

Achieve ITIL Compliance with APTARE

*Leveraging the Information Technology Infrastructure
Library for Managed Services Providers (MSPs)*



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Managed Services Providers (MSP) are uniquely positioned to benefit from the adoption of the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) standards. Through enhanced service delivery, an MSP can gain advantages over its competitors through operational efficiencies and by enhancing the quality and quantity of services provided to its clients.

The APTARE StorageConsole suite of data center optimization software has a proven track record in assisting Managed Services Providers in implementing ITIL standards and optimizing their data center infrastructures. APTARE has the unique ability of providing detailed analysis on IT infrastructure and the metrics necessary to baseline and measure Service Level Objectives (SLOs) and a service provider's compliance with Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

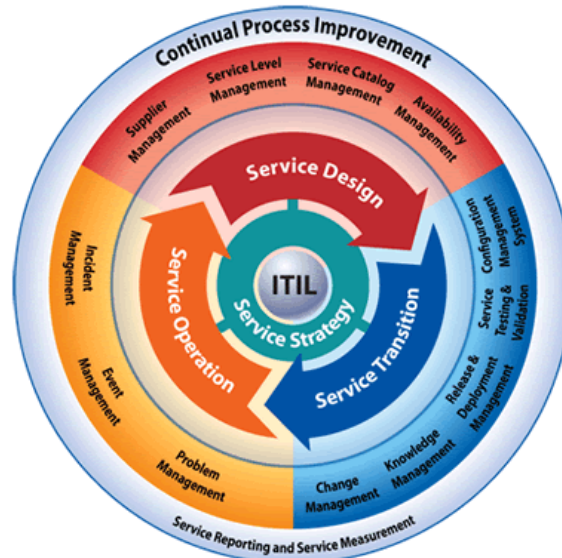
While there is no single application that addresses every aspect of ITIL, the remainder of this document will address how APTARE was designed to assist the MSP in realizing many of the benefits of the ITIL model.

1. What is ITIL?

The Information Technology Infrastructure Library or ITIL is a framework of processes designed to promote the effective and efficient management of IT infrastructure and service delivery. Through this framework, organizations have the ability to optimize and align their IT service capability to the needs of the businesses they support. This paper is not prepared to provide a detailed description of the ITIL model, but will introduce some of the basic concepts to support the overall premise. For additional information on the ITIL model, please visit: <http://www.itil-officialsite.com/home/home.aspx>

The most recent revision of the ITIL framework is comprised of five core lifecycle phases that are represented as the services lifecycle:

- Service Strategy
- Service Design
- Service Transition
- Service Operation
- Continual Service Improvement



