IT Asset Management: What and Why

An effective IT asset management (ITAM) program delivers significant benefits through IT cost management, increased agility and reduced risk. Gartner clients who successfully execute ITAM as a discipline have typically achieved 30% cost savings in the first year, and at least 5% cost savings in each of the subsequent five years. ITAM can also significantly reduce the compliance risks associated with the recent increase in software audits.

Gartner characterizes IT asset management as “a framework and set of processes for strategically tracking and managing the financial, physical, licensing and contractual aspects of IT assets through their life cycle.”

This definition highlights three elements that are essential to realize the value of IT asset management:

- A focus on financial, contractual and physical data;
- The asset life cycle; and,
- A process framework.

The Focus of IT Asset Management

Information technology is mission critical. Few businesses today could function without the IT assets – the hardware, software, network and other technologies – that support business operations. Not only are IT assets numerous, they’re expensive to acquire, configure and maintain. IT assets are frequently moved, rapidly depreciate and require constant update and replacement. The objective of IT asset management is to ensure that the large volume of constantly churning, costly assets so essential to an organization’s success are effectively managed from beginning to end to achieve the highest possible return on investment.
ITAM focuses on centralized management of financial (e.g., purchase price, cost events, supplier, etc.), contractual (e.g., terms and conditions, software entitlement, support agreements, leases, warranties, etc.) and physical (e.g., location, ownership, assignment, etc.) data about IT assets in an organization. It is a completely different function than IT operational management, whose objective is to optimize the performance and delivery of IT services; however, as Gartner points out,

“ITAM is often confused with the day-to-day management of the configuration of that asset, the financial management of assets that are on the fixed asset register or maintaining an inventory of deployed assets.”

Configuration management is not IT asset management.

Configuration information derived from IT operational management tools should never be used as a substitute for IT asset management data sources like ERP (enterprise resource planning) and finance systems. For example, asset assignment should not be based on the discovered primary user of a computer, nor should an asset’s physical location assignment be determined by IP address.

Using configuration information in place of properly sourced data is not consistent with IT asset management best practice.

**FIGURE 1**

**IT Asset Life Cycle**

Source: Gartner (May 2013)

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The IT Asset Life Cycle

Life cycle management practices are required to improve the return on investment for IT assets, avoid internal and external audit consequences, and adopt future technology. Gartner identifies five stages to an asset life cycle – requisition, procurement, deployment, maintenance and retirement – and notes that while many companies mistakenly believe that IT life cycle management begins when they receive an asset, the life cycle actually commences when an asset is requisitioned. Similarly, life cycle management continues after an asset is no longer operationally active, extending to retirement and disposal activities. Management of the life cycle may further continue for an indefinite period where historical asset records must be retained to satisfy legal and fiscal requirements.

Effective IT asset management requires complete coverage of the entire life cycle.

As an asset progresses through the life cycle, its status changes, and changes will occur to financial, contractual and physical data associated with the asset. Simply recording and tracking these changes, however, does not constitute asset life cycle management.

Asset tracking IS NOT life cycle management!
IT Asset Management Process

Life cycle is what you do, and asset tracking records what you’ve done. Process is how you do it. Process is the essence of IT asset management.

It’s all about process.

Gartner Research Director Patricia Adams underscores the importance of process and tool support in managing assets through the entire life cycle:

“ITAM depends on robust processes, with tools to automate manual processes. This data then enables organizations to effectively manage IT assets, vendors and a software and hardware asset portfolio from requisition through retirement, thus monitoring the asset’s performance throughout its life cycle.”

A process is a sequence of activities and tasks for the management of assets through a particular step in the life cycle. Effective processes are designed to achieve specific goals and objectives, take into account corporate policies, standards and procedures, and are modeled on established and proven industry best practices. Proper processes provide control, consistency and accuracy.

Best Practice

The quality of processes implemented in support of an IT asset management program is critical, especially for automated processes that are not under direct human supervision.

Best practice is capturing proven and effective know-how and incorporating it into IT asset management processes.

