



# What is ITIL® 4 High-velocity IT?

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## Digital and IT Transformation

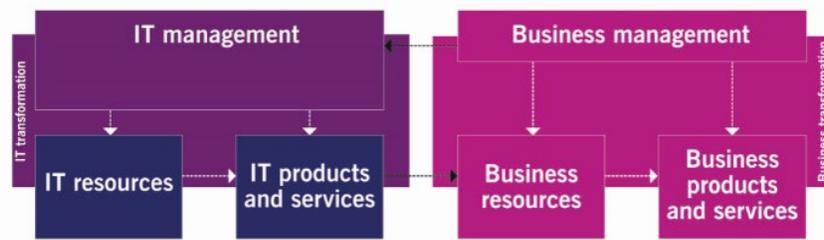
To say that digital technology is increasingly important is an understatement. Its economic, societal, and political impacts are unprecedented. At the same time, it is increasingly challenging for digital practitioners to design, develop, run, and support the systems and services that fulfil this demand.

Digital organizations are enabled by digital technology. Digital technology is a significant underpinning enabler for these organizations’ internal processes, and is often part of their products and services. It is a strategic part of a digital organization’s business model, and prioritizing digital technology (‘digital first’) is often part of the organization’s culture.

**Digital transformation** involves the use of digital technology to enable a significant improvement in the realization of an organization’s objectives that could not feasibly have been achieved by non-digital means. This phrase is often used to indicate major investment in digitizing, robotizing, and other forms of automation. This technological change often requires organizational change in how the organization uses the digital solutions.

Digital transformation enables organizations to do business significantly differently, or do significantly different business.

In organizations where business and IT are regarded as separate organizational functions, ‘**IT transformation**’ is often used to denote major change that improves how IT services are provided. IT transformation is focused on how IT services and information systems are developed, run, and supported. Where business and IT are regarded as separate organizational functions, ‘IT transformation’ is an appropriate term to use.



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To reap the benefits of digital technology, however, organizations are increasingly decentralizing the IT function and integrating it into digital lines of business. In cases where there is this integration of IT management into business management, ‘digital transformation’ would be used instead.

The term ‘transformation,’ used correctly, means major change. Despite this, transformation does not necessarily imply a single, large change. Based on the approach an organization selects, transformation can be achieved just as successfully with a few big changes, or many smaller ones. In many cases, a series of smaller changes can even be the more successful approach.

### What is High-velocity IT?

**High-velocity IT** is the application of digital technology for significant business enablement, where time to market, time to customer, time to change, and speed in general are crucial. High velocity is not restricted to fast development; it is required throughout the service value chain, from innovation at the start, through development and operations, to the actual realization of value.

HVIT provides many organizations with higher degrees of digital enablement, but it is not always a prudent investment. Just as some digital organizations are more digital than others, the velocity in some organizations is higher than in others. The velocity at which an organization should operate depends on the nature of that particular organization, and in some cases a lower velocity may be more beneficial. It is also not necessary, or even recommended, that the whole of an organization's IT should be high velocity. For example, more dynamic customer-facing systems could be managed with a HVIT way of working, whereas back-office legacy systems may be better handled in a more traditional way.

*High velocity does not come at the expense of the utility or warranty of the solution.*

*High velocity equates with high performance in general.*

Increasing velocity within an organization will always involve costs and risks, particularly when there is a steep change rather than a gradual improvement. For some organizations, it does not make sense to undertake such a transformation, as they have other, higher priorities. Others may choose not to try to increase velocity because they think the amount of cultural change involved would be too difficult to achieve, or unlikely to generate an acceptable return on investment.

### Key Objectives of High-velocity IT

Technology is strategic to digital organizations' business models, and as such, higher demands are placed on the lifecycle of their digital products. These demands can be represented by five high-level objectives that translate the vision and strategy of an organization into more operational objectives and indicators. These objectives are:

- **Valuable investments** – strategically innovative and effective application of IT
- **Fast development** – quick realization and delivery of IT services and IT-related products
- **Resilient operations** – highly resilient IT services and IT-related products
- **Co-created value** – effective interaction between service providers and service consumers
- **Assured conformance** – adherence to governance, risk, and compliance (GRC) requirements

In some instances, there will be conflicts between the different objectives. For example, fast development could negatively affect resilient operations when insufficient time is given to ensuring that services and products are robust. For this reason, these objectives should not be managed in isolation; they influence each other and interact with each other, and it is important to ensure that they are properly balanced.

## What is ITIL 4 High-velocity IT?

Practitioners in digitally-enabled organizations use various techniques to achieve the key objectives of high-velocity IT. Some of the techniques described in *ITIL® 4: High-velocity IT* are usually only found in these environments, whereas others are more general techniques that are crucial to HVIT work.

Although the techniques listed here are grouped by the key HVIT objectives, a technique will often support multiple objectives, and each technique can be used in the context of multiple ITIL practices.

