

# Skills & Capabilities Required of a 2020 ITSM Professional

FEATURING INSIGHTS FROM  
20 SERVICE MANAGEMENT EXPERTS,  
INFLUENCERS, AND ANALYSTS



# Introduction

by Sarah Lahav, CEO SysAid Technologies



The world of IT will look very different in 2020, as will the roles of IT service management (ITSM) professionals. The roles might still be doing elements of incident management, capacity planning, service level management, IT financial management, etc. But some of these are the part of the ITSM iceberg that can stay hidden below the water from a business perspective. And while these roles are collectively key to allowing the ITSM iceberg to float, there are other more visible “tip of the iceberg” aspects of ITSM roles that will be critically important to the ongoing success of the corporate ITSM team:

- Delivering services that consistently meet business needs, including the increasing demands of employees
- Ensuring that the business can continue working (on a day-to-day basis), including the quality of IT support capabilities
- That new internal and externally facing capabilities are seamlessly added (or changed) as needed
- Regularly delivering improvements across services, operations, and performance
- Providing insight that helps everything to be the best it can be

And, as corporate IT moves further away from being a technology-centric discipline, to one with a much greater focus on human engagement despite the introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and business value, the typical skills required of ITSM professionals will need to evolve. But what needs to change? What new skills and capabilities are required for ITSM professionals to effectively transition to meet the needs of 2020?

To help understand this future capability need, SysAid engaged with 20 ITSM experts, influencers, and analysts, to get their views and perspectives on the ITSM professional role of 2020.

You’ll see that the responses were varied, spanning multiple topics – both skills and capabilities – with a collective agreement that, as a whole, capabilities vary depending on your specific role. It was, however, relatively easy to see common themes and opinions emerging on what needs to be developed ahead of 2020. And this is exactly what our eBook explores.

**I hope that you find our eBook both interesting and informative – please reach out if you would like more information on getting ready for the future of ITSM.**

# Meet Our Contributors

The following 20 people, from across a range of ITSM-industry roles and geographies, each kindly offered up their thoughts and opinions on what skills and capabilities will be required of ITSM professionals in 2020 and beyond.



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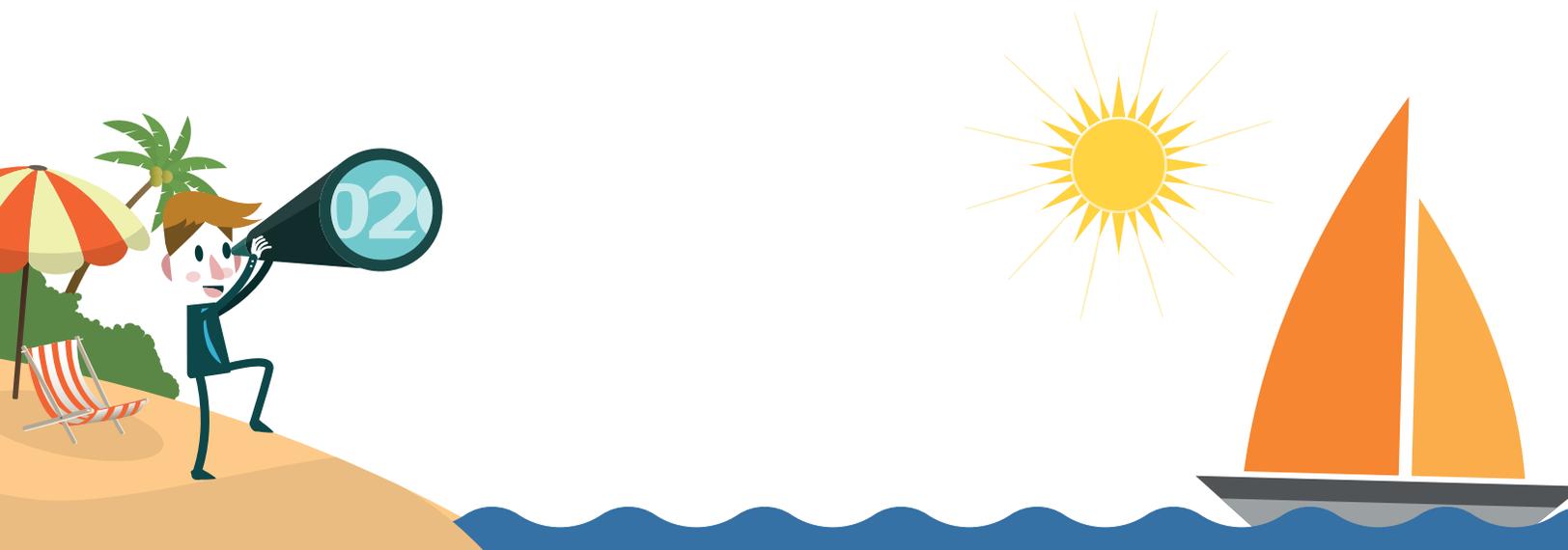
**Dave van Herpen**  
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# So What Skills and Capabilities are Required of a 2020 ITSM Professional?

As already mentioned, the collaborator responses provided a mix of desired skills and capabilities; and many would argue that in some cases differentiating between a skill and capability is not a black-or-white exercise – opinions will differ. The important thing is not to waste time defining each of the following as either a skill or a capability but to understand what each means in the context of your organization and its people.

- 1 An understanding of **AI and Analytics** and associated personal capabilities
- 2 **Knowledge Management** capabilities
- 3 **Business Relationship Management (BRM)** capabilities
- 4 An understanding of what **Business Value** is and how to create it
- 5 **Customer Engagement** skills
- 6 **Communication and Collaboration** skills
- 7 **Problem Solving** skills and capabilities
- 8 A focus on **Innovation** for better business outcomes
- 9 A desire for **Continual Learning**
- 10 Personal **Flexibility and Agility**, with the ability to deal with complexity

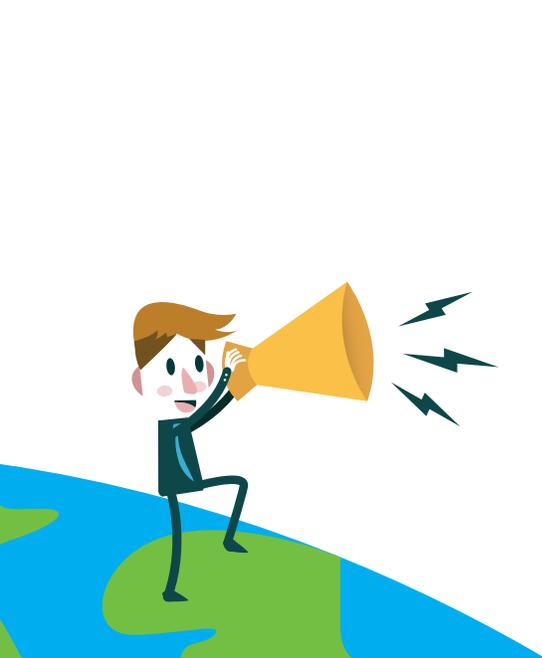
However, before we dive into the detail of these skills and capabilities, let's start with a selection of overriding insights from some of our contributors.