Aside from the specialized ISO 19770 standards and Microsoft® SAM Optimization Model for software management, no generally recognized framework is available for IT asset management comparable to IT service management frameworks such as ITIL® (IT Infrastructure Library) or the Microsoft Operations Framework (MoF). There are, however, three good sources for best practices:

- Effective current practices. Whether or not there is an existing IT asset management program, practices are already in place to perform the IT asset management function. In many cases, these practices have been refined over time to become more effective and better matched to organizational needs. There is no substitute for firsthand learning. Taking the time to identify, formally record and institutionalize successful methods already in place as part of the IT asset management program is the most fundamental and important source of best practices.

- Industry. Research firms like Gartner, practitioner organizations like the International Association of IT Asset Managers (IAITAM), publications like the ITAM Review, and ITAM events and webinars are excellent sources of best practice information. Experienced IT asset management and software asset management consultants can also provide valuable knowledge and insight.

- Tools. Superior IT asset management tools integrate best practices directly to ensure tasks and activities are performed in the correct sequence, that appropriate relationships and interdependencies are taken into account, and that data is properly maintained and updated. For example, a good tool will move child assets when the parent asset location is changed, or remove software assignments automatically when a hardware asset is retired.

Best practice ensures process is optimized based on successful individual and aggregated experience and is directly integrated into better IT asset management tools.

IT Asset Management Maturity

There are a number of different maturity models that establish an IT organization’s level of proficiency and guide future improvement. These include Gartner’s ITScore for Infrastructure and Operations (ITSIO), and the Microsoft Core Infrastructure Optimization (CIO) model. Regardless of the model, it is universally established that:

- Most organizations are at a low to modest level of IT asset management maturity. In its five-level model, Gartner estimates that about 35% of enterprises have reached the proactive (3rd) level of ITAM process maturity, while 5% to 8% have reached the service-aligned (4th) level, and less than 3% have reached the business partner (5th) level.

- Increasing benefits accrue as maturity level increases. “As IT organizations progress from level to level up the maturity curve, each step will yield incremental savings, resulting in lower costs, decreased risk and increased business alignment.”

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9 Gartner Inc., Characteristics of IT Asset Management Maturity G00227267, 28 March 2012
Maturity increases as a result of process improvement and implementation of tools that provide effective process support and automation. For example, these are characteristics of organizations at the proactive (3rd) level of the Gartner ITAM maturity model:

“By integrating IT life cycle management processes through all the stages of the asset life cycle, IT asset management (ITAM) programs will contribute meaningful savings at each stage.”

Successful IT asset management programs are supported by effective tools. An effective tool is characterized by its ability to manage financial, contractual and physical data, integrate with adjacent IT management tools and business systems, provide out of the box best practice functionality, and support implementation and automation of IT asset management processes.

“Organizations that systematically manage IT asset life cycles focusing on processes augmented by tools will reduce costs and improve the performance of the IT assets in their environment.”

Components of a successful IT asset management program:

- Complete coverage of the entire IT asset life cycle, from requisition to retirement (or beyond);
- Well defined processes to ensure efficient, consistent and accurate execution of IT asset management tasks and activities;
- Continuous process improvement to achieve increasingly greater levels of maturity; and,
- Effective tools that provide process support and automation.

Continuous process improvement combined with effective tools that provide process support and automation advance IT asset management maturity to deliver increasingly greater benefit.

Building a Successful IT Asset Management Program

In order to realize the significant potential benefits of IT asset management, a successful program requires breadth and depth. Specifically, breadth of life cycle coverage and depth of process support. Making continuous improvements to processes results in increasingly greater benefits.

Selecting a Tool to Support Your IT Asset Management Processes

There are four core capabilities tools must provide to support an effective IT asset management program:

- An IT asset management repository;
- Hardware and software inventory and usage information;
- Integration with adjacent IT and business systems; and,
- Data import.

The IT asset management repository is the principal component of an IT asset management system. It serves as the central store for the required financial, contractual and physical data. However, what determines the quality and effectiveness of the tool is the repository’s functional ability to perform IT asset management tasks and activities that support processes across the life cycle and that are based on best practice.

The ability to discover hardware and software inventory and determine asset use is similarly essential to effective IT asset management. Both automated discovery and physical inventory tools like bar code scanning are required to ensure continuous management of assets through both operational and non-operational portions of the life cycle. Without physical inventory capabilities, it is impossible to support certain IT asset management processes and best practices, such as receiving and rolling (physical) inventory.

