

Operational Excellence

Transforming IT using TIPA Assessments to Drive Change

A Third Sky White Paper

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Introduction

Small-scale or large-scale, organizational change in IT organizations is difficult. Truly transformational change to achieve operational excellence is even more difficult. Few would argue that process capability and maturity are essential to this excellence and even to distinctive performance, but adopting new processes and maturing them to a level that produces tangible and measurable benefit takes real planning and management.

The ITIL® (IT Infrastructure Library®) describes a set of inter-related and mutually dependent processes that are essential to achieving best in class IT capability. While many organizations have chosen to adopt the guidance the ITIL provides, too few are able to fully realize the benefits.

Focusing on artifacts and constructs (i.e., “*build a configuration management system*”, “*establish a Service Catalog*”, “*install a tool*” etc.) rather than process improvements is common. Even when the focus is on processes, many frequently pursue levels of improvement in a single process area that cannot be sustained due to interdependencies with other related process areas.

Gaining full benefit from adoption of IT Service Management requires that most if not all processes are implemented, and that those processes achieve an appropriate level of maturity to meet business requirements. Unfortunately this is too seldom achieved.

One of the reasons for this may be a lack of a repeatable, standardized method for assessing process capability and maturity over time, and using those results to enable improvement. Proprietary assessments and inconsistent measurement attributes make it almost impossible to see through competing localized functional agendas, and focus on those process attributes that will further the overall improvement objectives.

What IT organizations need is a structured, objective and repeatable method, based on recognized standards and best practices, for assessing IT Service Management process maturity. TIPA (Tudor’s ITSM Process Assessment), is that method. Based on ITIL and the ISO/IEC 15504 standard for process assessment, TIPA’s purpose is to determine to what extent those IT Service Management processes are in place, and to measure their maturity level by focusing on the degree to which the process’s purpose is achieved and by taking the business context into account.

But assessing process maturity is not enough. Third Sky has developed a method for using TIPA assessments to drive business-focused improvement. Clients are able to progress rapidly toward achieving the full benefits of ITSM through Third Sky’s approach that includes:

- objectively base-lining process maturity
- providing a detailed, actionable road-map for improvement
- enabling self-assessment to validate achievement along the way.

The Objective: Provide IT Services Needed by the Enterprise

Historically the IT function delivered applications and infrastructure to the enterprise, but customers need end-to-end IT services to be successful, not just technology. It does little good if the application is running flawlessly but the network delivering that application to the end user is down for maintenance. A cutting-edge infrastructure is useless if staff do not have the proper skills to support it. The net result can be business capabilities not available when needed.

What is a Service?

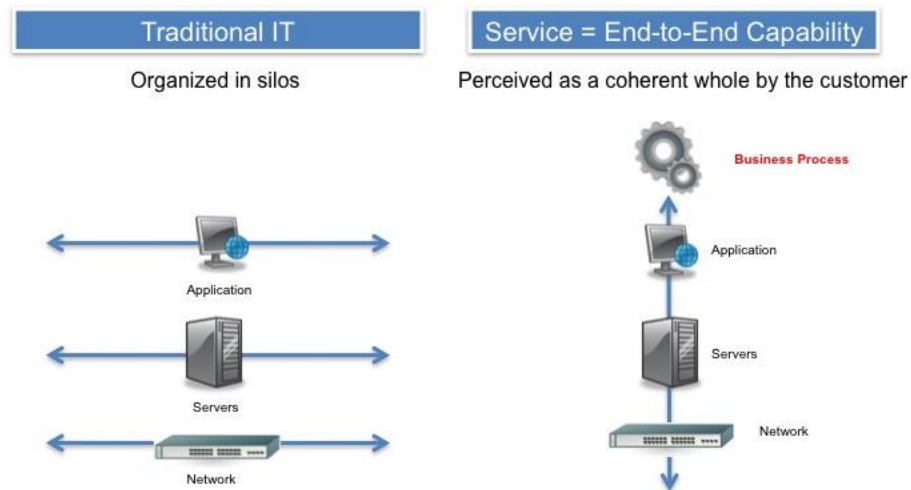


Figure 1

Figure 1 shows the traditional approach to IT on the left, aligned around functional silo’s compared to the right, re-orienting around the delivery of an end to end service supporting specific business processes. This is not to suggest that IT reorganize away from functional silos, because in reality those silos are necessary to delivery of services too. Instead, it is suggested that additional processes (not necessarily additional people) are necessary to provide end-to-end (E2E) services.

