

ITIL® SERVICE DELIVERY



Whether it is a government agency, a hospital, or a food chain, almost all entities exist to [provide services](#) to their clients. How they go about it varies, depending on their operational context, requirements of customers and stakeholders, availability of resources as well as culture.

And in the digital age, technology-centric service delivery is becoming the preferred model by organizations of all types and sizes. According to [UNCTAD](#), in 2020 digitally deliverable services increased to nearly 64% of total services export, a result driven mainly by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ITIL® framework, that has been in existence for the last 30 years, remains a useful guidance that organizations can adopt in delivery of services of a technology nature. In this article, we will look at how the ITIL 4 framework can be leveraged in improving service delivery efforts that lead to valuable outcomes for themselves and their customers.

(This article is part of our [ITIL 4 Guide](#). Use the right-hand menu to navigate.)

What is Service Delivery?

A subset of service management, service delivery is defined by the [Cambridge Dictionary](#) as the act of providing a service to customers. Service delivery is usually seen as the last leg once a service has been developed, gone live and is ready to be offered to any customer who requests for it.

Success in service delivery is usually measured from the customer's perspective—whether they are satisfied with the service received and the provider's efforts in delivering it:

- Obviously, a poorly performing service (such as failed login, poor response, bad UI etc.) will not

meet the grade.

- And even if the service is good, if the provider is poor at delivery (delays, bad customer service, erroneous billing etc.), then the customer's perception remains negative.

Successful service delivery requires an understanding of the competencies needed and the amount of each resource required. The [ITIL 4 CDS](#) publication informs us that the [four dimensions of service management](#) (organization & people, information & technology, partners & suppliers, value streams and processes) must be holistically considered, to identify the right resource needs in terms of amount as well as quality.

People involved in service delivery, particularly those facing the customer directly such as [service desk](#), must be equipped with the right tools and knowledge to effectively cater to customer needs in line with agreed service targets. They must also be motivated and led in the right way, under a culture that values services and customers.

Technology resources must be deployed in a way that eases the provision of services to customers especially when it comes to onboarding which is the primary activity in service delivery.

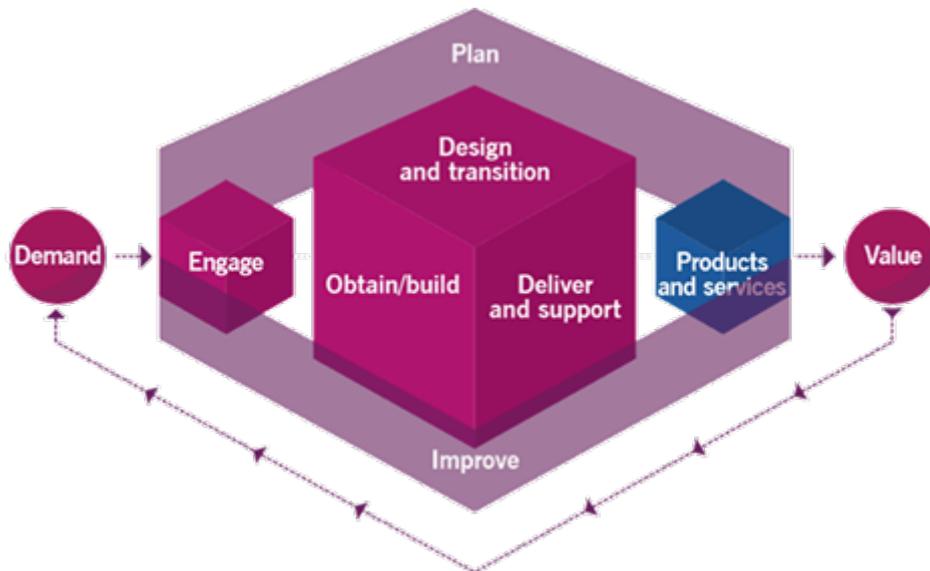
- Automation should be pursued where there are repetitive, manual tasks which can be optimized leading to faster delivery times and better quality.
- Where third party vendors or partners are involved, contracts and agreements need to define the right approach to ensure customer satisfaction is paramount.
- Value streams and processes should be regularly reviewed and optimized to ensure they do not hamper efforts to meet customer needs effectively.

The ITIL 4 Service Value Chain

In ITIL 4, we are introduced to the [service value chain](#), the central element of the service value system.

The service value chain is an operating model which outlines a set of loosely coupled activities required to respond to demand and facilitate value realization through the creation and management of products and services. A specific combination of these activities plus associated practices results in a value stream which starts from demand and ends in value through the provision of products and services.

For example, a value stream involving access to a SharePoint folder might begin with *Engage* activity where the user requests the Service Desk for access (by email or raising a request on an ITSM tool), then the Service Desk Agent fulfils the request for access through the *Deliver and Support* activity.



ITIL 4 Service Value Chain (Copyright Axelos)

In the Service Value Chain, the *Deliver and Support* activity is the main facet of service delivery. The purpose of the deliver and support value chain activity is to ensure that services are delivered and supported according to agreed specifications and stakeholders' expectations.