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Gartner Inc., “Adopt IT Asset Life Cycle Management as the Foundation for Your ITAM Programs G00225114, 20 September 2012”

Gartner Inc., “MarketScope for the IT Asset Management Repository G00247007, 2 April 2013”
IT asset management is reliant upon data from both IT and business systems. For this reason, “When choosing an ITAM repository, most Gartner clients say one of the top priorities is to look for how tightly integrated the repository is with adjacent toolsets. The primary toolsets with which ITAM repositories will integrate, besides inventory and software usage, are IT service support management, change management, and purchasing and configuration management.”

Where no direct technical integration is provided, effective data import capability is required, e.g., from finance or ERP systems. At a minimum, an import tool should be able to access information stored in either databases or files, and provide capabilities to filter and transform source data to either create or update asset records in the repository.

Given the increased benefit that is realized as an IT asset management program evolves, it is essential to select a tool whose feature set will not just meet current needs, but will also support anticipated future requirements as maturity improves. A larger initial investment in a more highly functional tool at the outset can prevent significantly higher downstream costs to “rip and replace” a tool whose functionality fails to keep pace with organizational improvement.

### Evaluating IT Asset Management Tools and Vendors

It’s essential to thoroughly assess and evaluate tools. The preferred method of evaluation is through firsthand use of fully functional trial or evaluation versions. This provides an opportunity to rigorously test software with real data and fully explore integration with existing systems and environments. Along with a functional assessment, a detailed review of product documentation will help establish the tool’s capabilities and quality.

In lieu of or as a supplement to hands on testing are product reviews and evaluations by objective and knowledgeable third parties. The Gartner MarketScope for the IT Asset Management Repository provides a review of 14 products and vendors. In addition, Gartner clients can schedule an analyst inquiry to ask detailed questions about tools under consideration. Product reviews are also occasionally featured in industry periodicals and web sites; however, caution should be exercised in using information acquired from general forums and blogs, even those hosted or moderated by a credible authority — particularly when information is posted by unattributed sources or anonymous authors.

Reputable tool vendors will be able to provide customer case studies and references. While partisan, these can be useful in more clearly understanding capabilities or scenarios that are particularly relevant or specific to a certain business need or industry.

In addition to gauging the quality and appropriateness of the tool, thorough due diligence is also required in appraising prospective suppliers. Important assessment criteria include:

- Established experience in IT asset management and software development;
- Future viability (derived in part by past track record and length of time in operation);
- Evidence of success and expertise, such as industry memberships, awards, accreditations and certifications;
- Company priority and focus on IT asset management software development (as opposed to professional services, development focus on other software products, etc.); and,
- Established history of product introduction and innovation.

### The Joint Microsoft® — Provance® Solution for IT Asset Management

The joint IT asset management solution comprised of Microsoft® System Center and Provance® management pack extensions features rich integration with the Microsoft Server and Cloud Platform for IT operational management, complete life cycle coverage, built-in best practice, process automation and powerful data import. It represents a unique collaboration that delivers the best of both worlds — the recognized IT asset management expertise of an agile and innovative independent software specialist, delivered on a powerful, extensible platform developed and backed by the world’s largest software company.

### Microsoft System Center

Microsoft System Center is IT operational management software that delivers unified management across on-premises, service provider, and Windows® Azure environments, thereby enabling the Microsoft Cloud OS. System Center provides features that enable infrastructure provisioning, infrastructure monitoring, application performance monitoring, automation and self-service, and IT service management. Capabilities of System Center that support IT asset management include:

- Configuration management database (CMDB). System Center-Service Manager features a CMDB with out-of-the-box connectors to Active Directory®, Configuration Manager, Operations Manager, Orchestrator and .csv file import.
- Inventory. System Center — Configuration Manager provides discovery of inventory and usage information for hardware and software.
- User and organizational detail. The out-of-the-box System Center — Service Manager connector to Active Directory® imports user, device and organizational detail into Configuration Items in the CMDB.
• IT Service Management. IT service management is a primary point of interaction with IT asset management. System Center — Service Manager provides Incident, Problem, Change, Release and Request Management to support the delivery of IT services.

