



AlertFind

MAKE COMMUNICATION YOUR SECRET WEAPON IN ITIL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT





ITIL, which stands for “Information Technology Infrastructure Library,” is the de facto standard for providing IT services – and for good reason. This popular IT framework helps IT service desks serve customers in a cost-effective and quality-driven way.

Developed in the 1980s and most recently updated in 2011, ITIL aims to align processes with desired business outcomes. Since it’s geared toward solving business issues and not just improving IT capabilities, the customers are at the core of ITIL’s concepts.

For IT incident managers, the ITIL framework can play an important role in incident management by improving response times and reducing downtime – vital metrics for any business. **But even the best ITIL processes in the world won’t work without a strong communication plan.**

Communication is often overlooked in favor of process and technology. However, you need people to drive those processes, make decisions, analyze impacts and send the right messages to key stakeholders.

To make communication your secret weapon in ITIL incident management, start building an ITIL communication plan now. A well-developed plan requires upfront work so you’re prepared before an incident occurs.



6 Ways ITIL Brings Value To An IT Organization

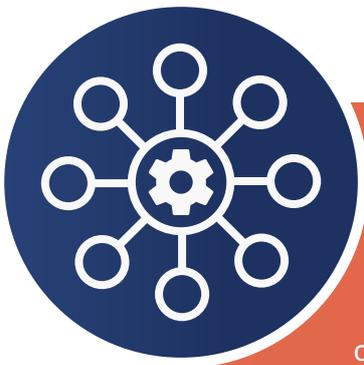
The ITIL framework includes five stages with 26 process areas. At the core, it's about improving the business service, so a strong support system (process, people and technology) must be in place to successfully execute these key ITIL concepts:

- Provide the most value to customers
- Optimize resources and capabilities
- Plan processes and include specific objectives
- Clearly define all roles

When those concepts are reached, ITIL delivers six high-level benefits:

- 1) **Stronger alignment between IT and the business:** Everyone working on the IT service desk should be business-focused. This means understanding customer needs and aligning IT appropriately.
- 2) **Improved service delivery and customer satisfaction:** Under the ITIL framework, an IT service desk is not a static help desk. The service desk is servicing and applying knowledge to assist customers as quickly as possible.
- 3) **Reduced costs through improved resource usage:** A mature IT service desk uses efficient processes that are fine-tuned over time. For instance, when first-line resolutions increase, fewer issues go to the second and third line. This frees up those specialized resources to focus on more high-level tasks.

- 4) **Greater visibility of IT costs and assets:** Numbers should play a critical role in decision-making. Nearly everything associated with an IT service desk is measurable, like length of calls and resolution times. This visibility helps you understand whether your numbers align with your business goals and objectives.
- 5) **Better management of business risk and service disruption or failure:** ITIL allows the service desk to detect problems before they become a significant issue. The goal should be to first identify the issue, put a workaround in, and then get the service back up and running. After service is restored, IT can focus on fixing the root cause of the issue.
- 6) **More stable service environment to support constant business change:** ITIL is focused on responsiveness and agility. IT must be able to adapt to the changing needs of the business, and having a stable environment makes adjustments easier and less disruptive to the organization as a whole.



5 Categories Of The ITIL Service Lifecycle

The entire ITIL framework is divided into these five broad categories, each with inherent supporting principles:

- 1) **Service strategy:** Defines the services as assets, with a focus on maintaining and implementing the strategy. Addresses issues such as business processes, decision-making and service improvement.
- 2) **Service design:** Deals with issues like capacity management and continuity management.
- 3) **Service transition:** Focuses on activities including change management, project management and knowledge management.
- 4) **Service operation:** Addresses activities such as event management, incident management and IT operations control.
- 5) **Continuous service Improvement:** Defines the roadmap for process evaluation and service review.



