

Getting Product and IT Teams Under the Same Umbrella with Jira Service Management



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A primary recommendation in [Gartner's 2022 Strategic Roadmap for IT Service Management](#) is to enable IT and product teams to practice ITSM. In other words, you need IT and product teams to work collaboratively under the same umbrella.

Information technology service management (ITSM) is an IT framework focused on the processes and technological aspects of planning, enabling, delivering, and continuously managing IT services. The main goal of ITSM is to serve IT services to customers in a timely and auditable manner. Typically, this is achieved using well-defined ITSM processes like:

- Configuration management
- Incident management
- Problem management
- Change request management
- Service Request Fulfillment
- Release management
- Service level management



Because ITSM is used to manage end-to-end delivery, it's often compared to [DevOps](#). DevOps (with “Dev” referring to “development” and “Ops” referring to “operations”) is a practice that combines software application development and IT operations. It actively works against the siloing of development and operations teams.

The main aim of DevOps and the objective of teams who practice DevOps – like a product team – is to improve collaboration between development and operations teams. The result of this improved collaboration is the more rapid building, testing, and release of more consistently reliable software.

Though ITSM and DevOps are regularly framed as conflicting concepts, both frameworks can be used to work quickly and strategically while maintaining a thorough development process that includes continuous integration, frequent testing, automation, IT management, and collaboration.

Moreover, both types of teams can use ITSM to communicate and work more effectively. Fortunately, Atlassian designed and built Jira Service Management (JSM) for product and ITSM teams – a claim no other ITSM toolset vendor can make.

This article discusses the importance of collaboration between product and ITSM teams and demonstrates the value of Atlassian's [Jira Service Management](#) as the centerpiece of collaboration.



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Understanding the Relationship Between IT and Product Teams

Product teams must maintain a broad focus. They typically oversee a product's planning, overall development, marketing and sales planning, price estimates, and eventual launch into the market. Such a broad array of responsibilities creates space for collaboration with multiple teams – like engineering, operations, support, marketing, and sales.

As a result of this close interconnectedness, product teams and DevOps teams often overlap in purview and strategy. In many ways, DevOps teams are a subset of product teams, with DevOps often having the most hands-on influence over what the product looks like and how it is maintained on a day-to-day basis.

In contrast, the goal of an IT team is to enable the product team to carry out their duties effectively. While IT team members aren't directly responsible for the product, they provide the necessary infrastructure that enables DevOps and other developmental-critical practices to take place. IT teams are responsible for maintaining the fundamental building blocks of collaboration, including project management tools, service desks, and company-wide communication channels.

While the respective teams' responsibilities are geared toward meeting the organization's goals, effectively implementing and practicing these concepts is challenging. To do so effectively requires discipline and a capable collaboration platform.

How to Ensure IT and Product Teams Can Collaborate Effectively

Some organizations don't yet integrate DevOps practices into their projects or software development lifecycle. In contrast, some implement DevOps methods but only to find that there's still friction that degrades the collaboration between the development and operations teams.

For example, consider a development team that packages its product as a jar artifact rather than as a containerized application. This does not align with the operations team's expectations, nor does the team receive advance warning. Moreover, it can create a challenge when defining the operations team's CI/CD pipeline stages, which can cascade into additional issues.

While this might seem like a conflict strictly between Dev and Ops, it also represents a misalignment between product and IT teams. Without the proper tools and communication channels that ITSM mechanisms establish, Dev and Ops struggle to remain synchronized. As a result, they experience difficulties aligning with the larger product team as projects pass through the software development lifecycle. However, having in place a strong ITSM backbone can minimize these misalignments.

To avoid such issues, you must improve collaboration between the Dev and Ops teams and ensure DevOps workflows align with the product's broader goals. This can be best illustrated with a use case as follows:

- First, the product team defines its product and business requirements in Confluence. Assume the final goal is to have a product that's scalable across millions of users and multiple geographical regions, with all expected functional requirements. This business requirement can be added to the page with all the other gathered requirements, where they can be reviewed by the product development/engineering team.



