

# How To Build an Asset Management Program: 7 Keys to Success

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Over the years, I've worked with many organizations at various states of maturity and success with their IT Asset Management (ITAM) programs. In this blog, I will share with you the seven common practices that I've observed from organizations that have built and maintained successful ITAM programs.



**1. “Give Them What They Want” (Executive Support/Alignment)** – IT Asset Management can be very political because it requires that multiple groups work together with some level of alignment to achieve common ends and produce mutual value. An ITAM program cannot be successful in isolation. Executive support is essential to influence the team to gain alignment, share information and work towards a common goal. Without executive support, there is little chance an organization

will be able to establish and maintain a successful ITAM program. Depending on the initial scope and approach, teams can experience some minor success upfront without executive support, but it will fade fast as the scope of the full ITAM program increases in subsequent phases, exposing the lack of alignment across the teams. Ideally, with executive support you will have “executive sponsor” to not only support and influence behavior, but sometimes serve as the mediator if any conflict arises. I’ve seen cases where there was limited executive support and direct involvement that negatively impacted the ITAM program resulting in delays.

**2. “What’s in it for me?” (Engage and Align)** – Because of the cross functional dependency, a successful ITAM program requires alignment across the teams which may vary depending how your company is organized (ex. IT/Support, Finance, Legal, etc.). Alignment is required on several fronts including the definition of asset management, goals, processes, policies, outcomes, etc. You must weave the needs of your executive sponsor into the aligned plans, but you must also ensure everyone involved receives benefits for their efforts. I have seen organizations that take the initiative to form a cross-functional team and/or steering team/committee experience improved alignment and success.

**3. “Don’t Boil the Ocean” (Take a Phased Approach)** – Another key to establishing and maintaining a successful ITAM program is getting the momentum going with an approach that ensures early success and iterative additional delivered value. To ensure success early in the program, you must make sure you don’t boil the ocean. You must test the waters with a limited scope to “work out the kinks” across people, processes and technologies. This critical success factor is tied into all the other factors. In terms of executive support, you must ensure your scope aligns to the executive’s needs in some way (ex. reducing costs, mitigating risk) and within the executive’s needs, you should focus on a subset of attainable goals for each phase. For example, you may know that the majority of hardware costs come from one or a few asset classes (ex. servers and laptops). Focus on these classes before expanding to others. This will enable you to work out the kinks and give

you a higher likelihood of momentum-building success. These gains will breed further success as other teams share in the benefits. You want to think strategically, but implement tactically. In other words, develop a long-term plan, but be tactical in your delivery to ensure iterative goal attainment in order to continue onto the next phase/scope. The BMC Remedyforce Onboarding Team has developed an agile-hybrid implementation methodology to deliver quick value.

**4. “Quality In, Quality Out” (Justify the Data)** – Only capture and manage data which is justified. I’ve seen organizations capture a tremendous amount of data because they This is made possible through a vast array of discovery tools and/or other systems. The questions you need to ask for every “object” and field is “what” and “why.” If there is value and the effort to capture, maintain and manage the data to ensure accuracy is justified, then include it. Many organizations will define a pricing threshold to clearly define types of records (ex. high monitors over \$500). The other dimension here is data quality. The old adage is “garbage in, garbage out”. You must ensure the data source is accurate and the integrations, processes, and people are in place to maintain the data. This also ties back to the phased approach and class types. Don’t manage a class just because it can be discovered. Just because you can doesn’t mean you should.

**5. “Technology is Not the Only Answer” (Process, Process, Process)** – When speaking to organizations about ITAM, especially those who are just beginning to build a program, I commonly state that “ITAM is 80% process, 20% technology.” I make this statement not to downplay the significance of the technologies, but to stress that process is essential for a successful ITAM program, and tools should not be the primary focus. Organizations must also ensure their processes and policies are well defined, communicated and enforced.

**6. “Rinse and Repeat” (Baseline and Measure)** – I’ve seen many organizations focus on most of these other critical success factors, but ignore or not spend as much effort on baselining and measuring; however, they are critical to success. Baselining is important because you must know where you started. How do you know where to go when you don’t know where you are? Organizations must use baselines to

track their progress. These can be qualitative, but must also be quantitative. There are several frameworks to leverage including Gartner's high-level [ITAM Maturity Model](#). The International Association of Information Technology Asset Managers (IAITAM) also has a very good tool called [ITAM 360 Assessment Model](#) which provides a more detailed assessment covering 12 key process areas (Note: For those not familiar with IAITAM, I encourage you to take a look at this organization. They have a lot of great real world, practical content and educational material).

Once you baseline, you must **measure** your progress on a consistent basis. The ongoing measurement and comparison enables organizations to track progress and expose opportunities for improvement. The principles around continuous process improvement are key here. The continuous measurement and assessment of progress exposes strengths and weaknesses, helping identify the opportunities to take your program to the next level.

**7. "Be Transparent" (Share the Results)** – Once you measure, it's important to share results with executive management and the other teams sponsoring and supporting the program. This is one of the most critical aspects, especially when early in establishing the program. With the right alignment and focused scope, you significantly increase your chances of success if you communicate those quick (and iterative) wins early and often. Shout your success from the rooftops and you'll attract other interested parties that you can draw on for support and help you expand the scope and success of your ITAM project.

In summary, all seven factors are essential to build and maintain a successful ITAM program. Over the years, I have seen organizations focus on a few of these factors and initially deliver some level of success, but as they mature, expand scope, and require other teams to get involved, the climb becomes more difficult and they falter. Once you lose momentum, it is much harder to get back on track. If you consider and balance each of these critical success factors, you will have a much higher likelihood for success.