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The main differences between FitSM and ITIL®

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IN TODAY'S DIGITAL WORLD, A WELL-MANAGED IT DEPARTMENT IS A NEED, NOT A COMMODITY. HERE'S A DESCRIPTION OF THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TWO RELEVANT ITSM FRAMEWORKS TO HELP YOU THINK THROUGH YOUR OPTIONS.

When it comes to IT Service Management, most business IT leaders make two assumptions: first, that the central challenge is to find the right balance between high cost and high performance, and second, that the more emphasis companies place on implementing a huge amount of ITSM processes, the more effective their strategies will be.

These assumptions are problematic. The main objective of any ITSM structure must be to provide high quality IT services that meet the expectations of customers and users by defining, establishing and maintaining service management processes.

But which processes? At necessarily high costs? And using which framework?

In this article we present the main differences between two very important ITSM frameworks: FitSM and ITIL. We will also focus on how each of the two frameworks declines aspects concerning processes, costs, complexity and areas of relevance.

Processes

A first important criterion for differentiation concerns the practices/processes.

ITIL defines an Operating Model (Service Value Chain) supported by **34 practices/processes**. From strategic perspective such as service financial management and service continuity management to operational perspective such as incident management, ITIL offers a process for the realization of each objective.

FitSM, on the other hand, focuses on the operational management of an IT organization with its **14 processes**. Thus, the focus is strongly on the management of requests, incidents, changes and problems.

Complementary processes that are dealt with independently in ITIL are combined in FitSM. The respective demand for completeness is thus reflected in the sum of the included processes. A list of the practices/processes can be found in the table below.

ITIL 4 PRACTICES	FitSM
Architecture management	
Continual improvement	Continual service improvement management
Information security management	Information security management
Knowledge management	
Measurement and reporting	Service reporting management
Organizational change management	
Portfolio management	Service portfolio management
Project management	
Relationship management	Customer relationship management
Risk management	
Service financial management	
Strategy management	
Supplier management	Supplier relationship management
Workforce and talent management	
Availability management	Service availability and continuity management
Business analysis	
Capacity and performance management	Capacity management
Change control	Change management
Incident management	Incident and service request management
IT asset management	
Monitoring and event management	
Problem management	Problem management
Release management	Release and deployment management
Service catalogue management	
Service configuration management	Configuration management
Service continuity management	Service availability and continuity management
Service design	
Service desk	
Service level management	Service level management
Service request management	Incident and service request management
Service validation and testing	
Deployment management	Release and deployment management
Infrastructure and platform management	
Software development and Management	

Complexity and cost

Complexity and cost also certainly differentiate the two frameworks.

ITIL, in fact, although containing many useful and comprehensive concepts, is quite complex and seems to be written mainly for large companies. Small and medium sized organizations often do not have the capacity to establish a service management system (SMS) that implements all the recommendations of these frameworks, nor do they have the capacity or can they afford the usually quite significant consultancy costs to "adapt" many hundreds of pages of ITIL guidance to their needs.

FitSM sees the **Pareto principle** applicable to ITSM processes and, by focusing only on the **most important elements** of the process, seeks to reduce much of the complexity of the process while sacrificing only a small part of its overall effectiveness.

Structure

ITIL has been oriented to the central aspect of the service (Service Value Chain). In accordance with this Service Value Chain, Portfolio Management support an activity of the Value Stream.

FitSM is a relatively young framework and describes itself as the lightweight standard family for ITSM. Its overall approach, structure and process model is relatively similar to ISO/IEC 20000-1.

Developed from a requirements-driven approach, FitSM offers a mix of minimum requirements, processes and application examples.

Although the content of FitSM is relatively compact compared to other described frameworks, it tries particularly to focus on the main objectives of each process. The Service Portfolio Management process is treated explicitly, additionally a role model is defined.

Needs

ITIL has been expanded to include new best practices, extended to new application areas and more precisely defined.

In summary, there is a very comprehensive and detailed holistic approach to the design of IT service management that purports to meet every need.

FitSM, on the other hand, defines the relevant processes for the initial introduction of ITSM, focusing on the operationally relevant processes.

The requirements contained in FitSM-1 allow a localization of the respective maturity level of the company's IT, so that any effort in introducing processes can be addressed in a targeted manner in the context of one's own company.

Trends

Another distinctive feature, which is also based on the claim of completeness, is the inclusion of current trends.

ITIL 4 incorporates current trend topics such as DevOps, Lean or Agile, thus also considering development or project management methods in the ITSM context. In the context of the recently published version 4 of ITIL, there is now talk of a business service management approach.

So ITIL is no longer just about IT service management.

FitSM does not provide any support or best practices for the application of development or project management methods. The framework focuses on IT service management, referring to other project management frameworks and methods.

Ownership

In 2021 the private organisation PeopleCert acquired the rights of the **ITIL** framework from a joint venture of Capita PLC and the UK government, and has become purely **private** since then.

FiTSM was developed within the FedSM project, an initiative of the 7th Framework Program for Research and Technological Development of the European Commission and is available under public license since then.

Time

ITIL has about **2,000 pages** (6 core + 34 practice books) to read and study.

FitSM, on the other hand, has **38 pages** (4 main documents) and 9 pages of requirements (part 1) to study and apply.

Certification schemes

The certification schemes are also quite different:

The **ITIL 4 certification** scheme has been streamlined to offer two main designation paths with six modules total between both certifications. You will progress from the Foundation level to either the Managing Professional (MP) or Strategic Leader (SL) paths.

If you choose to complete both paths, you'll be eligible to earn the ITIL Master designation.

The **FitSM training programme** is structured in three levels: Foundation, Advanced and Expert. After following the Foundation course you can learn a common conceptual and process model setting out realistic requirements to immediately use in your daily work.