• Self-service. Users can submit and check the status of IT service requests, change requests and incidents through the web-based System Center — Service Manager self-service portal.

• Automation. PowerShell, built-in workflow capabilities and runbook automation using System Center — Orchestrator all provide powerful functionality for automating tasks, activities and system-to-system interaction.

**Provance IT Asset Management for Microsoft System Center**

For more than 16 years Provance IT Asset Management software has been used by enterprises and government organizations of all sizes to drive down IT costs, increase service management efficiency, and reduce security and compliance risks. Today, Provance provides the most complete and powerful IT asset management solution for the Microsoft Server and Cloud Platform, enabling coverage of the entire IT asset life cycle with deep support for process based on best practice. The Provance family of IT asset management software products run natively as process management packs within Microsoft System Center 2012. They supplement the IT service management capability of Microsoft System Center with powerful IT asset life cycle management, software asset management, data management and physical inventory management. From request to disposal, Provance gives you visibility and control of the hardware and software that make up your client, cloud computing and datacenter environments.

In the most recent MarketScope for the IT Asset Management Repository, Gartner Research evaluated 14 IT asset management solutions targeted at midsize and large enterprises. The only native solution for Microsoft System Center included in the MarketScope, Provance was rated overall as “Promising,” and received recognition from Gartner for its strong integration with Microsoft System Center 2012 and its ability to rapidly innovate. Gartner recommends the Provance IT Asset Management Pack as an option for Microsoft-centric businesses, particularly those who have implemented Microsoft System Center 2012 Configuration Manager or Service Manager components.

In addition to expertise in IT asset management process, Provance places high value on excellence in internal operational process and continual improvement, and is certified to the ISO 9001:2008 international standard for quality management. A Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, Provance holds the Microsoft Software Asset Management (SAM) and Volume Licensing Competencies and is a member of the Microsoft System Center Alliance. Provance was named Microsoft 2011 SAM Innovation Partner of the Year finalist, and was a national 2011 Microsoft Impact Awards Partner of the Year finalist for SAM and Systems Management.

**Source:** Provance
IT asset managers must demonstrate and quantify IT asset management program benefits to secure vital resources and ensure ITAM is a valued component of IT. Develop outcome-oriented metrics to quantify the value and ROI delivered to the business through ITAM practices.

**Key Challenges**

- IT asset managers struggle to demonstrate and quantify value in order to justify continued executive sponsorship and investment in IT asset management ITAM.
- Many ITAM teams are already short-staffed and unable to prioritize program value assessments. The irony is that the very act of reporting this value could provide the justification for much-needed additional head count and tools.
- Tracking ITAM benefits is very time-consuming, especially using a methodology that is accepted across the enterprise. Yet this practice lends credibility and paves the way for increased maturity of ITAM programs.
- IT asset managers are often unsure what types of metric to utilize to demonstrate ITAM value that is meaningful to the business.

**Recommendations**

IT asset managers should:

- Align ITAM metrics to critical business and IT initiatives, goals and objectives to ensure that values with the maximum impact are measured.
- Evaluate all ITAM life cycle processes (requisition, procurement, deployment, maintenance and retirement) to mine them for delivered benefits.
- Scrutinize the logic behind ITAM benefits calculations to ensure their validity.

Consider utilizing an internal audit to add credibility to ITAM value metric processes and methodology.

- Maintain an ongoing log of all cost savings/avoidance that can be attributed to ITAM program efforts, such as the cancellation of unused/unneeded hardware maintenance, software licenses and/or maintenance or services contracts.

Unfortunately, without a clear business case to demonstrate the need for increased resources, ITAM teams can usually expect more of the same. Business cases require hard facts, sound ROI calculations and proven financial benefits to be approved. Having an established set of ongoing, monitored ITAM value metrics can help ease this process.

How do ITAM teams demonstrate and promote their value? What should we really track and measure?

Many IT asset managers believe it’s too time-consuming to track accomplishments when there are more pressing issues at hand. Even when there is adequate staff to perform the task, tracking benefits is often not a priority. (In Figure 1, note that stewardship of cost-benefit analysis was ranked by respondents lowest in importance as a reason to implement an ITAM program.)

