

# CSI study

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Continual Service Improvement (CSI) study to the members of itSMF Finland

**A white paper from the itSMF Finland Continual Service Improvement Special Interest Group**

**Date: April 2014**

**Authors: Anne Räsänen (Tieto), Hanna Nyéki-Niemi (Appelsiini Finland Oy), Tomi Lamminsalo (Aalto University), Sanna Ojalehto (Nets), Juha Kujala (Wärtsilä), Maarit Rantala (Fujitsu Finland Oy), Sanna Heikkinen (University of Eastern Finland), Katja Pelto-Lampola (OP), Jyrki Mäntynen (ex. Wakaru)**

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## 1. THIS DOCUMENT

This whitepaper was produced by itSMF Finland's Continual Service Improvement (CSI) Special Interest Group (SIG). It aims to provide an overview about the current state of CSI implementation within the organizations of itSMF Finland members.

The overview provided by this whitepaper is based on the results of a CSI survey (sent to all members of itSMF Finland in December 2013) and the deliverables of a CSI workshop held in January 2014 at itSMF Finland's annual membership seminar.

## 2. FOREWORDS

itSMF Finland CSI SIG was founded in autumn 2013 to provide a regular forum for like-minded CSI practitioners. The objectives set by the CSI SIG include:

- To develop members' expertise and experience in the field of CSI.
- To establish and share best practice guidelines and share this within the group.
- Share information (white papers, case studies, analysis, articles etc.) with itSMF community.
- To build network where CSI information is shared in Finland, SIG works as hub for this network.
- To provide a continuous review and insights of the CSI area. Follow the work done around the world in the field of CSI.
- To provide articles and speakers, under the banner of the CSI SIG for various itSMF Finland events and publications.
- Groups' methods for working are interactive (instead of lecturing).

This whitepaper is the first deliverable of the CSI SIG group, and provides a basis for future CSI SIG white papers and events.

## 3. CSI SURVEY

### 3.1. GENERAL

The idea of the CSI survey was to capture relevant information about the current CSI (Continual Service Improvement) state of the respondent's organization.

Depending on the level of detail provided by the respondents, valuable information was collected on whether obstacles existed which may have inhibited in the success of the organization's CSI objectives.

The CSI survey was sent to all members (total amount 1260) of the itSMF Finland in December 2013.

The number of survey questions was 14:

- 3 respondent related questions
- 11 CSI current state related questions (regarding CSI challenges, development actions etc.)
- Comment on any CSI / this survey related issue.

Most questions had "other" or "please specify" answer option in order for the respondent to give any other answer or a comment related to the question. In the chapter (3.2) below selected comments are presented.

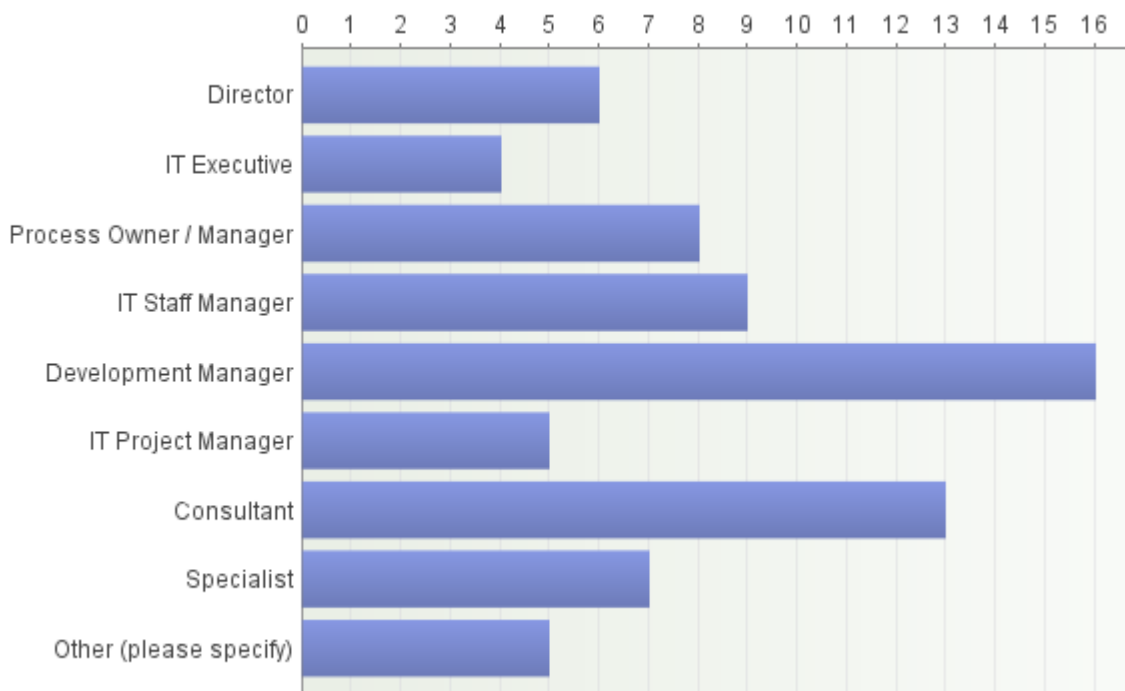
Note. Open answers provided in Finnish are translated into English.