The Integral Role Communication Plays In ITIL User Adoption

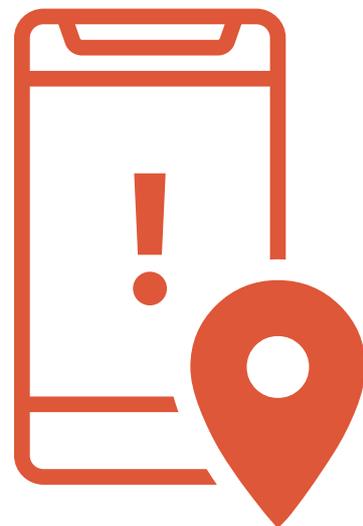
For the ITIL framework to be successful, you need people who are engaged and motivated about executing the processes. Otherwise, you're unlikely to gain the benefits outlined above.

Visibility and awareness are key principles of ITIL (they matter just as much as process adoption). It's important to keep people informed about what's happening in the IT organization.

To ensure that visibility and gain commitment from the entire IT service desk consumer base, start any ITIL project with a comprehensive communication strategy. Begin working on that plan as soon as the ITIL implementation project is approved.

What should your strategy include? An article from SearchCIO.com outlines the [top characteristics of a successful ITIL communication plan](#):

- **Executive buy-in:** High-level support of the program from the start is imperative. If you're implementing ITIL, the first message should come from the executive level.
- **Consistent communication:** Reinforce how the ITIL framework benefits people and highlight successes.
- **Targeted messages:** Send specific messages to people based on their roles. Communication should become more granular as you dive deeper into an ITIL implementation.



An ITIL implementation involves a variety of people, and a strong communication plan is necessary to get everyone on board with carrying out the processes.



Why Communication Is Critical During IT Incident Management

Once an ITIL program is up and running, the importance of communication doesn't diminish. In fact, it becomes even more vital during IT incidents. Resolving an IT issue is only half the battle. You also need to keep key stakeholders informed every step of the way.

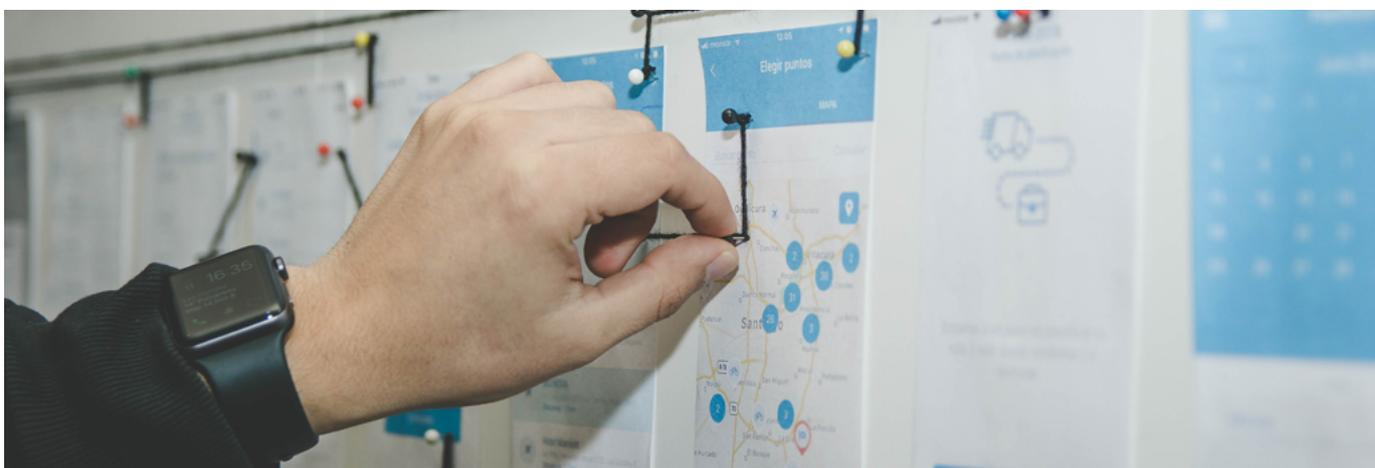
Communication is among the biggest challenges most IT organizations face. Even with a framework like ITIL, IT incidents are often handled poorly due to a lack of coordination, hampering the service desk's ability to provide quick response times.