Source: <http://www.tech-faq.com/itil-processes.html>

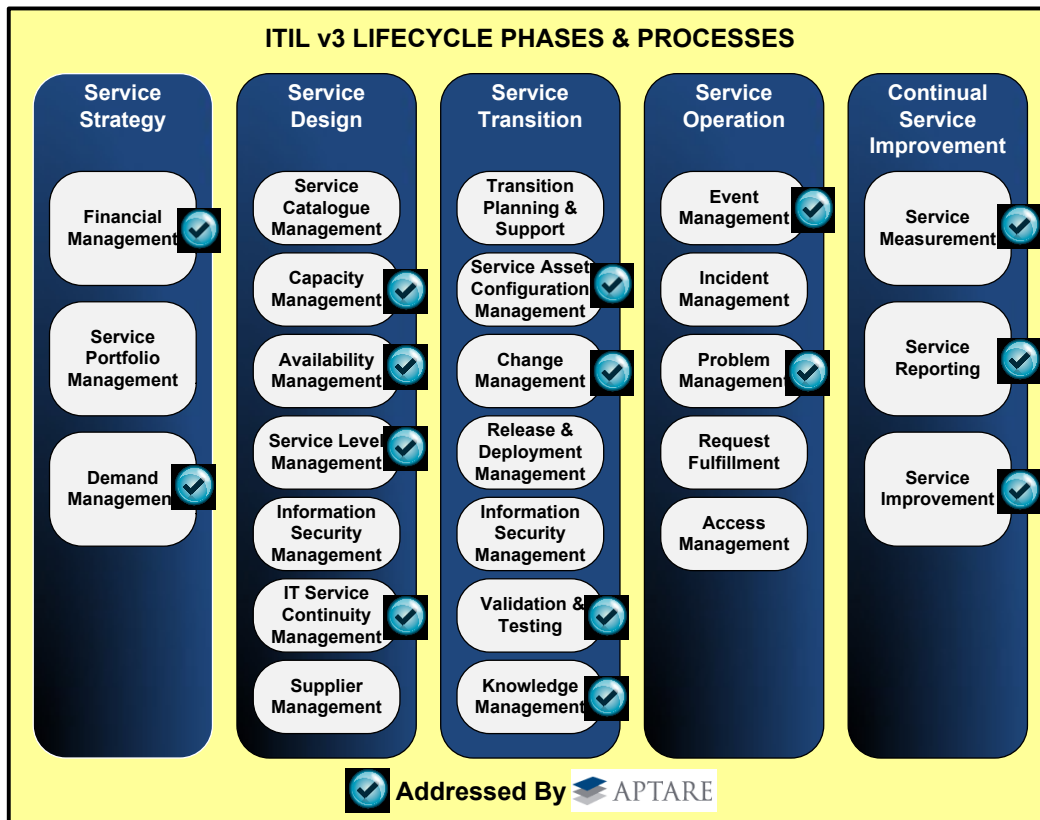
Each of these phases contains a series of processes designed to support the objectives of that phase. The individual processes contain activities, metrics, improvements, and procedures that are required to achieve compliance. Organizations rely on functions and capabilities in order to implement the processes defined in each phase.

APTARE has been successful in providing organizations the capability to interpret data from disparate sources, allowing the organization to make informed decisions based upon measurements and metrics about an organization’s IT infrastructure and configuration items (CI). APTARE’s capabilities touch many of the processes identified in each of the different lifecycle phases. In the subsequent sections we will identify individual ITIL processes that can be fulfilled using APTARE solutions.

2. APTARE & ITIL

APTARE’s suite of products has been developed to address the challenges of data center management through the optimization and analysis of data and infrastructure. When APTARE’s capabilities are aligned with the ITIL service delivery model, we can distinctly see which processes are supported and addressed.

The following table illustrates the different processes in each of the lifecycle phases and identifies which processes are addressed by APTARE.

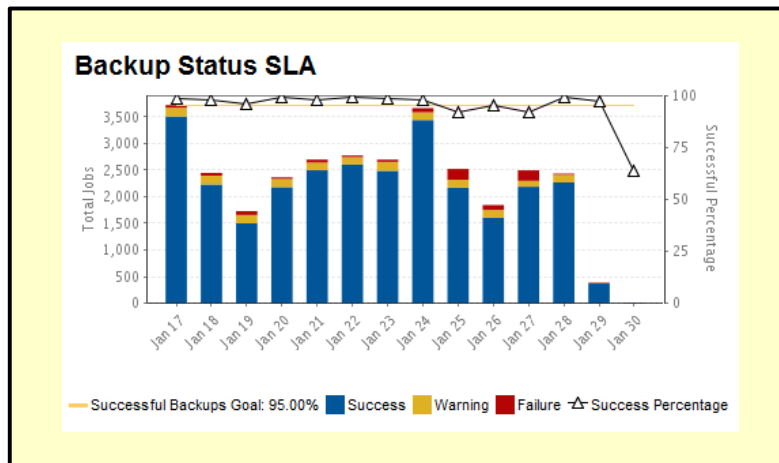


In the following section we will address several of the processes identified in the table above and explain specifically how APTARE supports the process.

2.1. Service Level Management

The objective of the Service Level Management (SLM) process is to agree on the delivery of IT services and to ensure that the agreed upon level of IT service is attained. The Service Level Management process involves planning, coordinating, agreeing, monitoring, and reporting on Service Level Agreements.

