



December 2013



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Podium

Interview with **Dr. Debabrata Das**,
Professor and Hewlett Packard Chair, IIIT-B &
Chairman of ITSMF-India Chapter Board

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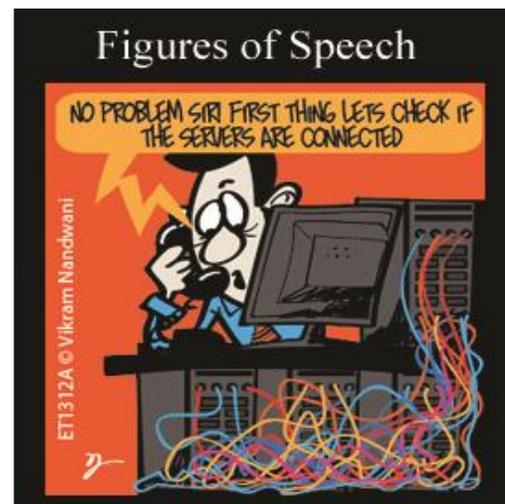
Dear Reader,

In a world driven by ever advancing technology and developments in all spheres of the business arena, a perfect harmony of the various activities that drive any organisation is a must. Today, IT and business processes work hand in hand. In India, the industry has not only transformed the country's image on the global platform, but has also fuelled economic growth. IT Service Management (ITSM) has become an integral part of business today that it is an industry in itself. With technology at our fingertips, the chances of technical glitches are also high. To highlight the importance of the ITSM sector, ET this month takes a look at the challenges of the IT Service Management Function.

As we say goodbye to 2013, here's wishing all our readers the very best of the New Year 2014!

In **Thinking Aloud**, Jay talks of the unsung heroes- the IT backend team. His article acknowledges the IT Service Management team and their contribution to the overall success of an organisation. Although software specialists have won the accolades, their ability to deliver well rests on the support provided by the technical team. Good IT infrastructure professionals are valuable in all industries, who strike a proper balance between the gamut of IT related activities.

On the **Podium** we feature **Dr. Debabrata Das** who serves as Professor and Hewlett Packard Chair at IIIT-Bangalore and the Chairman of ITSMF-India Chapter Board. He takes a look at the IT Service Management industry in India, which is an emerging sector. An adviser to the Government on issues related to IT and e-governance, Dr. Das



highlights the challenges faced in upgrading e-services to citizens & how they have been addressed.

In **We Recommend** this month, we present various articles extracted from the World Wide Web. The articles touch on topics such as the innovative problem solving technique, decision making and the power that lies within an incomplete leader.

Standing Ovation features the Association of People with Disability, a Bangalore based NGO which aims to educate and train the disabled and makes them self-reliant in all aspects of life. The Association offers schooling to children with disability at their integrated school and community learning centres, while at the same time ensure their inclusion in mainstream schools.

In **Figures of Speech**, Vikram's toon is in a fix!

As always, we value your opinion, so do let us know how you liked this issue. To visit our previous issues you can visit the Resources section on the website or simply [Click Here](#). You can also follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Linked In](#) & [Google+](#) - where you can join our community to continue the dialogue with us!



Thinking Aloud

The infrastructural backbone - Jay

In the quest for fancy buildings & structures what is often forgotten is that the foundational pieces are more relevant. While landmark architectural beauties are the cynosure of everyone in society (think Burj Al Khalifa, Petronas Towers or the Taj Mahal), what is more meaningful to a society is basic, ground level infrastructure that keeps the wheels of society moving smoothly. As the word indicates, 'infrastructure' refers to the 'basic physical and organizational structures and facilities (e.g. buildings, roads, power supplies) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise.'

Creators and managers of such foundational elements are often the unheralded and unsung specialists. Hidden in the shadows as 'back room facilities staff', they are called into play when a breakdown occurs. Or, worse, when the breakdown assumes larger proportions and becomes a crisis. Then what follows is unwanted attention on these infrastructure specialists who are deemed to be responsible for the fault or failure. Questioning their skills at such awkward times only adds to their diffidence, as they are known more for their engineering skills rather than grandstanding under the limelight.

