

GREY AREAS AND FRAYED EDGES: WHAT UWS HAS LEARNT ABOUT LEVERAGING AN ITIL

IMPLEMENTATION TO DRIVE CULTURAL CHANGE

It is interesting that the theme of the conference is “The Edge of the World” because there is no such thing really, since the world is not flat but we all understand what that means don’t we? We like the edges of things often to be neat and tidy with clarity around roles and responsibilities and we become irritated if the boundaries are not well defined. But the world is not like that is it? The world is grey, and grey areas bother us. We spend a lot of time trying to separate grey areas into black areas and white areas and when we do, we sit back quite pleased with ourselves, feeling like we achieved something. Sometimes we have indeed achieved something but was it what we intended? I often ask, “What’s wrong with grey?” I like grey. Grey areas are fantastic opportunities for collaboration. Of course, they are also fantastic opportunities for confrontation too but I prefer to see them as the former.

As the Project Executive of UWS’s ITSM Project, the edges of things have presented a number of interesting challenges for me and also for the Project Manager (PM). Not least the management of the scope, which has deliberately included cultural and practice change as a key focus despite it having the fundamental premise of an ITIL implementation. The ‘Build it and they will come’ approach is not really effective. It was recognised early in the thinking that if the project was to be successful, practice change would have to be a specific workstream. Changing the way people do things is much harder than designing and implementing new processes or rolling out new tools. This presentation explores how the ITSM project at UWS has bumped into a number of interfaces that started out crisp and well defined and then deliberately blurred the edges in the interests of customer service, forcing collaboration and conversation.

In leveraging a Best Practice Framework, the project has tried to stay focused on the “Practice” Framework not the “Best” Framework ... ensuring that those driving implementation understand the real intent of frameworks like ITIL and that they drive change from those core intentions and not from a pure black and white perspective. The project has purposefully leveraged other industry standard frameworks in its delivery and PRINCE2 is another example of needing to understand the intent of the framework and not just the black and white. PRINCE2 is not a set of Product descriptions and templates, it is about creating a project environment where the right stakeholders are provided with the capacity to truly lead a project and manage by exception. ITIL and PROSCI have similar examples.

The presentation includes, of course, the lessons learned thus far and discusses issues such as resistance to change, what to look for in an ITSM tool, how to bring the right skills to bear – when to use consultants and how to include internal staff to build capability but it also explores the leadership role IT Service Departments have in a modern, progressive University. Using ITSM as an example, we will discuss what role IT has in taking the lead to join corporate service silos (as well as the silos that always develop within IT).

Implementing ITIL and a new Service Management toolset should be easy as the maturity is out there now and others are very happy to share their experiences. Learn all you can and genuinely listen and demonstrably build those lessons into your plans. For a successful ITSM rollout, there are so many examples of mistakes, that you really should not be remaking them. You will find some new ones to make, of course, but then life is full of frayed edges.

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