in order to identify how things could be improved. However, regarding how to deliver the best service, ITIL was the only choice. As I tell people on the training courses, ITIL is a collection of thousands of people's experience in running a service, and to ignore that knowledge and advice, with the conviction that you know better, would be foolish. A lot of hard work has gone into making sure that people's experiences have been refined to the most straight-forward way to achieve service excellence. Service is a differentiator. Excellent service will put you head and shoulders above others.

## 3.5 WHAT ACHIEVEMENTS ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Along with the adoption and maturing of ITIL-aligned processes within Intrinsic, we managed an outsourced change management function for one of our customers. The feedback we received was that the change management function was performing better than when it was in-house. This is feedback from one of the country's largest business process outsourcers and is an achievement that I often remind our change management team of, as it was their hard work and desire to improve that earned that feedback.

### 3.6 DID THE SIZE OF YOUR ORGANIZATION AFFECT HOW YOU ADOPTED ITIL AND, IF IT DID, HOW DID YOU ADAPT ITIL TO ENSURE IT WORKED?

Intrinsic is an organization of approximately 140 people. If you read the ITIL manual as gospel and translate it literally, then we would have needed to hire considerably more staff, making the business unviable. Service strategy suggests that your services must be financially viable and profitable[2].

With this is mind, a RACI (responsible, accountable, consulted, informed) model was used, where responsibilities and accountabilities were split across the relevant staff, organized in a service operation model[3]. A process needs an owner, but the owner can be someone who uses the process to deliver the required outcomes. Figuring out responsibility, accountability, who should be consulted and who should be informed, and then streamlining from there, has allowed us to use a very scalable model that will grow with the business.



Image 3.2 John Wallworth at Service Operations Centre

## 4 Continual service improvement

### 4.1 WHAT ARE THE CURRENT CHALLENGES?

The current challenge is maintaining the momentum. Technology is always improving, service must do the same. Keeping focused on continual improvement, especially proactively, is always a challenge in any organization. Rather than using continual service improvement (CSI) to address issues and work reactively, the goal of CSI is to improve proactively, always challenging yourself to be the best.

### 4.2 WHAT PLANS DO YOU HAVE FOR THE FUTURE?

Continuing to mature our service management processes remains at the top of my 'to-do' list. Simplifying systems, driving automation and improving accuracy are key to developing services until they are the best they can be. Just because we have improved, it doesn't mean it can't be better still. 'Work smarter not harder' is how I sell ITIL to the uninitiated.

People will always be important, but where a system can automate standard repeatable tasks, it should. This then allows your people to focus on delivering the outcome rather than managing the process. I and Intrinsic are going to continue to look at this element for future improvements.

## 4.3 HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE WHAT YOU DO TO THE ORGANIZATION'S EMPLOYEES?

As a communications enabler, this is vital for both Intrinsic and myself. We use various methods to communicate, dependent upon the content and the audience. We have an intranet page for simple quick updates and we have monthly company meetings for more formal updates. We also deliver training sessions with groups, which can be either business-wide or role-focused. In as much as you should target your processes to suit your business, you must target your communications to suit your audience, (communications is another core skill highlighted on the Practitioner course).

## 4.4 HAVE ITIL TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION BEEN USEFUL IN ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS?

Without ITIL training and certification, I would not have had access to the collective knowledge and experience of others. I imagine we would be seriously behind where we are, as a business and me as an employee, without it. Going through the training and obtaining the certification is key to not only understanding how you can make things better, but also to showing your colleagues and customers that you know Best Practice and are tooled to deliver it. It is a considerable market differentiator.

# 5   What are your recommended Best Practices?

## 5.1 TOP FIVE ITIL SHOULD DO'S

- Ensure buy-in from top level management. You need the support of senior management teams to ensure buy-in across the company. They will be instrumental in ensuring the message is delivered across the business.

- Educate your people. Remember the four Ps: people, product, processes and partners. Your people need to be skilled and trained, and your processes require refreshing and to be communicated. This applies to ITIL adoption, too. Delivering a new process and a new way of thinking, without the appropriate knowledge and understanding, will only result in confusion.

- Challenge yourself and your organization, but be realistic. Adopting ITIL will produce results; it will bring efficiencies and cost-savings, but be careful how you approach it.

- Audit yourself before you start. Set a baseline before you improve. Showing the improvements along your journey will help those people who aren't in your world or don't speak your language to see the value in what you are doing.

- Be honest with yourself. Rome wasn't built in a day and continual service improvement exists, in my view, to allow you to grow and develop as you mature. Services, like people, mature with age. But they need support and guidance to mature successfully. Make sure you mature into a fine wine, not vinegar.

## 5.2 TOP FIVE ITIL DON'T DO'S

- Don't assume everyone understands ITIL the way you do. Not everyone does. Some people see it as a management and governance-heavy approach. We know it isn't, but that may need to be explained.

- Don't expect everyone to quickly and instantly buy in to your ideas. Changing culture is one of the hardest changes to drive. You need support from your senior management team.

- Don't take the framework as the only way to work. Take the ITIL Best Practice, get it accepted and turn it into good practice. Then improve it. Make your own Best Practice for your own needs.

- Don't stop being the champion of ITIL in your organization. It needs someone with the drive to work smarter not harder to achieve Best Practice. I have always tried to do things in the best way, and I will always strive to improve. There are always ways to improve, though you may not understand them yet. The problem management section of *ITIL Service Operation*[4] and all of *ITIL Continual Service Improvement*[5] are vital in helping you develop skills to identify issues and bring about improvement.

- Don't stop improving. What works for you now may not work in six months' time. We all get the 15:00 email on a Friday that needs actioning before you can go home and forces you to work late. Don't make yourself the sender of that email. Continual service improvement will ensure you are prepared and ready.

# 6　About Intrinsic

Intrinsic have been providing Secure Intelligent Communications to the UK market since 1999. They provide Managed and Professional Services to both the Public and Commercial sector.

They are headquartered in Haydock, Merseyside, have an office in the City in London and staff throughout the UK. Intrinsic are enablers of business agility, helping customers to improve how their business operates.

End Notes

[1] AXELOS (2011). *ITIL Service Design*, TSO. Norwich p.40

[2] AXELOS (2011).*ITIL Service Strategy*,TSO. Norwich section 4.3 'Financial management for IT services'

[3] AXELOS (2011) *ITIL Service Operation*, TSO. Norwich p. 203

[4] AXELOS (2011) *ITIL Service Operation*, TSO Norwich section 4.4 'Problem management'

[5] AXELOS (2011) *ITIL Continual Service Improvement*, TSO Norwich

# 7    About AXELOS

AXELOS is a joint venture company, created by the Cabinet Office on behalf of Her Majesty's Government (HMG) in the United Kingdom and Capita plc to run the Global Best Practice portfolio. It boasts an already enviable track record and an unmatched portfolio of products, including ITIL®, PRINCE2® and RESILIA™. RESILIA is the new Cyber Resilience Best Practice portfolio.

Used in the private, public and voluntary sectors in more than 180 countries worldwide, the Global Best Practice products have long been associated with achievement, heightened standards and truly measurable improved quality.

AXELOS has an ambitious programme of investment for developing innovative solutions and stimulating the growth of a vibrant, open international ecosystem of training, consultancy and examination organizations. Developments to the portfolio also include the launch of PRINCE2 Agile®, the ITIL Practitioner qualification and a professional development programme for practitioners, fully aligned with AXELOS Global Best Practice.

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