Chapter 1

IT Service Quality Management: Assumptions, Frameworks and Effects on Business Performance

Dieter Spath
Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering (IAO), Germany

Wilhelm Bauer
Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering (IAO), Germany

Claus-Peter Praeg
Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering (IAO), Germany

ABSTRACT

IT service management is a focal point of interest for practitioners, managers and researchers. In this chapter, the authors outline the field of IT service quality management - a topic that has not been adequately discussed in research literature to date. The authors introduce a framework for IT service quality management and show how the framework can be applied to different phases of an IT service lifecycle. Furthermore, they illustrate possible effects of IT service quality on business performance. For this reason, they define indicators, which are effective measures of business performance, and the relations between indicators and IT service quality. Due to the increased use of modular IT services and the high pressure on IT effectiveness and IT efficiency, IT service quality management has the potential to become a highly relevant topic for IT service providers and IT departments within enterprises.

INTRODUCTION

The quality of IT services is an interesting issue in the field of IT service management. However, until now it has not intensively discussed either in science or in practice. Based on the response of one of our previous publications (see Praeg & Spath, 2008) we would like to illustrate different aspects of IT service quality management. Analyzing and understanding the effectiveness of IT services will become more and more important in the near future (Jiang et al., 2000; Roses et al., 2009). Due to the increase in the intensity of information in businesses and the rising need for the distribution and use of information and IT services in different situations under changing conditions, systematic IT service management within enterprises is essential for business suc-

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cess. In consequence, the management of external service providers and internal IT departments is a crucial factor for successful IT service management in enterprises.

Our experience gained in information-intensive branches has also shown that the internal operation of an IT data processing center is not a critical factor for success but rather the ability to manage IT in business processes effectively. This also includes the ability to identify the IT requirements of changing business needs systematically, to translate these needs into technical service requirements and to communicate them to internal or external IT service providers. As a result, the management of IT service quality will become a high priority theme for companies over the next few years. Hence, there is a need for enterprises to redefine their processes regarding IT service management and to implement effective processes for managing IT service quality.

Accordingly, this topic is also of great interest to scientific research. However, our literature review of IT service quality management has shown that only a few publications focus on this topic (Praeg & Spath, 2008). Other publications analyze the effect of IT-based services on service quality (Zhu et al., 2002), the use of IT in improving customer services (Dabholkar, 1996; Ray et al., 2005) as well as concepts for measuring the quality of information systems (Kettinger et al., 1995; Watson et al., 1998). For this reason, our goal is to close this gap and provide a sound basis for future scientific discussions and research work.

The aim of this chapter is to outline the possible effects of IT service quality on the business performance of companies. The results of this chapter help IT service providers and internal IT departments to identify indicators relevant to service quality.

In order to achieve these aims, we outline the topics of quality, quality management and selected standards as well as concepts for managing service quality. Using this as a basis, we present a brief overview of selected IT service management concepts and derive requirements for a framework for IT service quality management. The next section introduces such a framework and describes the various framework modules. The final part of the chapter addresses the possible effect of IT service quality management on company business performance.

Following Glass et al. (2004), the solution described in this chapter is a conceptual analysis and an instrumental development based on a design science approach (Glass et al., 2004; Hevner et al., 2004). In IT research, design science creates and evaluates IT artifacts with the intention of solving organizational challenges. In this context, the organizational problem is the analysis of possible effects of IT service quality on business performance.