**Michelle Goldsmith**

*“The breadth and depth of knowledge required within service management is substantial. It’s usually not that ITSM professionals need to be hugely technical but knowledge of technology and an eye on the future certainly helps in engaging customers and sharing the possibilities. We all need to continually renew skills based on rapidly changing customer needs, technologies, and frenetic environments – and this will continue to mean that the traditional approach of gaining expertise in just one area will become a thing of the past.*

*Not every ITSM professional requires expert skills across all capabilities of course. I believe that by 2020 all organizations will value staff that are expert (or specialized) in one capability, but also have a breadth of knowledge. This type of competence enables collaboration between the different capabilities as part of cross functional teams delivering service or products. This is the T-shaped professional.”*

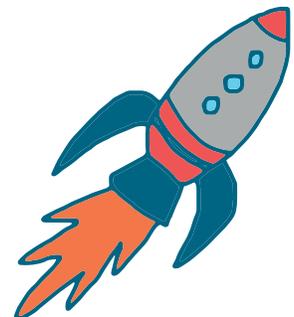


**Suresh GP**

*“ITSM today is at an interesting inflexion point, with a need to redefine its value proposition in the wake of Agile, DevOps, Internet of Things (IoT), and digital transformation. From an organizational standpoint, by 2020, ITSM needs to have shifted from cost efficiency to value differentiator.”*

**Daniel Card**

*“By 2020, we’ll hopefully see a broader range of skills and capabilities in the ITSM space, with a focus on IT-enabled outcomes driven by a hybrid of human and technology driven capabilities. The robot uprising may come one day, but in 2020 the ITSM professional will work both sides to continue to improve technology service delivery excellence.”*





**Kaimar Karu**

*“I believe that by 2020, a small but vocal number of ITSM professionals will have started to actively question the viability of ITSM as a stand-alone discipline. For ITSM to work as intended, it has to be integrated with enterprise-level service management (across all business services and products) and provide guidance for people involved in managing IT capabilities in the organization, whatever the team or department. As of today, many of our initiatives that might be described as ITSM on paper are, in fact, about IT operations management – and we still hear stories about ‘aligning IT with the business,’ although we should know better.*”

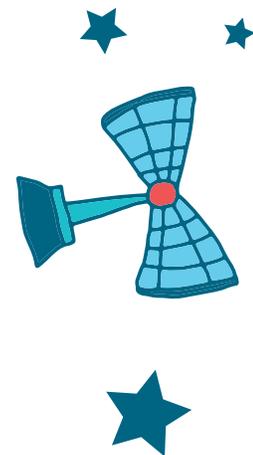
*We have learned about service management, we have been thinking about improving service management, but many in the industry have not been able to act on what they believe is necessary. The coming years will, I believe, provide an opportunity for ITSM professionals to get involved in enterprise-level service management initiatives and, with the right skills, become key players in these significant improvement programs.”*





**Charles Araujo**

*“By 2020, most enterprise organizations will be well on their way to adopting a hybrid IT management approach in which workloads seamlessly traverse an integrated architecture that includes legacy infrastructure, on-premises, and co-located private cloud deployments and public cloud environments. This will have a dramatic impact on the way organizations manage IT and IT services as the vast majority of those services will rely on technology stacks that are at least partially outside of the direct control of IT. In this environment, ITSM professionals will need to master a new set of skills and capabilities to provide value to the organization.”*



# Capabilities Required of a 2020 ITSM Professional

- ① An understanding of **AI and Analytics** and associated personal capabilities
- ② **Knowledge Management** capabilities
- ③ **Business Relationship Management (BRM)** capabilities
- ④ An understanding of what **Business Value** is and how to create it
- ⑤ **Customer Engagement** skills
- ⑥ **Communication and Collaboration** skills
- ⑦ **Problem Solving** skills and capabilities
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- ⑨ A desire for **Continual Learning**
- ⑩ Personal **Flexibility and Agility**, with the ability to deal with complexity



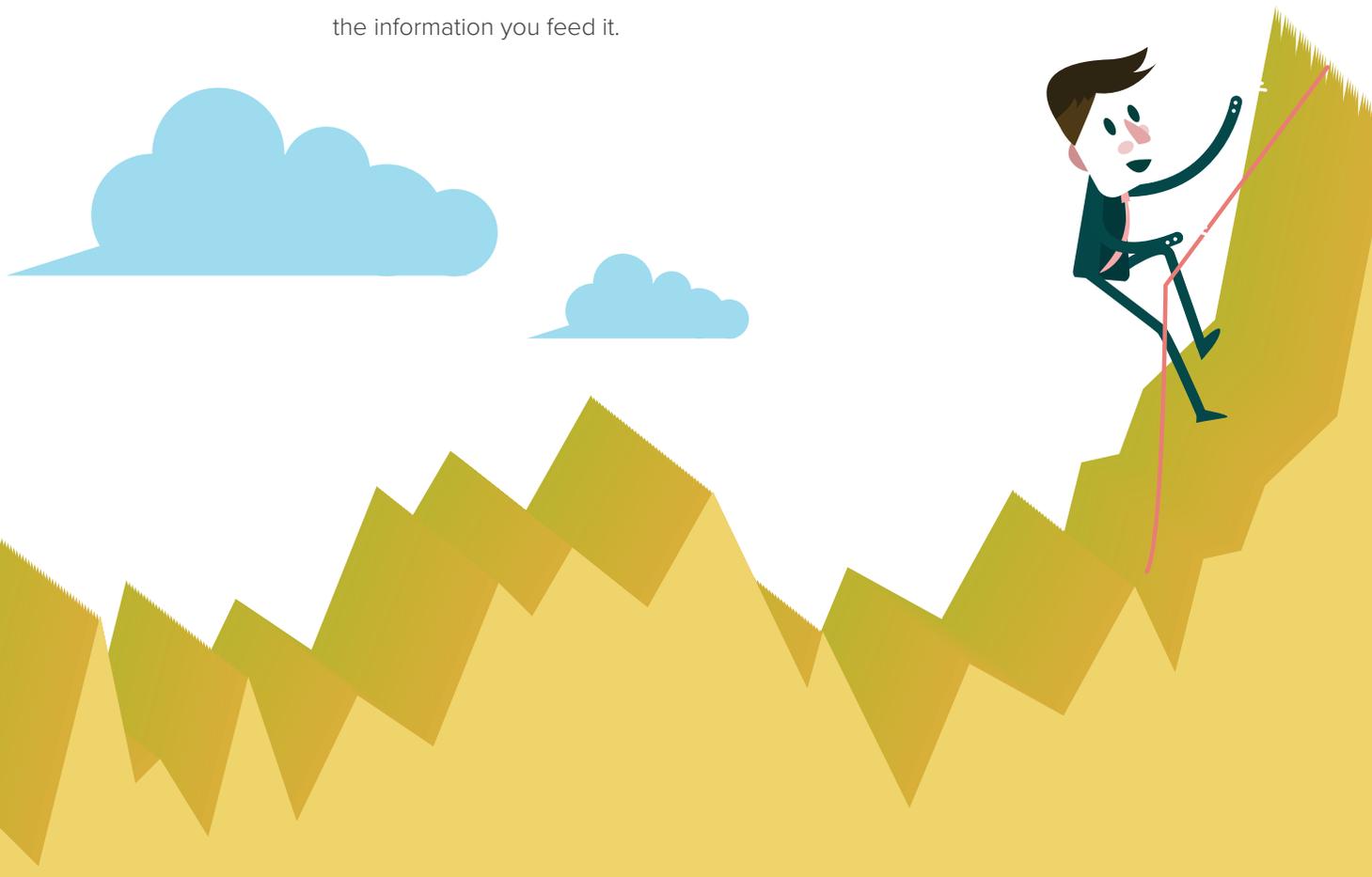


# An understanding of **AI and Analytics** and associated personal capabilities

AI is no longer confined to science fiction movies – it's a modern day reality and one that will continue to impact the IT service desk as the years progress. From virtual assistants and virtual agents, to chatbots and automated operations, AI will enable more advanced and efficient IT operations.

There is a school of thought that many IT teams are fearful of a world where robots replace them and make their jobs redundant, but fear not. The key opportunities for AI lie within automating non value-adding IT activities and assisting with “reactive” tasks. Thus leaving IT staff with more time for proactive, value-adding work. AI also enables IT support teams to make better-informed decisions, based on the ability of the technology to handle (and analyze) larger data sets and intelligence-based reporting, alerting, and data mining.

