



## Service Management and the Balance Beam

Please step, balance, spin and back flip, all while being closely watched and judged by your customers. Do not put a foot wrong or you are out.

Make sure the service you deliver is correctly balanced. Do not over supply or under supply. Meet the capacity required, when it is required. And predict the future. Be able to address sudden changes in demand. And always meet customer expectations.

**Capacity, Availability** and **Continuity Management** teach us how to plan and prepare for changing patterns of demand, while not committing too many resources. When a service is required, first ensure you understand all of the conditions and expectations that go along with it. Specify these conditions, and any possible reasons allowed for variation. Do this up front, to set customer expectations.

If I were managing a fleet of vehicles, I would need to know what the demand is likely to be for the next week, month, year. I would need to know the **Usage Patterns**. When is there the greatest demand, when is there the least? What types of vehicles are requested, when? How long are they typically required for?

It would be nice that a vehicle (or service) is never offline. But this is not realistic. How often do my vehicles need servicing, how long does a service take? How often do we have accidents that take a vehicle out? How many extra vehicles will I need to cover such times? Can I lease surplus vehicles quickly.

And then there are periods of unexpected high demand, or where the insurance company I use goes into liquidation. I cannot send a car out the door that is uninsured.

I must plan for normal operations (expected) and disasters (unexpected). I must plan a year or two ahead, just like I create my budget for the department. A budget is after all, my financial forecast.

This requires a good grounding in **Service Management** to properly govern services and ensure there are no surprises.

To set my fleet business on the right footing, my best approach is to study the patterns of the past, look for any emerging trends, cater for new business initiatives and allow for all contingent possibilities. Easier said than done.

Three key elements are required:

1. Plan for the expected demand – current usage patterns
2. Have the processes in place to quickly adjust these plans
3. Work out contingency actions, in advance, should a risk occur

This is what the three Service Management disciplines address – Capacity, Availability and Continuity Management.

Plan for these elements, and ensure that are captured (and funded) in your budget. Track your performance against your plans, and take action to address variances early. Create plans that are two years out, and adjust them at least every three months, and **when** an event with significant impact happens (for it will happen).

It doesn't matter what service you are providing, you must continue to move, spin, and if demanded, back flip, but always maintain your balance.