



Who Will Lead?

What Attributes Should You Look For in an ITAM Lead

When choosing the IT Asset Management lead, what attributes are most important for success?

The question is often asked - what qualities should we look for in a lead and to where should ITAM ultimately report in the organization? After twenty years of working with customers and observing what has been successful, as well as what hasn't, the following conclusions are offered:

1. ITAM should be positioned in the organization as a cost-takeout discipline. Not a project, not an initiative, but a new discipline to which the organization has committed. ITAM should be measured and report its progress specifically on how much cost it has been able to remove and, after removing, continue to avoid.
2. Since ITAM should be positioned as a cost-takeout discipline, it is best to have it report to IT Finance or IT Strategy. Do not have it report to Infrastructure and do not have it report to IT Purchasing / Spend Management. In any large organization, ITAM requires substantial introduction of new process to be successful, and organizational behavior change to comply with the new process. Because of the need to drive new process compliance, ITAM must be situated in the organization such that it has sufficient political power backing it up. In most organizations, Infrastructure and/or Purchasing/ Spend Management do not have a sufficient political power base to drive the necessary compliance.
3. ITAM is not a technical solution, although at first glance it may appear so (auto-discovery, databases, and knowledge of how all of that works seems to be what you should look for first). Although the ITAM lead should be comfortable working with and speaking with technical people, and should be experienced enough to know when technical people are artificially putting up roadblocks, the ITAM lead should not have a technical focus. Do not choose to elevate the auto-discovery technical expert to ITAM lead simply because he or she understands how one of the tools that ITAM may use works. Generally the technical "guru" type is uncomfortable stepping out and selling new processes and compliance, on a never-ending cycle, to the organization at large. Highly technical types

also tend to shy from detailed process work as it smacks of constraint, which directly opposes their DNA. Yet detailed process work - very detailed - is essential to ITAM success.

4. ITAM is a financial solution that is highly dependent on process compliance. The ITAM lead should have a strong finance background. The best (and proven) way to drive process compliance is through financial motivators, and someone with a finance background can understand exactly how to get that done. Also, the reporting of ITAM's success must be in financial terms, and a strong finance background is essential to be able to convey what ITAM has accomplished in the proper financial terms. The ideal lead should have an accounting degree, having spent time working in IT finance with IT technical people.
5. ITAM success is heavily dependent on new process compliance. New process compliance is heavily dependent on an effective organizational change management program. The ITAM lead should be comfortable as the organizational "zealot" and ultimate sales person - selling the benefits of ITAM to the individuals and groups that must comply with the new processes.

Over the years, ITAM has grown in importance within large organizations through many contributing factors. At this writing, Software License Management is a key focus for ITAM (it happens to be where millions of dollars of cost takeout exist for any reasonably sized organization). Therefore, choosing the right person to lead the ITAM effort, and choosing where to have ITAM report, is growing in importance as well. There are now millions of dollars of hard dollar cost take-out on the table in software licensing alone for most reasonably sized organizations - and that money will likely stay on the table if the proper person is not chosen to lead the ITAM discipline.

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