This process is often identified as the most important to the Managed Services Provider. Payment for IT service delivery is often coupled with meeting or exceeding service level objectives within the confines of a service level agreement. Having the ability to monitor performance against a service level objective is critical to both the service provider and the consumer of IT services.



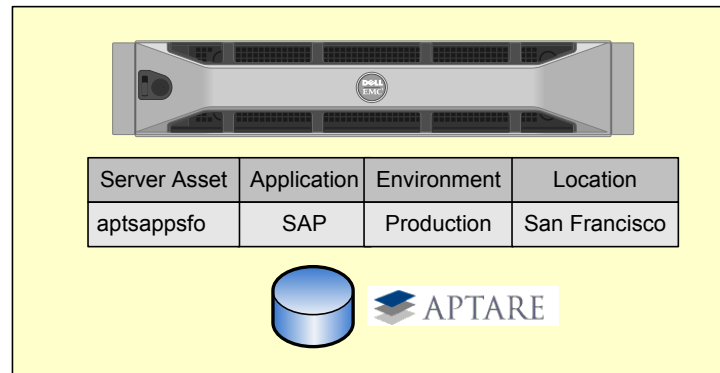
The ability to define a service level objective and identify thresholds for various IT services is a core capability of APTARE. Both service providers and the consumers of IT services can measure the performance and identify where a threshold was breached. Validating that service was delivered within the confines of the SLA is critical; and providing your clients the ability to monitor and measure the service provider’s performance is a valuable competitive differentiator.

2.2. Service Asset Configuration and Management (SACM)

SACM describes a process of managing service assets and configuration items (CIs) in order to support the other ITIL service management processes. SACM defines the service and infrastructure components and maintains accurate configuration records.

- **Configuration Item (CI):** is an asset, service component or other item that is (or will be) controlled by configuration management.ⁱ
 - **Attribute:** Piece of descriptive information about a CI. Example: Location, Cost Center, etc.
 - **Relationship:** Link between two CIs that identifies a dependency or connection between them.

APTARE’s collection process provides a mechanism for discovering data center assets, applications and infrastructure (or CIs). The assets and infrastructure are organized in a database, similar to a Configuration Management System (CMS). The collection process continuously updates and maintains the inventory of configuration items. The depth of information discovered about each of the configuration items varies, but critical information about software versions, firmware, and configuration information is automatically stored in the database. The relationship between the configuration items is programmatically correlated, and attributes can be added to provide additional details about a particular configuration item, as illustrated in the following example



2.2.1. Capacity Management

The Service Transition phase defines the process of capacity management as ensuring IT resources are provided at the right time in the right volume at the right price, and ensuring that IT resources are used in the most efficient mannerⁱⁱ. The sub-processes associated with this discipline include trend analysis, demand management, and modeling.

APTARE is a Capacity Management Information System (CMIS) and provides visibility into IT resource consumption from several different perspectives. By accurately predicting demand consumption, management can make more intelligent procurement decisions. For some IT resources, Just-in-time Purchasing (JIP) is desirable to take advantage of technology advances while reducing the operational costs of managing excess resources.

2.2.2. Knowledge Management

Simply supplying data does not provide the level of analysis necessary to make an informed decision. The ITIL Knowledge Management process describes the capability of collecting quantitative data from metrics and transforming that data into information. Knowledge is achieved by applying context and interpretation and when knowledge is used effectively to make a decision, wisdom is achieved.