However, it's critically important to understand that successful AI usage and practices be built on solid knowledge management foundations. Without them, any AI initiative undertaken is liable to fail. After all, the AI technology is only as good as the information you feed it.





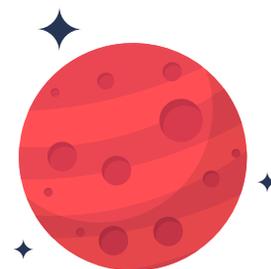
**Earl Begley**

*“AI will help service management practitioners quickly identify trends in incident and request process flows, help tune monitoring algorithms for events, identify opportunities for problem management teams, and help customers find quality answers to their issues.”*



**Daniel Card**

*“By 2020, organizations will have both active and passive agents feeding real and semi-real-time data into centralized management systems, and machine learning will be leveraged to drive management information insight to the business so that technology decisions can be made.”*





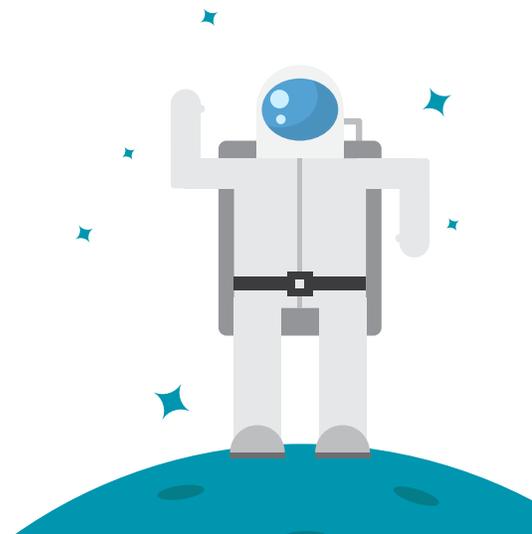
**Stephen Mann**

*“IT support staff will be technology-assisted – from knowledge exploitation, through collaboration, to using newer, AI-based capabilities for the purpose of eliminating manual activities and extending the human capacity for analytics and comprehension.”*



**John Custy**

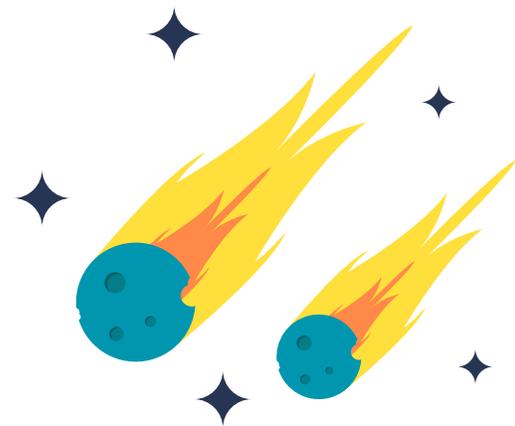
*“ITSM professionals need to be able to move from providing reactive analytics (what happened last month) to predictive. Management already knows what happened last week and last month, they need (and want) to better understand the impact of decisions. More predictive analytics are needed to reduce risk and increase probability of successes.”*





**Dennis Drogseth**

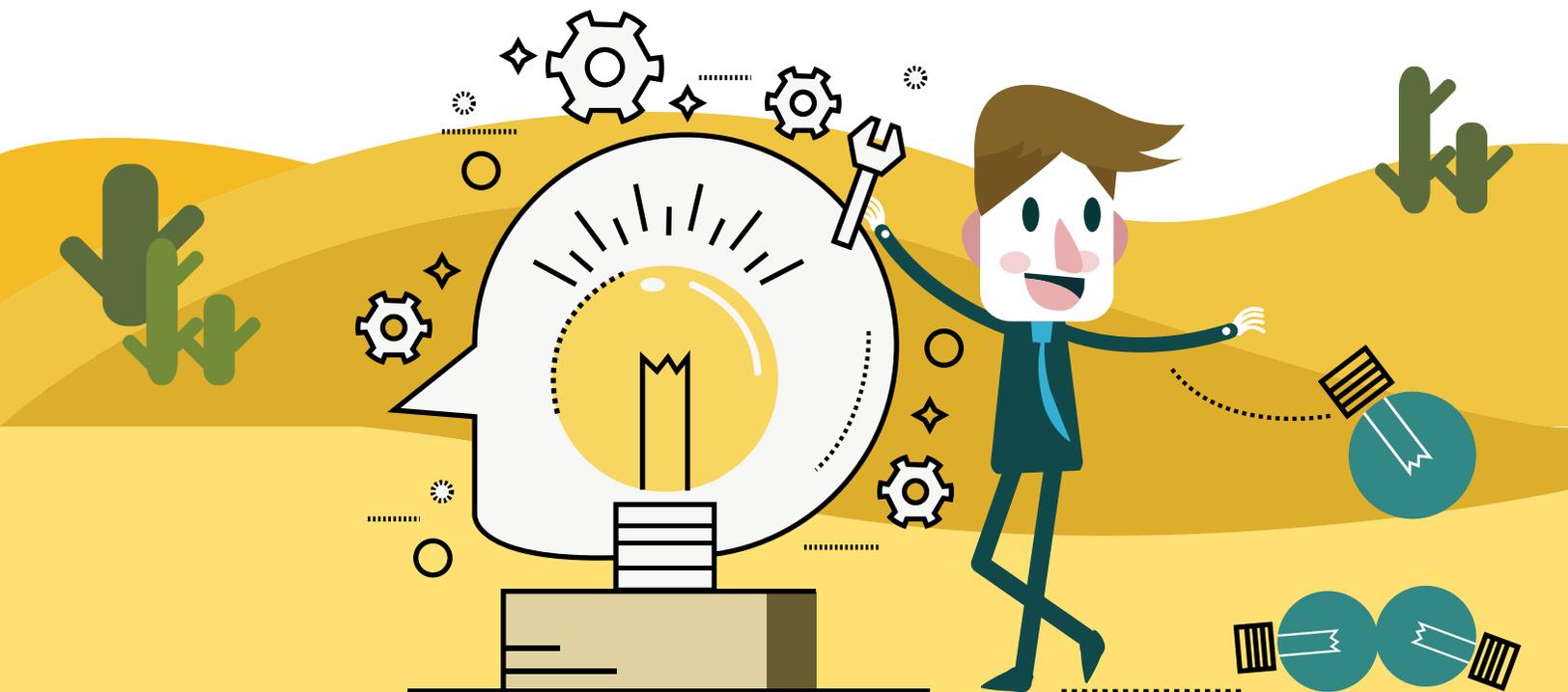
*“In 2020, ITSM professionals must have AI and analytics skills – learning how to assimilate more proactive insights into everything from major incident-related outages, to if/then options for capacity and change management, to governance data on IT efficiencies that is already of critical value in a growing number of IT environments. While managing and training AI for tasks (such as onboarding new employees and routine incident handling) will become increasingly valuable for ITSM professionals in the future.”*



## 2 Knowledge Management capabilities

It's easy for ITSM professionals to get carried away with the “new and exciting stuff,” especially in light of new AI technologies or similar. You might want to play with a chatbot, or spend the day talking to Alexa to see how she can help you work more efficiently. This is great, but please don't forget about the core elements of ITSM, such as knowledge management. For example, [many self-service \(technology\) initiatives have failed in recent years](#) due to the neglect of knowledge creation and nurturing, and the same will be true of your AI initiatives if you don't create the appropriate knowledge groundwork today.

AI and knowledge management are two sides of the same coin. Essentially, machines learn as human beings do – through experience, and through education, the latter in this case being “available knowledge.” And thus without effective knowledge management capabilities, organizations will struggle to succeed with their AI initiatives.





