



ITIL Plus COBIT: Formula for Success in IT Governance

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Do you know which approach will help you become more effective in meeting governance objectives by managing IT based on business priorities? Is it ITIL? COBIT? If you're wondering which one of these frameworks will be most effective at getting you to your end goal, the answer, most likely, is *both*. The IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL®) and Control Objectives for Information and related Technology (COBIT) are not alternate approaches, nor are they mutually exclusive. They are highly complementary methodologies that put you on a fast track to applying IT — not just to support business goals, but to drive them. Organizations that tap the power of both frameworks position themselves to:

- > Establish proven best-practice IT service management processes to manage IT from a business perspective and achieve business goals, including compliance with internal policies and external demands

- > Institute clear activity and process goals based on business goals, and provide a means of measuring progress against them
- > Ensure effective IT governance and control at the process level, and enable IT to demonstrate that it meets or exceeds governmental requirements

Combined, ITIL and COBIT let you increase the quality of business services you deliver, while also lowering overall costs. ITIL addresses IT service management best practices, and COBIT addresses the establishment of business goals and the measurement of progress toward those goals. Following these frameworks will offer your organization the ability to provide fast, consistent, reliable technology services that increase revenue, reduce costs, and help you demonstrate compliance with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (Sarbox), Basel II, and other regulatory requirements. They help you manage based on business priorities, also known as Business Service Management, or BSM.

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What ITIL Brings to the Equation

ITIL has become a de facto standard for establishing IT service management processes. Although it covers multiple areas, its main focus is IT service management. ITIL provides a comprehensive, consistent, and coherent framework of best practices and related processes. Consequently, it promotes a quality approach for achieving business effectiveness and efficiency in the use of information systems. Because it helps you manage IT from a business perspective, it drives business goals, including those related to IT governance and regulatory compliance.

What COBIT Adds

COBIT is an IT-focused governance and control framework that many enterprises are adopting as the governance and control model for implementing and demonstrating effective IT governance across all areas of IT activity. COBIT is harmonized with established frameworks, such as the Software Engineering Institute's Capability Maturity Model, ISO 9000, ITIL, and ISO 17799 (standard security framework, now ISO 27001). It provides high-level, broad



coverage and focuses attention on what the business requires. A predefined sequence of generic and specific process goals guide the implementation and improvement of individual processes. Consequently, it can integrate disparate practices under a single framework and link those practices to strategic business objectives.

COBIT is intended to be used at the highest level of IT governance to achieve strategic objectives. It provides an overall governance framework based on a high-level process model of a generic nature that makes it applicable to most organizations. Processes and standards that cover specific areas in more detail, such as ITIL and ISO 27001, can be mapped to the COBIT framework to create a hierarchy of guidance materials. The key COBIT 4.0 domains include *plan and organize*, *acquire and implement*, *deliver and support*, and *monitor and evaluate*.

The Power of Two

ITIL helps you better align IT service delivery with the needs of your enterprise. To ensure that your ITIL implementation is successful, though, you need an effective IT governance and control framework. That's where COBIT comes in. Its broad-based governance framework offers guidelines to help you build capability and drive toward business requirements. COBIT focuses on the performance of key management practices and the monitoring of key performance indicators to ensure that the desired goals are achieved.

To ensure that your ITIL implementation is successful, you need an effective IT governance and control framework. That's where COBIT comes in.

Although COBIT is oriented toward IT processes, it addresses the organizational building blocks but not the process steps and tasks themselves. It focuses on what your enterprise needs to do, not how to do it. ITIL, on the other hand, focuses on methods and defines the processes, providing a generally accepted description of the service management processes. By leveraging both frameworks, you'll put yourself on a faster track to managing IT from a business perspective.

Getting Results

Implementing ITIL and COBIT is by no means trivial. To get optimum results, you'll need to address the high degree of complexity in your IT infrastructure, ITIL processes, and COBIT

control objectives. This complexity is due to the siloed approach IT organizations traditionally have taken to support specific business entities. The fact that IT environments are always in a state of flux adds to the complexity. In these environments, manual processes are not effective or efficient. They would depend on dedicated staff willing to maintain a reliable paper trail that can stand up to a rigorous compliance audit.

The only way to conquer this complexity is to deploy a systems-based IT service management solution. That solution should meet four key criteria. It should:

- > Cover the full range of IT service management disciplines, and permit integration of processes across disciplines.
- > Permit monitoring and management of the IT infrastructure from a business perspective. That means getting away from the traditional focus on individual servers, switches, and databases that enable online transactions, and instead looking at whether those transactions are occurring fast enough to meet the demands of the business.
- > Have an underlying configuration management database that provides a single source of reference and control across IT disciplines to ensure that all processes are using consistent and accurate data.
- > Provide out-of-the-box support for ITIL processes and COBIT control objectives to eliminate the need for time-consuming and costly customization of the software to support these frameworks.

As an IT professional, you face the challenging, but necessary, transition to IT management based on business priorities. ITIL promotes alignment between the services delivered and the needs of the business. COBIT provides the framework for goal setting and measurement. Together, ITIL and COBIT offer a powerful formula for helping IT meet business objectives and reap the resulting rewards, including the delivery of higher-quality business services at a lower cost.

For detailed information on ITIL, visit http://www.ogc.gov.uk/guidance_itil.asp.

For detailed information on COBIT, visit www.isaca.org.

For more information about BMC solutions for ITIL and COBIT, visit www.bmc.com/compliance.



About the Author

Ken Turbitt is the global best practices director for BMC. He is focused on best practices for IT services, such as ITIL, COBIT, and eTom, among others, and presents this information to clients, partners, and analysts. Turbitt has held an ISEB ITIL Manager/Masters qualification for more than 12 years and has been a Gartner-qualified TCO consultant for more than 10 years.



About the Author

Peter Hill is a director of the IT Governance Network, a company specializing in IT governance consulting and training. Hill has extensive experience with COBIT, having used it as the umbrella model to implement IT governance, process improvement, compliance, and risk management activities for a number of clients. Hill has been at the forefront of information technology governance since the early 1990s and started working with COBIT in 1994.