Having a communication plan in place allows the IT incident management team to handle incidents in a controlled, procedural way. This reduces the risk of creating issues elsewhere and potentially increasing downtime.

Start by looking at your current state. Ask these four questions to determine how effective your communications are today:

- 1) *Are you notifying key people in your organization (the IT support team, the business leaders and the users)?*
- 2) *Which communication methods are you using?*
- 3) *How often are you sending updates during an incident?*
- 4) *Do you provide workarounds in your alerts so employees can keep working?*

You'll likely uncover some issues as you work through those questions. Once you pinpoint where your communications need improvement, work on identifying the causes and determining whether outside resources could help remedy them.





Be clear, concise and honest with your communication. Include enough details to show the issue is being handled in a controlled manner.



How To Correct Gaps In Communication Shortcomings

It's important to send just the right amount of information. Providing too much information often makes the message overly complicated and confusing. Providing not enough information (or "dripping out" several frequent, smaller messages) may cause people to feel anxious about the situation.

Be clear, concise and honest with your communication. Include enough details to show the issue is being handled in a controlled manner. For example, in the event of an IT outage, your message might be: "We're working to bring the system back up as soon as possible. We'll provide an update in three hours." Be sure to send an update as promised.

Write in plain language and avoid technical jargon that only people in IT may understand. Remember, ITIL is all about IT serving customers and solving business needs. Work with a member of your organization's communication team to craft messages that convey the problem and show how users can work around it.

It's often helpful to create some alert templates for your most likely IT incidents, such as system outages, data breaches or planned updates. For instance, a scripted alert for a data breach would contain protective steps for users to take, such as logging out of the system. These templates enable IT to quickly and easily communicate with users and business leaders.



Use IT Alerting For Improved IT Incident Management Communication

An IT alerting system plays an important role in helping to execute the ITIL framework and enable ITIL incident management communication. The right alerting system allows the IT service desk to respond faster and minimize downtime by ensuring the right IT staff are engaged quickly, stakeholders stay informed and users are notified.

The system should easily integrate with your service desk solution, be flexible enough to accommodate your organization's unique needs and align to the ITIL framework with ITSM connectors.

This technology doesn't replace the need for a solid communication strategy. Rather, an IT alerting system facilitates communication by connecting the IT incident management team with the business leaders and the users. Because during a major incident, the last thing you need is to be scrambling to contact key stakeholders and specialists.

Here are some of the benefits you'll gain by using an alerting system for ITIL incident management:

