The New Face of the IT Practitioner

By Rick Lemieux

ITIL training and certification has become a virtual requirement for IT professionals looking to differentiate their skill sets to hang on to their jobs or compete for a new one. The days of leveraging a technology certification as your ticket to employment are over. Technology professionals are now required to be certified in ITSM best practices in order to compete for jobs focused on implementing process controls designed to better align IT with the business and to deliver services that are optimized cost, quality and compliance.

Now that APMG has completed the delivery of the ITIL V3 certification syllabi, I thought it might be a good idea to provide our readers with some guidance on how to select the right ITIL training and certification programs to survive in this economic downturn or revive a career that has temporarily been put on hold. The following DITY outlines the six IT Service Management roles that will help the IT professional secure their place in the IT and enterprise leadership circle.

IT Service Management Roles & Responsibilities

ITSM Contributor

An ITSM Contributors does not have an active role in design, implementation and operations of an ITSM program but plays a very important role in the areas of securing funding and support for the overall program.

Historically, mid-level managers broker the introduction of ITIL within an organization, and the executive leadership team 'vets' ITIL in terms of the business value it provides and the resources required to bring it into the business.

These individuals include the executive leadership team and their direct reports along with anyone from the IT or business organizations who will play a role in the success of the program.

Successful ITIL implementation programs always require at least one such 'ITIL Champion.'

> **Recommended Training Programs:** ITIL Contributors need the big picture of how ITIL aligns with the overall Business and IT strategy, what resources they have on hand, and what capabilities they will need to develop or acquire. They need to be conversant about the concepts of ITIL, but they are not 'hands-on' practitioners or implementation managers.
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> This team typically seeks non-certification introductory sessions to ITIL and workshops that focus on building an ITSM business plan.
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> In addition, simulation workshops provide value to this team in three ways. First, they clearly demonstrate to them the effectiveness of the ITIL processes and concepts. Second, the leadership team's participation in the workshops provides a common ground for later discussion with the implementation and practitioner teams. Finally, the participatory nature of a simulation workshop cements the leadership team's commitment to the ITIL program.

ITSM Apprentice

ITSM Apprentice is the first step that all IT professionals must take on their way to a higher-level position in the ITSM organization. While an apprentice has a clear understanding of the ITIL, he or she has limited knowledge of the how-to aspects of any of the ITIL processes or functional areas.

Compare this to the two parts of a standard driver's license certification – the written rules-of-the-road test and the skills-based driving test. No matter how skillful a driver is in steering, braking and parking a vehicle, he must also understand the legal framework and common practices within which he is operating a vehicle. For most of us, our driving skill increases with experience and the rules-of-the-road become an ingrained part of our knowledge base.

ITSM Apprentices include anyone who plays an active role in the development, implementation and operations of the ITSM program.

> **Recommended Training Programs:** Apprentices need to know the 'rules,' and ITIL Foundation certification courses give them the foundation-level knowledge they will build on as they continue their careers within Information Technology.

ITSM Lifecycle Practitioner

ITSM Lifecycle Practitioners direct and manage IT services that align with the needs of the business, specifically in one or more of the following ITSM Lifecycle areas – Service Strategy, Service Design, Service Transition, Service Operation, or Continual Service Improvement.

ITSM Lifecycle Practitioners include members of the IT Engineering and Program and Project Management teams, along with anyone else who is looking to play an active role in the development of IT services that are in alignment with the needs of the business.

Often you will find members of the executive leadership team actively participating in directing and managing one of the Lifecycle areas.

> **Recommended Training Programs:** The ITIL V3 Lifecycle certification programs directly address the issues and concerns of ITSM Lifecycle Practitioners.

ITSM Capability Practitioner

ITSM Capability Practitioners execute the actual delivery of IT services within the frameworks of the ITSM Lifecycle domains. These are the 'hands-on' people and their managers and supervisors. Capability Practitioners typically specialize in one or more of the following ITSM Capability domains:

- Operational Support & Analysis (OSA) – Service Desk and traditional operations and technical management functions;
- Release Control & Validation (RCV) – transitioning new services into operation;
- Planning, Protection & Optimization (PPO) – ensuring services will work as required to bring value to the organization;
- Service Offerings & Agreements (SOA) – ensuring the implementation of the right level of services to provide value to the organization.

> **Recommended Training Programs:** The ITIL V3 Capability certification programs examine the capability areas in depth, as well as in the context of the organization's overall business needs and position within the ITSM Lifecycle.

ITSM Expert – Lifecycle Manager

ITSM Expert Lifecycle Managers lead the teams responsible for reviewing and building the organization's IT Service Lifecycle. This is typically a management or program management position, and it works within all of ITSM Lifecycle domains – Service Strategy, Service Design, Service Transition, Service Operation, and Continual Service Improvement.

ITSM Expert Lifecycle Managers include members of the IT Engineering and Project Management teams along with anyone else who leading the development of IT services within the ITIL framework.

> **Recommended Training Programs:** Leading a team that is implementing changes to the fundamental way the IT organization works requires both a broad understanding of the business' needs and in-depth knowledge of how IT can

meet those needs. These managers acquire detailed knowledge from the ITIL Service Lifecycle courses, and the broad ability to 'connect the dots' between IT and the business and between the ITSM Lifecycle domains from the ITIL 'Expert' certification courses.

ITSM Expert – Capability Manager

ITSM Expert Capability Managers are yet another type of manager who focuses directly on delivering and managing IT services in one or more of the ITSM Capability domains – Operational Support & Analysis (OSA), Release Control & Validation (RCV), Planning, Protection & Optimization (PPO), Service Offerings & Agreements (SOA).

ITSM Capability Managers include lead and participate in the IT Implementation and Operation Management teams. They also require a mixed skill set of hands-on practice skills and managerial skills that tie the Capability domains together and to the needs of the business.

Recommended Training Programs: ITSM Capability Managers typically sharpen their hands-on skills within the ITIL Service Capability courses, and seek to broaden their scope of influence and managerial skills with the ITIL 'Expert' certification courses.

Summary

Hopefully the above information has provided some insight into the roles an IT professional could play within an IT Service Management program. In a few weeks I will follow up with the second DITY focused on the topic of training beyond certification…stay tuned.