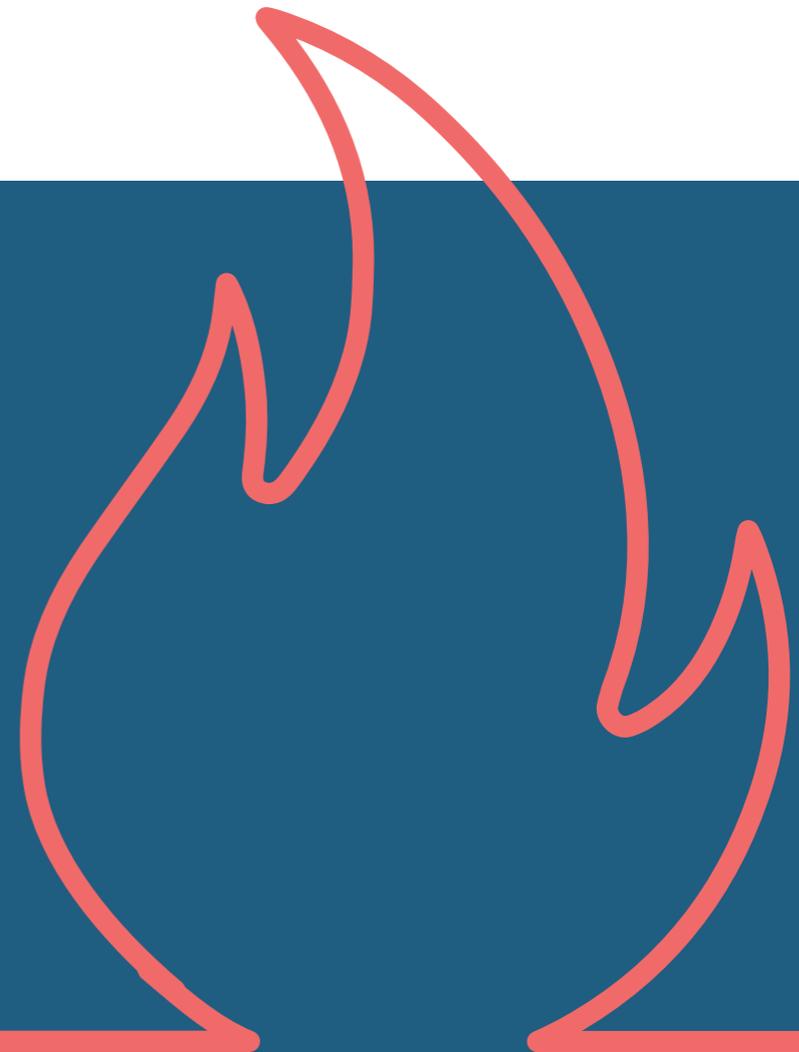


EBOOK

# 7 Deadly Sins of ITIL Implementation

How To Move At Digital Speed While Upholding ITIL Principles

(Includes Updated ITIL 4 Guidance)



cherwell



# Introduction

Some would have you believe that ITIL® is on its way out. That it's no longer relevant in today's fast-paced digital environment.

But ITIL still holds many timeless truths. As a set of best practice recommendations, ITIL provides a solid foundation and a common language for IT service management (ITSM) in these rapidly changing times. And with the updated guidance found within ITIL 4, ITIL is more relevant than ever.

However, as is the case with many frameworks, problems can rise when the guidance is seen as dogma. If you apply it too literally—as rules to follow, instead of recommendations to consider—ITIL will slow you down. You're left struggling to keep up with ever-increasing user demands, not to mention your enterprise's need to modernize and digitally transform.

If you suspect ITIL is slowing you down, read on to uncover the seven ways ITIL has commonly been misapplied—and gain guidance on how you can go faster, while still upholding ITIL principles.