The problem with this opinion is that if there is no perceived or validated value delivered to the enterprise, ITAM budgets will continue to be at risk of stagnation or reduction. This results in insufficient funds for critical ITAM resources.

In order to begin measuring and communicating ITAM program benefits, IT asset managers should follow these steps:

1. Determine what is important to your business and IT in terms of objectives and desired outcomes.
2. Mine your existing ITAM processes for activities that link to these desired outcomes.
3. Determine what outcomes can be effectively quantified and tracked.
4. Develop an ongoing discipline of tracking ITAM benefits that includes measurement validation and results communication.

**Introduction**

IT asset managers are struggling to demonstrate and quantify value in order to justify continued executive sponsorship and ongoing investment in ITAM resources. These managers want to establish best-in-class ITAM practices that demonstrate value, but they struggle to accomplish this with limited resources, such as head count. ITAM budgets are often at risk of becoming stagnant or, in the worst case, shrinking.

**Analysis**

**Determine What’s Important and Align ITAM Metrics With Business and IT Goals**

If we were to measure and track ITAM metrics, what should we measure and why?

ITAM activities are important for several reasons. In recent years, there has been a heightened focus on ITAM activities as a result of an increase in software license compliance audits. However, there are many other reasons why organizations must aim to establish or improve ITAM practices.

The key prerequisite for success is to map the priorities of your particular business to the value delivered through your ITAM discipline in the various areas of importance to your business and IT. Figure 1 shows the anticipated benefits that were rated by respondents in Gartner’s 2011 ITAM survey, in terms of their relative importance.
A good example of how ITAM can clearly demonstrate its considerable value is the effective management of the high-risk end-state of the IT asset life cycle – retirement and disposition. Robust ITAM programs focus on the two major areas of IT asset disposition (ITAD) risk: data security and environmentally-responsible recycling. All organizations should ensure that their ITAD vendors have rigorous data sanitization processes and a robust recycling process, certified by either R2 Solutions or e-Stewards. ITAM managers should communicate the importance of such robust ITAD processes and the substantial risk to your brand from ineffective ITAD.

The benefits of ITAM may be difficult to quantify and project. However, they are very material in a financial sense, particularly from a brand equity perspective. Just as you may be able to manage risks within a supplier agreement through improved terms and conditions, there is no specific financial number associated with this activity to measure its success; however, these instances should still be tracked.

Measurements of risk avoidance from proper asset disposal practices are well worth tracking and communicating, especially if there have been fees or violations of ITAD’s stringent regulations in the past. Document regulatory compliance (including fines avoided) as part of your benefits-tracking discipline.

Another example is if your organization (like many others) is developing sustainability and/or “green IT” programs – it might be worthwhile to look at ITAM metrics that convey progress toward these goals. Many such programs are focused on reducing the carbon footprint and environmental waste of the enterprise. For organizations that deem this a priority, it is worth measuring the value of moving to recyclable materials for all hardware items. Such organizations could also place a value on changing asset disposal methods from landfill-based disposal to vendors that ensure disposed items never end up in landfill. Figure 2 highlights some examples (taken from “Define and Capture Sustainable Value in Your Supply Chain”).

If your business maintains highly sensitive information, where the risk of its exposure at endpoints such as PCs or mobile phones is a concern, then security risk metrics would also be very beneficial to track. Where potential losses can be tracked and recovery rates can be proven, incidents and successful mitigation can be reported — for example, the number of times the ITAM organization was able to successfully wipe data from endpoint devices when they were reported lost or stolen. In some cases, a monetary value may be ascertained, or at least estimated, for such avoidance of data loss.

Align your ITAM value metrics with critical business initiatives to maximize the impact of results. The more tightly integrated ITAM practices are with key business goals and objectives, the more indispensable ITAM will undoubtedly be in the eyes of executive management.

![FIGURE 1](image)

**ITAM Importance Ratings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit Analysis</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control of IT Assets</td>
<td>5.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>License Compliance</td>
<td>5.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Savings</td>
<td>5.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventory Accuracy</td>
<td>5.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Management</td>
<td>5.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of Configuration</td>
<td>5.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Avoidance</td>
<td>5.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Efficiency</td>
<td>5.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Reduction</td>
<td>5.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuse of Software</td>
<td>5.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Analysis of IT Sourcing Options</td>
<td>4.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Liability</td>
<td>4.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Deviation</td>
<td>4.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship of Cost Benefit</td>
<td>1-3 rating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The question asked was, “How important were or are the following benefits to your organization when implementing ITAM?”

