

# Trends in IT: Destination Q

## ISO/IEC 20000: our compass and unquestionable guide

*ISO/IEC 20000: the compass to guide your path in the best practice universe* is the title of the contribution from Luis Miguel Rosa Nieto, EXIN's regional manager in Spain, and Alejandro Debenedet, international account manager, to the newly published book: *IT Service Management Global Best Practices*. Based on this article, Luis Miguel gave a presentation at the *Best Practices in IT Management* conference, which was organized on 22 April 2008 by the ITSMF, the Best Practice Community in the Netherlands. This article includes an overview of the presentation and of the full contribution, and we ask Luis Miguel to act as our guide and show us the highlights.

At the end of 2005, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) published the first specific international standard for the management of IT Services: ISO/IEC 20000. A standard that enables organizations to build and maintain an overall management system of IT services that meets the international ISO/IEC 20000 requirements. The article *ISO/IEC 20000: the compass to guide your path in the best practice universe*, written by Luis Miguel Rosa Nieto and Alejandro Debenedet, states: 'ISO/IEC 20000 is establishing itself more and more firmly as the compass that allows us to guide ourselves through the complex network of models and proposals related to IT service management.'

### **Skeleton and body**

ISO/IEC 20000 establishes the requirements a company 'shall' fulfil to deliver quality IT services. In other words, the standard focuses on the 'what' and not on the 'how to'. Luis Miguel: 'ISO/IEC 20000 provides the structure, just as the skeleton gives shape and strength to our constitution. Starting from this key element, you are free to complete the body with muscles, veins, organs, and skin to fulfil the purpose of the IT Management System.' In practice, those muscles, veins, organs and skin you use to complete the body are: processes, people and technology.

### **Processes**

Best practices and frameworks will help to manage the processes and to concretize the 'how to' for day-to-day operations. Luis Miguel: 'For example, you could use ITIL® to define your processes, and COBIT and the future ISO 38500 on IT Governance to measure and govern your processes. But you could also use your own procedures and expertise defined in-house.' ISO/IEC 20000 is known to be framework neutral. Both ISO/IEC 20000 and best practices and frameworks will benefit from each other's knowledge, dissemination and development.

Luis Miguel prefers to use the term 'good practices' rather than 'best practices': 'At the ITSMF conference, we discussed the use of the term 'best practices' and concluded that it seems a bit pretentious to refer to any model in the market as such. It is as if by using this term you mean that the practices you are referring to are the best, without any option for a different good practice. 'Good' in this context means good for the market and for organizations to use.'



### **People and technology**

Besides the successful management of the processes, the people in the organization who will help to implement and maintain the management system of IT services are equally important. 'Experienced IT professionals that have been trained for management and execution will finally bring IT service management to life.' EXIN and TÜV SÜD Akademie are jointly developing a new multi-level IT qualification program designed for a wide variety of IT staff who want to be certified for ISO/IEC 20000, such as operational staff, supervisors, managers, senior consultants & auditors (see frame). Accreditation of training providers ensures high-quality training for the new exams. Finally, in addition to processes and people, to meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 20000, an organization also needs technological tools to efficiently manage and deliver the IT services.

### **Business demand**

Luis Miguel concludes his presentation with some reflections about the future: 'In the future, the adoption of ISO/IEC 20000 will change from an initiative of IT units to a business demand. Adoption of ISO/IEC 20000 enables companies to deliver their IT services in compliance with the international standard and gives them the opportunity to prove their compliance by means of certification. I'm convinced that this will increase the market opportunities of any company able to demonstrate this compliance.' Luis Miguel and Alejandro conclude their article with the following sentence: 'We are moving from our current position to our goal, and ISO/IEC 20000 is our unquestionable guide.' The aim is clear. Whatever path we choose, the compass is always pointing to Q for Quality.

### **Qualification program for IT professionals**

The new qualification program for IT professionals that is being jointly developed by EXIN and TÜV SÜD Akademie is called IT Service Management according to ISO/IEC 20000. This program comprises a Foundation exam, Professional exams and two tracks. The first track is geared towards IT Management, while the second focuses on Auditing. The first exam, ISO/IEC 20000 Foundation, has been available since January 2008. Currently EXIN introduces four of the Professional exams. For more information, please visit [www.exin-exams.com](http://www.exin-exams.com).

**You can read the full article on the EXIN website: [www.exin-exams.com](http://www.exin-exams.com)→publications**

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