Business value is not derived from networks, server farms or even applications in isolation. Business value is derived from workers using services to enable efficient and effective business activity. Those services require the coordinated use of all necessary IT assets, including networks, servers, storage, people, processes, metrics and applications. Increasingly services provided by outside entities (“The Cloud”) are also included in the delivery of services to the customer.

The Requirement: Implement Processes to Support Delivery of E2E Services

The IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) describes a set of 26 processes that are necessary to deliver E2E services to customers. Figure 2 shows the ITIL processes, including the three new processes (Business Relationship Management, Strategy Management for IT Services and Design Coordination) introduced in 2011.

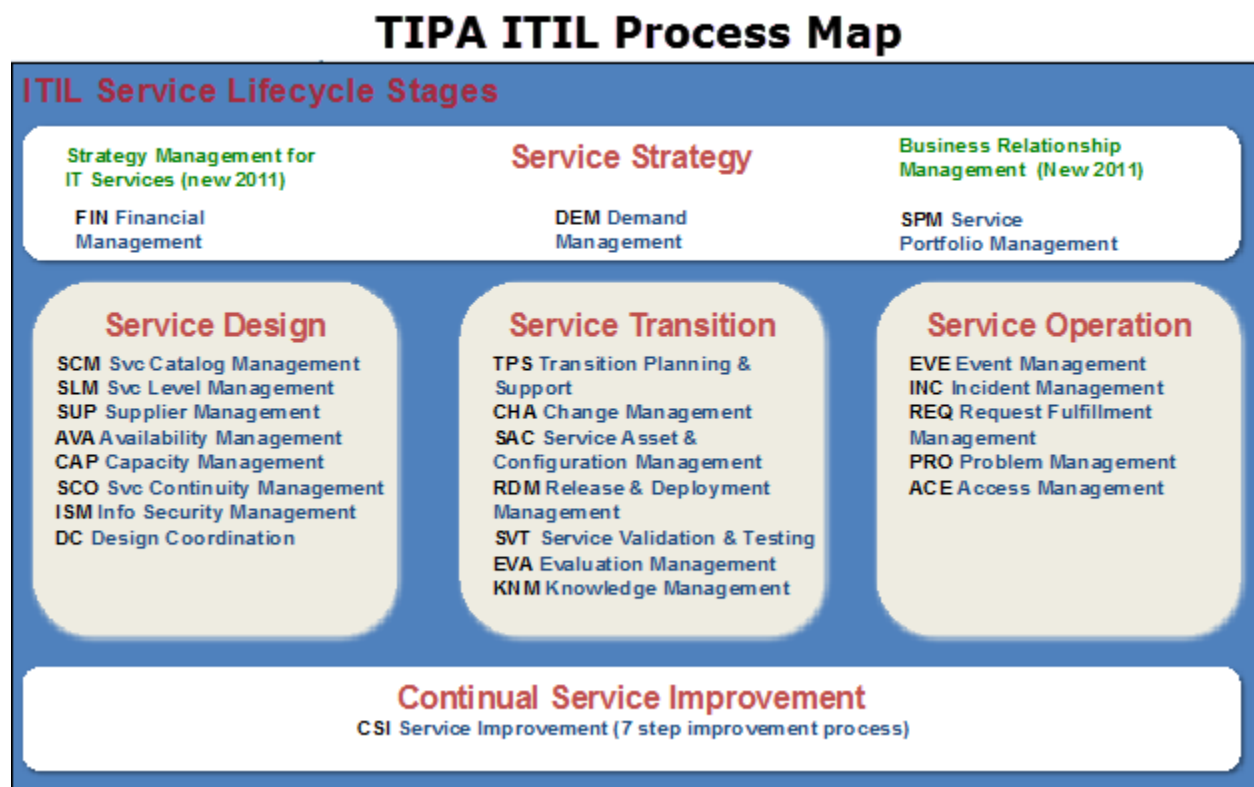


Figure 2

There are also 5 stages described in the service lifecycle – Service Strategy, Service Design, Service Transition, Service Operation and Continuous Service Improvement.

While all of these processes are necessary to deliver quality service, all are not equally important in all environments. Each of these processes is to a greater or lesser extent dependent upon the others for successful outcomes, and none can succeed independent of at least one other process.

Thus, to varying degrees, the maturity of each process constrains or enables other processes. Improvement of any process maturity contributes to improving the effectiveness of all IT services.

Organizational Change: Assess Process Maturity to Enable Improved Maturity

Modern quality management has developed strategies to change behavior, and thus outcomes, in a variety of difficult-to-change environments. For example, in manufacturing the focus has changed from quality control (inspection of product prior to delivery) to quality management.

