

**Jim Schakenbach****Who Really Runs IT Departments?****Jim Schakenbach**, Contributing Writer, 7/17/2013[Bio](#) [Email This](#) [Print](#) [Comment](#) 41 comments[Login](#) 100%  0%

Back in the day, running an IT department was a pretty simple affair. You had maybe a server, a switch, a central database, a couple of in-house apps, and some workstations or PCs, right? Boy, times sure have changed.

Today, IT departments are complex, powerful beasts driven by virtualization, cloud-based initiatives, mobility, and last – but definitely not least – BYOD. IT, once the hidden domain of geeks, is now often seen as the heart and soul of a business, the make-or-break element affecting customer and employee satisfaction, product time-to-market, corporate value, and ultimately, profitability.

The result has been a sea change in how corporations are approaching the provisioning and management of their IT environments, running them more like business units. According to a recently released [study](#) by the Aberdeen Group, increasing numbers of IT departments are adopting popular business trends such as continuous improvement. They're evolving from geekdoms tasked with keeping networks and computers running into key corporate players helping to facilitate business objectives.

This new IT business model has been dubbed IT Service Management (ITSM) and it is being embraced as the answer to a variety of relatively new IT developments such as the growing number of enterprise mobile app (EMA) initiatives helping to empower the mobile workforce. The flattening out of IT access and control, brought on in large part by the rapid adoption of BYOD, has eroded the IT department's traditional role of driver and controller of all things IT.

**IT as a business performance tool**

In its 2012 Enterprise Mobile Apps survey, Aberdeen revealed that Best-in-Class organizations were now more likely to have primary IT budget allocations controlled by C-level executives. Almost half of the organizations surveyed indicated that their technology budgets were, in fact, controlled by the CEO. This usurpation of technology budget allocation and decision-making infers that IT departments are now being seen as key differentiators in brand value and as another tool in the business performance improvement tool chest that's too important to be left to the geeks.

So what's the big deal with ITSM anyway? Well, a lot it seems. The Aberdeen study revealed that ITSM users who operate their technical departments more like business units with goals, accountability, and an eye toward better customer service saw definite IT performance improvements. Forty percent improved time-to-information (TTI) performance, meaning business-critical information was getting into the hands of frontline decision makers faster and easier.

Well over half of organizations using ITSM showed a marked improvement in employee satisfaction with IT departments remodeled as service-oriented business units, which treated employees like customers. There were also significant improvements in employee performance using mobile devices, a clear indicator that ITSM is helping companies get a better grip on their use of enterprise mobile apps and their overall mobile software initiatives (MSI).

The ITSM framework recommendations from Aberdeen suggest that organizations interested in ITSM:

- Start small: Build a core framework first and then slowly implement ITSM principles to make steady progress.
- Play nice with C-executives: A lot more is accomplished through cooperation and integration to help align business, technical, compliance, and security needs in the new ITSM model.
- Implement ITSM over time to refine the new operational model and make steady improvements.

Are your customers looking for more business value from IT? Let's chat about what that means for VARs and solution providers in the comments section below.

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