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Q: What if what the business wants cannot be measured? Our business is asking for very subjective measures and we are finding it difficult to determine what improvement is needed.

You have to just keep going back to better understand. Even things that are subjective can often be measured (e.g., via surveys). Remember one of the steps in Service Level Management process is reaching agreement. ITIL states strongly that if you can't agree how you are going to measure something, it shouldn't be in a Service Level Agreement or on a Scorecard. ITIL provides guidance for each of the processes about key performance indicators and what to measure. You may find a good starting point there. If you can't CURRENTLY measure what they are asking for, that then gives some direction in terms of changes to make in terms of what to monitor, what data to gather, and so forth. In other words, figure out how you can measure what the business wants. If you can't you have to get better at better explaining why (costs typically) you can't.

Q: If your business has teams working in silos and not looking at things from an end-to-end perspective, how does that impact the service improvement program?

ITIL, ISO, and other frameworks all view service management as a set of integrated processes that lay over top of the silos. You have to get serious about looking at things from a process perspective. Whether it's Incident Management, Availability Management, etc., your processes help you produce the end-to-end result. Rolling statistics up to more of a service perspective, or a process perspective as illustrated in the Service Measurement Model can really help you. One of the things you have to do is get everyone to agree on what we are going to measure. Check out also the ITSM Monitor Control Loop described in the Service Operation book. It can be used to monitor each of the silos in the context of processes, and then use the resulting data for CSI.

Q: Are ITIL CSI, TQM and Six Sigma aligned? Does any framework supersede any of the others?

They absolutely are aligned and no they don't supersede each other. ITIL doesn't try to be all things to all people. ITIL's focus is IT service management. CSI, draws from other frameworks for other techniques. For example, Six Sigma is used to reduce defects. COBIT provides controls that help with audits and relative to security. Frameworks and standards such as TQM and ISO 9000 provide guidance regarding how to establish a Quality Management System (QMS). ISO/IEC 20000 also provides specifications for a QMS along with specifications for an integrated set of IT service management processes. Each provides a slightly different perspective but can all be used together for CSI and achieving customer satisfaction.

The key is to come up with the frameworks that are useful to your organization and adopt them to the appropriate degree. Not all organizations want or need to achieve ISO/IEC 20000 certification but all organizations can benchmark themselves against the specification.

Benchmarking yourself again the ISO/IEC 20000 specification or, for example, the COBIT controls is a very good place to start. Begin by understanding the controls you must have in placed based on your company's risk profile and regulatory guidance. When you are designing your processes build those controls in so that people satisfy the controls (i.e., produce the needed evidence) as a normal part of performing the process. If you don't design the controls on up front, you will most likely end up with bureaucratic processes as you will have to add the controls in after the fact.

Q: Can you recommend sources for obtaining dashboards that can be used at no cost?

I checked with some of my tool geek friends and here are a couple of suggestions regarding how you can use tools you may already have:

- Use Managed Objects linked to monitoring tools and your CMS (CMDB)
- Use Microsoft Excel and Access in "real time" by connecting them to OLAP databases and other sources and "pulling" the data into pre-developed tables that have graphic representations through charts, etc. If someone has Visual Basic skills they can "program" this automation.

Q: Organizationally, who does the CSI "team" typically report to?

In the CSI book, there is an organizational structure, and they talk about the concept of a Service Management Office (SMO). This is where your process owner, CSI Manager will report, even if only via a dotted line. The SMO reports to the CIO in recognition of the need to view IT service management as a strategic program. The concept of the SMO lends itself to the idea of autonomy for these roles (i.e., having them step outside of their individual silos and work across the silos to achieve the desired results.)

Q: How do you approach a customer satisfaction response of 'not delivered in time' but we have met the SLA?

On a case by case basis, talk to the customers. Perhaps their incident was incorrectly prioritized, or, perhaps they are not aware of the SLAs and this is simply their perception. If it's happening frequently, it may speak to a greater issue. A lot of times, SLAs are negotiated by management in a back office, and the results aren't communicated clearly to users. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate, dashboard are very helpful here.

One organization sends out customer satisfaction surveys when incidents are closed and embeds into the email what the SLA is and how they performed.

It's really up to IT to both set expectations by negotiating SLAs and then manage those expectations through regular communication and reporting. If you are managing expectations, marketing achievements, and you are still hearing regularly from customers that incidents and service requests aren't being handled quickly enough, it may be time to review the SLAs. Initiate a Service Improvement Plan (discussed in the Service Design book under Service Level Management) and figure out what if any changes need to be made. Begin by analyzing how often you are hearing that complaint.

