

# Make or Break

## Change Management for IT Asset Management, Your Business and You

If you are an IT asset manager, you have worked hard to promote the benefits of the programs you have initiated. In many ways, the success of your career depends upon your ability to meet the commitments you have made to your management or to your customers. In this issue we address the importance of organizational change management as part of the deployment of a business transformation. Infrastructure consists of both human and technological components. Remember, we're not just counting servers here; we are running a business. That's what it's all about, right? Whether you have thought about it or not, the results of your efforts will greatly enhance your career or they will break it.

Jason Baldree is an associate director with Protiviti Inc, and his practice has years of experience in assisting clients with defining and deploying ITAM and a range of other risk and compliance initiatives. He describes the need for focus at a fundamental level: "Within an organization, change is constant. The organizations that succeed are the ones that are ready to adopt and adapt to the changing environment. The enabling of change requires a focus on the people that will be affected. Without user and executive support, ownership, and understanding of the new initiative, sustained benefits and return on investment will be jeopardized."

People (including users, project team members, subject matter experts and possibly others) drive the success of establishing enterprise programs and these programs, in turn, can drive the success of people through personal growth and new opportunities. In this article we will bring in disciplines that are further defined in the following ITAM Process Area specifications:

- Program Management
- Communication and Education
- Financial IT Asset Management

### DEFINING THE TEAM: ASSET MANAGEMENT ROLES

In the book *Good to Great*, Jim Collins said that the business principle we all should care about is deciding "first who and then what." With this concept, he created the call for "getting the right people on the bus." As the IT asset manager, you absolutely have the right to assemble the right team to make your efforts successful. This goes beyond just ensuring that people who are tasked have the right technical skills, training and experience. Attitude and influence are key criteria when deciding on project participants. Your asset management initiatives and priorities will change many times. If you are surrounded by and supported with the right people, the team will adapt and rise to the different challenges brought about by your business. This is most important to do at the beginning of an initiative. In the beginning you will need the best and the brightest – and those most able to influence others, since results and buy-in have yet to be achieved.

Let's start with the IT Asset Manager. This job title is becoming more and more common on corporate org charts. Here is IAITAM's definition for the responsibilities carried by this role:

IT asset manager: The IT asset manager is the primary point of responsibility for the lifecycle management of information technology assets throughout the organization.

Included in this responsibility are development and maintenance of policies, standards, processes, systems and measurements that enable the organization to manage IT assets with respect to risk, cost, control, governance, compliance and business performance objectives as established by the business.

The IT asset manager integrates the physical, technological, contractual and financial aspects of information technology assets to enable a holistic and proactive approach to achieving the objectives.

What about the immediate ITAM program team? You will probably have the least control over where you report to at the senior management level. This is something you can influence, but in the short-term it is more important to ensure that you have the right executive sponsor. When you achieve the right kind of sponsorship, it really won't matter where the team sits on the org chart: finance, IT, procurement or all three.

### STAKEHOLDERS

A stakeholder is someone who has a vested interest in the outcomes of the initiative. Not all stakeholders will understand why they need to be invested in your initiative. Stakeholder identification, education and buy-in will be big factors in determining the success of your initiatives. Who are typical stakeholder organizations in an IT asset management initiative? The most common are contracts, procurement/supply chain, legal, human resources, finance, facilities, risk management, warehouse/receiving and IT management. Within IT consider especially information security, the service desk, change management and service support functions.

Consider what each stakeholder understands about IT asset management at the onset:

- What does the information security stakeholder know about IT asset management? Likely they are dependent on the function for an accurate inventory of those assets they seek to secure.
- What does procurement know about IT asset management? A lot, if you are part of procurement! If you are in IT, they probably know that they need to support each you. But, how much? Are there job roles and responsibilities aligned with their performance objectives? Or do the groups and people operate in silos?

## Key Terminology

### ■ BUSINESS CASE

A business case describes why an organization chooses to do something. When thinking about a business case, ask yourself: What benefit will my organization realize in return for doing something or making a specific investment? A business case is most often defined with very specific cost estimates and savings. But, a business case should also address how the operating environment will improve (pain relief). Any benefit that is somewhat intangible, yet still believed to be important should also be described.

### ■ POLICY

A policy explains what employees are expected to do. Good policies also explain why.

### ■ PROCEDURE

A procedure describes how a task should be performed. A procedure is often a step-by-step set of instructions. It may also include checklists.

### ■ PROCESS

A process is a system that creates a specified outcome or product. The system will include a description of activities or mechanism that cause this result as well as information about who performs the activities, when they are performed and what each results in. A process must always be measurable. Another way of saying this is that the process can be quantified as to how well it is performing, in one or more ways. Business processes may reference procedures, checklists and techniques to provide specific information to ensure they perform correctly.

- Does legal know about IT Asset management? Maybe. Maybe not.
- Human resources?
- Lines of business?
- Other parts of the IT organization? Different locations?

Each of these relationships must be crafted and maintained if they don't already exist. Some stakeholders will immediately recognize the value of what you are doing, once they are educated on the "why." Others will take time to come around. Work with each stakeholder to make sure the right person from their group is committed to be an extended part of your team. Then continue to communicate progress and plans to both the stakeholder levels and the extended team members.

Implementations are really about organizational change management. And organizational change management is really about pain management. According to Bret Detillier, "When presented with two or more options, humans will usually pick the option that involves less pain." Detillier is an organizational consultant who has held a number of roles in the IT industry over the last 20 years, including process management, implementation planning and providing training and advice to

Fortune 500 companies. "We tend to get numb to our current pain or our current way of doing things in our jobs," he says. "In order to prepare for the desired change, the first step is to educate the organization on its current pain." New or redesigned business processes will take on more importance and gain traction in light of this newly found understanding of the pain we've been experiencing all along.

### PAIN KILLER

As part of the preparation sequence, we need to prepare a business case for change. The initial audience for this business case will be the executive sponsor, senior management and stakeholders. The plan for change needs to present that the new way of doing things will result in less pain than the current level of pain. Once the executive management team and stakeholders have bought into the business case and approved, it is time to take it to the next level. It is important for middle management to be engaged in deciding how to position and roll out the message.

### EVEN MORE COMMUNICATION

Ultimately, the communication must be brought to all levels of the organization. Everyone sells in one way or another, and it is critical that everyone involved is promoting the right "goods." Individuals vary from one extreme to another when it comes to change. At the outset of a new initiative everyone will have different impressions of what the effort is all about. Defining a communication plan that addresses the stakeholders and the different levels of the organization is more than smoothing over rough spots in the road. It is enabling a level of understanding and a vision of what is to come that will help define the success of the effort. As an IT asset manager you will need to act like an advertising executive from time to time. Your target market is your organization, and your ultimate win is the success and recognition of your efforts.

### TRAVELERS CHECKLIST: PLANNING FOR THE LONG VOYAGE

This is a checklist for turning your organization into an IT asset management improving and optimizing machine. Carry it with you and read it often.

- Get the right people on the team.
- Make sure stakeholders buy in from the beginning and are kept up to date throughout the implementation.
- Ask yourself if the program is defined.
- Are individual and organizational incentives defined?
- Develop a communication plan and make sure everyone has an "elevator pitch."

### SUMMARY

The best way to enjoy the journey, riding the wave of change, is to be part of the change. The strategies that have been discussed here will help you understand the changes happening around you and provide you the vocabulary and the action steps you need to take a leadership role. IT asset management is all about change and managing it well.

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