



## ABC of ICT Round table session

### Document overview

This document contains the results of the **ABC of ICT Round table session** held during the 'Best Practices in IT management 2008 - conference'. ABC stands for the 'Attitude', 'Behaviour' and 'Culture' of ICT. It is ABC that stands between you and the realization of business value using ITSM best practices.

In this article we hope to give you insight and advice into how you can finally resolve these ABC issues. Issues that are the reason why many ITIL initiatives fail to realize the hoped for, and needed, results. IT is now too important to business operations, we can no longer afford to fail to bring IT under control. The ABC issues **MUST** be tackled and resolved.

- **Section 1** contains a brief introduction as to what ABC is, what ABC worst practices are, and why they are relevant and worth serious consideration.
- **Section 2** introduces the ABC of ICT card set, an instrument that can be used to help organizations assess their own ABC worst practices and the risks that these pose. *This card set was used during the round table session to identify key ABC worst practices as identified by the participants.*
- **Section 3** contains the results of the exercise and tasks performed using the ABC card set during the session.
- **Section 4** contains a set of conclusions and recommendations to IT organizations that they should use these ABC cards as an assessment and dialogue instrument within their own teams, departments and organization.
- **Section 5** contains conclusions and recommendations to the itSMF on how to progress further with the findings of this round table session, and how the itSMF can help organizations address these ABC worst practices.
- **Section 6** contains quotes and comments from delegates about the ABC cards.

## Section 1. ABC of ICT

ABC of ICT stands for the Attitude, Behaviour and Culture within ICT organizations. In the past 10 years or so many IT organizations have adopted 'best practice' frameworks such as ITIL to bring IT under control. Many organizations have failed to realize the expected benefits of these frameworks. Why is this? Because of ABC issues. It is our belief that it is the ABC 'Worst practices' that will determine the success or failure of your ITSM improvement initiatives, not the frameworks and the models. ***It is ABC that will prevent you from realizing the value offered by these frameworks. It is ABC that presents a business risk.***

IT is becoming increasingly important to business operations, and to all types of businesses, as such we can no longer afford to fail to successfully apply these types of frameworks. It is time we recognized and resolved the ABC worst practices once and for all.

It is this need to bring IT under control that has partly led to the rise of IT Governance. IT Governance according to a Weill & Ross investigation into best practices for IT Governance, may be described as:

### **Specifying the decision rights and accountability framework**

to

### **encourage the desirable behaviour in IT**

We in IT have focused for too long now on the first part, the '*frameworks*', and not enough on the second part - the '*desirable behaviour*'. This is why many IT improvement initiatives fail. A Forrester report revealed that 52% fail because of 'resistance to change' (Attitude). A further 29% fail because of a lack of business interest or involvement (Attitude). Findings from our own 'Apollo 13 – An ITSM case experience' business simulation (see the article '**Using simulations to increase the success of your ITSM initiative**' published in the IT Service Management Global Best Practice book – volume 1, 2008, Van Haren publishing) also reveal that the key learning point, identified by more than 1000 students is that '**People related issues**' are the most significant success or fail factor in improving IT performance. Issues such as the need for:

- clearly defined, agreed and accepted tasks, roles and responsibilities;
- personal accountability;
- creating buy-in and commitment;
- leading change and 'walking-the-talk';
- 'acting' customer focused instead of 'saying we are' customer focused;
- Breaking down organizational 'silos';
- managing the soft issues relating to organizational change.

Unfortunately neither existing frameworks and 'Best practice' guidance, training or certification programs, conference sessions nor articles adequately tell you how to address these issues. Fortunately in the Netherlands things are changing. The itSMF has recognized the need to give attention to ABC, and has included ABC as a separate conference stream.

*ABC is like an iceberg, much of it hidden below the surface, and difficult to see, but nevertheless dangerous and capable of inflicting enormous damage.*

## Section 2. The ABC of ICT card set

Because there is currently too little help from the ITSM supplier community to help IT organizations resolve these ABC issues, we in GamingWorks, working together with Van Haren publishing, have developed a set of ABC of ICT cards.