## 3.2. RESULTS

The questions and answers of the CSI Survey are listed below:

### 1. Please specify your role

Amount of respondents: 73

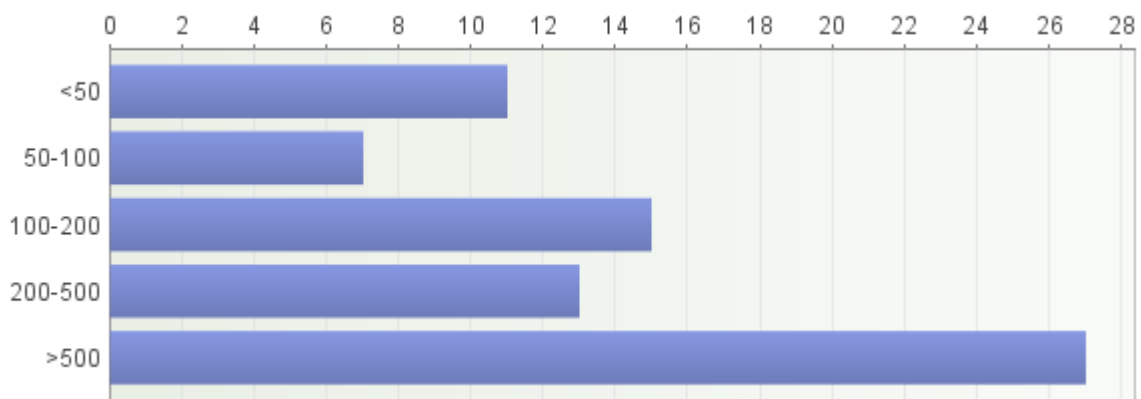


**Open answers: Other (please specify)**

- Development Manager
- Delivery Manager, responsible of service production
- Partner Manager
- Quality partner
- Service Manager

**2. What is the size of your IT organization?**

Amount of respondents: 73



**3. Please specify your level of ITIL training and/or certification**

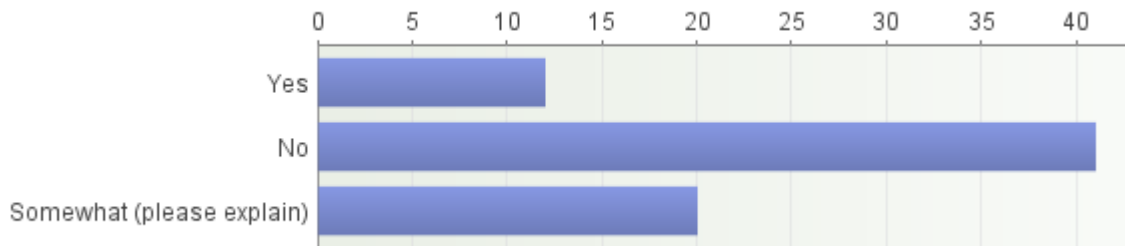
*\*) For example a module of ITIL Intermediate Level*

Amount of respondents: 73

	Yes	Training in progress	No	Sum	Average
ITIL Foundations	67	1	5	73	1,15
ITIL CSI training *)	14	4	55	73	2,56
ITIL Expert	17	4	52	73	2,48
ITIL Master	1	0	72	73	2,97
Sum	99	9	184	292	2,29