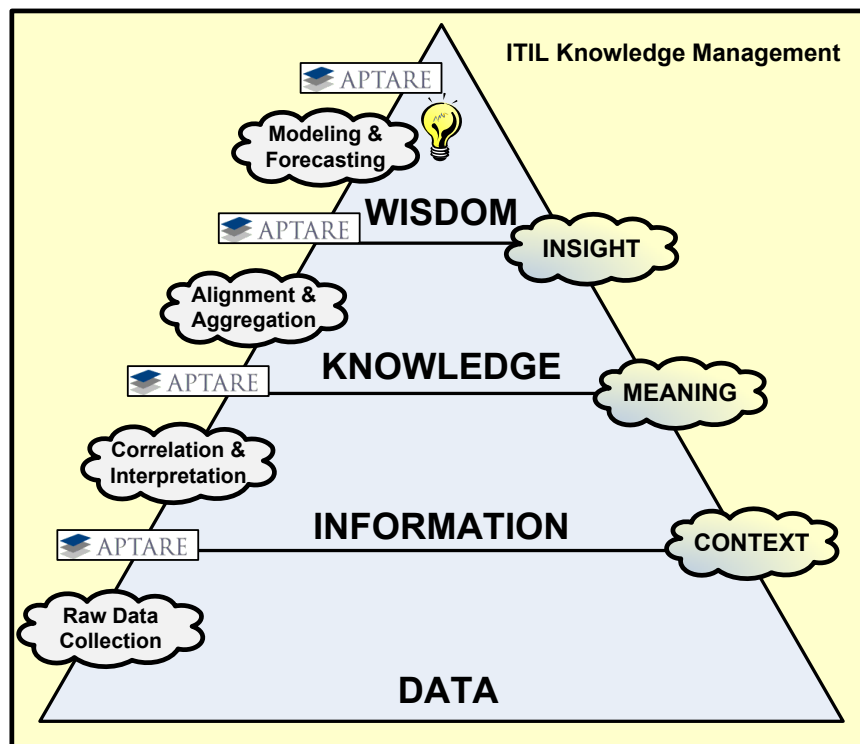
These capabilities are sometimes referred to as a Decision Support System (DSS). In ITIL terminology, APTARE would be considered a Service Knowledge Management System (SKMS) with the unique capability to collect data and information from various sources that include:

- Structured
- Unstructured
- CMDB/DML
- Systems & Infrastructure
- Applications

Knowledge Management often is illustrated using a pyramid design with four different stages showing the progression from data to wisdom. **DIKW**: Data > Information > Knowledge > Wisdom

This model is represented in the following diagram, along with additional content surrounding APTARE’s involvement in this process:

- **Data**: Raw data collection from your environment
- **Information**: Correlation of data with assets and infrastructure
- **Knowledge**: Alignment and aggregation of this data with your business
- **Wisdom**: Information leveraged to make informed business decisions



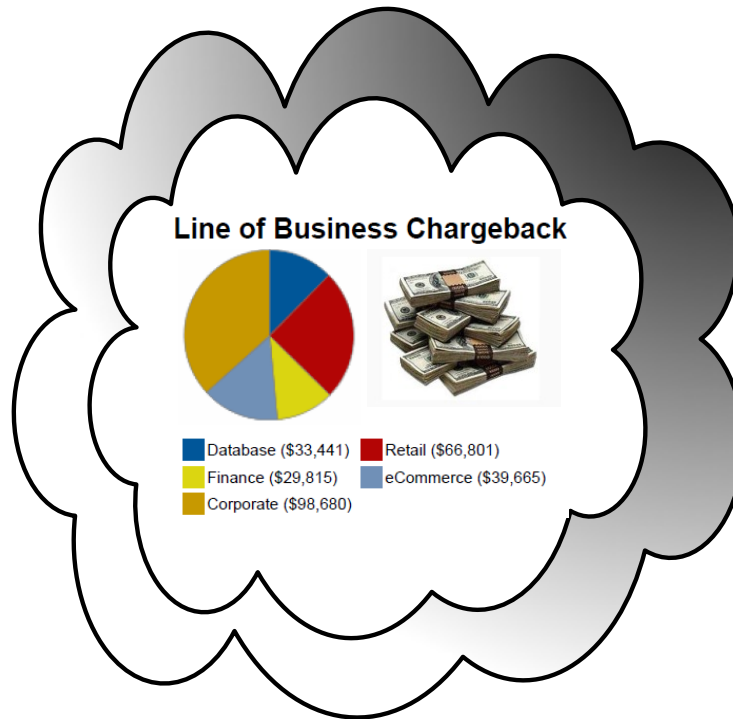
APTARE has a sophisticated process for turning data into information, and adds a layer of interpretation that assists an IT organization with making decisions about their IT infrastructure. APTARE provides various metrics about resource consumption that will support the procurement process and ultimately lead to informed decisions and more cost-effective and efficient service delivery.

