

Governing ITSM Value: The £3m Case for Diagnosing Before Designing

An approach to establish where service management investment is losing value and sequencing the remediation that recovers it.



Few enterprises can point to a single ITSM failure. What they face instead is a gradual one, made up of licenses that go unharvested, customizations that are never revisited, automation that is available but never switched on, and a business case that has quietly stopped reflecting reality.

At a glance

- ITSM value is usually lost through accumulation rather than incident. Duplicated tooling, divergent standards, fragmented data and inconsistent process each look tolerable in isolation and become material in aggregate.

- Standardization is often the industry's dominant response and it is necessary, but the constraint we most often find sits below it, in ownership, data trust and adoption.
- Those conditions are largely invisible in routine reporting, which is why drift persists and why remediation has to begin with measurement rather than design.
- Closing the gap is a sequencing problem. Stability, process, support model, governance and adoption are interdependent, and the order determines whether benefits are realized.

How cost and complexity accumulate

Across the estates Brillio assesses, a familiar set of conditions recurs. Services and tooling have been duplicated, often because acquisitions or business units arrived with their own. Technology stacks have drifted from any single standard. Data sits across multiple stores, which makes a single trusted view harder to establish. Processes differ between functions, and so do the structures that support them. Rarely is this deliberate. It is the cumulative effect of local choices, each reasonable at the time, that together produce an operating model no one designed as a whole.

The platform layer follows the same pattern. A ServiceNow business case assumes efficient use of licenses, streamlined processes and continuous adoption of new capability as it is released. Those assumptions hold at the outset. Over the years that follow, unused modules accumulate, customization raises the cost of every upgrade, and automation opportunities are missed as native capability develops faster than the instance adopts it. Each creates leakage: higher run-costs, unnecessary renewals, avoidable technical debt and lost productivity, and the erosion is gradual enough that no reporting period triggers a review.

Which raises the more useful question. If the platform still works, if tickets still close and services stay available, what exactly has been lost?

The governance conditions that determine whether returns hold

The industry's answer to service management problems has been standardization: align processes to ITIL, consolidate tooling, publish the operating model. That work is necessary. On its own it is insufficient, because it addresses the layer that is easiest to see.

The constraints often sit underneath.

- Platform ownership is diffuse, so architectural decisions are made locally and accumulate.
- Process owners exist on paper but are not aligned to a common design, so each optimizes for their own function.

- Data is not trusted, so reporting is rebuilt rather than relied upon.
- Users route around workflows they find slow, so measured adoption and real behavior diverge.

These are often symptoms of governance and engagement gaps, and standardization programs do not necessarily resolve them.

Set against that, good looks less like an inventory of capabilities than a set of conditions.

- **Services mapped through to the components that support them**, so a change in the business has a traceable consequence in the estate.
- **Standards that hold across the organization** rather than within it.
- **A relational data model underpinned by a trusted CMDB**, which allows reporting to be built once.
- **Repeatable processes** rather than locally interpreted ones.
- **A coordinated service organization** with accountability actively managed.

Holding that in place depends on effective platform ownership, aligned process owners, architectural and data governance, capable BAU support, engaged users, and continuous utilization of new capability as it arrives.

These are organizational conditions, not technical ones, and that is what makes them hard to manage. Availability, SLA attainment, and ticket volumes can all look healthy while ownership is ambiguous, licenses go unharvested, and a significant part of the automation in the platform is switched off. Routine reporting confirms the platform is working. It is not designed to establish whether it is still returning what was modeled.

Establishing the position: our Pulse diagnostic

If the conditions that erode value never surface operationally, an organization cannot know how far it has drifted without deliberately looking, and any remediation designed before that point is designed against assumption. Programs based primarily on internal consensus risk prioritizing the most visible or strongly represented concerns rather than the largest sources of measurable value leakage.

Measuring first means examining the areas where leakage is most consistent: licensing, complexity, data, automation and AI readiness, user experience, and organization. Over-licensing and unused modules, legacy scripts and manual upgrade effort, key data gaps and redundant reporting, underutilized native automation, and unclear accountabilities all show up repeatedly, and all are measurable.