The ABC card set contains 57 worst practice cartoons. These are worst practices that industry experts recognize and agree, and these are worst practices that I regularly present at itSMF conferences. Whenever I present them people nod (enthusiastically) in agreement and recognition. (I am a little concerned at the smiling, enthusiastic acknowledgement – it sometimes looks almost like pride “Yes! Yes! That is what we do!”).

This card set has been designed as a awareness and workshop instrument to help teams, departments and organizations:

- identify, recognize and agree whether these worst practices apply to their organization;
- look at worst practices from the perspectives of different stakeholders;
- identify how stakeholders are impacted by a worst practice and identify which stakeholders display which type of worst practices;
- enable teams, possibly comprised of various stakeholders, to get together to discuss the worst practices;
- discuss and agree the consequences and risks of these worst practices;
- recognize and create ‘buy-in’ to the ‘need’ to find a solution to resolve them;
- discuss and agree possible solutions to resolve the worst practices;
- provide input to ‘Continual Service Improvement’ initiatives.

The card set is aimed at creating dialogue and discussion so that these ABC issues can be brought out into the open. Once they are brought out into the open and recognized action can be taken to address them. *So long as they remain hidden and so long as we avoid to talk about them or discuss them they will remain a danger that may turn into resistance.* Resistance that will prevent your organization from achieving success, and as a result pose a risk to the business.

The card suits represent **Attitude** (Clubs), **Behaviour** (Diamonds), **Culture** (Spades) and **Stakeholders** (Hearts). There are 5 jokers representing People, Process, Product, Partner and Performance.

So how can you use the cards? what can you do with them?

The cards can be used at the start of a change program, for example the cartoons can be posted on a website and people invited to vote on the relevance of the cartoon within their organization. This will raise awareness to the issues and will help reveal a ‘need to change’. This will also help gain insight into people’s attitude towards the change.

Three of the cards were posted on the itSMF Netherlands website, as a sort of mini survey to try to identify whether people recognized these worst practices, the findings were:

Statement 1: ‘We are not Customer focused enough in IT’.

Result: **89%** agreed.

Statement 2: ‘We are poor at sharing and reusing knowledge in IT’.

Result: **86%** agreed.

Statement 3: ‘Current ITIL training and certification does not adequately address ABC issues’.

Result: **94%** agreed.

*These results clearly show that we in IT have some problems still to resolve and current training and certification doesn’t help resolve them.*

The cards can also be used as an assessment instrument, by inviting teams to identify and agree worst practices relevant to their own team or organization. A number of exercises can be performed using the cards, for a wide variety of stakeholders. These exercises will be made available in a book about the ABC of ICT that will be published towards the end of 2008. This book will also contain practical advice and examples from industry experts identifying possible solution actions to resolve the ABC worst practices. Example exercises can be found on the GamingWorks website or by sending a mail to [p.wilkinson@gamingworks.nl](mailto:p.wilkinson@gamingworks.nl) and requesting some example exercises.

And finally the card set can also be used as a normal set of playing cards.

### Section 3. The ABC exercise and results

The ABC of ICT round table session was a 45 minute event. In the session seven 'round tables' were created. Each table containing up to 6 participants. Participants were given a set of ABC of ICT cards and a series of tasks to perform:

#### Exercise: Customer and User focused.

During the round table session we focused on one specific exercise. This exercise was the Customer or user focused exercise. 'We are not customer focused enough in IT'.

The reason for this choice was:

- the results of the mini survey placed on the website (see above).
- the results of the findings of the itSMF's own 2007 survey which revealed that the number 1 strategic priority of many IT organizations in the Netherlands is the need 'to improve the quality of products and services'. This was the same number 1 as 10 years ago when I first presented my Worst practice cartoons. Why has so little changed after 10 years with all these 'Best practice' frameworks?

The objective of the exercise at the Round table session was to try to confirm the results of the mini survey, and to identify why we are not customer focused enough. What examples of worst practice Attitude, Behaviour and Culture do we display that are symptomatic of this lack of Customer focus, and what are these worst practices we need to get rid of before these 'Best practices' start delivering real results.