Quality Management



- Focus on measurement
- Focus on recording of results
- Quality is the result of self-assessment, not auditing or inspection!

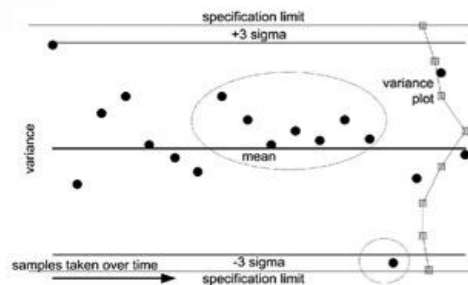


Figure 3

The objective of quality management is to ensure that the processes are in place and being followed to create the desired quality. Commonly a method to achieve this is to ensure that the output of every process is measured by the person(s) performing the process. If the metrics consistently reflect the desired results, then the quality of the product should be assured.

It has been proven time and again that, if the output of each activity or process is assessed through measurement by the person(s) performing that activity, the effect is dramatic improvement in the quality of end results. The same principals can be applied whether improving the quality of product manufacture or of IT processes, although there are different challenges.

A standards-based approach to ITIL assessment can address these challenges in several important ways, by providing a repeatable, consistent method for conducting process assessment. As previously stated, TIPA is such a method, based on the ITIL (“v3”) framework and the ISO 15504 standard.

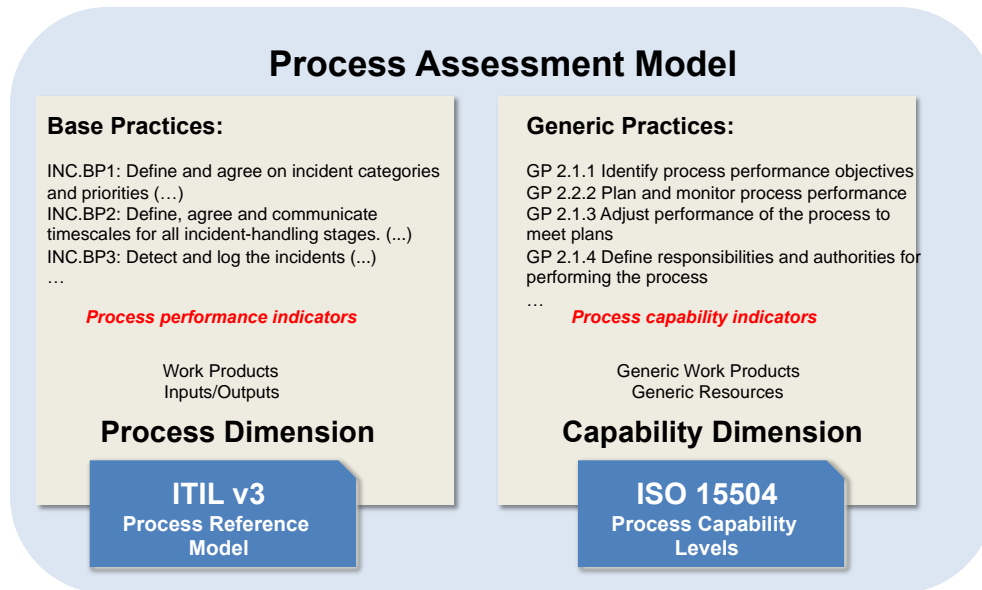


Figure 4

A TIPA assessment provides more than just a simple determination of process maturity. It pinpoints the current level of maturity a given process has achieved and calls out specific deficiencies which, if corrected, would advance the process to achievement of the desired level of maturity.

TIPA assessments are conducted by skilled assessors, following a structured method. The skills necessary to conduct a TIPA baseline assessment, however, may be lacking in organizations, so the aid of an already-certified assessor is frequently sought.

The purpose of a baseline assessment is to get a very clear, objective understanding of where the organization is right now as a basis for sound improvement planning. TIPA calls for conducting of confidential interviews with appropriate members of a process team. The confidentiality is critical to obtaining accurate and insightful information. Without this confidentiality interviewees are often under pressure to respond as they believe they are expected to by their management, not necessarily revealing any organizational deficiencies.

The results of the baseline assessment are used to create a roadmap for improvements, which are driven forward by properly prepared process leaders. The skills necessary to monitor and improve

specific processes are easily acquired. In particular, ITIL intermediate classes (previously referred to as “practitioner” classes) that can provide sufficient understanding for the process owner and members of the processes team to use the TIPA questions to guide them in improving their process. Mentorship of process owners and teams by experienced ITIL Experts is also valuable.