“Through 2019, dragged down by conflicting digital transformation imperatives, ineffective technology innovation, cloud infrastructure transition, and underfunded end-of-life core systems, 75 percent of CIOs and their enterprises will fail to meet all their digital objectives.”<sup>1</sup>

1. Gartner, “Applying Artificial Intelligence to Drive Business Transformation: A Gartner Trend Insight Report,” August 2017

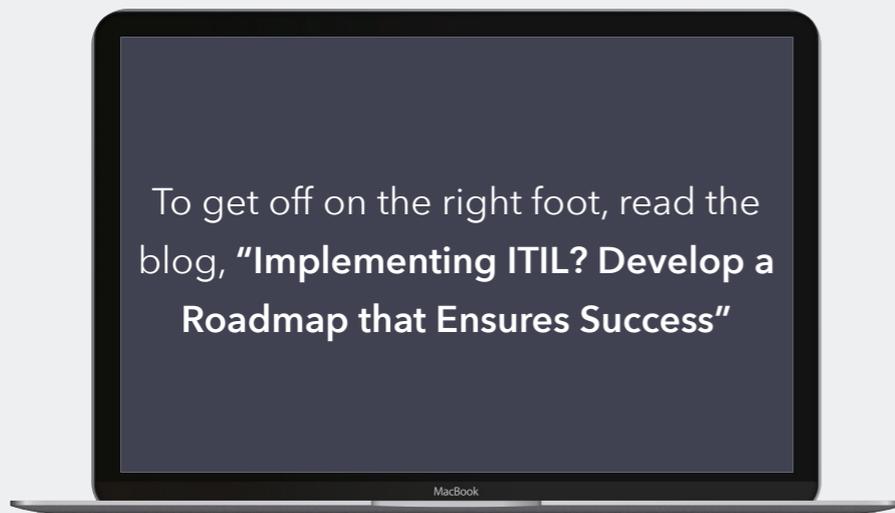
## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
Sin #1: Idolatry.....	3
Sin #2: Imbalance .....	4
Sin #3: Over-ambition .....	5
Sin #4: Complacency .....	6
Sin #5: Ignorance .....	7
Sin #6: Tyranny.....	8
Sin #7: Rigidity.....	9
Conclusion .....	10



### Need more inspiration?

If your approach to ITIL isn't paying dividends, why not step back and rethink your implementation? It's never too late to develop an ITIL roadmap that ensures you arrive at your desired outcomes.



## Idolatry

ITIL provides a set of recommended best practices, but it doesn't hold all of the answers. When you look to ITIL as the "be all and end all"—instead of the means to an end—you can easily become misguided. Adhering too tightly to ITIL often fosters a false belief that processes outweigh outcomes.

While not innately complex, ITIL can begin to look that way when you apply it too literally. As you implement more processes, the complexity only grows. If you allow ITIL to consume your thinking and dictate your approach, you'll soon be overwhelmed and blind to new opportunities or options for doing things better. Even relatively simple changes and straightforward releases can become unwieldy and slow to implement.

### Guidance: Don't take ITIL too literally

To overcome these obstacles, exercise free will. Be selective about what ITIL processes—and what aspects of each process—you do and don't implement. Even ITIL encourages you to view its framework as a source of counsel, not as a set of commandments to live by. In every publication, you'll find reminders to "adopt and adapt" best practices to work in your specific environment and meet your individual needs.

As you develop your own approach, consider that with the release of ITIL 4, you may be tempted to rapidly adopt the new processes as outlined within the updated guidance. However, it's likely that some of those practices, such as Agile, Lean, and DevOps, are already in place within your organization. If that's the case, start by working within and/or alongside those established processes. But, even if Agile/Lean/DevOps are new to your organization, it's important to adjust your approach based on business priorities, the maturity level of your organization, and the resources that can be reasonably applied.

# 2



## Need more inspiration?

While there's no denying that ITIL is a powerful tool for managing risk, it can also help you accelerate your service delivery.

To learn how to tune ITIL for top performance, read the blog, **"The Need for Speed: Soup Up Your ITIL Engine with Agile, Lean, and DevOps Approaches"**

## Imbalance

ITIL was born in an era when process control and risk mitigation were the gospel of the day (think mainframes and waterfall development). Concepts like "welcome changes" and "deliver early and continuously" were anathema to this thinking.

Because of its roots in risk aversion and waterfall development, ITIL is often not balanced with speed and efficiency. When you're rolling out big changes—instead of smaller, incremental ones—you can fall prey to unnecessary delays, inefficient use of resources, and spiraling costs. Ironically, this also increases risk, instead of mitigating it.