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- The architect of the engineering/development team can then translate this business requirement into user stories. These user stories can then be sent to Jira Software using the built-in integration with Jira.
- Based on the architect's design decisions, the development team will opt for a microservices-based infrastructure, which will be deployable as a containerized application. The development team will focus on containerizing the application right from the beginning.
- An ITSM Change ticket in Jira Service Management is created and assigned to the operation team. This ticket should describe the scope and work expected from the operations team in constructing the containerized application's CI/CD pipeline for the development team. User-reported outages can be recorded as Incident tickets in the ITSM tool and assigned to the L1 support team for triage.
- By creating tickets in the appropriate tool and assigning them to the targeted audience/teams (as ITSM practice dictates), the clarity of business and technical goals can facilitate more seamless collaboration among development, operations, and product teams.

When applying such a strategy, the product, development, and operations teams should identify and categorize their responsibilities when defining the product's requirements. Such a practice should continue, even after the product goes live. Furthermore, linking Incident, Problem, Change and Configuration Management ITSM tickets improves efficiency and reduces misalignment among the teams.

When all teams follow these ITSM strategies in combination with DevOps processes, they will solidify their professional working relationships, enhance traceability throughout development, and avoid redundant, time-consuming bureaucracy.

Closing the Gap with JSM

Once you understand the necessity of aligning your product and ITSM teams — and the obstacles faced when doing so — you can easily appreciate the importance of having a capable toolkit to help achieve this goal. Jira Service Management is often the best fit for this job.

While most organizations base their product and DevOps management practices on Agile methodology, the Waterfall approach of ITSM might seem like a direct conflict. However, with a JSM platform in place, you can empower your cross-functional teams to get the greatest value out of both practices.

The JSM platform brings in ITSM practices like Service Request, Change, Incident, Problem, Asset, Configuration, and Knowledge management. By integrating these practices into the platform, JSM can transform your product-oriented groups into high-velocity, agile teams.

IT teams can use JSM's Asset and Configuration Management capabilities to capture the asset and configuration item details corresponding to the developers' machines, servers, applications, and other software deployed in environments where the product will be deployed.

Product teams can define the requirements as a request ticket in JSM or as an epic in Jira. This ticket can then be defined as multiple stories in Jira or request tickets in JSM and assigned to corresponding stakeholders or teams. As the product is developed, each team can use Atlassian's Confluence Knowledge Management feature to combine their learnings and technical/functional details into a comprehensive knowledge base.



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Then, once the product is live and can potentially experience outages, you can use JSM to create an Incident. The engineers can respond to incidents and generate reports based on the details logged within the ticket. Such reports can then showcase the service level metrics details.

Furthermore, when end users/customers require any changes to the product, the details of the requirement can be captured as enhancement requests, enabling the corresponding team to address them accordingly. This entire cycle will iterate throughout the software lifecycle process, thereby achieving the integrity and implementation of all practices – product management, DevOps, and ITSM – in one platform.

Enhance Collaboration to Improve Productivity

DevOps practices intend to expedite software delivery through automation and improve collaboration across different teams. With the adoption of DevOps practices, many organizations reduced their focus on ITSM/ITIL processes – or have left ITIL processes up to what ITSM toolset vendors offer out-of-the-box. However, the ITIL4 framework now offers guiding principles such as keep it simple, collaborate, and optimize and automate – processes that have often proven crucial. Therefore, it is vital to recognize the potential benefits of integrating these frameworks rather than prioritizing one over another.

By improving collaboration between the DevOps team, product team, and IT team, you can avoid siloing, enhance visibility, reduce your incident response time, and meet your SLAs. All this results in a more streamlined development procedure and a superior customer experience.

JSM's powerful ITSM capabilities can help improve and integrate your organization's DevOps and ITSM practices, offering an intuitive and powerful no-code solution that integrates seamlessly with various tools and platforms.

The organizational impact of getting product and IT teams under the same umbrella using JSM reads like a page out of the ITIL4 or DevOps Handbook: improved IT/business alignment, greater collaboration across functions, and increased emphasis on employee experience. Most importantly, a successful ITSM experience positively impacts the business. RightStar, a division of XTIVIA, is a thought leader in ITSM and an expert with Atlassian and JSM-related solutions. RightStar offers consulting, design, and implementation services to help streamline your workflows and eliminate ITSM overload. Contact us at info@rightstar.com

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Our services include managed services and business solutions, like database support and management; DevOps, CRM, and ITSM; application solutions, including mobile apps; ERP solutions for GovCon and the private sector; and platform integration, with APIs as well as digital experience and CMS solutions.

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