ITAM = IT asset management

Number of respondents = 143

Source: Gartner (May 2013)
**FIGURE 2**
Sustainability Example Drivers and Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Drivers</th>
<th>Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost, Impact and Risk Reduction</td>
<td>Pollution and waste, Resource consumption, Changing energy and resource economics, Environmental externalities, Compliance costs, Supplier engagement — material and product reporting and insight</td>
<td>Pollution prevention, Cost reduction and efficiency improvement, Improved risk visibility and management, Tangible connections between sustainable and financial outcomes, Enriched supplier interactions, shared savings and collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputational Legitimacy</td>
<td>Transparency, Compliance, Communications and corporate social responsibility (CSR), Green brand power and the green marketplace, Supplier engagement — social responsibility and labor standards</td>
<td>Product stewardship, Enhanced stakeholder relations, Reputation and legitimacy, Product portfolio re-evaluation, Supplier risk reduction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gartner (May 2013)

**Determine What Can Be Measured Effectively and Gather Baseline Data**

Once you have evaluated what is important to your business, decide what can be measured. When looking for potential value-add areas to measure and track, first examine your IT asset life cycle and associated processes, as illustrated in Figure 3. There are probably many steps in the process already creating efficiencies, decreasing costs or reducing risks. Examine these life cycle processes to determine what is currently in place and can be measured moving forward.

There are no rules when it comes to assessing and quantifying ITAM’s benefits.

**FIGURE 3**
IT Asset Life Cycle

| Requisition | Procurement | Deployment | Maintenance | Retirement |

Source: Gartner (May 2013)

IT asset managers must determine what values can be quantified for their specific businesses. However, there are 10 key metrics to consider that may help demonstrate the value of ITAM disciplines:

1. Number of unused or unnecessary maintenance and/or support contracts (hardware, software and telecom) terminated, and their associated values, as well as avoidance of any cancellation, escalation or late fees.
2. Licenses and assets redeployed (or refurbished or upgraded) versus purchased (determine costs based on current vendor contracts or comparable substitute products).
3. Percentage of hardware leases refreshed at or before the lease end date, as well as any buy-out negotiations that provide value versus continuing with monthly payments.
4. Number of purchase orders reduced (see 2 above) — determine via your procurement team the cost of cutting one purchase order to a vendor.
5. Successful audit results, which can be defined in a variety of ways. Success for your entity, based on its history, may be a compliance invoice of only 5% (or less) of the current contract value. Capture any costs avoided, such as fees you would have to pay to the auditors if you are found to be non-compliant.
6. Audits deterred/decreased – some clients have successfully demonstrated solid ITAM/software asset management (SAM) disciplines that convinced a supplier to withdraw an audit request, or at least cease annual audits in favor of less frequent ones. If you accomplish this, you should record it.
7. Reduction in the total number of titles, line items with the same functionality and/or number of suppliers in the portfolio, based on ITAM practices.
8. Movement, transfer or divestiture of IT assets through increased visibility and improved contract terms and conditions.
9. Proactive elimination of license purchases and/or non-standard equipment through policy enforcement.
10. Reduction in cycle times for planning and executing major software licenses, maintenance and support renewals.

This list is not exhaustive. Continue to look for areas in which your ITAM practices are providing real value to the enterprise. What efficiencies have been gained? What
losses have been prevented? For all these metrics, valid, fact-based data is of critical importance. Ensure you can accurately account for and measure the value you claim to be able to deliver. Develop and validate baseline states for each metric that will be measured, so you can calculate end results comparatively over time.

Be mindful not to take sole credit in areas that are collaborative efforts with other teams such as procurement or vendor management. Lastly, as benefits are reported and communicated, ensure that you continue to improve and tweak your metrics and methodologies over time to meet the evolving needs of your constituents.

