The Value of IT Frameworks

Recent views from Chief Information Officers

Results from the CIONET survey of European CIO’s on the business value of IT Frameworks
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In an environment where new business demands, stringent industry-specific regulations, and risks emerge every day, maximizing the value of intellectual property, managing information risk and security, and assuring compliance through effective enterprise governance of IT, have all emerged as mission critical issues for all size and all industry enterprises worldwide. Several frameworks to support these enterprise challenges emerged some 20 years ago and while they have evolved they increasingly maintained they would create value for the enterprise. But do they?

CIONET is the biggest community of IT executives in Europe. Bringing together over 3500 CIOs, CTO’s and IT directors from wide ranging sectors, cultures, academic backgrounds and generations, CIONET’s membership represents an impressive body of expertise in IT management. CIONET’s mission is to feed and develop that expertise by providing top-level IT executives with the resources they need to realise their full potential.

The CIONET community maintains close ties with both corporate and academic worlds, helping to foster the kind of creative thinking that fuels innovation in IT. Every year, CIONET actively supports a number of research projects and, e.g., trends surveys on a range of topics developed in consultation with our advisory boards.

For the needs of this report, 56 enterpris-es of varying size and industry responded to the survey and provided detailed information on usage, actual and expected benefits, and actual and expected costs of IT frameworks used for:

- IT Governance
- Information Security
- Service Delivery

In addition to the traditional ‘Major lessons learned’, the survey explored the reason and degree of adoption of frameworks, their expected cost and benefits and the actual costs and benefits.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enterprise Size</th>
<th>Company Staff</th>
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<th>Industry</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Utilities &amp; Energy</td>
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<td>Financials</td>
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<td>Healthcare</td>
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<td>Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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1. IT Frameworks

IT Governance and Management

An IT Governance Framework like COBIT helps enterprises navigate the complexities of managing information and its infrastructure and helps to understand, utilise, implement and direct important information-related activities and make more informed decisions through simplified navigation and use. It is developed and maintained by ISACA who is about to publish version 5.

COBIT defines responsibility domains and a process structure together with a suggested cascade of linked enterprise, IT and process goals to help identify critical issues relative to enterprise IT. It also provides a knowledge base following the process structure containing practices, metrics, maturity models and RACI charts.

COBIT helps IT professionals with tools and expertise to identify critical issues and customize company-specific practices to support the management and governance of information and related technologies.

COBIT is being used by tens of thousands of companies and millions of professionals worldwide, is supported by many regulators and has become the de facto standard for enterprise governance of IT.
CobiT5 Concepts and Process Model

Processes for Governance of Enterprise IT

Evaluate, Direct & Monitor

EDM1 Set and maintain the Governance Framework
EDM2 Ensure Value Optimisation
EDM3 Ensure Risk Optimisation
EDM4 Ensure Resource Optimisation
EDM5 Ensure Stakeholder Transparency

Align, Plan & Organise ...

APO1 Define the Management Framework for IT
APO2 Define Strategy
APO3 Define Enterprise Architecture
APO4 Manage Innovation
APO5 Manage Portfolio
APO6 Manage Risk

Build, Acquire & Implement ...

BAI1 Programme and Projects
BAI2 Requirements
BAI3 Identify & Build Solutions
BAI4 Manage Availability & Capacity
BAI5 Enable Organisational Change
BAI6 Manage Changes
BAI7 Accept & Transition Changes
BAI8 Knowledge Management

Deliver, Service & Support ...

DS1 Manage Operations
DS2 Manage Assets
DS3 Manage Configuration
DS4 Manage Service Requests & Incidents
DS5 Manage Problems
DS6 Manage Continuity
DS7 Manage Security
DS8 Manage Business Process Controls

Monitor, Evaluate & Assess ...

MEA1 Monitor & Evaluate Performance and Conformance
MEA2 Monitor System of Internal Control

Processes for Management of Enterprise IT
The widest used framework by far is the current ISO27001, which formally specifies a management system that is intended to bring information security under explicit management control. Being a formal specification means that it mandates specific requirements. Organizations that claim to have adopted ISO/IEC 27001 can therefore be formally audited and certified compliant with the standard.

The standard evolved from ISO17799 which itself was based on the British Standard for Information Security BS7799.

