

Transformation and Zero Trust

The Need for a Unified Service Management System



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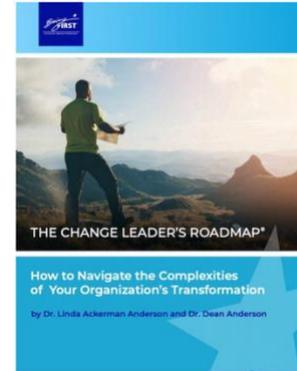
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The Zero Trust Wake-Up Call

The recent Executive Order 14028 in 2021 has resulted in a wake-up call for many government agencies and organizations. But understanding what these wake-up calls mean --- and what's being done with them by people in a position to initiate change --- will drive the strategy for change and the likelihood of success.

The change strategy leaders design is determined by their depth of understanding of the four levels of wake-up calls that lead to conscious, transformational change:

1. Recognizing that a change is needed
2. Recognizing that the change is transformational
3. Recognizing that transformation demands new approaches
4. Recognizing that transformation requires the leaders to personally change their mindset, behavior, and style



The [Change Leader's Roadmap](#) is an excellent resource leaders can use to understand and drive transformational change.

Transformation and Service Management

You don't have to be an expert in zero trust or software bill of materials (SBOM) to understand that these requirements will have significant impacts on a service management system. While an initial view may suggest we simply look at practices for access (zero trust) and configuration management (SBOM), this may be looking at the challenge from [the wrong end of the stick](#).

Regulations and mandates like M-22-09¹ set the rules that identify controls that must be in place in order to achieve compliance with many different standard(s). But interoperability within and between agencies, business units and external suppliers also increases the complexity of these mandates.

Following a standardized, methodical approach to the development and maintenance of a service management system can simplify compliance, regardless of the rules that emerge. This is a critical enabler of transformative change that will be needed for mandates like zero trust.

The Dutch government has figured this out, and it's why the USM method is part of the [Dutch Governmental Reference Architecture \(NORA\)](#). This paper will summarize some of the benefits of applying the USM method in a 'zero trust' or 'SBOM' environment.

¹ An Executive Order that set forth a Federal zero trust architecture (ZTA) strategy, requiring agencies to meet specific cybersecurity standards and objectives by the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2024.

Requirements for a Unified Service Management System

There are 3 basic requirements that must be met to establish a unified service management system:

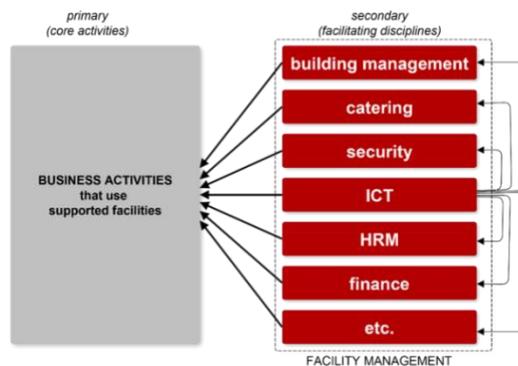
1. A universal method of defining any and all services
2. An integrated, integral process model
3. Standard workflows derived from the process model

The USM method uses these building blocks to establish standardized routines that provide flexibility to adapt any practice framework or standard and any organizational model. It also allows organizations to act as links in integrated supply chains and networks, an important capability for zero trust ecosystems.

Requirement 1 - Defining services in an everything-as-a-service world

Services (digital and otherwise) today are everywhere. Whether you are in IT, healthcare, finance, building management, security, catering, car rentals, etc. --- it doesn't matter.

Today *everyone's* a service provider.



External customers rely on the core activities of the business, but these end-to-end services depend on secondary (i.e., *facilitating*) disciplines. In turn, each of these disciplines acts as a service provider to all other teams in the business.

USM can be deployed in all service organizations and teams, in all disciplines.

While organizations and tooling differ for each service organization, the *management* of services is universal.

Figure 1 - Primary and secondary (facilitating) disciplines

Of course, not every service is built, delivered, and managed in-house. Service providers use other service providers; services are recursive, increasing the complexity of zero trust initiatives.

Today outsourcing of services is the norm, and we've really built complex networks of services that integrate capabilities at different points and different levels of a services ecosystem.