The *Deliver and Support* activity will get inputs from other service value chain activities including:

- New and changed products and services provided by *Design and Transition*
- Service components provided by *Obtain/Build*
- Improvement initiatives provided by *Improve*
- Improvement status reports from *Improve*
- User support tasks provided by *Engage*
- Knowledge and information about new and changed service components and services from *Design and Transition*, and *Obtain/Build*
- Knowledge and information about third-party service components from *Engage*

The key outputs of the *Deliver and Support* activity will include:

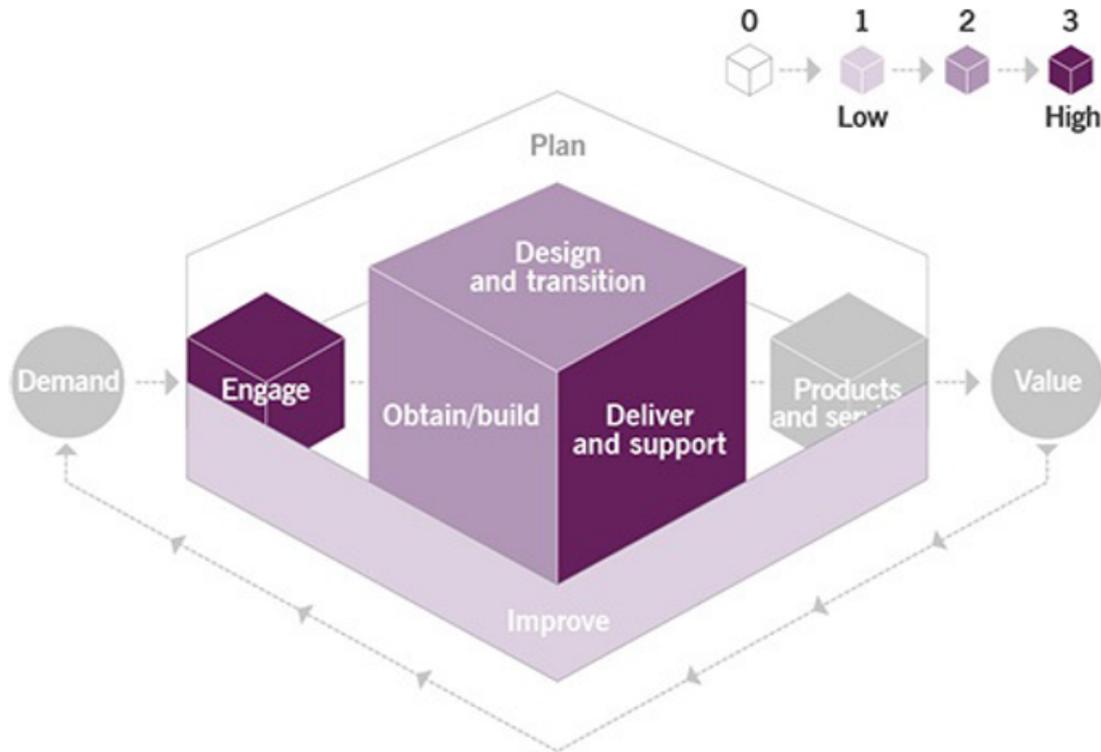
- Services delivered to customers and users
- Information on the completion of user support tasks for *Engage*
- Product and service performance information for *Engage* and *Improve*
- Improvement opportunities for *Improve*
- Contract and agreement requirements for *Engage*
- Change requests for *Obtain/Build*
- Service performance information for *Design and Transition*

ITIL 4 Service Delivery Practices

The ITIL 4 guidance lists [34 management practices](#) which are a set of organizational resources designed for performing work or accomplishing an objective. Practices support value chain activities at various points in the value stream and must be organized one way or another to ensure value creation since a practice is of no value as a stand-alone resource. While all practices have value, not all of them will be directly applicable in core service delivery activities.

When we consider the *Deliver and Support* activity within the Service Value Chain, certain practices

are more instrumental in service delivery as demonstrated in the heatmap below from the [ITIL 4 Foundation](#) publication:



Heat Map of Practice Contribution to Deliver and Support activity

The practices that contribute most to service delivery include:

- **Service Request Management.** The practice of supporting the agreed quality of a service by handling all predefined, user-initiated service requests in an effective and user-friendly manner. Handling of requests is at the heart of service delivery.
- **Service Desk.** The practice of capturing demand for incident resolution and service requests. It should also be the entry point and single point of contact for the service provider with all of its users. The service desk's capturing of demand for requests is tied directly to service delivery.
- **Change Enablement.** The practice of maximizing the number of successful service and product changes by ensuring that risks have been properly assessed, authorizing changes to proceed, and managing the change schedule. With regard to service delivery, standard changes are the type of change that would be most involved as some customer requests would be fulfilled as changes.

Related reading

- [BMC Service Management Blog](#)
- [ITIL 4 vs ITIL v3: What's The Difference?](#)
- [What Are The Goals of ITIL®?](#)
- [Service Desk in ITIL 4](#)