### Guidance: Keep risk in perspective

While it's important to standardize processes and manage risk, you must balance these ideals with a bias toward outcomes and time to value. To keep pace with today's rate of change, success will be found by borrowing the best from ITIL and combining it with other principles.

To ensure a balanced approach to risk and speed, evaluate risk over the complete value chain. Classify risk into categories ranging from "acceptable" or "low" to "unacceptable" or "severe," and regularly evaluate your approach against these measures. And with ITIL 4's guidance on Lean and Agile best practices, you'll be able to go even faster, eliminating waste and delivering more incremental value on a continual basis.

# 3



## Need more inspiration?

Some people think of Agile as just a software development methodology. But IT departments can also benefit by adopting Agile methodologies..



## Over-Ambition

Consider over-ambition to be like gluttony's more well-intentioned (and more civilized) cousin. In your desire to get it all done, you bite off more than you can chew. You end up with too many over-scoped projects and implementations of biblical proportions, taking as long as 18 months or more.

While done with the best of intentions, over-ambition inevitably comes at the cost of speed. When you're moving too slowly, you're not serving your organization as well as you could. And by the time you do complete that epic implementation, your enterprise's strategic priorities have inevitably changed.

### Guidance: Incorporate agile practices

ITIL 4 offers strong guidance around Agile, particularly when it comes to prioritizing processes based on anticipated impact, solving your most critical challenges first, then maturing your processes over time. By implementing in phases, making smaller changes more frequently, and progressing iteratively, you'll gain invaluable feedback, identify opportunities to course correct, and ultimately ensure a better outcome.

*"By their nature, ITSM processes were not intended to be complex or bureaucratic. Agile Service Management strives to instill Agile values into scaled ITSM processes, thereby increasing IT's end-to-end agility and ensuring consistency and speed."*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Jayne Gordon Gill, Agile Service Management Guide, DevOps Institute.

# 4



## Need more inspiration?

Continual improvement is one of those things that everybody talks about, but few do really well. While this alone could discourage you from pursuing CSI at all, you can effectively practice what you preach.

To learn how you can succeed at CSI, read the blog, **"7 Steps to Continual Service Improvement (CSI) Success"**

## Complacency

Complacency happens when we get too comfortable with our way of doing things and stop regarding our work with a critical eye. For IT teams, this manifests when a process implementation is considered "done." While you need to keep moving forward, you also need to look back (and from side to side) to identify opportunities for improvement.

Your business is dynamic, and priorities change. When you become complacent—or become too fixated on the process itself—you lose sight of the critical adjustments needed to remain aligned to shifting organizational needs. Without a clear focus on the big picture, you'll inevitably veer off course, spending precious resources on activities that don't deliver value back to the business.

### Guidance: Prioritize continual service improvement

You can overcome complacency by establishing a culture of continual improvement (formerly referred to by ITIL v3 as "continuous service improvement"), an often-overlooked core principle of ITIL. Develop this culture by establishing a consistent cadence and method for evaluating and refining processes. Get "Lean" by being ruthless about identifying and eliminating waste in your processes. And look to DevOps to identify processes you can automate.

In addition, it's important to incorporate proactive measures to identify emerging business requirements and evolve or re-engineer processes accordingly. Use ITIL 4's continual improvement guidance to ensure your team is continually identifying and implementing improvements that align to changing business needs.

# 5



## Need more inspiration?

There's a saying that you can only improve what you measure. KPIs provide a measure of how effectively you're achieving key objectives. But how can you be sure you're measuring the right things?

To avoid the most common mistakes IT teams make with their ITSM metrics, read the blog, **"3 Reasons Your Service Desk Metrics Are Measuring the Wrong Things"**

## Ignorance

Like ITIL, ignorance is easily misunderstood. To be clear: it doesn't mean stupidity; rather, it means a lack of knowledge or awareness. With ITIL implementations, ignorance occurs when you're operating without visibility into the impact your resources and efforts are having on longer-term outcomes.

