

5-Step Problem Management with Kepner-Tregoe

By [Rick Lemieux](#)



A few weeks back I wrote a DITY about the top five questions of ITIL V3. While ITIL® V3 training provides IT organizations with the knowledge and skills to successfully adopt the best practices outlined in the IT Infrastructure Library® (ITIL), additional training helps ensure a successful outcome of that adoption.

The following DITY is the second of a four-part series that outlines the additional training areas IT organizations should consider when adopting IT Service Management (ITSM) as the basis for the delivery of quality IT services.

1. Who is Kepner-Tregoe (KT) and what are KT Processes?

Many IT Service Management (ITSM) practitioners are first introduced to Kepner-Tregoe (KT) during their exploration of the Problem Management processes. The OGC's Service Operation publication points to a Kepner-Tregoe analysis as one of the most useful and frequently used techniques for Problem investigation and diagnosis.

In fact, organizations and individuals during every decade since 1958, and in many fields of human endeavor, have embraced KT's processes and applied them to a staggering array of decisions to be made, problems to be solved, and risks to be managed. Few other companies can claim to have been instrumental in bringing Apollo XIII back safely and to have delivered break-through results in every major industry from natural resources to entertainment, automotive manufacturing to life sciences, and much more.

The Kepner-Tregoe rational processes maximize the critical thinking skills of people. They are easily learned and applicable at all levels within an organization, from the IT professional to the CEO. Not dependent on a specific culture, technology, education level, or other factor, KT processes are flexible tools that provide enduring value in today's rapidly changing world. Many clients have embedded these systematic methods into their organization's workflow and as a result have realized quantum leaps in overall performance and customer satisfaction.

KT Processes

Over millions of years, through natural selection, neurological structures that promoted survival were preserved and passed on by the human race. Patterns of thinking, response, and behavior developed around accumulating answers to four basic questions:

1. What's going on?
2. Why did this happen?
3. Which course of action should we take?
4. What lies ahead?

Civilization developed as humans learned how to deal with complexity, discovered why things are as they are, made good choices, and anticipated the future. The elements that made these patterns of thinking possible became part of human nature.

Kepner-Tregoe developed four rational processes that mirror the basic patterns for applying critical thinking to information, data, and experience.

These rational processes are:

Thinking Pattern	Rational Process
Assessing and Clarifying: What's going on?	Situation Appraisal
Relating Cause and Effect: Why did this happen?	Problem Analysis
Making Choices: Which course of action should we take?	Decision Analysis
Anticipating the Future: What lies ahead?	Potential Problem (Opportunity) Analysis

Kepner-Tregoe processes are universally applicable, regardless of cultural setting or content. Whether people are Japanese, Canadian, or Brazilian, all are equipped - as a result of common human experiences - with identical, unchangeable patterns of thinking.

In an organizational setting, rational processes can make full use of the thinking ability within the organization, on a continuing basis. Rational processes provide organized ways of applying critical thinking skills to an issue. They constitute an explicit, logical system that can have a far-reaching impact.

The objective is to move an organization closer to its full potential to meet critical business objectives. This is achieved by the continuing, conscious use of common approaches, expressed in a simple language, and directed toward resolution of an organization's important concerns.

2. Which KT training and certifications should an ITSM organization pursue?

Kepner-Tregoe training and certification programs provide IT Professionals with the knowledge and skills to effectively manage the critical thinking process that will be used when developing anything from the ITSM Service Strategy to that of a more effective Service Operation organization.

Having members of your IT organization trained and certified in Kepner-Tregoe methods will dramatically increase your chances of ITSM success. Classes include:

- **Situation Appraisal** - This program trains the IT Professional on how to clarify issues, set priority and plan appropriate resolutions.
- **Problem Analysis** - This program trains the IT Professional on how to find the cause of a positive or negative deviation.
- **Decision Analysis** - This program trains the IT Professional on how to *maximize benefits* and *minimize risks*, yielding durable, supported decisions.
- **Potential Problem/Opportunity Analysis** - This program trains the IT Professional on how to *protect plans and exceed expectations*.
- **PIM (Problem & Incident Management) Certification** - During this workshop, students will learn the topics in preparation prepare you for the ISEB Certification Examination in [Kepner-Tregoe ITSM Foundation Certificate in Problem & Incident Management](#).
- **KT Rational Process Mastery** - During this workshop, the IT Professional deepens his/her understanding of the concepts of *Situation Appraisal, Problem Analysis, Decision Analysis, and Potential Problem/Opportunity Analysis*.
- **KT Analytical Trouble Shooting** - During this workshop, the IT Professional deepens his/her understanding of how *Analytic Trouble Shooting® (ATSSM)* integrates quality and productivity efforts, and provides a logical framework for statistical process control, lean manufacturing, Six Sigma, total productive maintenance, self-managed work teams, and other programs.

3. What options are available for students to take the KT certification exams?

The PIM certification does require students to attend a class to sit for the exam at any Prometric or VUE testing center.

4. Which project management training programs will enable the ITSM Practitioner to bring more value to an ITSM program?

The following outlines the Roles & Responsibilities an individual can assume in an IT organization once he or she successfully completes the KT program listed for that role.

ITIL Executive Leadership

Role	Recommended KT Training
IT Executive Leadership Team	Risk Management

ITIL V3 Service Operations Team

Role	Recommended KT Training
ITIL Service Desk Specialist	Situation Appraisal
ITIL Problem Management Specialist	Problem Analysis
ITIL Service Desk Practice Manager	Situation Appraisal Problem Analysis Decision Analysis Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis
ITIL Problem Management Practice Manager	Situation Appraisal Problem Analysis Decision Analysis Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis
ITIL Service Operation Practice Manager	Situation Appraisal Problem Analysis Decision Analysis Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis

ITIL Service Transition Team

Role	Recommended KT Training
ITIL Change Management Specialist	Decision Analysis Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis
ITIL Release & Deployment Management Specialist	Decision Analysis Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis
ITIL Transition Management Practice Manager	Decision Analysis Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis

ITIL Service Design Team

Role	Recommended KT Training
ITIL Service Capacity & Continuity Specialist	Decision Analysis Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis
ITIL Service Design Practice Manager	Decision Analysis Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis

ITIL Service Strategy & Continual Service Improvement Teams

Role	Recommended KT Training
ITIL Service Portfolio Management Specialist	Decision Analysis Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis
ITIL Service Quality Management Specialist	Decision Analysis Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis
ITIL Strategy & CSI Practice Manager	Decision Analysis Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis
IT Executive Leadership	Decision Analysis Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis

ITIL Expert Mentors

Role	Recommended KT Training
ITIL Lifecycle Expert	Decision Analysis Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis
ITIL Capability Expert	Situation Appraisal Problem Analysis Decision Analysis Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis
	Decision Analysis

Hybrid Expert #1: Mid-Level Manager Customer Relations	Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis
Hybrid Expert #2: Mid-Level Manager IT Quality Assurance	Decision Analysis Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis
Hybrid Expert #3: Mid-Level Manager IT Operations	Situation Appraisal Problem Analysis Decision Analysis Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis
Hybrid Expert #4 : Mid-Level Manager IT Planning & Architecture	Decision Analysis Potential Problem & Opportunity Analysis

5. Why will KT training & certification improve my chances for a job or promotion?

Having one or multiples of the above certifications will improve your chances of not only landing a job or promotion but also position you as one of the early adopters in a space that is destined to be one of the high growth areas for 2010 and beyond as stated in a recently published [Search CIO](#) article.

Summary

Hopefully you will find the above information useful as you and your company enters and begins to experience the value of the exciting new world of ITIL Version 3.

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