The other important point to remember is that the infrastructural piece is a crucial element of the capital expenditure of any new project. Lack of application of thought at this stage of the investment process is bound to cause much regret later on in the life cycle of a project. More often than not, this expenditure locks you structurally and repairing or replacing it can only be done with further deep investment. Wise project managers will tell you that proper investment in infrastructure management has the single biggest impact on the firm's revenue over the long-term.

Therefore, prudent and proactive steps have greater pay-offs for the firm.

The foundation of all enterprises rests on good infrastructure management. In the world of business today, while plant and machinery seems the obvious infrastructure cost, what is often not visible is the ubiquitous IT infrastructure cost. Omnipresent yet invisible they permeate every aspect of the firm, including in the walls of the intelligent eco-friendly buildings that are now LEED certified and using Building Energy Management Systems to manage operational costs.

The mention of IT infrastructure Management usually brings to mind issues of systems management, networks management and storage management. But these alone are not enough. Experts will tell you that this field covers an entire operational gamut including the challenges involved in creating policies, laying down processes, selection & maintenance of equipment, management of data & projects, working with vendors and most crucial of all, the ability to work with people given the reality of change management. All round effectiveness for an enterprise can only arise from dynamically balancing all these crucial elements. Orchestrating these to the perfect pitch - and more important - resilience in times of crisis is an art that is in short supply.

This is why I believe an organization needs to pay tribute to the back room boys - the IT Service Management team. While the software specialists are like the leading stars on a screen, who win the accolades from the viewing public, their ability to deliver well rests solely on the support provided by the technical team that is hidden away from the public but who truly create the magical environment that enables the stars to shine. Good IT infrastructure professionals are worth their weight in gold, be it in the process industry, the manufacturing sector, hospitals, hotels, professional services firms or pure play IT firms.

It is time to acknowledge their role. Take a bow, Infrastructure professionals!

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Podium

Dr. Debabrata Das, Professor and Hewlett Packard Chair, IIIT-B& Chairman of ITSMF-India Chapter Board



Dr. Debabrata Das received his Ph.D. from the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur (IIT Kharagpur). At present he is serving as Professor and Hewlett Packard Chair at IIIT-Bangalore (IIIT-B) and he is also the Chairman of ITSMF-India Chapter Board. Before joining IIIT-B, he had served at G S Sanyal School of Telecommunication at IIT Kharagpur and later at Kirana Networks in New Jersey, USA. He has served as the Principal Investigator of sponsored projects from the Government of India, Nokia, Intel, HP in the wireless, IMS.

His areas of teaching interest are Wireless Access Network, Mobile Computing with IMS and Internetworking. His main areas of research interest are Wireless Access Network's MAC, QoS, Power saving and IP Multimedia Subsystems. Dr. Das has more than 65 peer reviewed papers in different journals and

International conferences. He and his wireless network team had contributed three ideas to IEEE 802.16m Broadband Wireless Standard. He is also the board member of OCAC of the Orissa Government and a member of e-Governance committee of the Government of Karnataka. He was General Chair of IEEE International Conference IMSAA-09. He is the TPC Co-Chair of IEEE CONECCT-2013 and IEEE VITAE of Global Wireless Summit 2013. He has been the TPC member of a number of international conferences and reviewers of IEEE Journals. Dr. Das is also the recipient of Global IEEE MGA Achievement Award 2012.

ET: The first National Conference of the IT Service Management Forum (itSMF) was held recently in Bangalore. Can you briefly explain what itSMF is all about?