#### 4. Have CSI process roles and responsibilities been clearly identified and documented within your organization?

Amount of respondents: 73

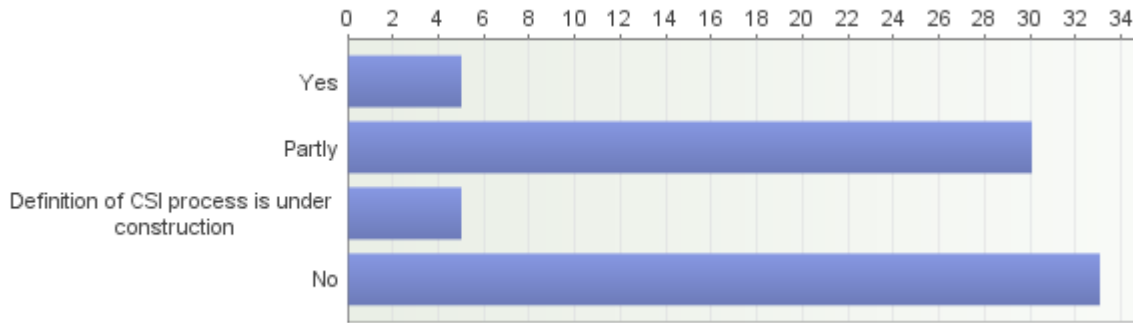


##### Open answers: Somewhat (please explain)

- ISO9001 is in use
- We have a CSI process in use and also Toyota Kata method in parts of our organization
- CSI is part of everyone's daily work (applies to 1/3 of our organization)
- All processes don't have clear responsibility definitions, although roles are in place
- We have some metrics in place – what is lacking is clear ownership, who analyzes them and is responsible for development actions
- Partly agreed with external IT providers and in workstation services
- CSI roles and responsibilities are partly identified and documented (is not perfect)
- We have ongoing development actions in place - high-level plan and prioritization is lacking
- CSI process is identified and documented. Responsibilities need clarification.
- CSI process descriptions are currently under development
- We don't have allocations yet to all needed roles
- Every (business) unit is responsible for their own development
- In some Business units there is a person responsible of CSI, but not exactly as ITIL defines it
- Roles are included in the common service delivery roles, but responsibilities are not always so clearly set
- CSI responsibilities are scattered to many roles

**5. Is CSI process defined AND implemented within your organization?**

Amount of respondents: 73



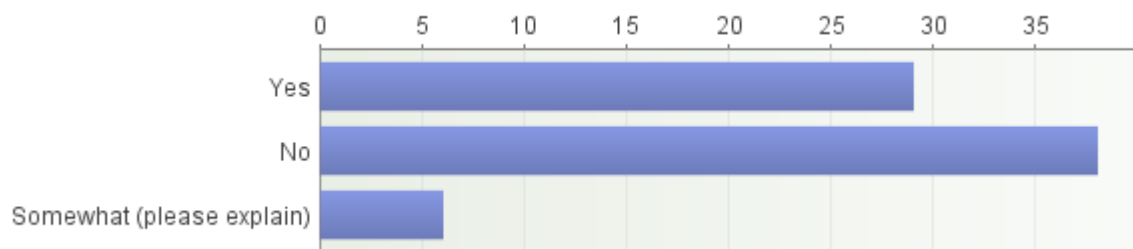
**6. Which CSI process roles do you have within your organization?**

Amount of respondents: 73

	Yes	No	I don't know	Sum	Average
CSI Process Owner	21	39	13	73	1,89
CSI Process Manager	18	40	15	73	1,96
Other (please specify)	6	17	8	31	2,06
Sum	45	96	36	177	1,97

**7. Are CSI process objectives related to specific organizational objectives?**

Amount of respondents: 73

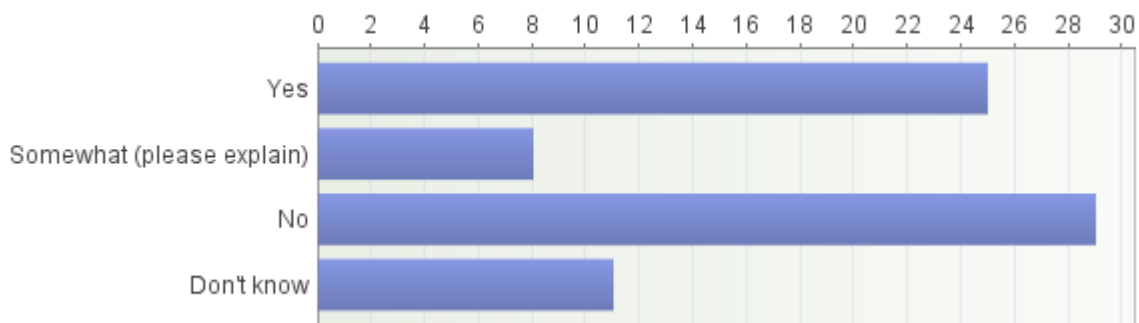


**Open answers: Somewhat (please explain)**

- There is a challenge with somewhat inconsistent incentive targets between matrix organization and process owners
- Some people understand organization objects and make improvements towards it, while some people don't (making improvements towards better results according to their own vision (360 degree))
- "You get what you measure". Metrics are not changed according to the changing world and are not adjusted to the purpose.
- There is no CSI in ITIL Manner. However Continues Improvement in on Company Strategy level.
- Improvement activities are done based on organization's targets but they can also change depending on customer situation.
- The elements of CSI process exists and there are related objectives, but not as constant defined process and it's measures.