IT teams are often flying blind because of lack of commitment to KPIs, too many KPIs, or the wrong KPIs. This is often caused—if not exacerbated—by an inability to surface the right data through dashboards or reporting and a failure to communicate the most critical data to the right people. If you don't define the right KPIs in relationship to ITIL, you miss important opportunities to optimize your processes or—equally problematic—you waste time optimizing the wrong ones.

### Guidance: Commit to the right KPIs

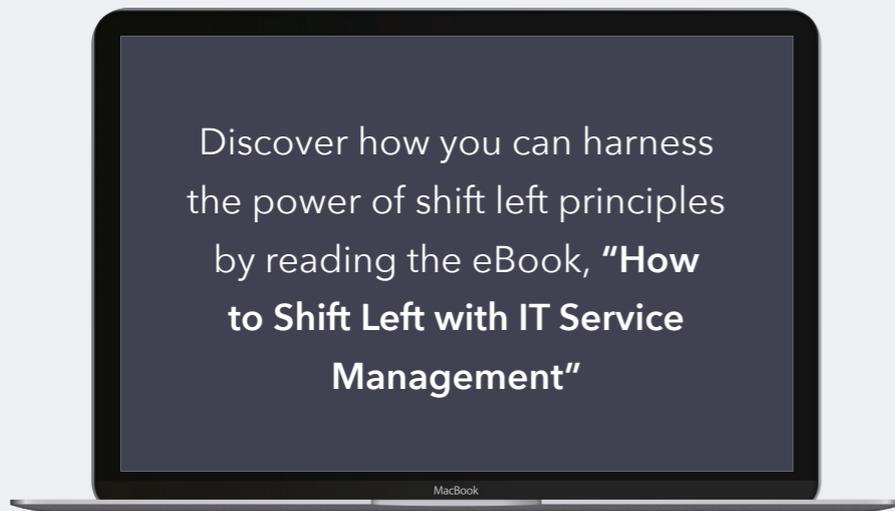
You overcome ignorance by employing ITIL's guidance about KPIs. Start by identifying the critical success factors of a successful process or service. Ensure these KPIs transcend silos and processes to ensure delivery of the right outcomes and quick time to value.

You'll want to establish a meaningful reporting process, identify the right people to include, and commit to convening regularly. When determining your most important KPIs, include both quantitative metrics (like time to resolution and first contact resolution), as well as qualitative ones (like customer satisfaction), and review regularly.



### Need more inspiration?

You've heard of "shift left" as a means to increase agility, reduce cost, and improve product and release quality in the world of software development. But shifting left also provides a powerful method for optimizing IT service management.



## Tyranny

Traditional ITIL implementations—which derive from an era when the primary concerns were incident handling and operational work—can result in an overwhelming amount of low-value work being placed on the service desk technician.

When your team is inundated with repetitive, routine tasks, your pace of service delivery inevitably slows, as does your ability to adjust to changing priorities.

### Guidance: "Shift left" where possible

To escape tyranny, "shift left" at each tier of the service desk, from level zero (self-service) to L3 expert technicians. By moving problem resolution as close to the end user as possible, you'll liberate your team to take on more challenging, high-value initiatives and to respond more rapidly to shifting organizational needs.

To borrow from DevOps, automation is your ally here. Start by automating routine and repetitive tasks, such as password resets. And prioritize the deployment of a self-service portal and knowledge base. When you enable your users to resolve problems themselves, you'll be amazed at how many resources you free up.

"Shift left should mean more than just self-service or web submission (automation). Shift left is about better service and achieving better business results."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Allison Munn, "7 Experts on What Shift Left Means for IT Departments," Cherwell (blog), Aug 18, 2017.

# 7



## Need more inspiration?

If you're still burdened by an antiquated ITSM tool, you'll know how much time and expense are required to make even simple changes. A modern codeless solution will allow customization like you've only dreamed of until now.

To be sure you're getting the real deal, read the blog, **"How to Know When a "Codeless" ITSM Solution is Truly Codeless"**

## Rigidity

While other sins are characterized by people and processes, rigidity is a symptom of poor technology. If you're still working with a legacy ITSM tool, you know what we're talking about. It's almost impossible to go faster when you lack the tools to support agility, flexibility, and extensibility.