- **Valuable investments** – prioritization techniques, minimum viable products and services, product or service ownership, A/B testing
- **Fast development** – infrastructure as code, loosely coupled information system architecture, reviews/retrospectives, continual business analysis, continuous integration/continuous delivery (CI/CD), continuous testing, Kanban
- **Resilient operations** – technical debt, chaos engineering, definition of done, version control, AIOps, ChatOps, site reliability engineering
- **Co-created value** – service experience
- **Assured conformance** - DevOps Audit Defense Toolkit, DevSecOps, peer reviews

## Key Characteristics of High-velocity IT

There are many approaches that can be taken to reach and maintain HVIT. Four characteristics that are dominant in common HVIT approaches are:

Characteristic	Benefit
<b>Lean</b>	Helps to improve throughput and reduce waste. HVIT environments benefit from approaches with Lean characteristics due to the pressure on time to market and time to customer.
<b>Agile</b>	Adds close and iterative collaboration with users. Approaches with Agile characteristics are important for HVIT environments because digital products and services have to be developed in response to changeable market demands.
<b>Resilience</b>	Maintains workable availability and performance. The systems that support HVIT environments are complex and therefore error-prone. Approaches with resilient characteristics minimize the effect of incidents by degrading systems gradually and restoring service quickly.
<b>Continuous</b>	Ensures fast and reliable deployment. Approaches with continuous characteristics extend the Lean focus on throughput by standardizing and automating processes for integrating, building, testing, and shipping code, enabling digital products and services to be available when required.

*When used together and properly by organizations, these characteristics enable the co-creation of value.*

## What is ITIL 4 High-velocity IT?

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These key characteristics are technical in nature, focusing more on the tangible parts of information systems (i.e., the products), but can also be applied to IT services. In isolation, these characteristics are not unique to HVIT. Together, however, they help to fulfil the higher demands that digitally enabled organizations place on IT.

### Key Behaviors of High-velocity IT

Working in a high-velocity environment can be both challenging and rewarding. The same can be said for working through a digital transformation.

Practitioners working in these environments are familiar with traditional concepts and practices. They now want to learn new ways of thinking and working and integrate these into their existing ways of working. They also want meaningful and rewarding employment.

Five key behavior patterns that reflect the organizational needs and the aspirations of practitioners working in these challenging environments are:

- **Accept ambiguity and uncertainty**
- **Trust and be trusted**
- **Continually raise the bar**
- **Help get customers' jobs done**
- **Commit to continual learning**

HVIT behaviors are supported by a combination of guiding principles, models and concepts that influence “how we do things around here” – in other words, culture. These behavior patterns are intended to appeal to humans’ desire to contribute to something worthwhile, to learn and improve, and to be recognized for their intent and effort.

Although most of these behavior patterns are not exclusive to HVIT, the combination of and adherence to all five is beneficial to the kind of people who understand the demands of a more digitally enabled enterprise. To support these behaviors, organizations should evolve the way they think and operate in regard to:

- How they define and fulfil their mission and objectives
- How they ensure a productive, safe, stress-free environment for their people
- How they enable high performance in constantly changing circumstances

*“This is not just a question of changing skillset. It is a changing of mindset.”*

Julie Dodd, The New Reality

*ITIL® 4 High-velocity IT* provides an overview of the key concepts of digital transformation and high-velocity business and IT management. It suggests a set of objectives and behavioral patterns that will help to transform a business, enabling it to get the most out of digital technology. Finally, it describes a collection of useful techniques, methods, and contributing practices that support the key objectives.

## What is ITIL 4 High-velocity IT?

### Make a Difference!

Any service management related initiative will affect organizational culture. Effective communication plans, training, and clear policies and procedures are all needed to achieve the desired performance outcomes and enable collaboration between the many different people involved.

*Culture change and progress cannot happen without the support of people like you.*

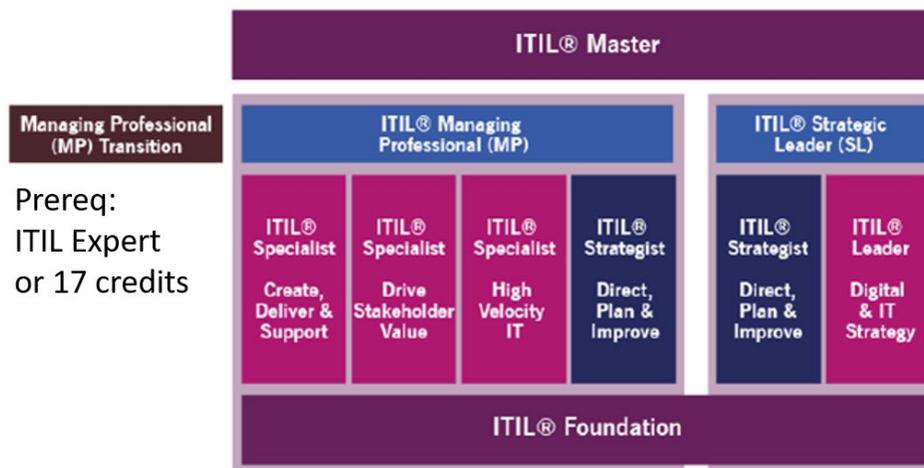
*Take action!*

Contribute to your organization’s IT service management effort by expanding your knowledge of best practices and by enthusiastically using what you learn to lead transformational and continual improvement activities. **Be a change champion!**

### Want to Learn More?

Training helps individuals and organizations build and maintain their capabilities. Training also provides individuals the knowledge, skills and information needed to fill their role in the organization or achieve their career goals, along with a place to test and develop the confidence to use these skills in the workplace.

The ITIL® 4 qualification scheme provides a role-based, modular approach that is comprised of qualifications focused on different aspects of ITIL best practice to various degrees of depth and detail.



The structure of the ITIL qualification scheme offers individuals flexibility relating to the different disciplines and areas of ITIL and the ability to focus their studies on key areas of interest.

[Click here to learn more about the ITIL 4 Qualification Scheme.](#)

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