2.2.3. Financial Management

In ITIL terms, Financial Management determines the costs associated with IT infrastructure and service delivery. This process consists of three sub-processes: Budgeting, IT Accountability, and Charging. This process endeavors to provide the following back to the business:

- Providing oversight of all IT expenditures

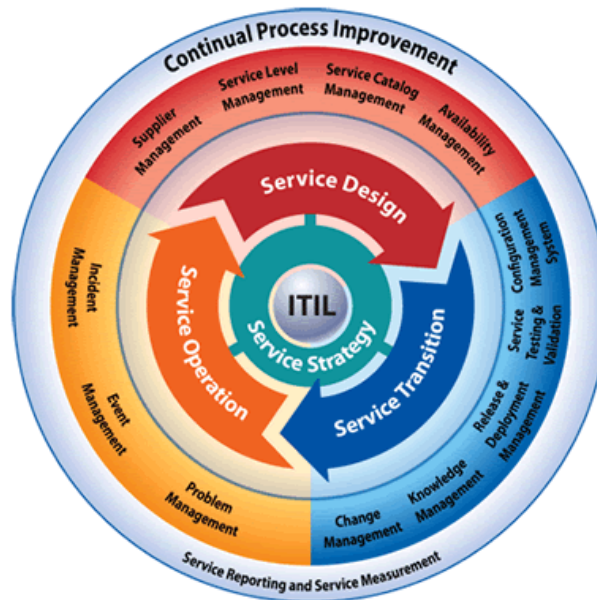
- Ensuring funds are available for planned events
- Providing detailed financial information for proposed initiatives
- Influencing the use of IT assets to maximize the return on IT investments through chargeback
- Tracking current expenditures against the budget



APTARE provides visibility to key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the financial performance of an application, business unit or other object, from an IT resource perspective. It also incorporates numerous tools to assist you in tracking costs associated with data center infrastructure, service delivery, and compliance. MSPs leverage this capability to calculate, trend, forecast, and model costs for both internal and external processes. The ability to associate financial accountability for the utilization of services is a powerful capability that assists in managing budgets and costs. In addition, MSPs can deliver these services to their clients in order to enhance their value proposition and gain a competitive edge.

2.2.4. Continual Service Improvement

Continual Service Improvement (CSI) is intended to be implemented throughout all phases and processes of the ITIL Lifecycle. This is an ongoing endeavor that focuses on measuring performance, making adjustments, and increasing efficiency through optimization.



Source: <http://www.tech-faq.com/itil-processes.html>

The primary goal of Continual Service Improvement is a persistent improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency by which an organization delivers its IT services and ultimately meets or exceeds the business requirements. CSI consists of the following tasks:

- Measure and analyze performance against Service Level Agreements
- Recommend improvements in all phases of the lifecycle
- Increase the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of delivered services
- Introduce cost-effective IT services that meet or exceed customer requirements

One of the most common challenges with ITIL compliance is not having the capabilities and resources necessary to measure performance against objectives. This might not prevent the development and delivery of an IT service, but it does reduce the effectiveness and undermines the overall success.

To sustain the standards of ITIL, organizations need to leverage tools like those provided by APTARE to evaluate the performance of IT services, capture metrics, and establish baselines. This process will provide the information necessary to develop service level objectives and agreements. APTARE provides the ability collect, correlate, and measure metrics from disparate IT systems and applications. The information is coalesced within a relational database for analysis. Having this level of visibility allows for the identification of trends and ultimately provides actionable information to optimize the delivery of services and increase overall operational efficiency.