**Aprill Allen**

*“It’s only through effective knowledge workflows in the service desk that you will have the material your chatbot needs to be useful to your customers.”*



**John Custy**

*“Knowledge management capabilities needs to be Agile and Lean, and I believe that Knowledge Center Services (KCS) is currently the only knowledge management framework available that can help ITSM professionals to meet these requirements.”*





**Stephen Mann**

*“ITSM professionals need to be supported by fit-for-purpose knowledge preservation and exploitation capabilities.”*



**Doug Tedder**

*“As teams and the user experience continue to become more virtualized, effective collaboration will become a ‘must have’ skill set for the ITSM 2020 professional. But because of the very nature of virtualized teams, collaboration becomes even more challenging than it is today. The answer? Knowledge management.*

*An effective knowledge management approach provides a crucial component for enabling collaboration now – and even more so in the future. And there’s an added benefit of knowledge management, especially in the digital economy. Having the right knowledge at the right time differentiates the user experience – and separates a company from its competitors.”*



## 3 Business Relationship Management (BRM) capabilities

Effective BRM helps to bridge the gap between IT and other lines of business, and helps to stimulate, surface, and shape business demand for your product and services, while ensuring that the potential business value from those products and services is captured, optimized, and communicated.

Come 2020, it will be impossible for IT to continue to work in a silo, and BRM will be pivotal to IT's success. Importantly, BRM is about so much more than better IT to business alignment. In fact, BRM should be used to help dispel the talk of such things – after all, the IT department is part of the business not something separate.



**Mark Smalley**

*“ITSM professionals need to interact as equal co-workers in a symbiotic relationship with the business, rather than as a subservient order-taker in a transactional demand-supply relationship. Whether IT is aligned or converged, there is a need for IT to become the business’ valued and respected partner. This starts with how IT regards itself. IT people need to up their language and stop talking about themselves just as providers of IT services to customers.”*

**Matthew Burrows**

*“I believe that relationship management (as defined by SFIA - the Skills Framework for the Information Age) is an essential competency for most business relationship managers, account managers, service delivery managers, consultants, and people owning the relationships with other parties internally or externally, including those working in a service integration and management (SIAM) multi-vendor environment.”*





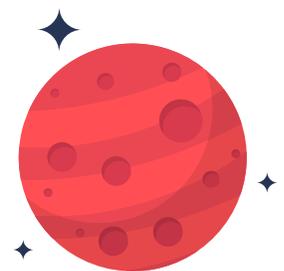
**Roy Atkinson**

*“Not just by 2020, but now, today, ITSM professionals need BRM, at all levels – taking into account that navigating and changing organizational culture is a large part of creating successful business outcomes.”*



**Kaimar Karu**

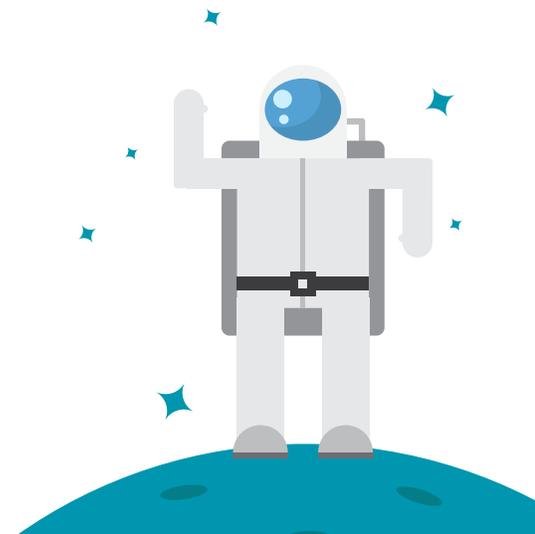
*“While we still work in a team operating under the ‘ITSM’ banner, our job is to ensure that our services contribute to increased business value, our improvements contribute to increased business value, and our knowledge and experience can be best used to help the organization increase business value.”*





**Scarlett Bayes**

*“For some time, the typical trope of IT was that it was treated as a separate entity to the business, and it would be considered last in any business decisions. However, businesses are starting to realize that inviting IT to the table is necessary for helping the business to achieve their goals and succeed. ITSM processes can also be particularly useful if implemented across the business; therefore, an ITSM professional in 2020 will need to have a good knowledge of the business, and understand how ITSM can, not only support the business, but actively help it improve performance and efficiency.”*



## ④ An understanding of what **Business Value** is and how to create it

IT departments and those that work within them might need to reset their calibration as we approach 2020. Because what we literally call ourselves can, either consciously or subconsciously, drive what we do and ultimately deliver at work. In the case of “ITSM professional,” it’s a term that talks about what someone does, i.e. ITSM, rather than what they achieve through their “doing.” It’s also too easy for people to be focused on the IT rather than what’s achieved – at a business level – through the use of that IT (or IT services).

Thus, by 2020, we need to move ITSM professionals on from “doing ITSM” to fulfilling a far more business-focused and effective purpose. As to what this new role is called, let’s ask the customer how they see the role(s) helping them, and from that a suitable name might appear. Whatever’s chosen, it should ideally reflect better business outcomes rather than what’s being done “internally.” There is, of course, a need to create a generic role title to allow good practices to be collected and shared across the world.





**Charles Araujo**

*“While ITSM should have always been focused on business value, the reality is that most ITSM initiatives have been process, or at best, service-focused. In the near future, the only driver will be business value – specifically the contribution to competitive differentiation that any technology or platform makes to the organization. ITSM professionals in 2020 will need to develop an acute awareness of how the organization creates value, what differentiates it in the market, and how the various technologies that support the organization directly contribute to both.”*



**Earl Begley**

*“For years, the premise of having a service management practice has been ‘proving IT’s value to the business.’ Now we’re seeing a shift in organizational thinking where leadership is no longer worried about IT showing value. Now, leadership is looking for specific proof that IT is not a cost center but clearly provides positive impact to the bottom line. This means IT will need to show – via metrics, cost models, and continual service improvement opportunities – how IT functions improve the bottom line for the organization.”*





**Greg Sanker**

*“Successful business leaders and up-and-coming millennial leaders will have limited tolerance for traditional IT delivery models; and the distinction between IT as a service provider and just a part of the business will disappear. ITSM professionals will increasingly be called to manage line of business services in the same manner as marketing, manufacturing, and sales. ITSM must jettison its process-focused roots and get in the business-value game.”*



**Dave van Herpen**

*“In 2020, ITSM professionals will need to be value-driven, in everything. Having an adaptive and customer-focused mindset (be it with Agile, Lean, or DevOps perspectives) is essential to deliver valuable and continuously improving services. ITSM professionals need to help the organization build up capabilities to continuously reprioritize any work backlogs, from strategic to operational work items, all with a constant eye on business and customer value, without compromising continuity or allowing deranged technical debt. ITSM professionals should also enable and drive organizational intelligence and resilience in dealing with unexpected events, such as knowledge and capability sharing, improving service testability, enhancing change and release flows, etc.”*





**Roman Jouravlev**

*“ITSM professionals must focus on value – with understanding the value expected by customers and the way it’s being delivered already recognized as crucial for everyone involved in service delivery and management. And it’s not just about understanding; ITSM practitioners should be able to act for the customers’ value, based on their ability to deal with complexity. In some cases these two capabilities create the foundation for the so-called intelligent disobedience – where the standard response is ignored when the information to hand dictates an alternative response.”*



**Suresh GP**

*“While the definition of a service clearly indicates delivering business value by facilitating outcomes, people still struggle to define value, and to measure and harvest it. In 2020, ITSM professionals will need to have a holistic understanding of business processes and value chains, and will need to develop skills related to value management. This has to go beyond quantifiable metrics to outcome management.”*



# 5 Customer Engagement skills

While the IT world at large has been focused on new technologies, from cloud to AI, and new approaches to the delivery of new technology-enabled business capabilities such as DevOps, another important success driver has gained traction in corporate IT – customer experience (CX).