Q: I'd like to see how many people really do availability mgmt end to end, same with capacity. It's easy to do component, but service is very difficult.

It is very difficult but it is really the heart of what service management is all about. The way to get there is to keep educating your people and keep maturing your processes. In time, you really come to understand how tightly integrated all of your processes are and how they all lead to delivering higher quality services. Start with your most critical business process and deconstruct those. If nothing else, determine the critical components that underpin your critical processes. It's a good place to start.

Q: Of the Lifecycle courses and books, what is your suggestion about CSI - should it be the first book/course you take, or the last?

I think CSI be the first because every other book and class talks about CSI. If you start with CSI, then you understand all of those principles, and can use them when designing your processes. If you take CSI last, you will most likely find that there are things you could have been doing better or differently all along, or things that you have struggled with, and the answers are in CSI.

Remember too that CSI starts today. There are things, even if only small things, you can do now to improve your services, processes and culture. This is particularly important when organizations are stuck in a mode of just trying to keep the lights on. You've got to understand that there is always opportunity for improvement, even if only small incremental improvement. Enough small changes and you really change your organization.

Q: You mentioned looking for breakthrough opportunities in the improvement process, can you give a couple examples from your experiences

You can really improve quality without spending a lot of money. One way is to look at refining your existing processes, particularly those that you've had in place quite a while. Incident Management is a good example. Many organizations manage both incidents and service requests via the same process and it makes for quite a complex process. ITIL V3 suggests that, if your workload justifies it, you split out service requests from Incidents. Without a lot of effort you could adopt this new concept and really change the way people manage their workload. You could, for example, create self-service forms for service requests and initiate them via the web. This frees Service Desk resources to work on critical incidents.

First Call Resolution Note:

According to HDI, 75% first contact resolution is the industry average. In organizations that manage incidents together with services requests, the percentage is often considerably lower. For example, one organization reported a 35% first contact resolution percentage because they weren't able to report separately on incidents and service requests. This left the organization with a very bad perception of the Service Desk, when in fact, the Service Desk was doing a great job... it just couldn't produce the stats to prove it. If your results are not where you want them to be, look at how you are producing your metrics. A breakthrough improvement may be simply determine what data you need to capture in order to accurately reflect how a function or process is actually performing, without having to always explain the stat.

You may also have a tool suite in-house, but are only using one or two of the modules, such as the Incident Management module. I see all the time where organizations have great tools that they aren't fully utilizing because they aren't "perfect." Use what you have and if nothing else, you'll gather really solid requirements for the perfect tool.

I think it's also important that IT organizations move away from this idea that every tool has to be customized. If you have a tool you're not using, just get it up and running and start using it with as little customization as possible. After time, you'll figure out what changes you really need to make.

Q: As a consultant I know CSI is very valuable in organizations, but unfortunately in reality IT departments don't give much importance to processes let alone improving them. Organizational changes are often not even on company's radar screen and can be quite a political subject. Based

on your experience how can IT start looking at the big picture of CSI rather than the day to day operations of keeping the lights on?

Quality is back in vogue again. This is a really good opportunity to talk about quality, what we are measuring, what behavior that is driving. For example, ITIL talks a lot about the fact that Service Operations staff has to be involved in the other stages. Many organizations are running so lean that it makes it difficult. You have to seize the opportunities where you can take baby steps toward quality improvement, then promote the heck out of it. Continue to show proof of concepts and quick wins. Consider benchmarking against other organizations or against standard as well. Tap in to what is important to senior management and figure out how processes and CSI can support those goals. Even small steps can have incremental improvement. Be persistent.

Q: You mentioned customer satisfaction surveys are important, what happens when your customers don't fill them out anymore, is there a better method to survey them instead of online surveys?

There is not a better method and so you can begin by looking at how often you are sending surveys. Are you doing it for every single contact? If so, you may want to back off and survey less often. You can also try incenting people (e.g., hold a monthly contest, which I know can be difficult given the times). Consider also selecting a percentage of contacts and reaching out to those folks directly. I know a lot of Service Desk Managers who contact X customers per month and ask for their feedback.

Regarding contacts involving the Service Desk, you may want to consider techniques such as monitoring to keep your finger on the pulse of how contacts are being handled. Monitoring can also help you determine if there are customers you need to reach out to directly for feedback.

You can also make sure the Service Desk has a field for "Feedback" on their call logging screen. This can be a simple field where they can log complaints. That way that information is captured and can be passed on to management, whether or not the customer sent in a survey.

Launch a **We are Listening** Campaign to let customers know that you are using (and need) the feedback! This can really help. If you ask for feedback but never make changes based on the feedback, people won't take the time. If you show that you are listening they will be more apt to continue providing feedback.