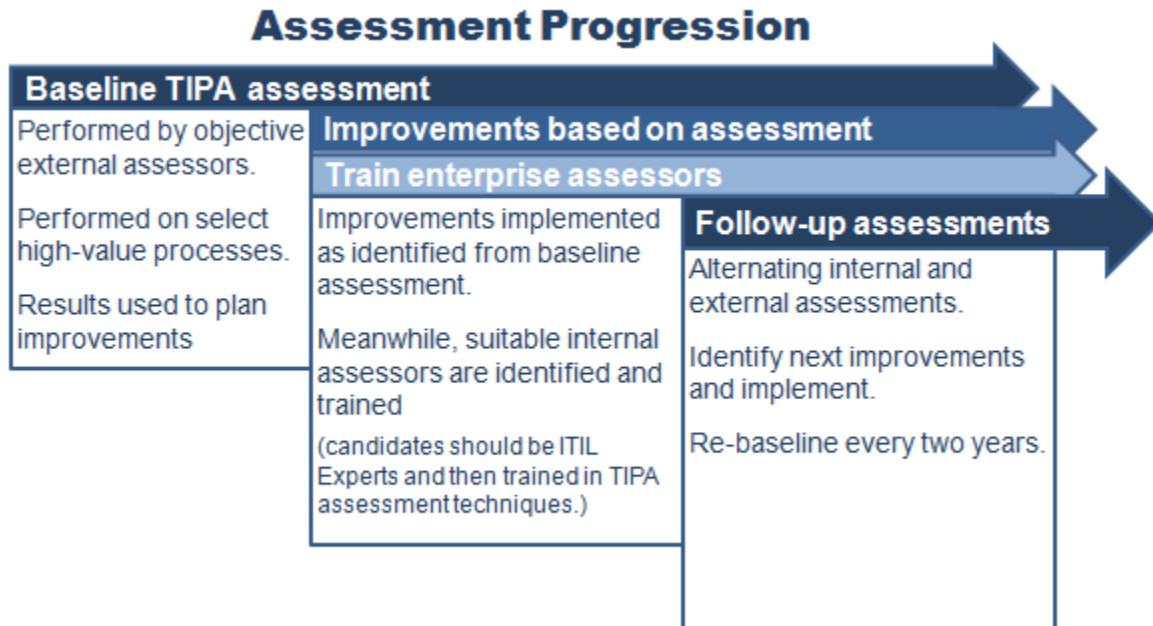


Figure 5

By having a properly qualified third party conduct baseline assessments, working in collaboration with internal process team members, organizations can transform themselves with the lowest possible cost and the greatest level of cooperation. The team is given the goal of maturing their process by a full level within a specified period of time. The baseline assessment calls out exactly the deficiencies that need to be corrected, and exactly how they can be corrected.

To facilitate future self-assessments that will validate improvement results and identify next steps, organizations can identify individuals with the appropriate skill sets to be trained as internal assessors. Because formal certification as a TIPA assessor requires that the candidate hold ITIL Expert certification as a pre-requisite and then calls for training in the TIPA methodology, some organizations will prefer to continue using professional assessors. Regardless of the strategy adopted, re-assessment against clearly defined objectives is a key element of a successful ITSM-based improvement program.

How process maturity levels work

One of the reasons that process improvement can take time is that there are many inter-dependencies between the ITIL processes. For example, change assessment (part of effective change management)

relies on accurate configuration data, and accurate configuration data is heavily influenced by clearly defined services, etc. So it can be very difficult to increase process maturity in one process if a related process is missing key elements.

Another challenge to process improvement is that organizations are often fragmented, with multiple service provider types within the IT organization each with self-contained processes. Viewed independently, there could conceivably be relatively high levels of process capability and maturity. But the business usually views IT as a single entity, which often calls for a standard set of ITSM processes across the organization.

For example, when viewed separately, an enterprise could have two independent IT organizations each with level 3 or higher processes. But when viewed as a single organization, these processes likely would not achieve higher than level 2. The standard assessment's 'instance view' at level 1 and 2, forces standardization to achieve level 3 and above ('organizational view').