**8. In your opinion has the maturity level of your CSI process improved during the last year?**

Amount of respondents: 73



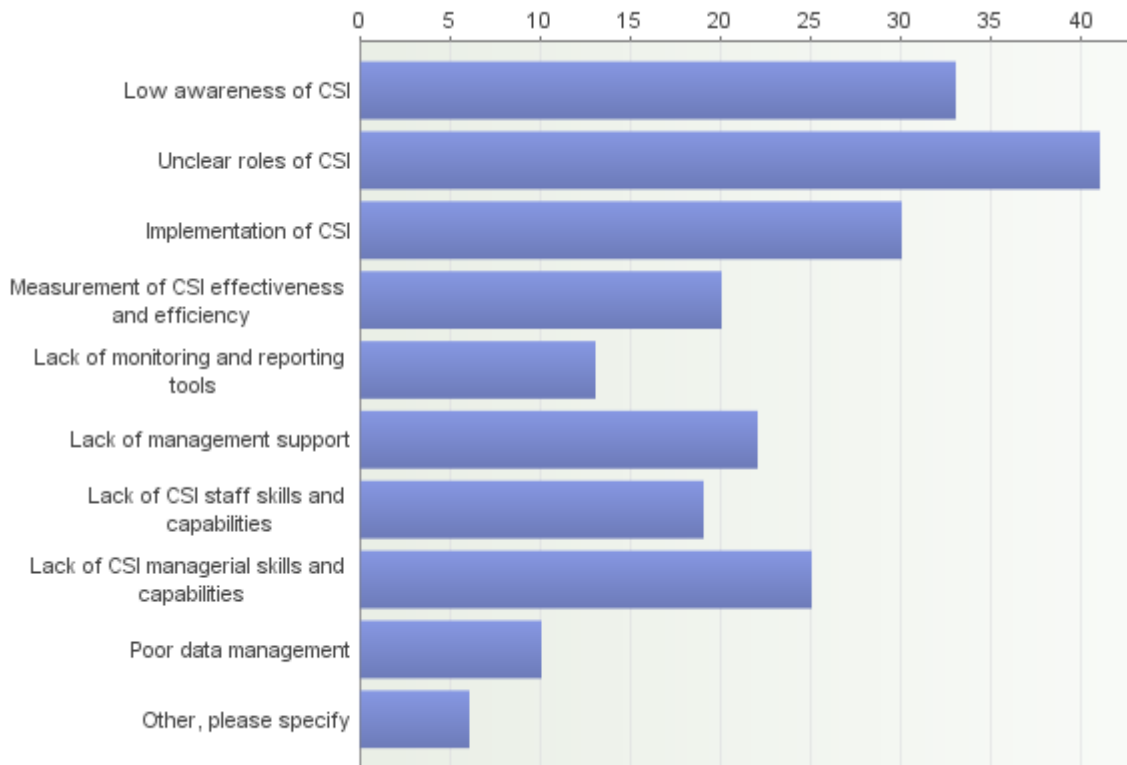
**Open answers: Somewhat (please explain)**

- New metrics have been deployed but it's unclear what value they add and to whom
- Awareness of the need has started and some elements are there