2.2.5. Other Processes

For brevity, this paper did not address every process identified above. For additional information on how APTARE can assist you with a particular ITIL process or lifecycle phase, please contact: sales@aptare.com

2.3. Managed Services Providers

Managed Services Providers (MSPs) continue to offer an attractive option for companies attempting to reduce the costs and risks associated with managing data center processes and infrastructure. Fueling this trend is the increased complexity of administering technology, coupled with the scrutiny of government regulations and compliance standards. In addition, enhancements to security technology have accelerated the acceptance of the public cloud and the delivery of critical services through a public cloud platform. All of these factors support the MSP's business case.

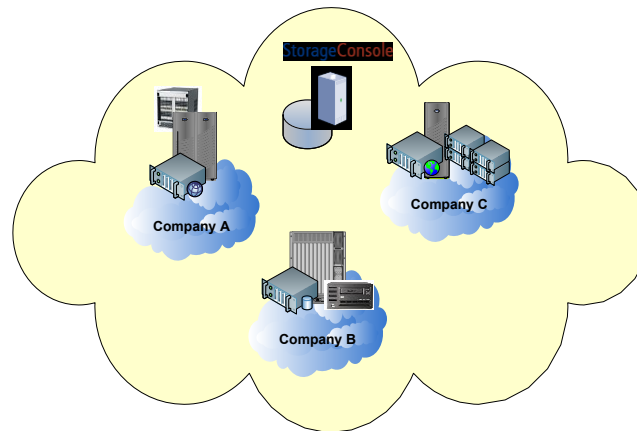
With the increased demand for managed services comes a more competitive environment. MSPs now need to offer a larger portfolio of quality services at a lower cost in order to attract and retain business. MSPs have been embracing the ITIL framework to decrease operational costs, improve resource utilization, manage service level agreements, and increase the overall quality of service delivery.

The effort involved with implementing ITIL is significant and it's a process that's constantly being refined to achieve better results. Since an organization is constantly changing and adapting to new technologies and market conditions, it's essential to have applications and tools in place that can assist in analyzing trends and monitoring performance.

The APTARE solution addresses more than half of the processes defined in the framework. It includes an intelligent interface to identify trends, forecast resource utilization, transform data into information, and align your resources and infrastructure with your applications and line of business.

2.3.1. APTARE - Multi-Tenant Architecture

From its conception, APTARE was developed to address the needs of the Managed Services Provider. The multi-tenant architecture provides a fully functional cloud platform right out of the box. The design enables the MSP to manage infrastructure and provide an ever-increasing portfolio of services. The application also contains various mechanisms for segregating assets and infrastructure.



The concept of domains allows the Managed Services Provider to deliver IT services to its clients through a public cloud platform. The infrastructure of each company (or tenant) can be isolated from one another. This allows the MSP to securely deliver data center services, performance metrics, and analysis to each of its clients. Therefore through the APTARE platform the benefits of ITIL can be realized by the MSP internally and also by the clients who leverage their services.

3. Conclusions

While implementing APTARE alone will not allow a Managed Services Provider to claim total ITIL compliance, we have shown specific examples of how APTARE can assist the MSP in achieving compliance with individual processes within each of the lifecycle phases. In addition, we have shown how APTARE assists with one of the most difficult aspects of ITIL; collecting the data necessary to measure the effectiveness of IT process and procedures, and the information required for making informed decisions and adjustments in an ever-changing environment.

The concepts within ITIL are not revolutionary. Many of the individual processes described within the ITIL model are most likely being addressed in some form or fashion. APTARE adds value by supporting the adoption of ITIL and providing the information necessary to optimize your data and infrastructure.

For additional information on how APTARE can assist you, visit our web site www.aptare.com or contact APTARE, Inc. at 866.927.8273

ⁱ <http://www.itilfoundations.com/processes/configuration-management/service-assets-and-configuration-management/>

ⁱⁱ http://www.itlibrary.org/index.php?page=Capacity_Management