DD: The Information Technology Service Management Forum (India), or itSMF® India, is a non-profit organization affiliated with itSMF® International. It is an established forum for Information Technology professionals to explore all means available to improve the quality of IT services to their respective customers. Although itSMF® India takes strategic directions from itSMF® International, it operates within the Indian IT industry and its objectives are relevant to that context. This not-for-profit organization is a prominent player in the on-going development and promotion of IT Service Management's "best practice", standards and qualifications since 1991 across countries and is now initiating the same in India. You can get more details from the International Website and the itSMF India Website (www.itsmfindia.in).

ET: It has been said that IT Service Management is the neglected and less glamorous part of the IT industry (in comparison with Software Development). What are your views? And, what are the key reasons that companies (both small and large) neglect this function?

DD: Application or Software Development has been the core business for Software companies both abroad and in India and hence it is evident that most of them today are CMMI 5 Certified which is a standard for ascertaining best practices for Software Development life cycle (SDLC). ITIL (IT infrastructure Library) on the other hand is the best practice framework for IT Infrastructure which is the supporting back bone for all Application Development. Some of the reasons as to why we see a lack of involvement is that some companies focus more on Product and Application development that yield them directly revenues. However, there is a paradigm shift towards all Service based companies today to imbibe best practice ITIL processes and get certified on ISO/IEC 20000 which is the defacto standard for IT Service Management.

ET: What is the current state of IT Service Management in the country and going forward what lies ahead?

DD: Today across India we have about 100+ service based organizations both IT and non IT certified on ISO/IEC 20000. Also we have over 43,000 ITIL certified professionals and the list is growing. Most of the Service based companies (Large and Medium) ITIL processes, Service Management tool, Certified professionals at Support, Consulting and Implementation deliver IT Services to end customers. itSMF will play a substantial role moving forward to bring in fellow professionals, corporates and vendors in service based organizations to share a common platform to create awareness, exchange best practices and contribute to the betterment of IT Services for customers and end users. Our Board of Director, Mr. Suresh GP also conducts a monthly ITSM India Podcast to discuss ITSM market trends/challenges and contributions made by organizations from India in the field of ITSM (one can get the link on itSMF-India Chapter website: www.itsmfindia.in).

ET: Can you please highlight how effective ITSM can help meet the challenges in the Indian telecom sector which is a technology driven sector?

DD: We are in an era of Mobility and that is changing the way we do and operate business and other facets of

human living. We see this business booming in India and in order to be competitive, there has to be proven capability of best practice processes. This would help to address issues of Downtime, connectivity loss, infrastructure bottlenecks and more importantly provide seamless service (Voice, data and value added service). ITSM can help the telecom sector from the inception of preparing a compelling Service Strategy (SS), developing strong Service Design (SD) that takes care of Information Security, IT Service Continuity, Availability and Capacity of Telecom Service. In addition, it could help in transitioning (Service Transition) portfolio of services to operations (Service Operations) and manage Service Desk/Help Desk to address customer complaints, issues and suggestions effectively using Continual Service Improvement (CSI).

ET: You have been an adviser to Government (both National & State) on issues pertaining to IT, and in particular, e-governance. Could you please share what are the challenges we face in upgrading our e-services to citizens & how they are being addressed?

DD: Many people may not know the fact that the Government of India and many State governments are now a days a great user of IT infrastructure and applications for fast and transparent governance. Many major projects are monitored and run by IT infrastructure. However, the major issues are proper software architecture design for scalability, security and interoperability between heterogeneous systems as well as department applications, availability of skilled manpower to run the systems, proper knowledge transfer to officials etc. Moreover, proper financial models between the Government and Private industry to run projects are also a challenge.

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We Recommend Articles

With the internet world offering us a plethora of management-related literature, this month we share with you links to resources from management leaders offering their viewpoints on various topics:

1) Are You Solving the Right Problem?

Dwayne Spradlin, Chief Executive Officer of InnoCentive defines the problem solving process. On critically analyzing and clearly articulating a problem, he is of the opinion that one can yield highly innovative solutions. Organizations that apply simple concepts of defining problems can create strategic advantages, innovate, and drive better business performance.