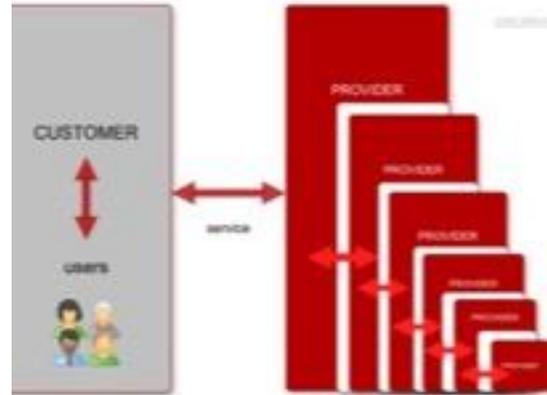


Figure 2 - Recursive service ecosystems

Another area of complexity is how services are defined today. While technology is becoming pervasive, not all services are technology-based. In an everything-as-a-service world, a definition of service must be able to define ANY service regardless of what that service is.

The Unified Service Management Method is not limited to digital services; it applies to any service provider. The USM Customer-Provider Interaction Model provides a standard link which can be used within and between service providers of any kind.

A service is a supported facility

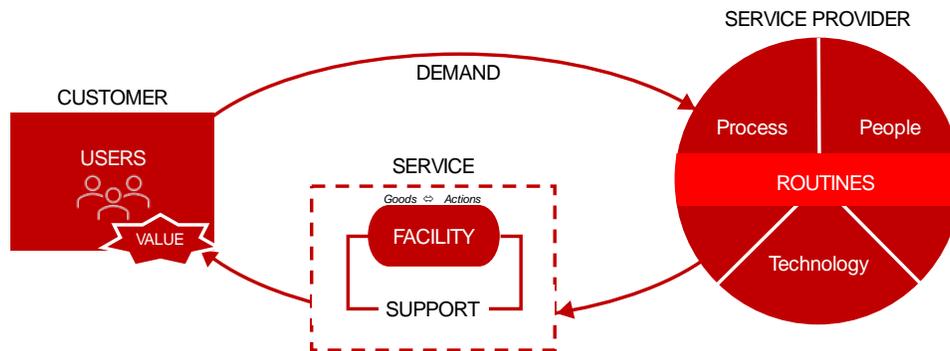


Figure 3 - The Customer-Provider Interaction Model

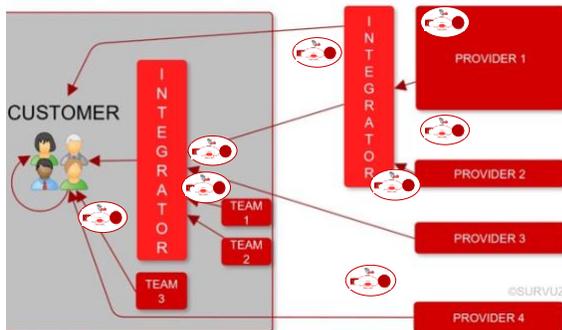


Figure 4 - Uniform Links in Service Supply Chains

The customer-provider interaction model is the initial building block of the USM method. All services could be defined as a supported facility, using templates provided by the USM method.

The customer-provider relationship can be repeated for each actor in a supply network and can be the uniform link in endless service ecosystems (see Figure 4).

Requirement 2 - An integrated, integral process model

Key to the USM method is a non-redundant process model that’s been repeatedly field tested for more than 8 years. The USM process model is **integral** --- meaning it covers all aspects of managing a service organization --- and **integrated** --- which means each activity occurs only once (it is *non-redundant*).

It is important to recognize that USM is consistent and consists exclusively of single (end-to-end, customer-facing) processes, is completely non-redundant, contains all activities for managing services and is simple and easy to learn.

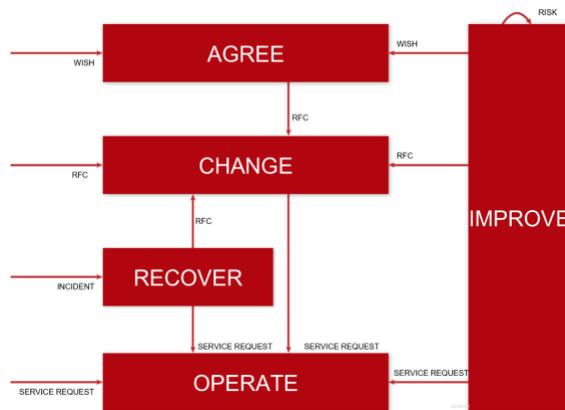


Figure 5 - The USM Process Model

The process design criteria used by the USM method is focused on a ‘pure process’ approach that adheres to [10 process design criteria](#). In practice, people are particularly inclined to get involved with the specifications of routines of the type of procedure and work instruction – and not with processes.