The first task given to the team was:

#### Task 1:

- Place the USER stakeholder card, 2 of hearts, in the middle of the table (User = creature at the end of the evolutionary chain). Place the 2 of clubs on the table. ('Customers', 'Users' or '**Dorks**')
- Read out the following to the team "*We have had ITIL for more than 20 years. ITIL was all about the Users and the Customers and providing services that deliver quality to the Users and Customers. In a recent mini-survey on the itSMF site in the Netherlands this cartoon was published (2 of clubs) with a statement. 'We are not customer focused enough in IT'. You would expect after 20 years of ITIL that this was a ridiculous survey to place there, as this is obviously no longer true. However 89% of respondents AGREED with the statement!.*"

Task 1: Ask each individual to agree or disagree with this statement:

*We are not customer focused enough in IT'.*

Record the answers on this form. Those who agree must give one example of behaviour they have seen that supports this, those who disagree can also give one example.

The key findings in the exercise were, for me, somewhat surprising. I had suspected that the high result on the itSMF website survey was influenced by the type of people who had responded. I suspected that most of those who responded were people who had read our (Paul Wilkinson and Brian Johnson) book '**IT Service Management from hell**' and were simply wanting to endorse the twisted and warped view of IT in this book!. Many of the cartoons in the book were used to create the ABC of ICT card set.

Results of statement during the round table session:

'We are not Customer focused enough in IT'

86% agreed with the statement

What surprised me was that this was a wider selection of IT professionals, most of whom had probably never been influenced or corrupted by 'IT Service management from Hell'.

**Examples of behaviour to support the statement we are not Customer focused enough:**

- The Customer behind the customer needs to be taken into account
- We need for round the table sessions with our customers
- Grey areas in service delivery (entitled/not entitled to support – The customer is the victim!)
- We have problems realizing 'Time to market' of new services and solutions
- IT is too busy with its own processes
- We are too Internally focused
- We can keep the end user happy, but not the business manager
- IT doesn't understand the business
- There is still no clear, single point of contact for customers
- Language and communication towards customers is still an issue
- We don't take the customer seriously
- We focus too much on technology, ....because that is SO interesting (2)
- If we were customer focused ENOUGH we wouldn't need all the models (Frameworks)
- Users are poorly represented in IT projects
- We display a tunnel vision by only involving a subset of the user community
- IT is convinced *it* knows how the business should act
- IT thinks it knows best what the business needs (2)
- If you call the help desk you won't get a direct solution
- Costs of IT are confusing
- Otherwise we advisors wouldn't have any work anymore!
- Most IT staff have no idea
- We have a 'Blinkered' view
- The customer is a pain in the ...system
- Is the customer always right?...you might never achieve the customer requirements – we need to think ahead
- We still need to be more proactive

**Examples of behaviour to support the claim we ARE customer focussed enough:**

- External provider is paid and judged by the hour; market mechanisms apply
- 80% OK, 20% problem
- As externals we try to develop new services
- Otherwise we would miss revenue....the customer is our business

(It was noticeable that that the comments of examples of good behaviour seem to have been made by external suppliers!, whilst the results of the next exercise do not match this view!)

The above exercise was aimed at generating discussion within the group, what IS customer focused behaviour? What does it look like? What type of behaviour is NOT customer focused?.

This allows a team to share views of desirable and non-desirable behaviour.

The following task was intended to place the participants into the perspective of the 'Customer' or 'User' and to try to identify what the 'User' would see as the worst practices that support the 86% findings. (This is as attempt to break out of the finding in task 1 above that we in IT are too internally focused).

Task 2:

- Lay the cards out on the table.
- Read out the following to the team: “Now imagine we are asking the User (2 of hearts). If we give the user the ABC cards which 3 cards would he or she choose that most typically represents the worst practices in ABC in your organization”?
- Let each person choose 3 and record these on the form supplied

The **overall findings** of this were as follows. The figure between ( ) represents the number of times this worst practice was chosen.

