The Seven Critical ITIL Success Factors / Enabler

Contributed by David Noel-Davies

Consider the analogy that these seven enablers are the heart
of your ITSM initiative with seven valves that pump the lifeblood through a
healthy ITIL program. Each enabler needs to be healthy to run the marathon and
cross the finish line; however, that being said, not every company is running a
marathon and many have a much more modest ITSM goal.

Even so, each value
needs to have some capacity even at a limited level for success. If one or more
of these valves is blocked or partially constrained, the reality o heart surgery may be required to keep the program alive.

Enabler – Constraint – Blockage

Before we look at each of the critical success factors in
detail, it would be helpful to clearly define what is meant by an enabler or
constraint. Consider that any improvement initiative has certain critical
success factors that are required to make the goals and deliverables of the
initiative achievable. We often take those factors for granted and do not give
them much consideration until they run out or their lack of quality places the
initiative at risk.

Making the naive assumption that these critical factors are
present in enough quality and quantity is often a fatal mistake. Understanding
what these factors are and managing the risks related to their absence is key to knowing if you have sufficient means to achieve your
ends.

To illustrate this concept, consider the analogy of getting
to work on a Monday morning, assuming that you commute to work in your own mode
of transportation. To get from home to the office parking lot, you require
several enablers to be in place though you probably did not give them much
thought as you were sipping your morningbeverage .

The 7 Enablers:

1) Car: A car or some form of transportation is the most
obvious enabler; however, a car alone will not make the journey possible.

(ITSM Project Equivalent: An approved project, IT Management
Tool)

2) Fuel, Money: The car needs fuel and you need money (more

and more these days) to fill the car with fuel.

 (ITSM Project
Equivalent: Resources: The very real People, Time and Budget required for the
project)

3) Directions: A car with a full tank of gas without a
vision or goal of where you are headed is not much use unless you are out for a
joyride.

(ITSM Project Equivalent: A clear vision, strategy and
roadmap plan over a realistic time frame)

4) Roads: We often assume that the road will simply be there
when we start driving; however, in many countries this is not an assumption we
can safely make. Even in the countries that have a mature infrastructure the
occurrence of unanticipated accidents, road construction and detours can often
remove the assumption of a good and quick road from our path.

(ITSM Project Equivalent: Agreed and documented, process,
policies, metrics and on-going governance structures)

5) A Driver's License: You may think that a license is not
required to drive, but consider that your driver's license represents
governance, policy and rules of the road by which all drivers must adhere to,
the resulting lack of which would present a chaotic and dangerous environment
in which to drive.

(ITSM Project Equivalent: ITIL Certification as some element
of proof that your team or the consultant you hired has based a minimum level
of education in order to understand the problem if not the answer)

6) Knowledge & Skill: You need to know how to drive your
car! You gain knowledge from time spent in a driver's education class and even
some guided road trials. But real experience and "skill" comes from having
driven your car in all types of weather in different climates and geographic
regions.

(ITSM Project Equivalent: Contrary to some people's opinions
certification and fancy lapel pins are not enough! You need people you can rely
on for answers that have been in the trenches and have the ITSM lessons learned
battle scars to prove it)

While most of us don't think of them on a daily basis, these
enablers are critical to actually achieving our goal of getting to work on
time. If even one of these critical factors is limited in quantity or quality,
the likelihood of succeeding at our or mission of getting to work is at risk.