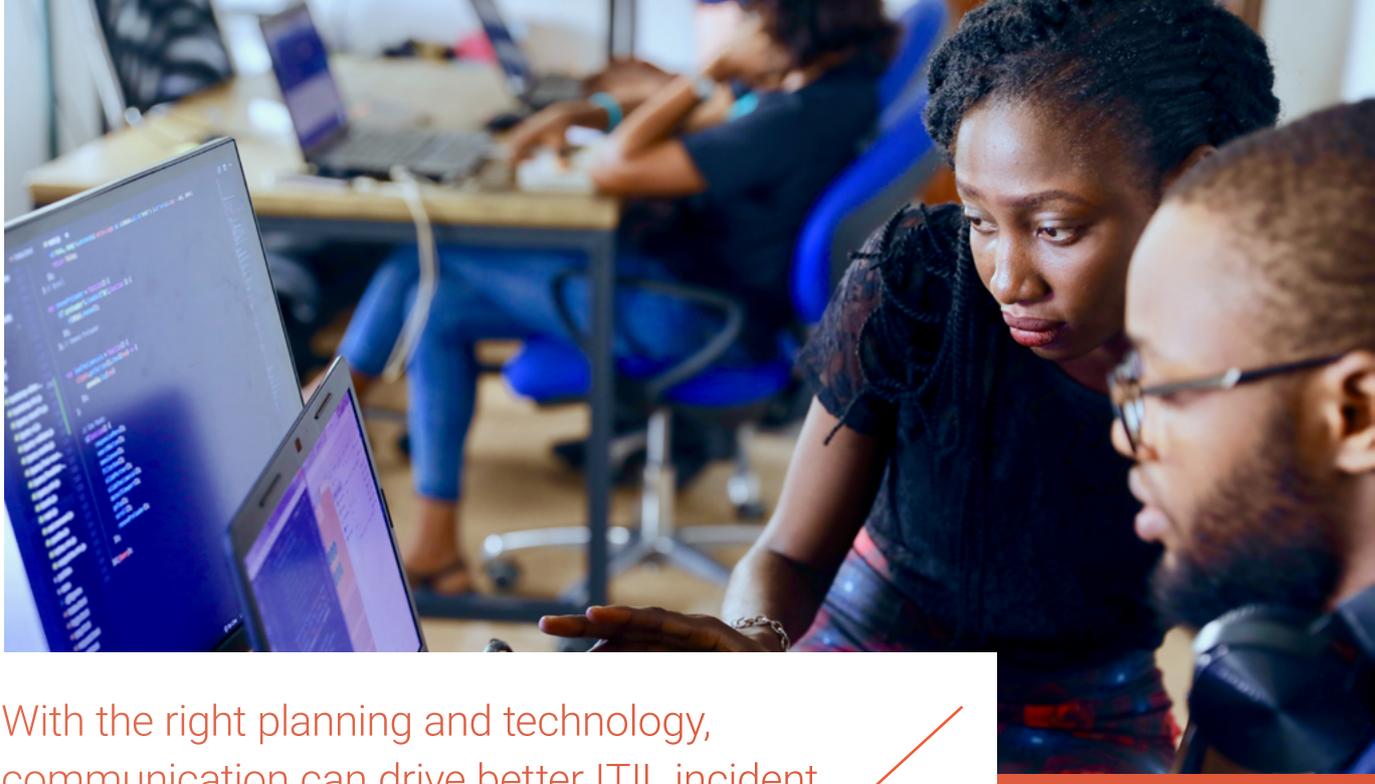
- **Get faster resolution:** Reducing time to resolution from hours to minutes helps businesses save significant money in lost productivity. An IT alerting system is designed to provide timely and targeted communication with one-click instant alerts. This proactive communication can decrease ticket volume during major IT incidents and get issues resolved quicker.
- **Start conference lines easily:** Set up and launch custom hotlines and conference bridges so groups can coordinate effortlessly. Keep the lines secure by requesting identification by phone number, user name, PIN number or other company identifier. Your IT alerting system should exceed stringent requirements for security, availability, processing integrity, confidentiality and privacy.
- **Launch auto-escalating alerts:** The alerts will continue to ping anyone across designated channels until the message is acknowledged. This means you don't have to worry about an on-call resource not responding and an alert going unanswered. Plus, IT service desk managers can specify device and user escalations.

- **Provide alerts via several channels:** You need to be able to communicate and send alerts, even if your network is compromised. IT is the lifeblood of any organization. That's why an IT alerting system that offers secure off-network alerts supported by redundant data centers is so valuable. With 100% uptime guaranteed, your alerts always get delivered.
- **Tailor alerts to people's preferred communication method:** You're able to reach employees on multiple channels, including email, text, voice call, fax, mobile app push notifications and pages. In a major IT incident, you're likely to send messages on multiple channels, but it's always helpful to have the ability to send messages via people's preferred methods.
- **Alert business leaders and users with targeted messages:** Target only the people who need to be alerted and avoid "alert fatigue" by reducing companywide alerts. In addition, you can send polls to specific people and capture caller-entered responses to get their status during an IT incident.
- **Guaranteed up-to-date contact information:** You don't have to worry about whether your contact database is accurate. With an IT alerting system that is connected to your HR databases and automatically updates data, you're guaranteed 100% accuracy for the entire organization.

Today's IT alerting tools are sophisticated and can be overly complex. Look for technology that works well within the ITIL framework and mirrors the maturity of your service desk.

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With the right planning and technology, communication can drive better ITIL incident management across your organization.