Attitude

- IT not seen as an added value partner (4)
- Neither partner makes an effort to understand the other (4)
- My TOOL will solve ALL your ITSM problems (4)

Behaviour

- We don't measure our value contribution to strategy (5)
- Throwing ITIL solutions over the wall and hoping people will follow them (5)
- Process managers without authority (4)

Culture

- 9 to 5 culture (4)
- Not my responsibility (4)
- Blame culture (4)

These were the cards chosen by the individuals and the number of times that a card was chosen.

card	suit	Description	No of time chosen
2	♠	No respect for, or understanding of users	✓✓
3	♠	Knowledge is power	✓✓
4	♠	IT not seen as an added value partner to the business	✓✓✓✓
5	♠	Neither partner makes an effort to understand the other	✓✓✓✓
6	♠	ITIL never work here	✓✓
7	♠	My TOOL will solve ALL your ITSM problems	✓✓✓✓
8	♠	IT thinks it doesn't need to understand the business to make a business case	✓✓✓
9	♠	Walking the talk	
10	♠	No respect for, or trust in management	
J	♠	Let's outsource the business – we'd be better off	✓✓
Q	♠	No understanding of business impact & priority	✓✓
K	♠	ITIL is the objective,... not what it should achieve	✓✓
A	♠	ITIL certification means I know what I am doing	
2	♦	We don't measure our value contribution to strategy	✓✓✓✓✓
3	♦	Too little business involvement in requirements specification & testing	✓✓
4	♦	Not capturing the right knowledge for reuse	✓
5	♦	No management commitment	✓
6	♦	Everything has the highest priority....according to the users	✓
7	♦	Throwing solutions (ITIL) over the wall and HOPING people will use them	✓✓✓✓✓
8	♦	We're going to INSTALL ITIL....it can't be that hard	✓✓

9	♦	Maybe we should have tested that change first	✓
10	♦	Never mind about following procedures....just do what we usually do	✓
J	♦	Saying <b>yes</b> but meaning <b>no</b>	✓
Q	♦	The solution the customer sees isn't the one that IT sees	✓✓
K	♦	IT strategy's contribution to business strategy	
A	♦	Process managers without authority	✓✓✓✓
2	♠	Them and Us culture—opposing and competing forces	✓✓✓
3	♠	Hierarchic culture 'The boss is always right....even when the boss is wrong!	
4	♠	Internally focused	✓✓
5	♠	Punishment culture	✓✓
6	♠	Hero culture	✓
7	♠	9 to 5 culture	✓✓✓✓
8	♠	Plan, Do, stop....no real continual improvement culture	✓✓
9	♠	Promotion on ability	
10	♠	The superiority complex 'We know best!'	✓✓
J	♠	Avoidance culture	
Q	♠	Not my responsibility	✓✓✓✓
K	♠	Empowering people	
A	♠	Blame culture	✓✓✓✓
2	♥	The User...creature at the end of the evolutionary chain	✓
3	♥	The Help Desk Technoid...Hello HELPLESS desk....what do you want NOW?	✓✓
4	♥	The IT manager...The best way to improve services is to outsource.....the business!	✓✓✓
5	♥	The consultant...without me the world will stop spinning	
6	♥	The Technogeek...That problem isn't in my book, therefore it doesn't exist	✓
7	♥	Business manager...Demand & Give. I demand and you give in	✓✓
8	♥	The CIO...The buck stops anywhere but here!	
9	♥	The Supplier...OK so the functionality isn't great but look at the flashy user interface!	✓
10	♥	The Quality manager...waiting for the IT organization to improve	✓✓✓
J	♥	The ITIL consultant...A process flow and some procedures are all you need	
Q	♥	The project manager...Of course we will finish on time and within budget	✓
K	♥	The CEO...Which part of NO didn't you understand	
A	♥	HRD manager...our IT staff are now strategic assets?	
	<b>Joker</b>	...The Silo mentality (Process)	✓
	<b>Joker</b>	Outsourcing saves costs....whilst maintaining quality (partner)	✓✓✓
	<b>Joker</b>	A Tool solves all problems (Product)	
	<b>Joker</b>	Unable to specify the VALUE required by the business (Performance)	✓✓
	<b>Joker</b>	IT as a business enabler and differentiator (People)	✓

Now the team has a list of worst practices that they themselves have identified. However they don't necessarily feel any need or commitment for them or for doing anything about them. The next task was designed to try to create the need for change.

