

## The State of ITSM in the Federal Space – Part 2

### The Federal Leaders Playbook - Season 1, Episode 5

#### Featuring:

**Eric Lazerson - Vice-president at Acuity**

**Jessica Alfaro - Senior Manager at Acuity**

**Tom Hamill - Tactical lead for the BSM practice within Acuity**

**Kerri Posteraro - Managing Director at Acuity**

**Jeff Collison – BMC**

**Tom Hamill:** Hi, welcome. Today we're going to be talking about the current state of ITSM in the federal space; but, before we get going let's go around and introduce ourselves. My name is Tom Hamill. I'm a tactical lead for the BSM practice within Acuity.

**Eric Lazerson:** I'm Eric Lazerson, Vice-president at Acuity.

**Kerri Posteraro:** Kerri Posteraro, Managing Director at Acuity.

**Jessica Alfaro:** I am Jessica Alfaro, Senior Manager at Acuity.

**Tom Hamill:** Ok, we also have a special guest with us today, Jeff Collison from BMC.

**Jeff Collison:** Hey folks. I'm Jeff. I'm excited to be here talking about ITSM in the federal space. For the last seven-eight years I've been covering Department of Defense and various other agencies.

**Eric Lazerson:** We talk a lot about IT organizations supporting both Technical Services for other-other organizations as well as the business services. What are things in the service management space that are helping to keep up with the shadow IT, the, you know, 'I can do it on my own and I do it at home faster, I'm able to get spin up servers, spin down servers for application development'?

**Jeff Collison:** You know, well, I think there is a big push to - whether it's a DoD agency or a civilian agency – to move towards an implementation of a Configuration Management Database because that's really whether it's going to control shadow IT or not whether, I don't think based upon the mission sets that are needed out there everyone needs to really be agile out there.

**Eric Lazerson:** Excellent. Yeah, I see it all the time, I hear it all the time. 'It takes too long, it takes too long.' We sometimes, in the operations world, forget that our customers, they're exposed to the ease of procurement their personal life and there needs to be this balance, certainly needs to be secure, security needs to be taken into consideration first, but I think as we start looking at service management and we talked about kind of the, the comfort level with the basic ITIL process, implementation at some of these agencies, getting into request fulfillment and tying some of those into some of these automation tools. There's a number of tools where, you can request things, it can go through a standard set of, either standard change or through some standard approvals. The provisioning should be much quicker, you should have that those server builds, those application levels all that should already be

approved and authorized and secured and available for these different groups because they are trying to meet mission-critical requirements. So, I just see service management today it feels as if it's a hindrance to some of these organizations because the process is not-not as mature as it could be, socially they're not quite ready for you know that within their organization. People are afraid to give up some of that control, like okay I can just have this automated, it reduces my workload or my team's workload; I still control what's being automated, but they're not quite there and they're not thinking about that.

**Jeff Collison:** I think it's interesting that you make that point. I, as an engineer, know that I can quickly spin up something in AWS, if I'm allowed to from my agency. The flip side, without a CMDB, I can spin that thing quickly up, where's my bill go at the end of the day? Which is a problem.

**Eric Lazerson:** The financial part of that's huge.

**Jeff Collison:** But also from an IA perspective, how is that going to impact the mission? At the end of the day, I just need to have some type of record keeping or reporting that-that is automated on the backend to satisfy some of the other things that I, as an engineer, don't necessarily think about, such as the costing or from an IA perspective.

**Jessica Alfaro:** Right. I think there's still a lot of work to be done; I think when you think about ITSM tools it's largely been 'give me your data, put your data into this ITSM system and let me consume it.' I think the ability to generate back out meaningful information is still kind of behind the curve. I can follow this process I can put in all of these details but what does that get me at the end of the day?

**Eric Lazerson:** Alright. That's a great point. We've preached for years, put your information in one single source, let's get it all in there, let's start to categorize it, let's prioritize it, let's do all these things to it so transactionally, I can move through an ITIL process, I can add it at a pace that is approved by the organization but it's 'how do I make decisions with that information and what is pulled out?'. We have lots of, lots of information in there and we start to hear new buzz words around you know big data and all these other things and there's tools around visualizing that information. My concern is, the IT leaders see this, you know, this lake of information and they're saying, 'Wow, that's a lot of a lot of stuff, what do I do with it?'

**Jessica Alfaro:** Right.

**Eric Lazerson:** And I don't think we're at a point in the federal space where those leaders know enough to make decisions with it. They're not always driven by the financial impact of a process taking a long time or a service performance being degraded.

**Kerri Posteraro:** Right.

**Eric Lazerson:** They're not always thinking about the financial aspect of that. I know some of my personal experiences working in the financial space and in banks and up in New York and they're driven by 'application downtime cost X amount of dollars' and in the federal

space they don't always think that way, so it's interesting you mentioned reporting because we're putting tons of information in there. Our tools are collecting it, we're analyzing - you know we're putting it in there, we're relating it, we're building out these models...

**Jessica Alfaro:** Yeah, I think a lot of where, what we're talking about kind of ties back to you know some of the challenges that we've had is just having that champion. You know someone that understands service management, that understands the, I guess, the footprint it has that it's not just a service management tool it's a, it's a lot of tools it's-it's the processes, it's you know the date the output of the data it's all of that and enforcing a vision; you know coming up with a vision of this is the way that the organization needs to go and communicating that and I think that's where you know a lot of the shortfalls that we've seen in the federal spaces that communication doesn't make it down to the worker bees, the people that are doing the work that are you know executing on these processes, they're not seeing where the output of what they do on a daily basis, what does that mean from the larger scheme of you know IT service management as a whole.

**Jeff Collison:** I would definitely agree with that, the champion statement. From all of the agencies that I've actually visited across the board but just having someone that can actually champion not necessarily so much the toolset and technology in the beginning, but really kind of the process and who needs this what type of data out of the system. So, it's really a champion that can communicate across the agency from an enterprise perspective.

**Tom Hamill:** Ok. Alright. Well thanks everyone. I'm going to throw a challenge out. Who can wrap this up, this discussion on the current state of federal, ITSM in the federal space?

**Eric Lazerson:** I-I love a good challenge.

**Tom Hamill:** Well come on Eric.

**Eric Lazerson:** I think I, my assessment of it at the beginning was probably right where...I think this conversation kind of solidified the fact that we made huge strides in kind of the ITSM evolution in the federal space. We've got a lot of experience sitting at this table, both in civilian, DoD agencies, in the Intel space. We've been there, we've seen it, we've helped. It-it's maturing, it's maturing slowly.

**Tom Hamill:** But maturing

**Eric Lazerson:** But maturing.

**Jessica Alfaro:** Yeah, I mean I think you know the wrap up is, I think what we just ended with, with the champion

**Eric Lazerson:** Find the champion.

**Jessica Alfaro:** Right, looking above not just staying at a use case, this is bigger than just that it's- it's- it's looking, bringing your head up many levels to see how it all fits together.

**Tom Hamill:** Excellent! Well Jeff, thanks for joining us today in this discussion.

**Jeff Collison:** You're welcome.