ISO/IEC 27001 requires that management:
- systematically examine the organization’s information security risks, taking account of the threats, vulnerabilities and impacts;
- design and implement a coherent and comprehensive suite of information security controls and/or other forms of risk treatment (such as risk avoidance or risk transfer) to address those risks that are deemed unacceptable;
- adopt an overarching management process to ensure that the information security controls continue to meet the organization’s information security needs on an ongoing basis.

It is constructed following a Plan-Do-Check-Act model and provides 39 control objectives and 123 controls for information security for 11 domains:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IS27001 Domains</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Controls</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Security Policy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Organisation and information Security</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Asset Management</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Human Resources Security</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Physical and Environmental Security</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Communications and Operations Management</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Access Control</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Security Requirements of Information Systems</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Information Security Incident Management</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Business Continuity Management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Compliance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
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Associated standards have been developed for verifying compliance against 27001.
ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) is the most widely accepted approach to IT service management in the world. ITIL provides a cohesive set of best practice, drawn from the public and private sectors internationally. It was developed by the CCTA which is now incorporated in the Office of Government Commerce (OGC).

A new version became available in 2007 (ITIL version 3). It does not focus on processes like version 2 but rather on services. A service lifecycle forms the heart of version 3:

- Service Strategy
- Service Design
- Service Transition
- Service Operation
- Continual Service Improvement

ITIL describes activities and practices of the service lifecycle in detail, linked to customer/business requirements using business metrics and reinforcing continuous improvement. Based on a clear specification and a “Code of Practice”, it draws on many other standards and helps managers develop their own IT Service Management System. ITIL has become the “bible” of many IT operational managers.
In almost all cases this framework is CobiT or CobiT-based. Not surprisingly, the CIO sponsors the adoption and use of an IT governance framework in more than 3 out of 4 cases. Hence it is also logical that IT management and IT professionals are leading its implementation and are primary users. Other major users are the risk, security, compliance and audit functions.
Nearly all respondents use the framework in one form or another. But when asking how intensively the IT Governance Framework is used, it turns out that less than one third use it for more than just for guidance.

The latter was confirmed when asking for the reason why they adopted the framework, i.e. as guidance for IT governance implementations and IT improvements.

Adoption of a governance framework is seen as a forward looking action and not done in reaction to a problem.
The results of the expected and actual benefits paint a complex picture:

- The major driver is service delivery, a driver one would expect more for a service delivery framework such as ITIL.
- Improved processes and reduced risk come in as a close second as expected benefits.
- The actual benefits however look very different, indicating overall benefits (see the scores in the Medium column) but disappointing as to the high expectations.
- Interestingly, innovation was not an expected nor an actual benefit which indicates that the industry is maybe not ready yet for frameworks like ValIT.

Less data was provided on the actual cost of the framework’s implementation, roll-out and usage. When asked how they measure costs, 60% was through metrics, the rest via actual cases and management perception.

Only half of the respondents used external help on the project, on average 112 man-days, a quarter of which was used for training.

Nevertheless and after deleting the extreme values, sufficient data was available to learn that the actual cost was generally less than the estimate. Larger companies tend to be better at estimating but the closeness of estimate and actual is intriguing. Smaller companies spend 20% less, especially in the roll-out phase of the project.
The survey enterprises were also asked how benefits were demonstrated. The result is shown here as a heat chart. Two results jump to the front: benefit metrics appear to be very much used for service delivery, and increased innovation is purely a case of perception. The respondents also provided information as to the actual metrics used. Overall the most quoted was number of issues raised, fixed and outstanding, and second most quoted was resolution time. Framework adherence and maturity level achieved, only received low scores.

Finally, the lessons learned were collected. Respondents confirmed a major argument used by framework developers, i.e., that they significantly provide for a common language between all stakeholders of IT. On the negative side, their implementation is perceived to be complex with a high learning curve for managers. And as for most initiatives that look for improvement, the high level of senior management support was identified as a major requirement for success.

As a general conclusion we can state that the cost of an IT governance framework is 20% less than expected but benefits - in the absence of strong metrics, are perceived to be less than hoped for. Notwithstanding, the lessons learned all talk about a better organisation, more useful management information and a higher maturity.
Even more than for IT governance, the CIO sponsors the adoption and use of a Service Delivery framework. However, many more possible sponsors have been identified who push the issue onto the executive’s agenda.