- Task 3:**
- Consolidate the findings and identify the teams' overall top 3 ABC worst practice cards.
  - Discuss and Record examples of symptoms and behaviour that support these cards.
  - Record the consequences and the risks of these top 3 cards.

This raised an interesting discussion as to how to choose a top 3 because individuals had already chosen their own 3. How could we determine the most important?. One way could be to identify how many times a worst practice card was chosen, however the most effective way would be to focus on the 'Consequences' of the Attitude, Behaviour or Culture cards chosen, and to focus on the 'Risk' to the business. This will help the team discuss and identify consequences in terms of 'downtime', 'delay', 'costs', 'availability and continuity of business operations', 'failure to achieve business goals'. By discussing consequences participants will themselves discover the 3 most in need of resolving which will help create 'the need or urgency to change'. Unfortunately during the round table session there was insufficient time to discuss the risks in detail as there was so much discussion trying to identify and agree the consequences.

These were the cards named as the top 3 cards by each of the teams, together with examples of behaviour and the consequences.

**Team 1**

Card:	Symptoms: <i>Describe example of behaviour seen that closely related to card</i>	Consequences: <i>In terms of Customer satisfaction, Costs, Downtime, Delay.</i>	Acceptable risk?
<p><b>5♣</b></p> <p>Neither partner makes an effort to understand the other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continual discussion about what &amp; who wants what</li> <li>• Independent budgets and investments</li> <li>• No Alignment between business and IT plans</li> <li>• No business meetings for IT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business goals not realized</li> <li>• Conflicting goals</li> <li>• Overlapping investments</li> <li>• Disconnect between strategy and operations</li> <li>• Delayed solutions</li> <li>• Dissatisfied Customers</li> </ul>	
<p><b>8♠</b></p> <p>Plan, Do, stop! ....no real continual improvement culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understatement of effort and scope of project</li> <li>• Understatement of impact of project</li> <li>• No strategic cycle, only operational focus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher costs</li> <li>• Adhoc and reactive</li> <li>• Demotivation</li> <li>• Fire fighting (again!)</li> <li>• No real progress</li> <li>• Risk of going out of business</li> </ul>	Not acceptable
<p><b>J♦</b></p> <p>Saying <b>yes</b> but meaning <b>no</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resistance to do things</li> <li>• Not following procedures or sticking to agreements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delays</li> <li>• Requirements not carried out</li> </ul>	




Team 2

Card:	Symptoms: <i>Describe example of behaviour seen that closely related to card</i>	Consequences: <i>In terms of Customer satisfaction, Costs, Downtime, Delay.</i>	Acceptable risk?
<p><b>7♠</b></p> <p>9 to 5 culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “lunch break”.. exchange server is down</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business functionality down</li> <li>• “according to the SLA that’s OK!”</li> </ul>	No
<p><b>10♥</b></p> <p>Quality manager ..waiting for the IT organization to improve</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process written in 2006! 2 years nothing done with it, no updates or improvements!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper tiger!</li> <li>• Inefficient operations</li> <li>• Ineffective processes</li> </ul>	No
<p><b>4♥</b></p> <p>IT manager... The best way to improve services is to outsource... the business!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “They’re always moaning about something! It is never good!”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No user or customer focus</li> <li>• Ignore the customer needs</li> <li>• IT not responsive to business needs</li> <li>• Business will eventually look for another provider</li> </ul>	No