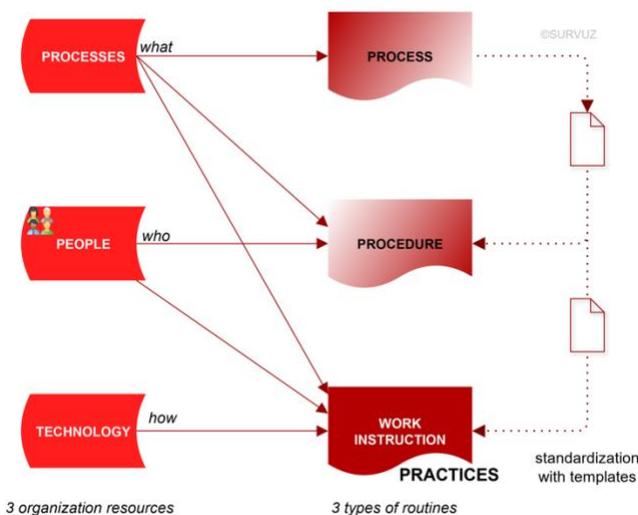


Figure 6 - People appear only in procedures and work instructions

This is how the popular 'practices' came into being, quickly applicable, but not derived from the underlying process model.

As a result, these practices lack structural coherence with other practices within the organization. The application of a large number of practices creates a complexity that soon becomes unmanageable.

The USM process model is the second requirement and enables standard workflows and standardized routines which is our third requirement.

Requirement 3 – Standard workflows and standardized routines

Each process consists of steps, subdivided into activities. The work, consisting of combinations of activities, is done in the form of workflows with customer-relevant output. These are successive series of process steps, which - if set up in the right order - lead to the desired results.

According to the logic of the non-redundant USM process model, only eight workflows represent all service management activities of a service organization. They can be used to record all generally accepted routines that can then be standardized (work instructions, practices).

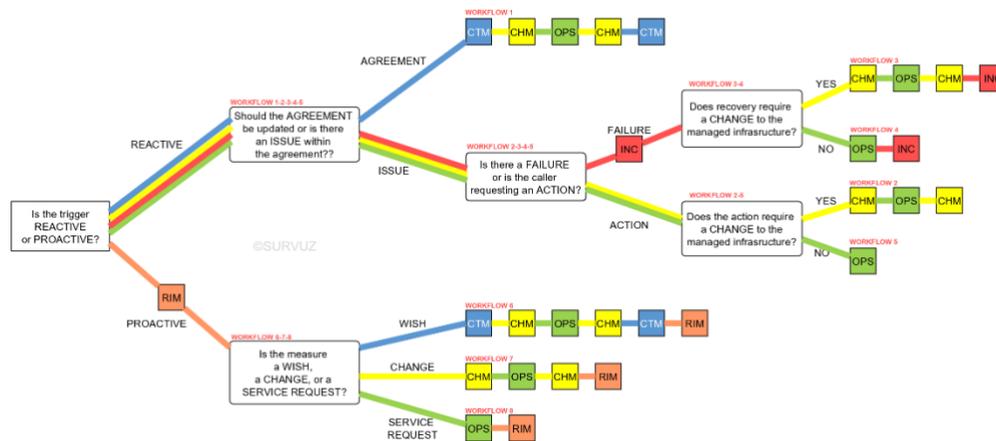


Figure 7 - Decision Tree for USM Workflows

The management of the routines therefore falls entirely within the scope of USM. It can even be considered as the core of the method. Once the process architecture is known, procedures and work instructions can easily be recorded by means of templates: two extra columns in a process description table, with successively the who and the how, record the procedure and the work instructions per process (See Figure 8).

