

Building the business case for IT Service Optimization

Using INFORM/OE to translate higher efficiency in IT into business value

Organizations spend most of their IT budgets on ongoing operations. Funding for innovative, value-creating projects is scarce. IT services need to improve their operational efficiency in order to align more closely with business objectives.

Operational optimization of IT services starts by understanding the following questions:

- What is the potential impact of IT efficiency improvements on business value?
- What are the main drivers for increased IT efficiency?
- How effective are my IT service management processes?
- Which should be my priority IT initiatives?
- How do I build the business case for investing in IT optimization?

The INFORM program from Symantec is a set of tools and services that support senior IT managers by optimizing their investment in IT risk management. The program gives visibility to operational and security risks and helps model solutions that both reduce these and create business value. The INFORM for Operational Efficiency (INFORM/OE) module assesses current operational efficiency and the risks to it, and quantifies the benefit of improvements. It allows organizations to assess the effectiveness of their IT processes and benchmark against ITIL good practices. Finally, INFORM/OE lets organizations prioritize new initiatives based on how they impact business value

The operational barriers to innovation

In most organizations, the effectiveness of the IT department is measured by its ability to maintain the performance and availability of systems and to ensure information confidentiality, integrity, and compliance with regulatory and good governance requirements. However, organizations increasingly realize that their IT services also play a crucial role in adding business value through innovation. Unfortunately, this requires additional resources and funding that may not be forthcoming, and as a result, IT services may be forced to concentrate on maintaining increasingly complex systems with static or diminishing resources. Even if additional funds are made available, it is often hard to determine the optimum use of those funds. INFORM/OE

addresses these issues by giving organizations a clear structure to profile their current operational management, relate it to their business needs, and understand how it can best be improved through the implementation of a tailored action plan.

The case for optimizing IT services

IT services must be able to manage effectively both the negative and positive aspects of IT risk if business value is to be enhanced. The negative component of risk is the loss of business value through the impact of security incidents. The positive is the maximization of business value through the operational effectiveness of IT services. Good IT service management requires understanding and handling of the balance between these two aspects of IT risk. However, in many organizations, IT services are so concerned with the day-to-day problems of dealing with threats and operational inefficiencies that they are unable to step back and take a balanced view. Only by doing this, and by understanding the role of IT efficiency in creating business value, is it possible to build the case for tackling inefficiencies and transforming risk into opportunity through higher availability, better performance, and greater agility in IT services. INFORM/OE assigns a monetary value to efficiency improvements and demonstrates how new initiatives can help to reduce operational costs while releasing cash for innovation.

A coordinated action plan

Business executives want to see the link between spending and benefits. Although a case for innovative business applications may be easily made, it is often difficult to demonstrate the value contributed by IT services' day-to-day operational processes. The INFORM/OE methodology therefore uses the service delivery and support practices of the internationally used ITIL (IT Infrastructure Library) standard to benchmark the current effectiveness of an organization's operational processes and to correlate gaps with the potential benefits of improved efficiency. INFORM/OE highlights areas on which the organization needs to focus and produces a prioritized action plan. Benchmarking with INFORM/OE is an iterative process, helping to track progress over time.

How INFORM/OE works

INFORM/OE gives your enterprise the power to explore the effectiveness of current and planned services management initiatives in a structured, repeatable way. To do this, it uses six modules that provide the following:

1. Identification of business objectives, critical processes, the role and maturity of IT, and operational risks
2. Operational assessment focused on availability, performance, agility, and IT resource productivity
3. Measurement of current and targeted operational effectiveness, benchmarked against ITIL practices
4. Assessment of current and target effectiveness of solutions, leading to an improvement program that includes a prioritized action plan
5. Comparative scenarios showing the effect on cost and efficiency improvements of different efficiency assessments, ITIL process targets, or solution selection

INFORM allows rapid production of reports on preliminary scenarios, showing improvements in operational efficiency for a chosen investment scenario. This may be used to build an investment business case, or may become the basis for more extensive investigations.

What INFORM can do for you

- Benchmark your current service management against ITIL good practices
- Assess your benefits in improving operational efficiency
- Compare your situation to your peers
- Offer solution options with costs
- Create prioritized action plans

To request further information on INFORM, contact: inform@symantec.com or your Symantec Account Representative.

About Symantec

Symantec is a global leader in infrastructure software, enabling businesses and consumers to have confidence in a connected world. The company helps customers protect their infrastructure, information, and interactions by delivering software and services that address risks to security, availability, compliance, and performance. Headquartered in Cupertino, Calif., Symantec has operations in 40 countries. More information is available at www.symantec.com.

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