### 9. What are the three (3) biggest challenges around CSI within your organization?

Amount of respondents: 73

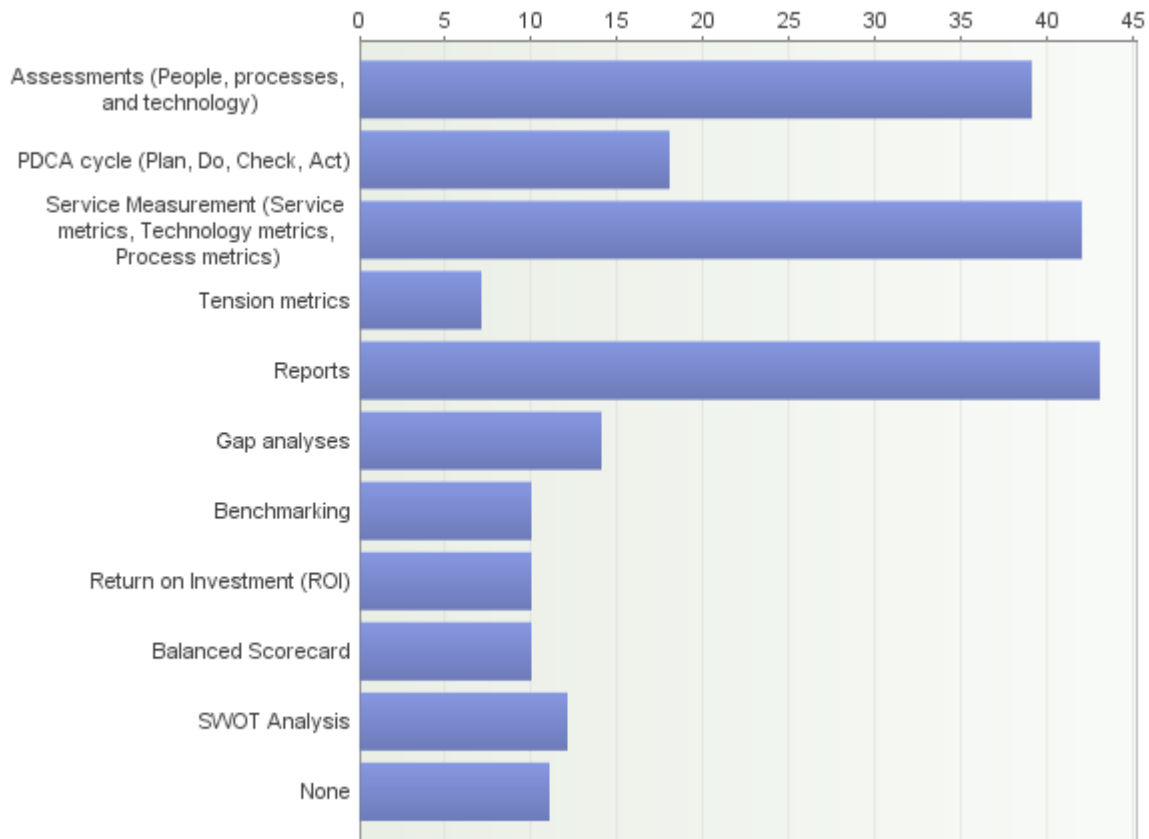


#### Open answers: Other, please specify

- Challenging nature of sustainable and formalised culture for continual improvement
- Too much obeying ITIL by the book without capability to adapt to practice
- Execution of initiatives
- Matrix organisation
- CSI is not built into daily operations, but rather a separate task that is raised only in annual/quarterly workshops

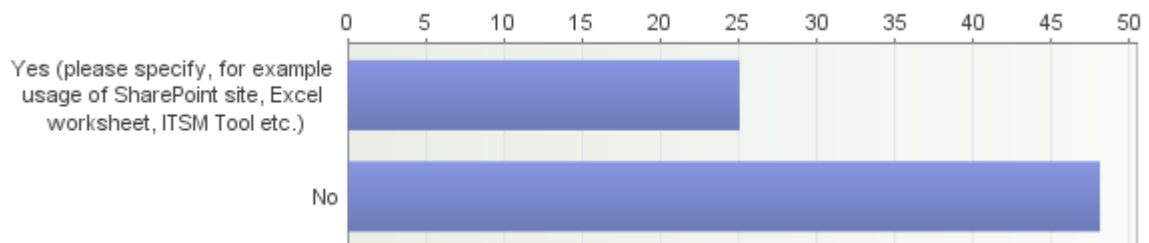
**10. What kinds of methods and/or techniques are used within your organization regarding the improvement of the CSI process?**

