



# President's Letter

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Now that it's been a fair amount of time since the release of ISO/IEC 19770-1, I wanted to ask a question of all who have reviewed it. Is it any more than what has been turned out in the trades, industry white papers, IAITAM certification materials, research and seminars given by Gartner and Forrester and a wide range of other easily-accessed information from people in the industry? Is there any new information, or am I missing something?

To be more specific, is *it* missing something? For all of the framework and outcomes so painstakingly developed in this standard, is there anyplace where the “how-to” is explained?

I will always give credit where credit is due. With all the processes our organizations are to develop and implement in support of a viable ITAM program, they are well-defined in the ISO standard. That in and of itself is adequate for a start, but an industry standard at this stage of the ITAM evolutionary process needs to go beyond just stating the obvious to be of use to the industry today.

This new set of standards provides us with another framework to follow. It may sound simple-minded, but I wonder how the early pioneers of industry managed without having so many independently-developed frameworks to guide them? This standard so far is nothing more than just another framework. What we need is something with some substance to it. Where is it you ask? Keep reading and I'll tell you.

I'm disappointed. I really thought organizations as distinguished as both the International Organization for Standardization and International Electro-technical Commission would move beyond the obvious and get to the substance. Instead, we have another document with a disclaimer stating: "This part of the ISO/IEC 19770 does not include activities which may be used to achieve the outcomes." How is one supposed to formulate an ITAM program when this guide supplies only the outcomes with no vehicle to achieve them, and provides no instructional guide at any level?

Now maybe I'm being too critical. After all, we know this is the first version with plenty of room left for the substance in the next release. The complete 19770 is yet to come, with plenty of room for the “how-to”, hopefully. As it stands today, what the released standard comes down to is a suggestion that yes, it is a good business practice to have IT asset management standards in place and not much else.

What worries me however, is that organizations will jump at this first release and start working toward becoming ISO/IEC 19770-certified. Already I see courses being developed to give certification on what little has been released. I have to ask myself: certification in what? Process identification? As it is right now, the whole standard is left up to interpretation after process areas are determined. Being certified in ISO/IEC 19770 is not the same as having a standard for software compliance or hardware lifecycle management.

What about the important questions? Where should IT asset management fit in to the structure of a company? How long should an IT invoice be kept? How does an organization make sure they're in compliance with all software copyrights, or are disposing of monitors correctly? What about the business that keeps a cardboard box in the back room full of documents, and considers that its disaster recovery program? ISO/IEC 19770 doesn't appear to have an answer – just that knowing these are necessary to being able to reach the outcomes listed in the standard is not enough.

Most organizations already know that this information is crucial to their ITAM program. For the amount of planning that has gone into the standard, that same information has been presented to the industry by several others and in similar fashion. At least for now the content appears to reinvent the wheel all over again. We've been saying all the “whats” for years now at IAITAM. It's about time that we started drilling down to the “hows.”



With a standard like this being released, organizations are going to think they're doing the right thing in becoming compliant before any of the "hows" are ever given. The problem is, companies want to do the right thing about IT asset management. How can they do the right thing when it isn't defined beyond a set of outcomes that should happen if the processes are implemented correctly?

I know hundreds of you reading this have heard one of our key trainers say before: "Kids, this ain't rocket science." Managing IT assets means understanding good business methodology. I can't begin to describe the frustration that I have when I speak to organizations who think there is some magic potion called best practices or industry frameworks or some other snake oil liniment that will cure all their corporate ills. It's usually uttered by some executive who has no clue as to the depth and breadth true asset management entails, but wants to make sure that his company remains correctly on top of the current standards released.

Now don't get me wrong – good, mature processes are essential to building a good program. We all know that. But so many people even in the industry itself are repeating over and over to themselves that something has to be done, and they are not taking action to become part of a solution to the problem. The processes for IT asset management have been identified time and time again! We'd all like to know where to take the processes from there. **Here's where IAITAM can help.**

We need to be able to take advantage of the knowledge and experience that has come before us so we don't lose all corporate credibility by implementing those processes, policies and procedures through trial and error. Now if ever, the information on how to make the outcomes in that standard a reality is necessary to prove the usefulness of an IT asset management program in an organization. My recommendation is to use the newly released IAITAM Best Practice BluePrint (BP<sup>2</sup>) for such a "how-to" guidebook. IAITAM has taken 13 process areas and given an organization the meat and potatoes of implementing a true ITAM program. No more overview and rehashing the obvious state of affairs surrounding ITAM processes.

In addition to the BP<sup>2</sup>, if you really want to expand your value to your organization, learn more business management, acquire contract knowledge and negotiation skills and learn risk management from a financial point of view (not network security – although that won't hurt either).

Understand how to make sure each tool brought into your organization will produce the greatest value possible – that goes for employees, contractors and vendors. Learn the value of process automation and most of all, understand how your business works.

As for 19770, if you think your senior management will give you more buy-in power by showing them that ISO/IEC has recommended certain processes and that will empower you to get the job done, by all means, do it. Then get out and get some real education on how to build the practices it's going to take to make those processes work with IAITAM training and the BP<sup>2</sup> guide. Get the recognition you deserve for the vital role you play in the profitability of the organization.

In reality, the standard can actually accomplish some good even as companies try to become compliant. While becoming more familiar with the many processes and outcomes, organizations will be looking for information that we've been preaching since the practice of IT asset management became a job function. The difficulty will arise as businesses get stuck in the quagmire while trying to wade through to the list of outcomes without the help of the missing practices.

Rather than rely on an incomplete standard at all, we recommend using the IAITAM Best Practices BluePrint for IT asset management. The difference is IAITAM presents a system that gets down to the processes and procedures rather than an overall scope statement. It doesn't just describe issues and problems, but gives you usable guides for 13 process areas in IT asset management.

ISO/IEC 19770-1 may be a good overview statement, but it's always been IAITAM's mission to apply tactical information rather than general strategy. Recognize the standard for what it is and go beyond it with the Best Practices BluePrint.

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