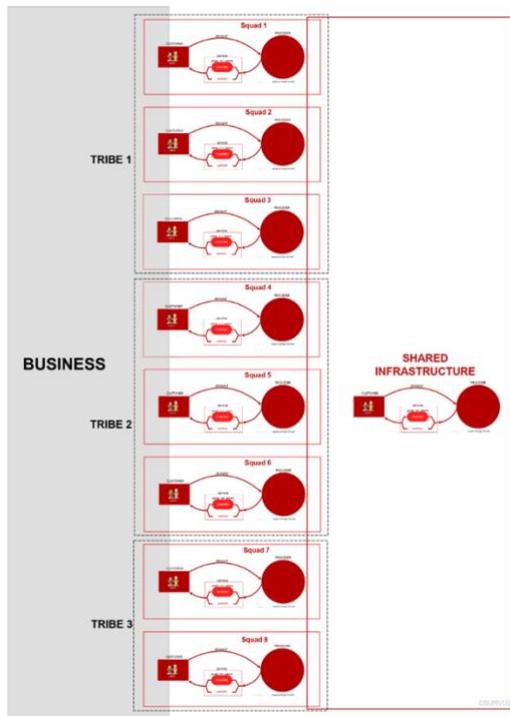
The second column with the WHO is set by the organization and can be generated from a RACI model. The third column with the WHAT then specifies the work instruction, the practice, which can then be automated in a standardized way with suitable tooling.

Work instruction X		
WHAT: activity in the process	WHO: role/function/profile by activity	HOW: specifics for the execution of the activity
Activity 1		
Activity 2		
Activity 3		
Activity 4		
Activity 5		
....		
....		
Activity N		

Figure 8 - Processes determine the structure of procedures and work instructions

Other Considerations – Separation of Duties and DevOps

Separation of duties is one of the most fundamental interventions to get in control of a task. USM is based on the combination of domain separation and process-based working. USM can apply separation of duties through process-based working--- i.e., separating a task domain into process management and line management --- and/or through domain separation.



Separation of duties in the form of domain separation is one of the essential control mechanisms of the USM method. Because of its generic character, USM can easily be applied in a practice with domain separation, but also in a practice without domain separation.

An example of domain separation is USM in a DevOps environment. One DevOps technique creates multiple parallel management teams (i.e., *squads*), each with its own customer-provider perspective. The squads can be grouped into *tribes*, more commonly known as service teams (See Figure 9).

As DevOps accelerates continuous deployment techniques, the Unified Service Management method can create effective interoperability between service teams.

Figure 9 - Repeated USM application in a DevOps organizational structure

Importance of Unified Service Management for Zero Trust

Establishing zero trust and SBOM is about much more than improving practices for access and configuration management. It is likely to accelerate the drive to other changes such as continual deployment.

Recent mandates will force transformative change in organizations, which is going to impact every area of the business (and all stakeholders). Certainly, improvements to current practices are likely to be required. However, starting improvements in this area (i.e., *practice-led*) will not lead to the desired results.

USM provides a control mechanism based on a management architecture, specifying a management system. It enables organizations to get in control of changing environments and is an autonomous system that is capable of adjusting itself (and its performance) to changing requirements (i.e., it is a [viable system](#)).

Using the USM Method, every organization can get in control of its service delivery, with a management system of **5 processes** and **8 workflows**. A singular normalized management system as an acceptable link is the core concept of the Unified Service Management method, and it is based on the concept of an integral and integrated process architecture.

As organizations attempt to comply with changing regulations and mandates, establishing the USM method can:

- Improve interoperability between providers in a service ecosystem
- Get in control of all service organizations
- Establish a sustainable, enterprise-wide service management system
- Improve the organization's ability to comply with evolving practices and standards

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About the Author

John Worthington's had a 40-year IT career with more than two decades dedicated to service management and unified performance monitoring of end-to-end digital services.

He's currently focused on helping customers simplify service management for the entire enterprise in a way that's affordable, easy to learn and use, and is consistent with— and complimentary to — existing frameworks and practices using the [USM Method](#).

He's an ITIL Expert (v3), an XLA Master and a Certified USM Coach, and has also had a two-decade relationship with eG Innovations and can assist customers with the development of unified performance monitoring road maps.

As an Authorized Affiliate of BeingFirst he can provide change leaders with innovative methods for evolving human systems and performance through their [Conscious Change Leadership](#) approach.

You can read more about him and his particular journey by getting the book, [Rolling Uphill](#).

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