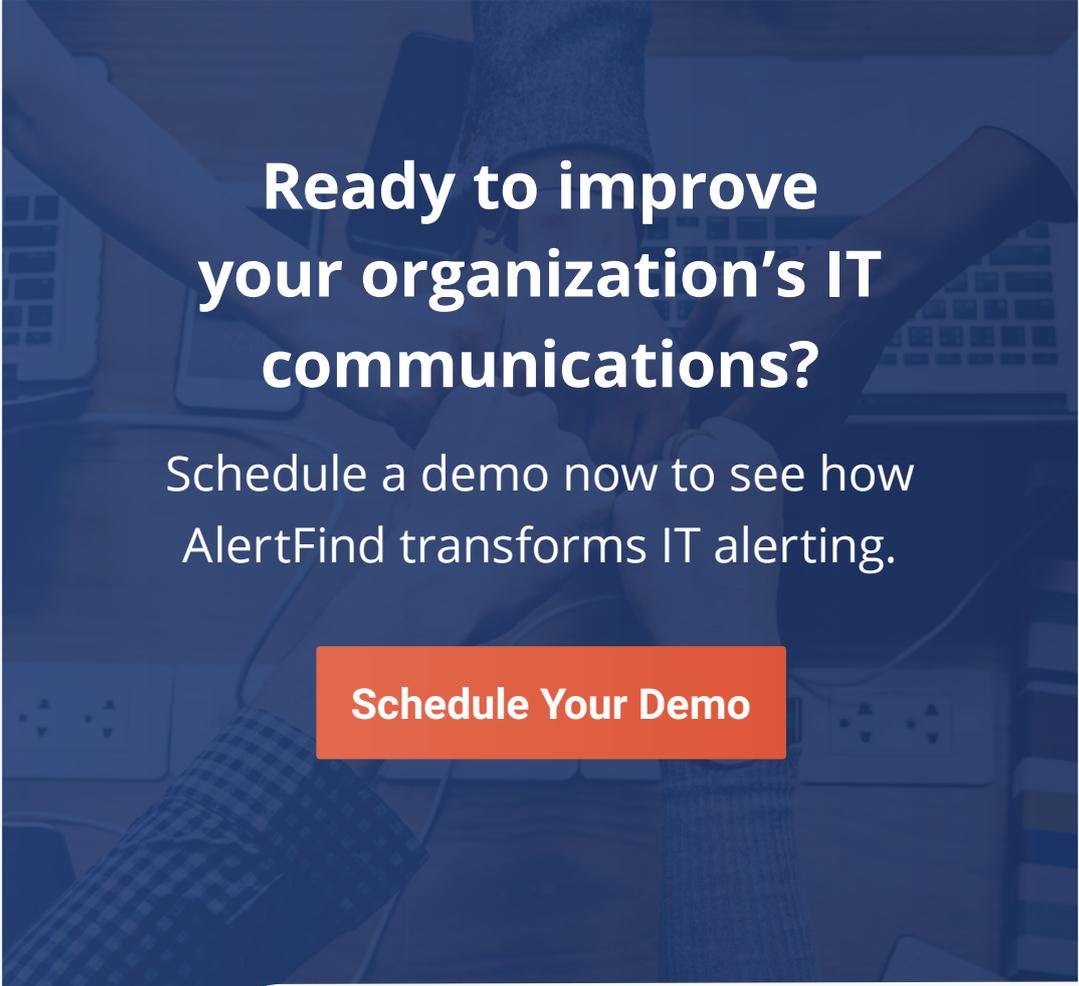
Creating The Right Communication Is Key To ITIL Success

Communication is not a technical skill, but it's a critical part of successful ITIL incident management. Even small missteps can create confusion and slow down the entire process.

While it is important to deploy the right technical resources to diagnose and resolve issues, you should spend as much time (if not more) on planning how to communicate these issues to the appropriate stakeholders.

Communication issues hold back incident management and may hurt the IT organization's reputation. Since ITIL strives for tight alignment between IT and the business, strong communication should be a core component of any ITIL initiative.

With the right planning and technology, communication can drive better ITIL incident management across your organization.



Ready to improve your organization's IT communications?

Schedule a demo now to see how
AlertFind transforms IT alerting.

[Schedule Your Demo](#)



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