Amount of respondents: 73



**11. Does your organization use a CSI register where all the identified improvements are recorded?**

Amount of respondents: 73

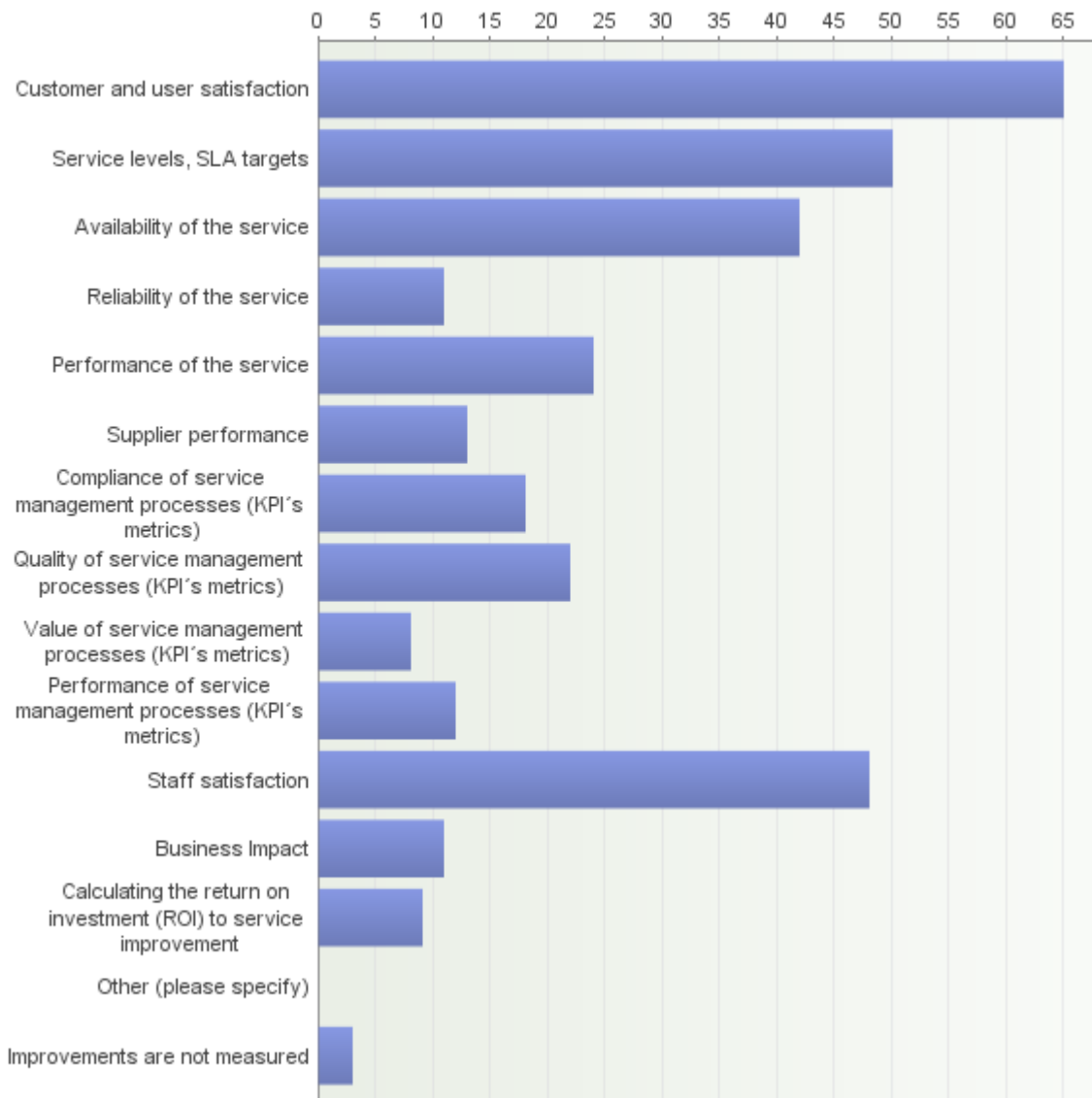


## Open answers: Yes (please specify, for example usage of SharePoint site, Excel worksheet, ITSM Tool etc.)

- Excel
- ITSM tool
- For service related improvements we use Atlassian Jira as a backlog, but only in certain parts of the organisation
- SharePoint, Efecte
- Jira / Trac wiki
- Email

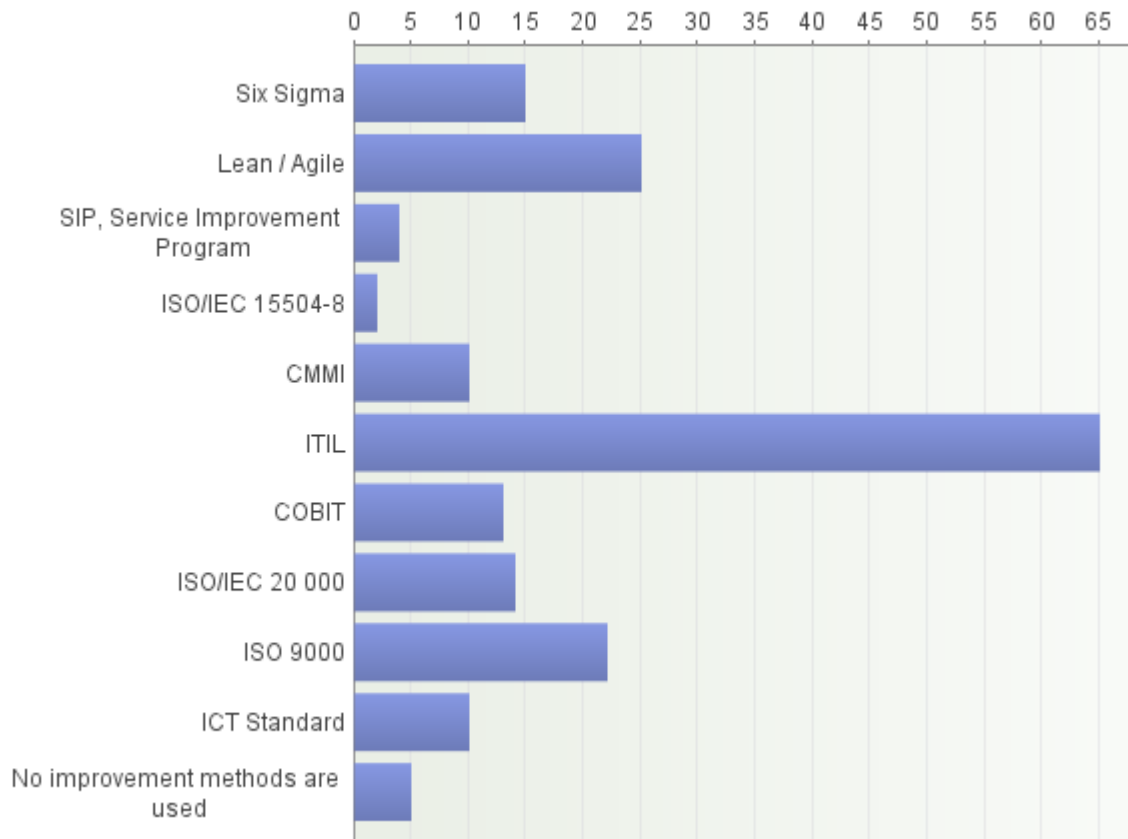
## 12. How do you measure service improvements within your IT organization?