Link: <http://hbr.org/2012/09/are-you-solving-the-right-problem/>

2) Five routes to more innovative problem solving

Management gurus, Olivier Leclerc and Mihnea Moldoveanu, delve into how problems can be shaped before being solved, which requires decision makers to look through multiple lenses. The authors introduce flexons or flexible

objects for generating novel solutions which provide a way of shaping difficult problems to reveal innovative solutions that would otherwise remain hidden.

Link: http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/strategy/five_routes_to_more_innovative_problem_solving

3) A Leader's Framework for Decision Making

Authors David J. Snowden and Mary E. Boone through this article elucidate how managers rely on common leadership approaches that work well in one situation but may fall short in others. The authors introduce the Cynefin framework which allows executives to see things from new angles, assimilate complex concepts and address real-world problems and opportunities.

Link: <http://hbr.org/2007/11/a-leaders-framework-for-decision-making/>

4) In Praise of the Incomplete Leader

One of the popular articles featured on HBR is one that states that it's time to end the myth of the complete leader: the flawless person at the top who's got everything figured out. The article talks about the fact that leaders when incomplete as having both strengths and weaknesses will they be able to make up for their missing skills by relying on others.

Link: <http://hbr.org/2007/02/in-praise-of-the-incomplete-leader/ar/1>

5) Make Better Decisions

The article throws light on the decision making disorder and provides for a framework for improving decisions.

Link: <http://hbr.org/2009/11/make-better-decisions>

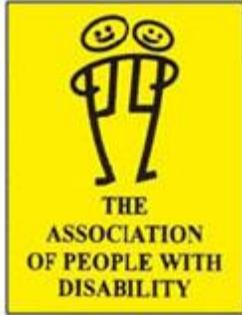
Note: To access the entire article, you are required to register online on HBR

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Standing Ovation

The Association of People with Disability, Bangalore



Bangalore based NGO, the Association of People with Disability (APD) started in 1959 with an aim to educate and train persons with disability and enable them to recognise their potential for self-reliance. APD also supports other NGOs & parent organizations to enhance the quality of services and reach out to a large number of people with disabilities. APD offers schooling to children with disability from Kindergarten to Class VII at their integrated school and community learning centres, while reaching out to children in urban and rural communities to ensure their inclusion in mainstream schools.

Programmes at APD:

Training and Employment:

Over 6,000 youth are provided training, higher education and livelihood support through APD's Industrial training centre and Information technology training courses, community programmes and local mainstream institutions.

Therapeutic services:

APD's physiotherapy, spinal cord injury and orthotic units provide therapeutic intervention, aids and appliances to over 6,000 disabled people.

Horticulture Units:

APD has two horticulture units at Jeevan Bhima Nagar and Kyalasanahalli that train over 70 disabled youth in gardening and landscaping through a rigorous 10 month residential course.

People's Organizations and Advocacy:

Through the promotion of local self-help groups and active lobbying at the local, regional and national level, this advocacy programme seeks to empower people with disability and enable them to access resources. Over 11,200 persons have benefitted from several initiatives that include formation of disability collectives, RTI petitions, public hearings and community awareness programmes.

Resource Support to Organizations (RSO):

The RSO programme works with partner organizations, providing training and financial support to enable them to take on disability work in their communities. The programme reaches over 1,400 persons through 6 NGO partners.

District Disability Programme:

APD has expanded its service by commencing work in three districts in Karnataka - Chikkaballapur, Davangere and Bijapur. In these districts, APD works with the existing resources and systems to strengthen government agencies, NGOs and other people's organizations over a period of four to five years to ensure that sustainable disability work can be carried on for inclusion of persons with disability in the age group 0-35 in mainstream education, health and livelihood services.

To know more about APD, you can visit their website <http://www.apd-india.org> or simply write to contact@apd-india.org.

Here's to APD for their cause!

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