Usage patterns are not much different from the IT Governance framework. However, while security and audit staff are also significant users, in this case they appear to play no role in promoting adoption and helping implementation.
When looking at intensity of usage, a totally different pattern emerges. Probably because frameworks like ITIL have been used for many years by operations managers as their “roadbook”, and later on by CIO’s, a much higher degree of maturity is revealed with more than 60% of respondents using it at least as IT policy. A majority uses it for its practices and several even verify compliance.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Usage Maturity of ITIL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not used at all</td>
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<tr>
<td>Just influenced by its concepts</td>
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<tr>
<td>To obtain guidance in decision making</td>
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<tr>
<td>In addition used regularly as reference material</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basis for IT policy but not for practices</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Extensively used for practices but compliance not verified</strong></td>
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<td>Extracted practices applied and compliance verified</td>
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The reason for implementing a Service Delivery framework appears at first sight the same as for governance, i.e., governance implementation and IT improvements. Surprisingly though, respondents also identified regulatory compliance and audit requirements as secondary reasons.
CIO’s expected more benefits from a Service Delivery framework and while results are overall better than for governance, again actual results are less than expected. However, the strong results in the ‘Medium’ column for actual benefits are encouraging. While the heat chart for how benefits are demonstrated is again similar with better service delivery being objectively measured and innovation being a matter of pure perception, there are indications that for process quality and speed of delivery, more metrics are being used. Metrics that show up here which were not being used for governance are: SLA metrics and customer satisfaction.
The cost for implementing and using a service delivery framework appears to be much more supported by hard metrics compared to the cost measurement of IT Governance Frameworks. Again estimates are fairly accurate but now both large and small companies are less accurate spending about 10% more than estimated. Especially day-to-day usage in small companies is underestimated. 72% of respondents use external help to implement a service delivery framework with on average 125m/d for training and 225m/d of expertise.

A better IT organisation and improved common ground were experiences similar to the lessons learned from implementing an IT governance framework. As more of the respondents have implemented ITIL or similar frameworks, the lessons learned were more extensive. Major improvements experienced were a better risk and configuration management, stronger focus on the support of the business processes and a standardised and measurable IT.

As for IT governance the learning curve, management time and complexity of implementation were identified as negative experiences. Interesting to note was the lesson that driving change is hard but foremost that people need to understand the reasons why of the implementation and changes it requires.
As for the other domains, the CIO is most often the sponsor of the adoption of the Information Security Framework. However, leadership in implementation is shared between the CIO and the security staff.

**Usage of the Information**

Security framework and its practices is the broadest of all frameworks in the survey. According to the responses, maturity is of application is in between the governance and service frameworks. This is somewhat in contradiction with the broad usage in the enterprises, possibly due to the fact that most enterprises will adapt the standard framework to their own needs and risk profile.

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<th>Sponsors Service Delivery Framework</th>
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<td>CIO</td>
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<td>CTO</td>
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<td>CEO</td>
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<th>Users and Leaders Information Security Framework</th>
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<td>Senior management</td>
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<td>IT management</td>
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<td>IT professionals</td>
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<td>Risk managers</td>
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<td>Security staff</td>
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<td>Compliance officers</td>
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<td>Auditors</td>
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<th>Usage Maturity of Information Security Framework</th>
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The main drivers are - no surprise - regulatory compliance and audit. Nevertheless, enterprises feel that application of this framework will also improve IT and help with IT governance implementation.

Risk reduction is the major benefit identified by most enterprises and has also been fairly well achieved. Respondents did not provide much data as to cost but it is generally estimated as $\frac{1}{2}$ of the IT Governance Framework implementation. Notwithstanding, 60% of enterprises have objective metrics.

The major positive experiences identified were the increase in awareness and the reduction of risk. Interesting remarks in the lessons learned were that the framework was to the point, extensive and complete and that useful than expected. The survey recorded the same comments as for other frameworks on negative experiences: complexity, learning curve, hard to do, management time, senior management support.
The IT Governance Institute published the results of two international surveys on the adoption and use of the IT governance frameworks CobiT and ValiT in 2008 and 2010.

The first covered responses from 750 companies. Europe, Asia and the Americas were about equally represented while the manufacturing industry and public sector were the major responders. Leadership for these frameworks was in the first place with the CIO but with a much larger role for other executives. What was also striking was that the non-IT responders of this survey were much more positive about IT – in terms of general management attention and value creation - than the IT responders.

The 2008 survey also noted in the two years prior to the survey, a strong reduction in adoption of quality and ‘home-made’ frameworks and the growth of ITIL, CobiT and ISO27000.