Team 3

Card:	Symptoms: <i>Describe example of behaviour seen that closely related to card</i>	Consequences: <i>In terms of Customer satisfaction, Costs, Downtime, Delay.</i>	Acceptable risk?
<p><b>Q♥</b></p> <p>The project manager... Of course we will finish on time &amp; within budget</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not on time</li> <li>• Not within budget</li> <li>• IT services not ready in time</li> <li>• Less quality delivered because of pressure on time overrun</li> <li>• Scope boundaries change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missing business requirements</li> <li>• Increased cost</li> <li>• Dissatisfied business</li> </ul>	
<p><b>J♠</b></p> <p>80% of downtime due to users.... Let’s outsource the business – we’d be better off</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of users training</li> <li>• Wrong and changing requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects deliver no real benefits</li> <li>• Increased cost of support</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Joker</b></p> <p>“there is no keyboard?!..... we’ve been outsourced,..it is a cost reduction initiative”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not my responsibility</li> <li>• Not in my back yard</li> <li>• We know what is good for you</li> <li>• .....</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Users feel they are not taken seriously</li> <li>• Circumvention by obtaining own solutions</li> </ul>	




Team 4

Card:	Symptoms: <i>Describe example of behaviour seen that closely related to card</i>	Consequences: <i>What are consequences. In terms of Customer satisfaction, Costs, Downtime, Delay.</i>	Acceptable risk?
<p>3 </p> <p>Too little business involvement in requirements specification &amp; testing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor, and continually changing requirements</li> <li>• Incorrect prioritization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delays</li> <li>• Investments in wrong solutions</li> <li>• Investments do not support the business</li> </ul>	
<p>Q </p> <p>Not my responsibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grey areas of who does what....who is allowed what</li> <li>• No real accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business suffers</li> <li>• Delayed time to market</li> <li>• Things don't get done</li> </ul>	
<p>4 </p> <p>Internally focused</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT too busy with technology and not the business use of technology</li> <li>• IT too busy with its own processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology not aligned to business needs</li> <li>• Processes don't deliver business value</li> <li>• Lack of alignment between IT initiatives and business goals</li> </ul>	




Team 5

Card:	Symptoms: <i>Describe example of behaviour seen that closely related to card</i>	Consequences: <i>In terms of Customer satisfaction, Costs, Downtime, Delay.</i>	Acceptable risk?
<p>4 </p> <p>Internally focused</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissatisfied customers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outsourcing</li> </ul>	
<p>7 </p> <p>Business manager... Demand &amp; Give. I demand and you give in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continually changing priorities</li> <li>• Rework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher costs</li> <li>• Takes longer</li> </ul>	
<p>2 </p> <p>We don't measure our value contribution to strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No insight for decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor decision making</li> <li>• Wrong investments</li> </ul>	

Team 6

Card:	Symptoms: <i>Describe example of behaviour seen that closely related to card</i>	Consequences: <i>In terms of Customer satisfaction, Costs, Downtime, Delay.</i>	Acceptable risk?
<p><b>8</b> </p> <p>We're going to INSTALL ITIL....it can't be that hard</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes longer than planned</li> <li>• Increased bureaucracy</li> <li>• Continually changing priorities</li> <li>• Rework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissatisfied customers</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3</b> </p> <p>Too little business involvement in requirements specification &amp; testing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrong choices and decisions</li> <li>• Increased mistakes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs</li> <li>• Rework</li> <li>• Delays</li> <li>• No value</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4</b> </p> <p>IT not seen as an added value partner to the business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT not invited to participate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissatisfied customers</li> </ul>	

Team 7

Card:	Symptoms: <i>Describe example of behaviour seen that closely related to card</i>	Consequences: <i>In terms of Customer satisfaction, Costs, Downtime, Delay.</i>	Acceptable risk?
<p><b>10</b> </p> <p>The superiority complex 'We know best!'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superiority feeling within IT</li> <li>• We know best so shut-up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doing the wrong things</li> <li>• Dissatisfied customer</li> </ul>	no
<p><b>2</b> </p> <p>We don't measure our value contribution to strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No ability to determine added value of IT for the company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business doesn't have the right information to be able to make decisions</li> </ul>	no
<p><b>K</b> </p> <p>ITIL is the objective,... not what it should achieve</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrogance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too focused on processes and technique and not on the Customers and Users or value</li> <li>• Inability to steer on value realization</li> </ul>	

### Exercise: The 'Certification' exercise:

We had scheduled a second exercise if there was enough time. Unfortunately there was insufficient time for the teams to perform this exercise. One team did however carry it out.