Amount of respondents: 73



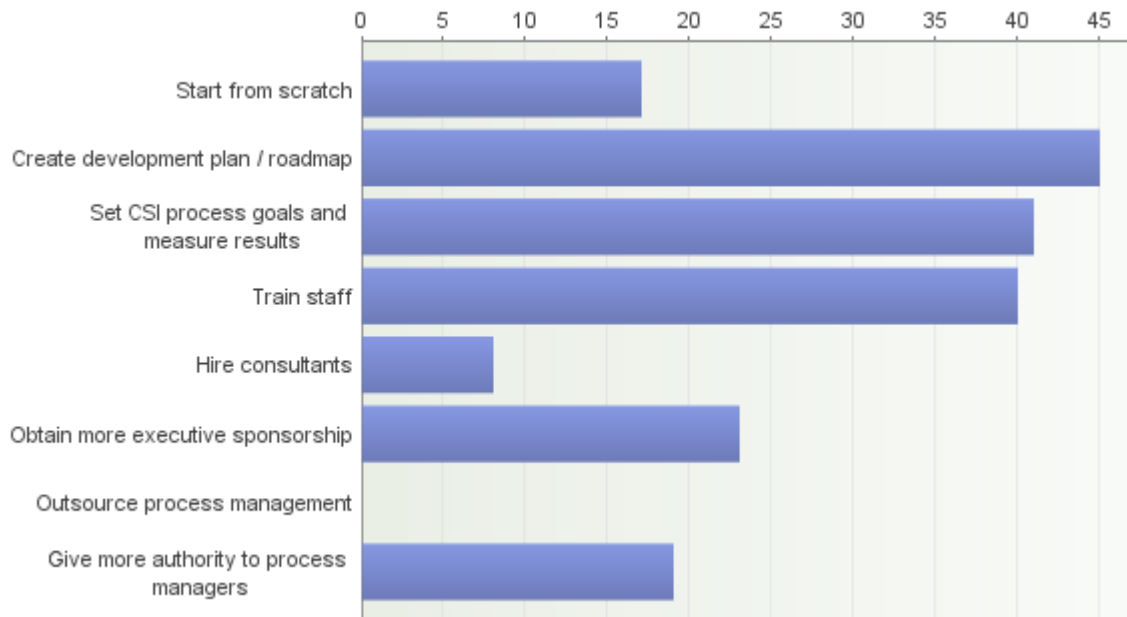
**13. What CSI implementation standards, frameworks and/or methods are implemented within your IT organization?**

Amount of respondents: 73



**14. In your opinion, what should be done in order to improve the level of your organization's CSI process effectiveness?**

Amount of respondents: 73



**15. Do you have any other CSI related comments regarding this survey or development ideas that you'd like to share?**

- Relations between services, systems etc. must be in a good shape in order to focus changes/improvement ideas more specifically on exact steps in the process. This requires good ticket management with also relations covered
- Especially development organisation has difficulties in understanding the continual nature of operations. Work is seen to be only projects. Therefore sustainable development and continual measurement is not a mature practice yet.
- CSI is a very wide domain and theoretical service improvement and mere report walkthrough is a typical problem. Concrete actions and small improvements are left undone when simple things are made too heavy and difficult. CSI initiatives can be executed in light-weight and agile manner also – that's the modern way
- In many cases I find these questions kind of misleading. The CSI as a process is really awkward as its own... we see these more like business development opportunities that are identified based on metrics listed. The way they are executed is usually projects with defined scope, deliverables and impact. Usually "IT" as such is not the case, it is just one part, but we rather look things from Business Development or Quality Management point of view rather than IT being center in here.

- It feels that as a company we have had to go through a certain trajectory, so that now we are ready to talk about processes and continual service improvement as a process. First we had to grow big enough, then we set up basic processes such as incident management. From there we got to problem management and now we have concluded that problems should be predicted, which takes us to continual service improvement. From that perspective it seems that although things are not in perfect shape (yet), the directions is correct.
- Because we work for customers, our own service improvement is being suffocated by customer needs. However, our operations have improved a lot in the past two years and we will continue on this path.
- In my opinion, CSI is not a process
- Awakening of management for CSI topics would help. Now it seems that CSI is, if not a blind spot, at least a grey area that is not invested in. It's mainly developed with bottom-up approach.

## 4. ITSMF CSI SEMINAR

### 4.1. GENERAL

itSMF Finland hosted it's annual members' seminar (cruise) on 23.1.-24.1.2014. 22 itSMF Finland members met there to learn and exchange experiences about CSI.

On the second day a workshop was held by CSI SIG group members Anne Räsänen and Hanna Nyéki-Niemi, consisting of practical and general CSI related questions. The questions and a summary of answers to those questions are listed below.

### 4.2. RESULTS

The following questions were asked at the workshop:

1. What is CSI (in your opinion / organization in practice)?
2. What is agile service development / continual improvement?
3. Do you have any CSI related hints and tips you'd like to share?

