



Enterprise Service Management To Ignite The Spark Of Workflow Automation

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Working as an industry analyst (formerly at Forrester Research and now at Research In Action) has been very rewarding. As an Industry Analyst, one has many responsibilities for example advising and evaluating vendor offerings, fielding questions from IT enterprise folks around best practices or questions on key technology and other innovations. One specific responsibility is to define, research and analyze key trends and market movements. I have been researching and analyzing the Service Management space since my Industry Analyst career began in 2006. During the initial years, I have adopted the definition of IT Service Management (ITSM) mostly determined by market leading vendors and other industry analysts as I mostly agreed with those definitions. My current Vendor Selection Matrix™ projects are focused on the Enterprise Service Management (ESM) global and German vendors respectively. During the research phase, I had many very inspirational conversations and have heard and seen exciting innovations and capabilities across the vast number of vendors in this space. Unfortunately, studying publications, blogs and research studies published by thought leaders outside of the vendor world I felt thoroughly underwhelmed. The focus is still too much on IT services and the value streams within IT. While I do respect many of these thought leaders, the research is disappointing.

This has motivated me to start the new year with this blog. While we all have finished our 2021 projects and are mentally preparing for 2022, I believe it is time for acknowledging the past of ITSM and move on to embrace Enterprise Service Management in 2022. Here is why:

- **Automation of ESM value streams is strong due to our current situation.** The pandemic has accelerated the demand for digital interactions and companies and institutions needed automation solutions which allowed the implementation of enterprise services such as field services, legal services, HR services, sourcing and supply chain service and facilities management. While IT service workflows are the most mature (at about 75% automated according to our survey data), employee workflow automation has been catching up in 2021 with 50% automated and customer workflows automated at 25%.
- **Investment priorities focused on customer experience and employee experience technologies.** Our survey data shows that enterprises across the globe have put their money and effort towards customer experience technologies such as chatbots and mobile applications to enhance how customers interact with organizations and institutions. At the same time, investments into self-service and workflow automations for employees was a high priority to enhance employee's productivity and ability to serve customers.

Yes, ITSM history must be recognized, but we need to move into the next chapter

I have been researching the topics of ITSM, ESM and the supporting IT automation topics and vendors for over 15 years. During this journey I have seen vendors rise



and fall, acquisitions made to bolster existing vendors capabilities, and seen innovations such as the adoption of Artificial Intelligence. Additionally, the development and availability of low-code/no-code capabilities across the vendors provides an opportunity for teams outside IT to automate enterprise services. I am, however, taken aback by how some thought leaders are researching and evaluating this market and wanted to share the following thoughts to ponder:

- **Stop discussing the origin and motivate teams to initiate ESM projects.** I think we all agree on that the roots of ESM are somewhere within ITSM. But why do we need to continuously discuss this? What is essential to an enterprise team, no matter what functional area, workflows need to be automated. Yes, IT teams had recognized this and have been doing this for many years, but let's move on and help the business functions to adopt this service thinking. Share and show your work among your business functional leaders and help them understand that workflow automation is possible beyond IT.
- **Shift IT lingo to the language your business function speaks and understands.** Incident management, knowledge management and other processes which IT had automated are understood within IT, but business owners or functional leaders might not be able to immediately translate these to their workflows. Help them understand what processes, tasks and events can be automated through conversations and explorations. For example, incident management might be referred to as case management.
- **Think services from the outside in.** Business leaders are focused on their functions, teams, individuals, and must achieve outcomes. Many of them are looking for ways to digitize their workflows and the pandemic is one reason why there is intense focus on digital services. Also, competitive pressures and a growing expectation from customers and employees wanting better and more efficient services from their service provider or company is the perfect time for pushing ESM.
- **Inspire your business function with ESM benefits for adoption.** Faster processing of requests from employees, improved handling of customer issues and eliminating waste of time and resources are just a few business benefits of ESM. Also, collaboration between functions during on- or off-boarding of employees are attractive business benefits. Business leaders need to understand that such benefits can be achieved. Establishing a Minimal Viable Product (MVP) might just be one way to get a business leader interested in an enterprise workflow automation project.
- **Market and celebrate what ITSM has achieved to change your reputation.** While some IT organizations are seen as a business partner or service provider, others are still seen as a cost center. The knowledge and experience of existing ITSM implementations, best practices and knowledge is extremely high across many enterprises large and small. This experience must be leveraged towards workflow innovations and improvements outside of IT. By expanding the focus outside of IT, teams can transpose from custodians of technology towards business innovation and automation partners.

The ESM journey is supported by many vendors and their automation solutions; however, the journey is not just that of automating but rather changing the mindset



and goals of those involved. One important change is that the ownership of service management can no longer be within IT alone. IT must function as change agent reaching out to business leaders describing and showing the possibilities and igniting the spark of workflow automation. For now, I will do my part on completing the Vendor Selection Matrix™ on ESM global and German vendors with a new definition of ESM. The study will be published in February 2022. The results look very different from existing research pieces ...that much I can promise already. Until then, enjoy the holidays as best as you can, stay safe and healthy.

Thank you very much.

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