Mind Your Ps and Qs

There are several theories on the origin of the statement, “Mind your Ps and Qs”. It is generally recognized as a reminder to be polite and to act respectfully to others by always saying “please” and “thank you”.

Let’s think about that. Starting at a very young age, we are all, for the most part, taught to be polite and to say “please” and “thank you”. The lessons are not complex or difficult. The vast majority of us understand the concepts and can illustrate and demonstrate our understanding through polite behaviors and respectful communications with others.

Why, then do we need to be reminded? This is simple stuff … isn’t it?

I have taught ITIL Foundations for years. Thousands of students have heard, learned and understood the concept of, “Provide Value to the Customer in the form of Services”. Different versions of ITIL may bend it, or re-word it or modify it to “Co-create Value” but the bottom line - output must be valuable to the customer.

As a DevOps Fundamentals Instructor, I talk about Value, Sooner, Safer and Happier and at the heart of DevOps activities we find the Value Stream. In essence we have Dev and Ops coexisting to provide outputs that must be valuable to the customer. Similar objectives, different approaches.
I recently googled BizDevOps. I had heard the term but didn’t understand why we would need it and I wanted to understand how it is different. The article, that I selected to read, talked about the need for BizDevOps is due to the misalignment between what the business needs (the customer) and what the DevOps teams deliver.

... Say What?

If Dev and Ops, independently, or in concert as DevOps, are focussed on producing outputs that provide value to be realized by customers how can we have misalignment? What is going on that could cause the misalignment and could the solution be as simple as needing to be reminded of our Ps and Qs?

We can easily get too involved and too immersed in the details of our tasks and our work. It becomes easy to lose sight of our true objectives and we can find ourselves, lost, down in the weeds. We need good communications within our teams, effective methodologies and tools to help keep our work visible and aligned with our goals.

Whatever your organizations’ methodologies, approaches or disciplines are - ITIL, SRE, DevOps, Agile Project Management, SIAM, etc. you must continuously ensure that you are focussed on the value realization for your customers. Consider ways to build reminders into your daily practices and ensure that you get fast feedback and have the ability to act on it.

This will help you focus on Value and don’t forget - “Mind Your Ps and Qs”.
About the Author
Jim Jackson is the Managing Director of Blue Sky AFC Associates LLC. Jim holds the ITIL Expert Certificate (V3), ITIL 4 Foundations and DevOps Fundamentals certification. Jim is a service management professional and has been an accredited instructor of ITIL Foundations since 2005 and DevOps Fundamentals. He has shared his open, non-restricted view of the ITIL framework as he has trained and assisted hundreds of candidates to prepare for and pass the ITIL Foundations examinations. Jim has also written accredited courseware for earlier versions of ITIL Foundations and he contributed to ITIL 4 accredited course materials for Thought Rock in 2019.

About the Series - IT Service Management Around the World
These are fictional stories of service management and any similarity, you may find, to your own organization is purely coincidental. The purpose of these service management musings is to introduce service management and ITIL concepts as well as postulate on how ITIL and its components could be at play in any size business located anywhere in the world. The opinion stories are written to motivate customer centric, service oriented thinking and discussions. The content is not intended to constitute advice of any sort. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information no liability is accepted for any loss resulting from the use of or reliance on this content.

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