Concerning maturity of use, the findings were similar to the CIONET survey: for 50% it is one of the enterprise’s references, for 25% it is the main source of reference, a little more than 10% are only influence by it, and at the other end of the spectrum, a little less than 10% apply it by the book.
The major constraints for adoption in 2008 were concerns for budget and expected benefits as well as a lack of knowledge and expertise on IT governance.

The IT Governance Institute Survey published in 2010 focused on process implementation and the benefits of IT Governance Frameworks like CobiT and ValIT, and received responses from over 500 companies worldwide. Governance over the processes of acquisition, change management, security and operations scored highest while nevertheless most processes only scoring around the middle of the scale from 1 = not implemented to 5 = fully implemented. The better implementations were noted in Europe, the finance industry and with the larger companies.

On achievement of business and IT goals – from 1 not achieved to 5 achieved, results are generally just above the middle with the business financial goal scoring best and the future IT capabilities goal the least.

At a more detailed level, the better contributions of an IT Governance framework referred to IT compliance, information security and IT infrastructure, while also service levels and cost optimisation where also positively impacted.

The survey also collected information to analyse the benefits of IT Governance practices by correlating process results to IT goals to business goals. The major conclusions are that this value chain is hard to analyse and prove but also the distinct and strong correlation between properly functioning operational and support-oriented processes with IT compliance and security goals and compliance and risk business goals.
4. The Case Studies

IT Governance

Ben Farhangui, Director IT Governance & Compliance, Atos Worldline

The nature of Atos Worldline’s business with a large range of IT products and services subject to a large number of local and global rules, calls for a well-established framework for IT governance embraced by the senior executive team.

A framework like CobiT helps to understand the operational control requirements to drive the IT strategy and strengthen desirable behaviours irrespective of the fact that the different IT environments are centralised, decentralised or federated.

CobiT helped identify the most relevant processes to start with based on a selection of business goals. The relatively long list of processes was then filtered by first selecting those that were important and urgent, then those that provided opportunities and were highly feasible. Maturity and performance targets for the processes present in both lists were then set to start the improvement programme.

The programme consisted of assigning roles and responsibilities to ensure process governance, integrating tools in the different regions, ensuring process adherence through awareness programmes, while strongly building on existing processes and know-how.

The major lesson learned was that vision, skills, resources and action plan should all support gradual change, avoiding confusion, anxiety, frustration and false starts. Ben called it “stealth governance”!
M-team is today an IT-service service provider for 3 unions and 27 health-care payers (neutral, liberal, free) on the Belgium market. M-team provides it-services towards 5000 end-users serving 2.7 million affiliates from 1700 branch offices.

A few years ago, M-team proposed a gradual IT-infrastructure centralisation. The decision was mainly driven by the economy of scale potential for its customers owning and managing their own distributed infrastructure and resources. In a world where cost and quality are more and more under pressure, the management quickly recognized the need to evolve from an informal technology driven organization to a service oriented organization.

M-team’s approach for this transformation toward industrialization has been very pragmatic from the beginning. Although it was recognized that frameworks like ITIL or CobIT can substantially help, proper governance and a strong focus on short term delivery with visible benefits were the most critical success factors.

The motto “adopt and adapt” was introduced ensuring that frameworks were used only when value was delivered to M-Team customers and never for the sake of using them.

Dexia’s approach towards frameworks is holistic and pragmatic but while ISO2700x is a “mandatory” inspiration, the Web Application Security standard, the Set of Secure Development Guidelines from Microsoft and a very strict application of Rational SD for web based applications are even more important.

ISO2700x in his view provides guidelines and very good Best Practices more than directly applicable solutions, but they do not plan on certification. Reasons for this are that frameworks are not pragmatic enough, are costly and require strong process integration. Hence, Dexia’s preference for frameworks directly applicable in the field.

Peter pointed out there is no magic framework for clients. It is therefore required to educate their clients to make them aware of Security and Data Privacy issues. He expressed the need to focus on real threats and their mutations and also warned that frameworks do not provide per se effective responses to current attack patterns. As a result, IT Security Incident Management, inspired by ITIL and ISO2700x is a priority.
5. Major findings from the Break-out Sessions

Some 30 attendants discussed intensively in 6 working groups about the justification of framework investments, how to plan for success; what risks to avoid and what would a typical (successful) implementation look like. Below is a summary of their findings.