What makes such an assessment credible is the method rather than the coverage. It has to:

- be sufficiently **independent** from day-to-day platform ownership to challenge existing assumptions;
- triangulate workshops with **system evidence** and documentation, rather than relying on self-reported maturity alone;

- move **fast enough** not to become a program in its own right;
- tie **findings to data points**, so recommendations can be challenged on evidence rather than debated as opinion.

Those criteria are what our proprietary Pulse framework for ServiceNow is built around. It runs in three stages: preparation that secures access and documentation ahead of day one, discovery across architecture, experience, process, data and governance, and a playback giving a clear ROI statement, a current state view mapped to data points, quick wins and a future state roadmap.

The value shows in what happens next. For a major global financial services company facing regulatory exposure in IT asset management, an eight-week assessment identified areas of potential non-compliance and set out a roadmap aligned with stakeholders across the organization. It provided the evidence needed to unlock more than £3m of year-one budget and initiate a two-to-three-year program.

Sequencing remediation so each workstream enables the next

The roadmap that emerges almost always spans several disciplines, and the common failure is not missing capability but wrong order. Work gets sequenced by visibility, or by which stakeholder is most exposed, rather than by what the other workstreams depend on.

Where service is unstable, stabilization usually becomes the first dependency. Process redesign is considerably harder to land while operational teams and stakeholders are absorbed by repeated major incidents. The principle we work to is to staff for action and run a Pulse for a plan: put experienced practitioners into the immediate response while using the same period to establish the evidence base for longer-term remediation. Stabilization and diagnosis therefore progress in parallel, creating a firmer basis for subsequent process, operating model, merger integration and right-sourcing decisions.

Governance determines whether any of it survives the program. Controls, resilience, reporting and service integration need to be self-sustaining, meaning control does not depend on continued external involvement or on individuals who happen to remember why a decision was made. This is the workstream that is often deferred, and deferring it produces the drift described at the start of this paper. Adoption then determines whether the rest converts, and is a discipline that is frequently underfunded. Our working principle is that results are a function of benefits multiplied by the square of adoption, a blunt way of saying a well-designed change nobody uses returns nothing.

The interdependence is visible in outcomes. At a global financial markets infrastructure business, work on IT controls automated 53 controls within ServiceNow across six process areas, giving process owners a current

view of compliance rather than a periodic reconstruction of it. At the same client, a service desk rebuilt around a trained onshore capability contributed to a 25% reduction in mean time to resolve. Neither was achieved through tooling alone. Both required process, governance, data and people in one program, sequenced so each built on the last.

Key takeaways

- Anticipate drift rather than waiting for a trigger. Routine reporting confirms the platform is working, not that it is still returning what was modeled.
- Look below the process layer. Standardization is necessary, but ownership, data trust and adoption are more often where the constraint sits.
- Establish the position before designing the remedy. License position, customization debt, data quality and automation coverage are all measurable, and measurement frequently revises internal estimates.
- Sequence by dependency, not visibility. Stability enables process work, and governance is what makes any of it durable.
- Fund adoption with the same rigor applied to build, because benefits scale with how thoroughly change is landed rather than how well it was specified.

About Brillio

Brillio is The Enterprise AI Accelerator helping Fortune 1000 companies move from AI ambition to scaled impact, faster. Powered by our AI accelerator platform – Agentic Data and Application Management (ADAM), Brillio is one of the fastest-growing digital technology service providers, delivering transformation across five core workstreams: business-led transformation, customer experience transformation, AI and data engineering, digital engineering, and infrastructure engineering.

With 14 delivery locations across North America, Europe, and Asia and a team of over 6,000 customer-obsessed professionals, Brillio combines deep industry expertise, modern engineering, and accelerators to deliver measurable outcomes. Headquartered in Dallas, Texas, Brillio serves clients globally with a commitment to speed, scale, and measurable impact.



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