Whether this is viewed from slightly different perspectives such as end-user experience, employee experience, service experience, or something else, there's no escaping the fact that what customers and employees think of the IT department, its services, and customer service is increasingly important. The expectations of both customers and employees is continuing to rise thanks to the continued investment in customer experience improvements in the business-to-consumer (B2C) space, including the availability and quality of customer engagement mechanisms.



**Charles Araujo**

*“While there is much talk about customer engagement and self-service, we’re in the midst of a much larger transition in terms of how customers – internally and externally – engage with an organization and its services along the customer journey. Most notably, engagement is becoming asymmetrical – meaning that it’s no longer occurring through an equal, back-and-forth exchange. Customers (and, increasingly, employees) are engaging with an organization and its products and services across multiple touchpoints, simultaneously, and expect continuity of engagement regardless of the touchpoint or the time between interactions. ITSM professionals will need to rethink their engagement processes and self-service modalities to shift away from the organization being at the center of the engagement to a focus on customer-centricity.”*

**Ivor Macfarlane**

*“Seeing the world through the customers’ eyes is, was, and will be, the critical starting point for establishing ‘the right direction.’ Without getting direction right, effort is all speed and no velocity.”*



**Kaimar Karu**

*“As the role of the IT department (and IT capabilities overall) in enterprises is changing, and an increasing number of business services are heavily dependent on IT, it’s quickly becoming impossible to design IT services without keeping the end customer in mind. Not that it was ever a good idea to not keep them in mind, but let’s be honest, it was possible to get away without doing it. Not anymore. In many cases, the organization itself needs to seriously explore their proposed unique selling point (USP) in the market they operate within, and confirm (or improve) their understanding of what their customers want from them – what outcomes they expect to achieve by using the products and services from your company. ITSM professionals have many (tacit) skills that can be leveraged to open and maintain a continuous dialogue with the customer, but only if we can allow ourselves to come out of the basement and refocus from infrastructure management to value co-creation with our customers. Infrastructure management is still important, but it’s not why we’re here.”*

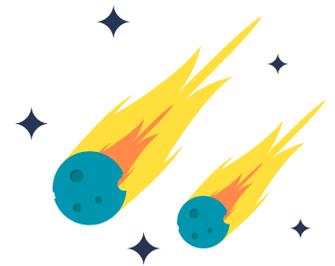


**Aprill Allen**

*“The most important attribute for the service management leader of today is not just having a good ear for the voice of the customer, but the ability to stand in their shoes and take the same steps. Learn how to lead customer journey workshops, so you can be better informed of where the people you support experience friction in their day-to-day interactions with your services and how that friction presents itself.”*

**Greg Sanker**

*“With an aging workforce retiring in droves in the next decade, the workforce will quickly be dominated by millennials. This is the first shift of this magnitude in the information age, and will radically change the user experience expected by the majority of customers. The transition will be abrupt, and those who can quickly understand the implication on service design and customer support will be in high demand.”*



## 6 Communication and Collaboration skills

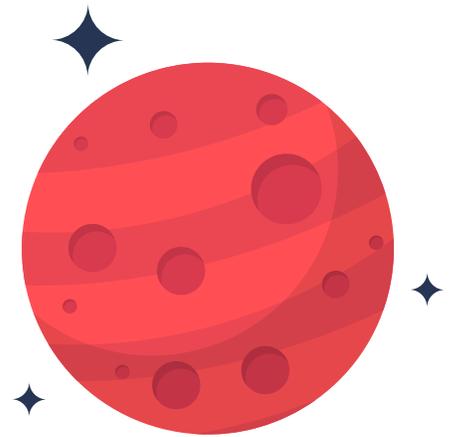
The ITSM industry has, for many years, paid lip service to the softer skills required for effective ITSM, with the commonly espoused mantra of “people, process, and technology – and in that order” often overlooked as the focus has remained on process and technology change/improvement. Things must change though, with the need to get the people “things” right often the missing ingredient in the recipe for delivering the desired business outcomes.

Two people aspects stand out for 2020 - effective communication and collaboration. IT should no longer rely on superior individual performance, and the oft-associated hero mentality. The example of DevOps in particular is proving the power – and superior results – of small teams working together towards a common goal.



**Michelle Goldsmith**

*“Collaboration is crucial in any work environment, no matter how technically advanced or focused it is. Collaboration involves people jointly working with others towards a common goal. And when a team collaborates, it achieves things that each individual could not do on their own. In a collaborative environment, everyone’s contribution is valued and there’s a shared responsibility for outcomes and shared resources. For collaboration to work, cooperation, respect, and trust are required. Cross-functional and cross-capability working supports collaboration, so it’s important to have teams that span the organization’s capabilities and include different skills and perspectives.”*



**Dave van Herpen**

*“Collaboration and dynamic connection should be organized across team and even organizational boundaries. In the future, ITSM professionals will play a big part in organizing this in such a way that the end user/customer will truly benefit from often complex service delivery chains. Especially in terms of short lead times and high adaptability. Agreements and collaboration constructs with partners or suppliers will then enable Agile and DevOps ways of working, stimulate systems thinking across teams and organizations, focus on business value, and continuous improvements, etc.”*

**Roman Jouravlev**

*“As the years progress, ITSM professionals deal less with IT and more with people – customers, users, and partners. And dealing with people requires effective communications.”*

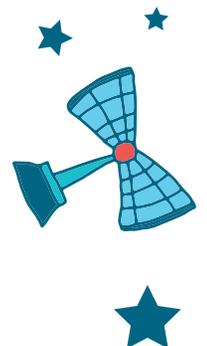


**Daniel Card**

*“Having good communication skills is now essential, from board meetings through to technical-lingo-filled huddles. It’s important for ITSM professionals to be able to articulate business context and requirements, to motivate, and to facilitate to really drive through meaningful technology-driven outcomes.”*

**April Allen**

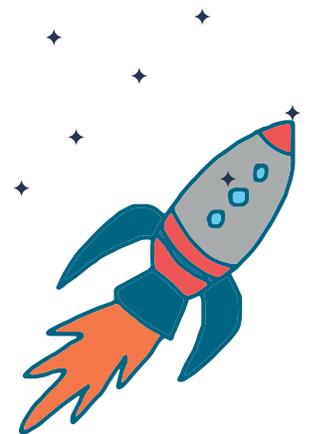
*“By 2020, ITSM professionals will need the ability to collaborate effectively. And the increasing reliance on contingent workforces means we must become pro-level collaborators. We’ve already experienced working with contractors, but roadblocks still exist – communication doesn’t flow, information management is a mess, and it can be hard to know if you’re pulling in the right skills at the right time. If you understand your customer journey well, and can work effectively across time and space with the people you need when you need them, then you can solve just about anything.”*





**Mark Smalley**

*“ITSM professionals need to be able to work in a constellation of small, multi-functional, relatively autonomous, and self-organizing teams that use guidance from Agile, Lean, and DevOps disciplines to co-create value quickly. Multidisciplinary collaboration is the name of the new game, applying these new practices to get work done faster and better. ‘Co-creation’ is a key concept. And despite the misleading language, service is not delivered in the sense of the provider working in isolation until the service is ready to share it with the consumer. Rather, consumer and provider work in close collaboration to create value together.”*



# 7

## Problem Solving skills and capabilities

The ability to solve problems is nothing new. And many ITSM professionals already have the skills to solve problems, as evidenced in their personal lives. Problem solving in the workplace, however, might be a different matter – with people often held back, or feeling unable to make decisions, due to a variety of potential root causes. For instance, micro-management (or other people-limiting management styles), bureaucratic processes, ill-defined roles and responsibilities, or a blame culture that prevents risk taking however small.

So while ITSM professionals can be trained in problem-solving methods and techniques, and provided with tools that facilitate this, there also needs to be a cultural change – think of it as an empowerment – that allows staff to feel free to solve problems, either individually or collectively, as and when needed.