If you're the victim of an inflexible service management platform, you can't implement changes or build out new capabilities quickly enough to meet the needs of the business. Overly reliant on developers, you're at the mercy of competing development priorities, lengthy queues, and high project costs.

### Guidance: Adopt a low code ITSM platform

Configuring your service management platform to meet your needs shouldn't require an act of god—or an army of developers. If your current tech can't support your new, optimized approach to ITIL, now would be a good time to entertain a switch.

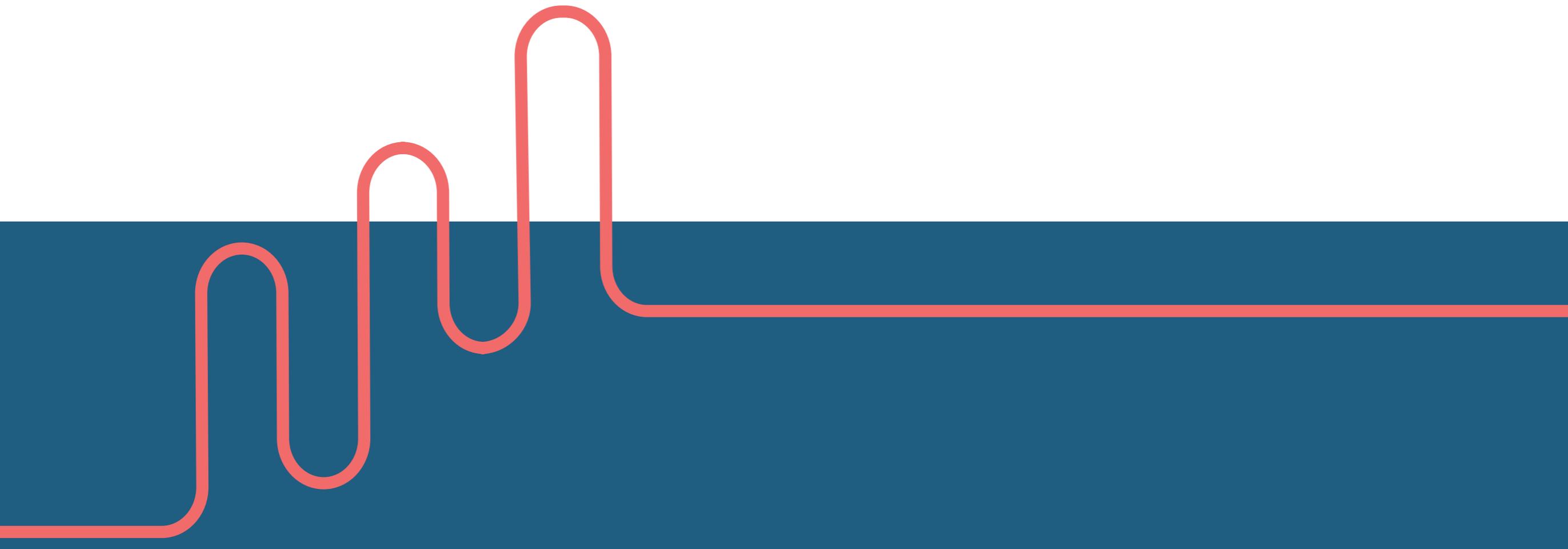
You'll find success by adopting a low-code (sometimes referred to as "codeless") platform that provides out-of-the-box ITIL best practices and an Agile approach to configuration. Your service desk admins should be able to quickly and easily configure portals, dashboards, forms, and workflows, as well as perform upgrades. When your ITSM tool is working for you—not the other way around—your team will be capable of fast-tracking the ITSM and digital initiatives that enable your business to meet its goals.

## Conclusion

ITIL should be viewed as a means to an end, not the end itself. When applied judiciously—but not religiously—and in combination with ITIL 4's guidance surrounding Agile, Lean, and DevOps principles, ITIL will provide the framework and guidance your service desk team needs to rapidly deliver the outcomes the business demands.

If your current ITSM tool is slowing you down, download the 4-in-1 software evaluation toolkit for the resources you need to find a modern, flexible ITSM solution that will put you on the fast track to success.





**cherwell**