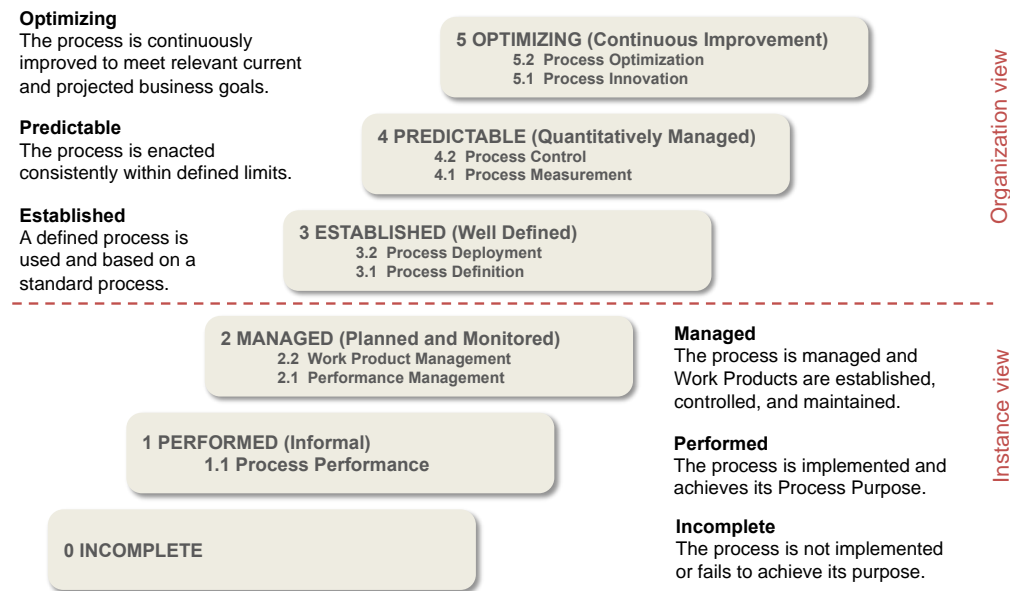


Figure 6

In a perfect world, every process would be at a level 5 in maturity. After all, one of the primary goals of IT Service Management is to continually improve the quality of service delivered and mature processes should help ensure service quality. Realistically, however, this may not always align with business priorities. Improvement might be defined as doing more with less, continuously leading by innovation, or any other definition that best addresses the needs of the enterprise. Business-driven decision-making and strategy definition is the key.

Going Forward ...

The steps for enabling Organizational Change using TIPA assessments:

1. Senior IT management must make it clear that improvement in ITIL process maturity is important to the organization. Because the services provided by IT are critical to the competitiveness of the enterprise, process capability in today's IT organizations is essential. Senior management must make clear that demonstrated and validated improvement is expected.
2. Have a TIPA assessment conducted on selected high value processes
3. Based upon the initial assessment, construct a roadmap of improvements that promise the greatest benefit (ideally in the shortest time for the smallest investment) and actively manage the agreed improvement actions (using ITIL continual service improvement methods).
4. Provide the people involved in processes with the appropriate ITIL intermediate training. Also provide them the TIPA assessor training so they clearly understand how the assessment process will work.
5. Require that processes have empowered ownership and that process owners, managers and practitioners measure and report upon their progress at appropriate regular intervals.
6. Publish findings and progress in a public forum (often the corporate intranet)
7. Periodically reassess using external assessors and publish differences between internal assessments and external assessments (to encourage honest internal assessments). During these reassessments a new baseline is defined and a new roadmap developed.
8. Repeat for additional processes as it becomes evident they are constraining the initial processes from maturing fully.

Conclusion

Achieving operational excellence and ultimately distinctive performance will require effective and efficient processes across the service lifecycle. The need for increased process maturity will continue to grow in importance. A standards-based approach to assessing process maturity can provide a repeatable, vendor neutral, and structured approach to assessment.

The results will include greater return on IT investments, less re-work as a result of improved prioritization of improvement initiatives, and cost reductions as processes mature based on business drivers.



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About Third Sky

Third Sky is a recognized thought leader in the IT Service Management space, and provides a full suite of services around Service Management including:

- Training
- Consulting
- Technology

Third Sky can be found on the web at: www.thirdsky.com

Third Sky Standards-Based Assessment Services

Third Sky is the leading TIPA assessment firm in North America, with higher levels of training and expertise, and extensive experience.

Leveraging Third Sky and industry standards, customers can help bridge the gap between ITIL training and consulting, by training key staff to conduct ongoing self-assessments.

The structured nature of the deliverables can also help provide consistent results for both internal and external assessments that are vendor-neutral and repeatable.

This can increase staff understanding about complex process interdependencies and improve understanding of continual service improvement programs by all levels of management.

Customers of this service will benefit from an objective evaluation of their ITIL / ITSM program by experienced and knowledgeable Third Sky experts. They will have a clear understanding of their current state and how it relates to what the organization is trying to accomplish.

For information please call

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