**Michelle Goldsmith**

*“Critical thinking involves being able to use logic and reasoning to interrogate an issue or problem, consider various solutions to the problem, and weigh up the pros and cons of each approach. Critical thinking moves past the application of processes and procedures, and demonstrates an ability to apply a range of techniques to allow contextualization and application no matter what the situation involves. It also involves having the capability to solve issues we have never experienced.”*



**John Custy**

*“Listening, questioning, and problem-solving (structured problem solving) will become more important than ever. Listening will create the link and build the relationship (trust), questioning will ensure that the correct data is collected – allowing the resolution (if known) or having the necessary data to escalate to the right person. Understanding problem-solving techniques (structured questioning, etc.) will be needed to collect the necessary information, while providing the confidence that they’re talking with the right resource.”*





**Roy Atkinson**

*“ITSM professionals will need the ability to proactively solve problems in innovative ways. This requires a ‘beginner’s mind,’ not discounting any solutions until they are shown to be impractical.”*



**Ivor Macfarlane**

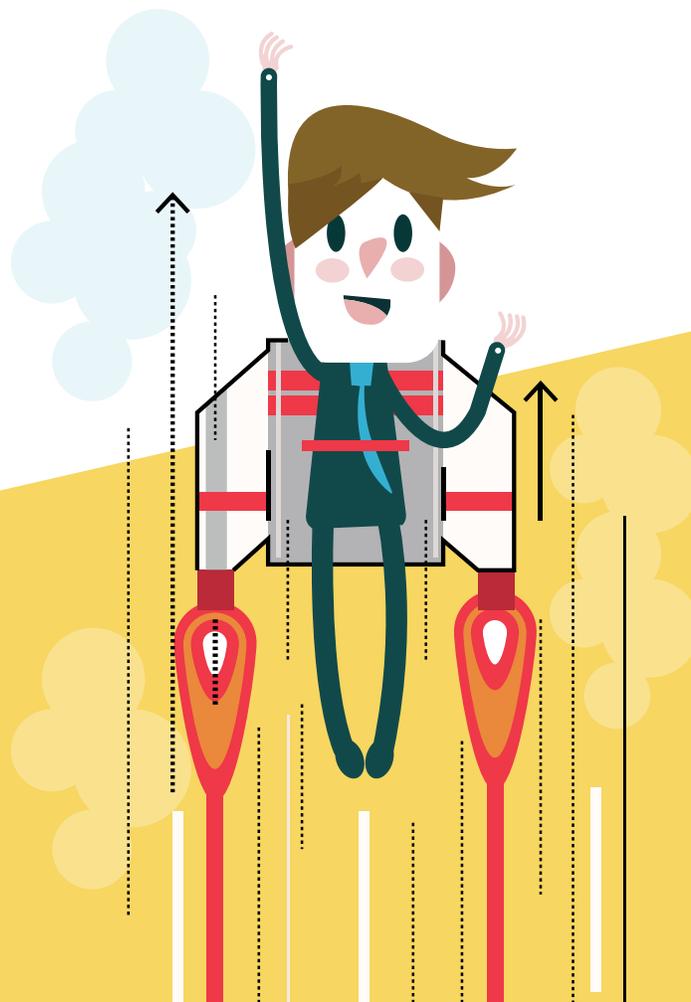
*“Common sense will still likely be rare in 2020, but it won’t be any less useful in solving issues and problems. Seeing when rules need following or when they need breaking, not doing things because we always have, seeing the obvious, and trusting judgement. It’s the most valuable skill. Intelligent disobedience will, hopefully, be more valued. The more we wish to empower people, the more common sense is valued. Without empowerment, costs will rise. So common sense will still be the holy grail of skills.”*



## 8 A focus on **Innovation** for better business outcomes

Innovation is a management buzzword that never seems to go away. It's also often misused and/or confused with similar words such as imagination, creativity, or ideation. The important thing to understand about innovation, and its need, is that it leads to something tangible not just a new idea or concept.

Thus innovation is "the process of translating an idea or invention into a product or service that creates value or for which customers will pay".





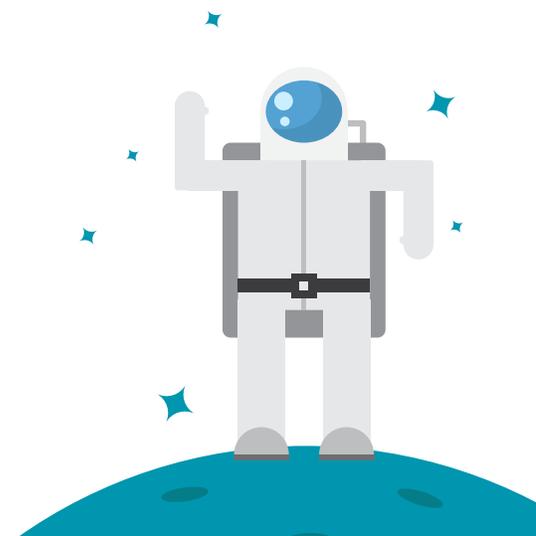
**Scarlett Bayes**

*“Innovation is what drives industries forward, therefore ITSM professionals should be able to take their knowledge and use it to improve how both their own organizations, and the industry as a whole, work and perform. ITSM professionals in 2020, particularly those who are managers, should also encourage others to be innovative, and to use their initiative, as this allows people with fresh ideas or perspectives to realize their full potential in delivering better business outcomes.”*



**Matthew Burrows**

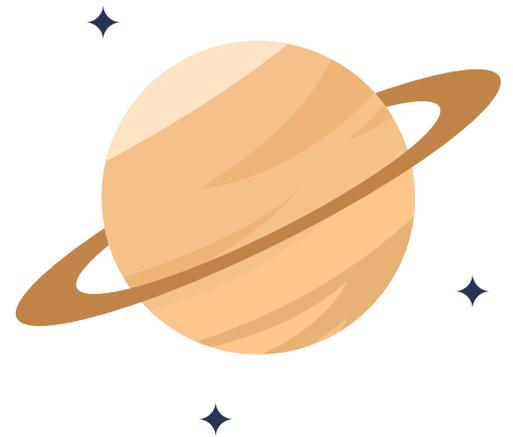
*“By 2020, innovation (and by that I mean proactive monitoring for opportunities where technology drives new ways of conducting business) will be an essential skill for those wanting to drive disruption, digital transformation, and stay ahead of the competition.”*





**Stephen Mann**

*“The ITSM pro of 2020 must help deliver the different types of innovation required to meet future business ambitions. First though, they need to recognize that innovation isn’t just the use of new technologies, and understand the difference between innovation and improvement. For instance, how business-driven innovation differs from technology-driven innovation.”*





**Doug Tedder**

*“To me, innovation is about taking existing capabilities and doing new things with those capabilities in interesting, thought-provoking ways – a skill that will be required of any ITSM professional in 2020. Innovation cannot be thought of in just technology terms; indeed, recent advancements in ITSM can be attributed to applying approaches from other industries to service management in interesting, thought-provoking ways. For example, concepts like Kanban and Lean from the manufacturing industry are being applied to service management with great success. DevOps borrows heavily from Agile software development and Lean principles to help IT work in a more holistic way. Indeed, many ITSM concepts were born from practices already prevalent in the service industry.*

*The trend of doing more with less will only accelerate, and the ITSM professional of 2020 must be prepared to utilize existing capabilities, both from within and outside of IT, and apply them in new and innovative ways to meet the demands of business. We are already seeing the impact of things like AI, chatbots, and process automation positively impacting how ITSM helps resolve business issues and challenges.*