The task given was:

#### Task 1:

- Place the Ace of clubs card on the table. 'ITIL certification means I know what I am doing.'
- Read out the following to the team: "*The current ITIL V3 certification scheme is all about obtaining 22 points. Following a series of bridging classes and foundation type exams aimed at 'certification'. This will give you 22 points and allow you to declare yourself ITIL V3 certified. The ITIL V3 Service Transition book declares 'The Service Transition Team will soon become familiar with the need to change attitudes and the operation of converting culture. For them it is a routine task, holding no threat', perhaps that is why the current certification does not address this as it is a routine task.*"
- In a recent survey on the itSMF website 94% agreed with my statement that ITIL training and certification does not help us resolve the ABC issues.

#### Question 1: 'Do the current ITIL training offerings help you to resolve the worst practices you have identified?'

100% of the team said "No they do not"

#### Question 2: 'What type of additional training is required?'

- ABC
- Kotter (as an example of organizational change) – should be mandatory as part of a certification model.

## Section 4: Conclusions and recommendations to IT organizations

### Conclusions

- We are still not Customer or user focused enough in IT, and we confirm this ourselves.
- People clearly identified with the worst practices in the card set and could relate them to their own organization which shows that the cards do reflect current worst practices.
- All participants were engaged in active dialogue and discussion, to such an extent that we ran out of time because they wanted to continue to explore and discuss issues, clearly demonstrating that the cards achieve their intended aim of creating dialogue and discussion.
- People were able to identify and describe actual undesirable behaviour and the consequences within a short, 45 minute session. Showing that valuable assessment results can be achieved within a short time frame (such as a regular team meeting).
- Participants were willing and eager to take the cards away and perform exercises within their own organization because of the dialogue this created. I am receiving mails asking for the example exercises.
- The card with the most choices is 'We don't measure our value contribution to strategy' which confirms my own findings, which is why I specifically included the 'value' exercise in the article 'ABC of ICT V3' in the 'IT Service Management Global Best Practices – Volume 1 book, 2008, Van Haren publishing. I have added this exercise to recommendations below.

### Recommendations

- Use these cards within your own organization', to create dialogue and enable an assessment of your own worst practices.
- Either carry out this exercise or pick some cards that you think are particularly relevant to your organization, publish them on your web-site and ask people to react. Ask people to discuss them in regular team meetings or organize a 1 hour meeting to perform the exercise.

- Give the card set to your users and customers! And ask THEM what THEY see as the worst practices that need resolving. At the same time ask the business to select the worst practices that apply to them!
- Use the cards with as many people as possible to get a good view of the attitude and perceived behaviour within the organization by the various stakeholders.
- Ensure that the focus of the discussion is not on recognizing the ABC, but of discussing and agreeing the consequences and the risk.
- **If you do decide to use them, PLEASE LET ME KNOW THE RESULTS. Let me know how useful and effective the cards were. I would like some case studies to add to the ABC book we are writing.**
- Implement DEMAND management in IT. What do I mean by that? I realize I am now going to make myself unpopular with Training companies, Consulting companies and Tool providers. Customer organizations should DEMAND, before selecting and engaging any training company, consulting company or tool provider, that unless they can specify HOW they will address the ABC issues they WILL NOT BE SELECTED. Ask them to give a reference site, white paper or visioning statement, ask them to demonstrate that they have the skills and capabilities in house to help YOU tackle the ABC issues.
- As the card 'We don't measure our value contribution to strategy (5)' was the most selected card, and as this represents industry findings, I challenge you to carry out the 'value exercise' in YOUR organization.