As a summary answers to the questions were:

#### **1. What is CSI (in your opinion / organization in practice)?**

- Developing a part of a service
- Focuses on providing VALUE to the Customer
- Not just IT-related and not settling for good-enough
- Finding new ways to provide better and fit-for-purpose service

- Monitoring progress (and acting on the results) regularly
- Focuses on service quality, efficiency and effectiveness
- CSI is a process
- CSI is not a process
- Planning, monitoring, acting, learning, reacting on changes → to achieve continual service improvement
- CSI is a mindset - requiring humility
- Focuses on getting a customer and KEEPING it
- Constant learning and renewal of organizations and employees

## **2. What is agile service development / continual improvement (in your opinion / organization in practice)?**

- Focus on solutions, not problems
- Daily scrums and minor / smaller scale development, tasks instead of projects
- Utilize agile methods when relevant
- "Well working" / fit-for-purpose organization
- Open, regular and frequent communication with Customers and other stakeholders
- (Culture of) frequent feedback and allowing "low-hierarchy" decision making
- Delegating when necessary
- Meaningful metrics, clear roles and responsibilities
- Focus on co-operation between relevant stakeholders, teams etc.
- Willing to change –attitude. Also mistakes are not always a bad thing + "fail fast"
- Proactivity; don't just wait you are given a task to do
- Try new tools and ideas, e.g. DevOps
- LISTEN to your customer, prioritize wishes after which ACT
- Reward on good work
- Doing "everything" in a single project → does this provide the desired output?

## **3. CSI hints and tips**

- Create and embrace "service improvement culture"
- LISTEN, RESPECT and TRUST: your Customer, stakeholders, team members etc.
- Focus and evaluate at all times on looking at provided service from the Customer point of view
- Create CSI culture, where CSI is part of everyone's daily work
- Right people to the right positions
- Do the right things right and organize relevant training
- Enough of authority to employees, especially to those working closely with the Customer
- Regular checkups of provided service (not just levels) with the Customer

## 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As a summary from the CSI survey (Chapter 3) and CSI seminar (Chapter 4), the main points of implementing and practicing CSI in organizations were the following:

- CSI as a practice is not clearly defined and roles responsible for facilitating the work are not clear.
- CSI is done by utilizing numerous methods, frameworks and tools.
- CSI is not guided clearly by KPIs and although improvements are made, they might not always be towards organizations' goals.
- Biggest obstacles for CSI are low awareness, unclear roles and implementation of the practice.
- CSI is mainly done by assessments and use of metrics (process, people, service, technology). Reporting is seen as key tool for improving services.
- Most organizations don't use a register for centralized "improvement backlog"
- Service improvement is measured by customer and staff satisfaction, availability of service and SLAs and meeting targets.
- ITIL is most common framework used for CSI. Lean and Agile methods are used to enhance implementation and use of ITIL best practices.
- All tools of improving CSI process are internally focused from building a roadmap, setting goals and measurements for successful CSI to training the staff.
- CSI is not IT specific. CSI done right is towards customer value creation.
- Agile / Lean CSI key allows low hierarchy decision making. These methods use close feedback loops and small increments when building value. Listening to your customers and then acting towards customer value creation.
- The key problem to solve for sustainable CSI is: How CSI culture is built and how to get everyone inspired and internally motivated about CSI.

CSI survey (Chapter 3) was mostly answered by people from managerial and consultancy positions.



## **6. CSI SIG CONCLUSIONS**

CSI is often seen as an activity which only few can “afford”, due to role and urgent day to day activities like managing technology and solving incidents. In practice CSI is done by numerous methods and different tools in organizations.

The survey results (Chapter 3) also indicate that CSI targets are not often aligned with business goals. This might lead to e.g. supplier driven improvements and (only) partial improvements, where – instead of business driven CSI activities – somewhat insignificant CSI tasks might be carried out.

Quite often we believe that implementing CSI involves lots of projects and additional work. In reality it can be done as a very light-touch set of activities, providing lots of value to all stakeholders. The more CSI is imbedded into the whole organization and culture, the more it will contribute in providing higher quality services to the Customer.

However, building a CSI culture is not done overnight. Instead, creating a CSI culture must be engrained in the day-to-day activities and become a mindset for each employee. In order to fully embed CSI culture within the whole organization, it not only has to be clearly communicated to all employees and stakeholders, but properly supported with resources like training or coaching.

Additionally, implementing measurable goals for employees and stakeholders is crucial.

Paying attention to and rewarding strong instances of CSI from individual associates will also create motivation for employees to engage in desired cultural behaviors. Also tracking CSI surveys and other metrics will help company leadership determine whether the implemented changes have been successful.

CSI has to become as much a part of the business plan as the delivery of a final service or product. We believe that developing a company culture centered on CSI is the only true way to provide a value to customers in future. Organizational CSI culture is ‘the glue’ that guides behavior and shapes decision making. We have confidence that in order to really achieve CSI within any organization it have to embed a culture in which continual improvement is seen as daily living duties – through all areas of the business.

Last but not least, all of us have to remember – CSI is about CONTINUAL Service Improvement where we should constantly seek ways to provide additional value to our Customer - this must never ever come to an end.