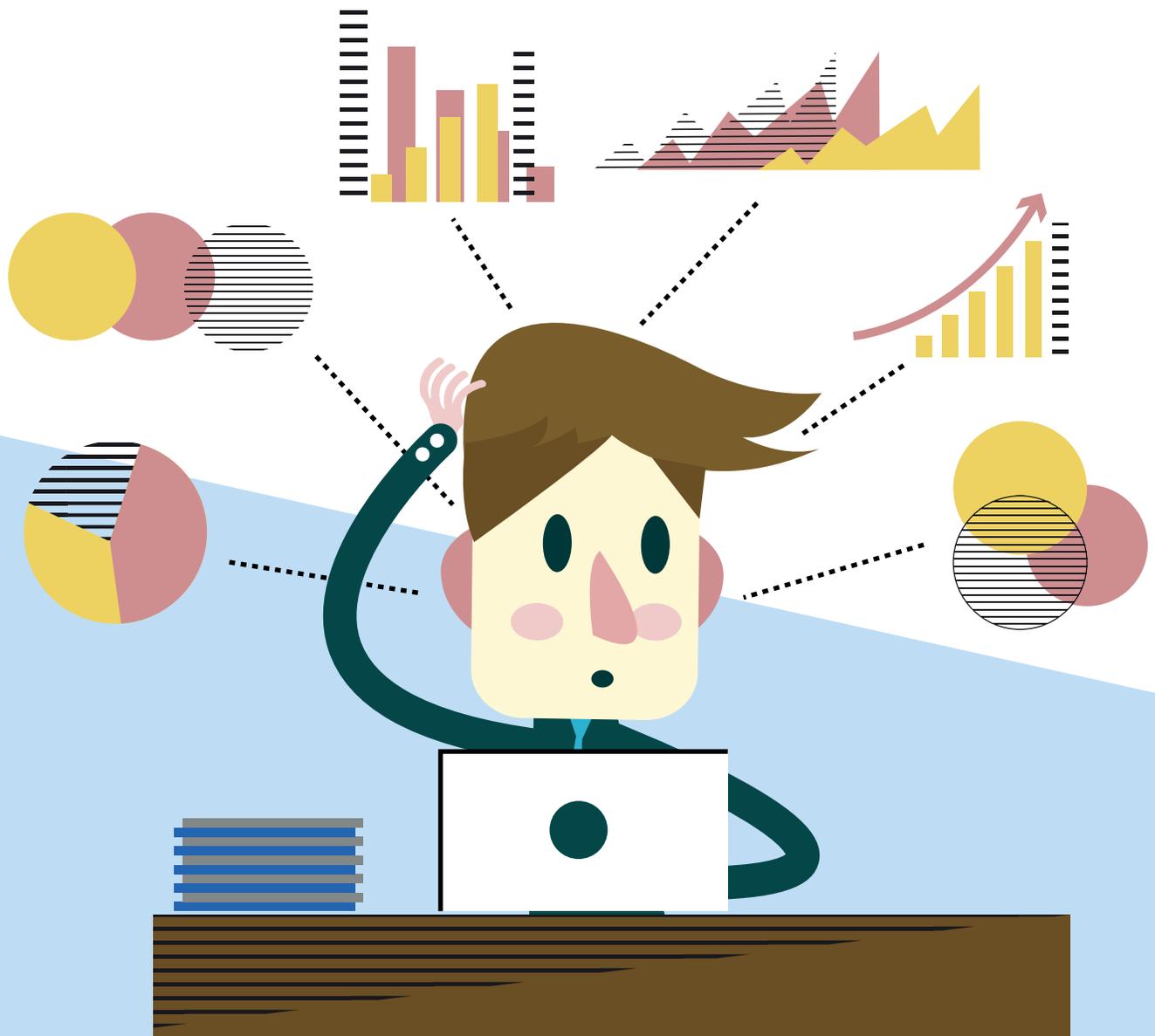
*The next great innovation in service management is just ahead, and we already have the pieces to solve the puzzle.”*



## 9 A desire for **Continual Learning**

In order to stay on top of industry developments, technological change, and the increasing expectations placed on, and by, the business, learning has to be part of the ITSM professionals DNA. To remain relevant, ITSM professionals will need to regularly seek out ways to refine and develop their skill sets and to learn about, and understand, their business environment and new technology and ideas.

Learning new things, improving skill sets, and keeping abreast of new innovations and thinking will enable ITSM professionals to maintain a competitive edge, better respond to customer demand, and position themselves at the forefront of organizational change. In such a fast-changing business environment, this learning will be the key to ITSM professional success in 2020 and beyond.

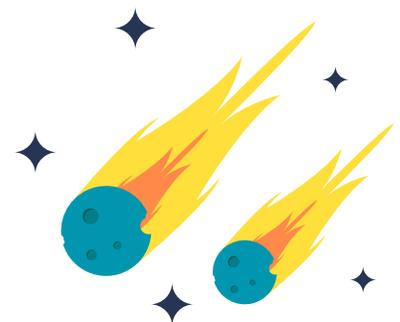


**Vawns Murphy**

*“Continual learning is essential to support continual improvement of whatever you deliver at work – be it goods, services or processes, especially in an environment of constant change. Service management is never ‘done’ – there will always be opportunities or requirements to improve. Don’t believe me? There will always be new business directives, new requests to fulfill, or new regulatory requirements that must be met. If you keep improving you will never be caught playing catch up at the wrong time.”*

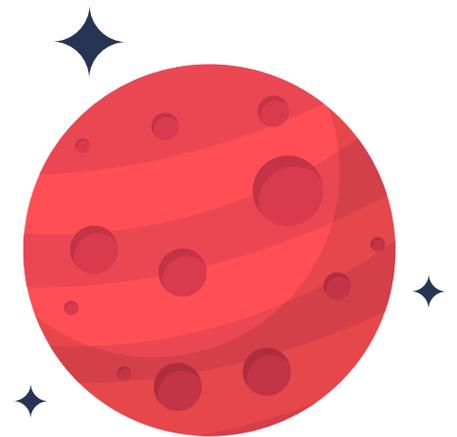
**Roy Atkinson**

*“ITSM professionals must have a desire for continuous learning. Those who believe they have done their learning when they achieve a certification or a degree will not be able to keep up with either technical or business changes.”*



**Scarlett Bayes**

*“The ITSM industry, though small in comparison to other industries, comprises a wealth of knowledge and understanding, which is only growing as time goes on. In 2020, ITSM professionals may be expected to be more conversant about issues the wider IT industry faces, as well as having a good knowledge and understanding of trends, technologies, and frameworks and methodologies. They should also be able to understand how they can utilize these trends and technologies to support the business better, but be wary of trying to shoehorn these in, as this can damage the ITSM department, and therefore the business.”*





**Greg Sanker**

*“By 2020, we will be long into the so-called digital transformation, with most leading organizations having migrated a major component of their IT infrastructure to cloud solutions. To this point, the game has been managing the transition and skills associated with managing new delivery models and securing information assets. This next phase will be new territory as organizations seek a competitive advantage by superior optimization of cloud/multi-vendor solutions. With a further need for ITSM pro learning.”*