**Develop a Standardized Discipline of Benefits Measurement and Communication**

If something is worth measuring, the process of calculating these ITAM values should be well-documented, including the precise formulas that must be followed for each metric. Create a methods and procedures document that details all the benefit measurement processes. Categorize each benefit type and develop the standardized set of processes that will be used to measure that metric consistently.

Determine how and where you will maintain results. Some clients have developed repositories in applications such as SharePoint or Lotus Notes. Linking to asset management systems or ERP systems may require integration, but it can assist with the automation of some of these processes.

Consider auditing your processes. Unfortunately, ITAM organizations can face a conflict of interest when measuring their own value. It can be beneficial to consult with internal auditors and request a formal review of process methodology and benefits calculations. This will lend credibility to the metrics and can reduce or eliminate executives’ skepticism about the findings.

However, as the ITAM discipline matures, its metrics and the audited benefits calculation methodology will, of necessity, evolve as well. Moreover, ITAM’s value metrics will have to be continuously tweaked and retuned to remain in alignment with the dynamic objectives of both IT and the business.

**Evidence**

1. Over a 24-month period ending in March 2013, Gartner’s IT Asset Management and Procurement analysts fielded 4,042 inquires relating to ITAM.

2. Data from surveys carried out at Gartner IT Financial, Procurement and Asset Management Summits between 2005 and 2012, which showed that the percentage of respondents subjected to vendor software audits increased from 30% to 62% during this period. A similar poll of readers of The ITAM Review in July 2010 found that 78% of respondents had been audited, with an average of 2.5 audits each, during the preceding 12 months.

3. In a survey conducted in 2011, Gartner invited 5,076 organizations in four countries from North America (the U.S.) and Europe (the U.K., Germany and France) to participate in a regional ITAM research study. The survey was administered online and using native languages. Survey questions focused on ITAM maturity and organizational ITAM strategies. Of the 5,076 organizations initially contacted, 2,934 qualified to participate in Section 1 of the study, which focused on implementation and organizations’ ITAM maturity.

The qualifying criteria for this section included: having already implemented an ITAM program, currently implementing one, or implementing one in the next 12 months; and having extensive knowledge of their organization’s ITAM activities. Quotas were further provided to ensure an equal sample size between the regions and a mixture of Gartner’s 14 industry subgroupings.

In Section 2 of the study, Gartner homed in on large and midsize organizations and individuals with a more extensive knowledge of their organizations’ ITAM activities. Qualifying panelists (298) completed the remainder of the study. The sample showed an almost equal split between each region, with 150 respondents in North America and 148 in Europe.

The survey was developed collaboratively by a team of Gartner analysts that follow the ITAM market, and it was reviewed, tested and administered by Gartner’s research data analytics team.

Source: Gartner Research, G00249346, Gayla Sullivan, 16 May 2013
When it comes to IT Asset Management for the Microsoft Server and Cloud Platform, Provance is the best in the business.

An independent vendor of IT Asset Management software since 1997 and developer of the first third-party process management pack for Microsoft System Center, Provance has helped customers in enterprises and governments from around the world drive down IT costs, increase service management efficiency and reduce security and compliance risks.

Provance customers have achieved increases in IT service management efficiencies in the ninetieth percentile, saved hundreds of thousands annually in software licensing and hardware costs and millions collectively in total IT savings.

Our customers know that choosing Provance means not only "best-in-class" software tracked by leading industry analysts like Gartner, but a relationship with an organization obsessed with process — the foundation of both the IT Service Management and IT Asset Management disciplines.

Provance's obsession with process permeates our product and organization — from software development to customer support — and is supported by 12 straight years of certification to the ISO 9001 international standard for quality management.

Microsoft customers know that choosing Provance means a relationship with an acclaimed gold certified Microsoft partner that pioneered the development of process management packs for Microsoft System Center.

Provance is one of a select group of partners that actively participates in Microsoft partner programs such as the Microsoft Technology Adoption Program (TAP) and Rapid Deployment Program (RDP), Microsoft Premier Support and the Microsoft System Center Alliance. The only IT Asset Management solution for Microsoft System Center verified for integration with all versions of Service Manager and Configuration Manager, Provance is one of just 22 third-party software providers showcased in the 31 Microsoft Technology Centers around the world.