#### **The 'Value' exercise: 15 minutes**

- Place the 'Value' joker in the middle of the table.
- Read out the following to the team *"We have had ITIL for more than 20 years. ITIL is all about delivering value. ITIL V3 service strategy also talks about value. IT organizations are poor at measuring and demonstrating the value of ITSM best practice initiatives. In a survey (Parity) only 29% of IT organizations have directly measured the return on investment from ITIL implementations, and under half measured the value that IT Service management delivered to their business."*
- Read the following to the team: *"Imagine the CEO is sitting at the table, he or she says 'So you have spent money applying ITSM best practices to deliver value to my business. Do you KNOW what that value is? Do you KNOW what value I wanted?'"*
- Ask each person write down "Yes" or "No", if the answer is "Yes" ask them to write down what that value is in terms of key performance indicators or measures or strategic goals to be realized.
- Discuss whether people really KNOW the value or whether they are assuming? If they say they KNOW this then ask them *"Can you demonstrate this to us? Where would we see this documented? If we were to ask each of our IT employees would they be able to tell us that they KNOW what this value is?"*
- Now ask, to those who say they KNOW what this value is, "Are you measuring this?", and "Can you demonstrate that you are actually achieving this value?"
- If you do NOT KNOW then go and find out and ensure everybody knows this. Why? An ISO 20000 demand is: **"Top management SHALL ensure that its employees are aware of the relevance and importance of their activities and how they contribute to results."** Even if you don't want to apply the whole of ISO20000 this is surely one 'shall' that every IT organization must feel compelled to comply with.

## Section 5: Conclusions and recommendations to the itSMF

### Conclusions

- The ABC card statements stimulate a response 'agree/disagree' and are a good way of opening up dialogue and of enabling the itSMF to determine what worst practices are common and in need of resolving.
- The workshop clearly identified some ABC worst practices that organizations need to address. The mini survey on the site about ITIL training and certification revealed that this type of training does not adequately help people to tackle these issues.
- The itSMF is well suited to find customers, cases and examples of people who have successfully tackled these ABC issues. As such the itSMF is in an ideal position to help organizations.

### Recommendations

- Use the top named cards as the next statements to be tested on the itSMF website, invite people to vote and give feedback.
- Consolidate and publish these findings. Invite people that have successfully resolved these top worst practice issues to write an article for the itSMF magazine and to come and give an ABC presentation at the itSMF conference in the ABC of ICT stream.
- Conduct a survey on the itSMF website, and through the itSMF book stores relating to the adequacy of the existing and planned ITIL certification scheme to address the ABC issues.
- Gather the feedback and suggestions from as wide a public as possible and give this through to those responsible for developing the new ITIL certification schemes.

## Section 5: Quotes

This section contains quotes from delegates about the game, and follow up quotes and requests that show the value of the cards.

### **Maarten Bordewijk, Getronics-PinkRocade, senior ITIL trainer, Netherlands.**

"Any IT Service Management initiative that doesn't address ABC is bound for failure. Any educational institute wanting to give people the capabilities and knowledge for successfully deploying ITIL should use the ABC cards to support the necessary discussion in training modules leading up to formal certification."

"When organizing an improvement workshop it helps to list issues and to prioritize them. Participants often find it difficult to be complete in this. The ABC Cards provide a complete list of all things that could go wrong. People can instantly recognize issues and pick the cards that apply to them and provide examples of attitude and behavior. It speeds up the process and helps everyone involved to name the issues that really inhibit successful ITSM."

### **Alejandro Debenedet, EXIN, Netherlands**

"The ABC card exercise was a lot of fun, and put people immediately to work, brainstorming on the worst practices and their consequences, aided by the easily recognizable cartoons. It was interesting to see how people from different backgrounds could quickly interact and agree on how the situations apply to daily life and how they need to be approached."

"From my perspective at EXIN, I see that the ABC card set helps people understand the problems and the typical worst practices. It helps people discuss the consequences and possible solutions, and with that it achieves something very important: it gives hands-on experience in solving ITSM related issues."

"This is a great aid for people seeking for certification in the different levels and practices of ITSM, whether it is ITIL or ISO 20000 or other good practices. EXIN has always developed the exams based on the believe that the candidates need more than just theory, but also practical knowledge, and this helps people gain practical knowledge."