



WHAT, EXACTLY, IS BEST PRACTICE?

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Quintica SA, the service management solutions specialist and IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) software developer, has acquired accredited ITIL training and consulting company, CSMG Management Consulting, for an undisclosed sum.

The ICT industry is renowned for generating hyperbole, confusing acronyms and catchy phrases and these are very often clearly intended to sell more product. Among the latest of these is the phrase 'best practice', something that is today over-used and often misunderstood.

Perhaps the best way to understand best practice is to look at how it is applied in the more mature industries. Typically, these industries have developed optimum ways of doing things over time and through experience. This, in a nutshell, is what constitutes best practice.

In addition, mature industries have tended to ratify such methodology by developing and subscribing to a formal standard. The ICT field is only beginning to understand this as evidenced by the emergence of the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) standard for best practice in service industries.

But what are the drivers of best practice? It is important to understand that the advent of the ITIL standard and, by default, best practice, is a result of the need to manage change effectively in an increasingly complex and technologically dependent world. It is also critical to appreciate that, despite the IT in its name, ITIL is more about best practice in service management than it is about IT.

The main drivers for ITIL are:

- To provide a business-focused 'road map' for implementing and maintaining a cost-effective and integrated service management strategy.
- The definition of processes needed to identify and manage quality and levels of service provided to customers, along with the resources and cost needed to achieve it.
- To provide guidance in managing risk and critical business change.
- To define best practice and, thereby, remove the need to 're-invent the wheel'.

The best practice approach is perhaps more easily understood as a systematic, professional approach to the management of IT service provision. It is based upon the combined experience of industry experts and is intended to provide IT services with: a proven, quality approach to service delivery; increased productivity; greater customer satisfaction; minimised risk; reduced costs; and, above all, improved communication between IT, the business and customers.



Ultimately, service management is or should be all about satisfying the needs of customers. It is therefore obvious that better and more effective IT services will have the knock-on effect of happier and more loyal customers. For more information, go to <http://www.quintica.co.za>.

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