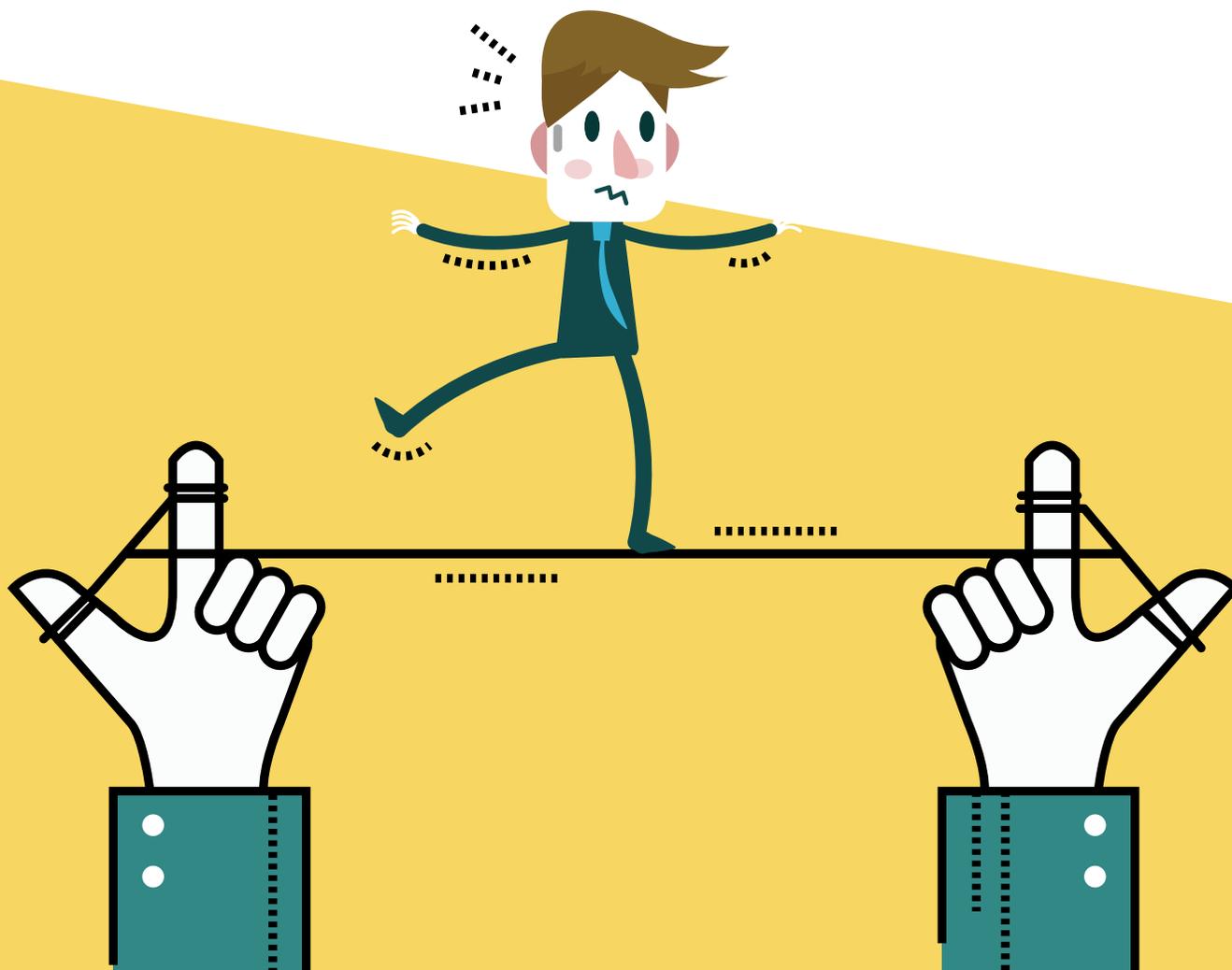


## 10

## Personal **Flexibility and Agility**, with the ability to deal with complexity

Industry best practice frameworks and methodologies have served the ITSM industry well over the last 30 years but the changing technology and business landscapes have made them less and less relevant. Certain best practices no longer reflect business needs and the available technology, and single approaches – when used in isolation – are insufficient to fulfill the requirements of modern-day IT service delivery and support.

Thus, the ITSM professional of 2020 will need to be capable of taking the best, or most appropriate, elements from a variety of approaches to create “[the perfect blend](#)” for their organization. This might utilize a variety of ITSM frameworks, methodologies, and standards as well as other approaches. From ITIL to DevOps, SIAM to customer-experience best practice, or IT4IT to VeriSM.



**Vawns Murphy**

*“In 2020, ITSM professionals will need to use a blended approach that combines different methods and techniques to achieve the best results for their environment. Whether it be ITIL, ISO 20000, COBIT, DevOps, or any other, ITSM professionals should use what works best for their company.”*

**Earl Begley**

*“By 2020, the business will no longer be interested in what framework or methodology ITSM professionals utilize for service management. The business will be interested in how the service management program will help reach the outcomes they desire in shorter time frames, at a lower cost, but with higher quality. ITSM professionals may find the need to quickly switch between current approaches such as ITIL, Agile, or DevOps in order to meet the business’ desires. However, the business will also expect IT to find new and novel ways to solve their problems. This may include rapidly adapting new (future) approaches and showing excellent integration with project management frameworks. Having a well-defined continual improvement process to help transitions between what IT can currently do versus the business ‘blue-sky’ desire will also help show the business that IT can be flexible in its approach and is a committed partner in fulfilling business objectives.”*





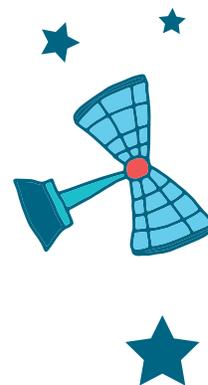
**Dennis Drogseth**

*“ITSM professionals will increasingly need to broaden their awareness of DevOps and Agile needs, while also learning how to assimilate new toolsets and stakeholders into the change management process.”*



**Suresh GP**

*“ITSM professionals need to ask: How do we transition existing process to become more Agile and adaptive to new trends like DevOps? How does release management change with rapid deployments? It’s also critical for ITSM professionals to make their processes ‘just enough’ to deliver value using iterative deployment – applying the Agile practices of Scrum and Kanban in the operational environment to help deliver business value using an end-to-end value chain.”*



**Mark Smalley**

*“ITSM pros will need to become more comfortable in complex adaptive organizational systems and in applying guidance that is more effective in dealing with emergent behavior. Increasingly, people are realizing that the environment in which they work is unpredictable. It’s therefore futile to write detailed and rigid project plans and process descriptions in the assumption that (a) they will work and (b) that intelligent knowledge workers will follow them when they know better. The [Cynefin](#) sense-making framework is an excellent eye-opener, it provides practical guidance how to act effectively in a variety of situations with varying degrees of (un)predictability.”*

**Roman Jouravlev**

*“A skill that ITSM professionals need to develop ahead of 2020 is system thinking and dealing with complexity. It’s becoming more and more important to understand the big picture of ITSM; to recognize different levels of complexity and to act accordingly. It applies equally to managers responsible for ITSM systems in general, and to ITSM practitioners in their day-to-day activities.”*



# Skill Up or Shut Up

The 20 ITSM industry authorities offered up a variety of ITSM-pro skills and capabilities that will be required for 2020, with their responses taking a number of forms – from single sentences to multiple paragraphs detailing not only the need but also the reasons why. There were a number of outliers in the 100+ opinions given, but the covered 10 common skills and capabilities stood out from the 20 sets of responses.

While these 10 skills and capabilities provide ITSM professionals with a very ambitious set of personal improvement opportunities, not all will be required for all roles (although some will). It's thus important for ITSM professionals to understand how their current and desired future roles will change over the next few years, and to grasp which are the skill and capability improvements that will be required of them.

It's also important to truly understand, and to be honest about, the level of current capabilities – because it's the baseline from which improvement will need to be made. And, without an accurate baseline, it will be difficult for ITSM professionals to understand how far they need to travel in acquiring the new (or improved) skills and capabilities required of them.



It's no different to any skills-gap assessment, with a requirement to:

- 1 Understand the status quo
- 2 Agree upon the desired future state
- 3 Determine the skill/capability gap
- 4 Ascertain and plan how to traverse the gap – prioritizing based on both business importance and known (usually resource-based) limitations
- 5 Execute the plan, assessing achievements as you progress (and, as a result, revising the plan as needed)

Unfortunately, failing to adapt at both an individual and team level will leave both people and organizational capabilities short of what's needed for modern businesses. It's time for ITSM professionals to evolve to meet future demands. And most organizations will be unable to carry people who are still working as though it's 2011!

## Are you ready for the journey?



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If you're interested in learning more about how SysAid can help you with your ITSM journey, please don't hesitate to [contact us](#).