1. How to justify framework investments?
   _ The framework will make IT deliver to your expectations, control the schedule, promote a common language and will help you to avoid costs.
   _ Use a slogan, e.g.: “The framework will make IT deliver to your expectations; control the schedule, promote a common language and will help you to avoid cost”
   _ Link argumentation to the business strategy
   _ Demonstrate measurable business value (end-user experience, regulatory, cost reduction, positive business value, risk mitigation)

2. How to plan for success?
   _ Find opportunities to sell (initiatives, incidents, stakeholder having problems)
   _ Integrate governance practices into investment business cases (“stealth”)
   _ Show successes, show that it works and then tell all
   _ Convince the people who eventually will have to execute and make them your ambassadors
   _ Obtain top management support (e.g. a framework as top-down policy)
   _ Manage stakeholders (actors and beneficiaries) from the beginning by identifying and managing their expectations
   _ While not ignoring the need to point out risks, the primary relationship between champions of the framework, management and those needing to act needs to be build on TRUST, based on the alignment of organisational and personal values of those involved
   _ “Think big, start small”
   _ Get an executive sponsor
   _ Measure customer satisfaction (but always relate to business expectations)
   _ Also measure service unit cost, schedule achievement, incidents etc
   _ Get buy-in from the business for the metrics used

3. What are the risks to avoid?
   _ Focus on the implementation of the framework as an objective on its own
   _ Not properly managing the expectations
   _ Not making the goals explicit, and not highlighting the benefits
   _ Not identifying/recognizing the need to improve as a key driver
   _ Inadequate scope, or scope definition process
   _ Incorrect timing and phase definition
   _ Unbalanced or insufficient internal knowledge and skills
   _ Large organization: look more for generalist
   _ Small organization: look more for specialists
   _ Underestimating the impact of change to the organisation
   _ Poor business case (e.g. imbalance between budget, scope and objectives)
   _ Lack of support from the top (e.g. board, top management)
   _ Loss of stakeholders trust during implementation

4. What is the profile of a framework implementation?
   _ Gradual, incremental approach (quick-wins), holistic & pragmatic
   _ A good communications plan explaining the why, what is in it for everyone
   _ All involved understand the framework
   _ A change enabler community, involving stakeholders early
   _ Continuous Communication
   _ Shows the right objectives based on pain points, As Is-To be gaps, demand/supply balance and strategic drivers
   _ Aligns first internally, then aligns with the business
   _ Objectives are agreed and shared
   _ Objectives are measured and success is celebrated
   _ Run as a Project, possibly “slicing” the project and showing results per “slice”
   _ Visible, continuous and systematic measurements
The benefits of implementing an IT governance framework are perceived to be less than hoped for and create a high learning curve for managers even though it usually costs 20% less than expected. Notwithstanding, they do provide a better organisation, more useful management information and a higher maturity.

ITIL as the example ‘par excellence’ of IT service frameworks is the most widely used and despite the detail, complexity and management learning curve, does provide a better IT organisation.

A security framework implementation generally costs ½ of an IT Governance framework and is often considered to be more useful than originally expected.

Even though it kicks in an open door, all framework implementations also require senior management support. So if you do not have it to begin with, don’t get started! Or as some of the break-out attendees suggested, do it in a ‘stealthy’ manner, bottom up.

But if you do have senior management support you should nevertheless take on board this very insightful comment from one of the participants:

Adoption of frameworks is neither a simple nor a self-contained project with measured costs. It is a gradual shift and interrelates with many other initiatives.
When not enjoying his retirement, Erik lectures on the subjects of IT security and control, IT governance, and risk management at the Management School of the University of Antwerp, Belgium. He worked for many years at SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication), where he held the positions of Inspector-general and Director of Information Security and worked with its board and executive management on the subjects of governance, risk, security and control. He held several positions in ISACA and the IT Governance Institute between 1989 and 2007. Often referred to as “The Father of CobiT”, he lead the development of COBIT and Val IT. He currently chairs a panel of professors that reviews the master of IT audit programmes in four universities in The Netherlands.

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CIONET would like to thank the many responders to the survey as well as the presenters and attendants of the breakouts at the event on The Value of IT Frameworks held in September 2011.

About CIONET

We are CIONET, the biggest community of IT executives in Europe. Bringing together over 3500 CIOs, CTO’s and IT directors from wide ranging sectors, cultures, academic backgrounds and generations, CIONET’s membership represents an impressive body of expertise in IT management. CIONET’s mission is to feed and develop that expertise by providing top-level IT executives with the resources they need to realise their full potential.

CIONET develops, manages and moderates an integrated array of tools and services from the online CIONET platform – the world’s first social network for CIOs – to a range of offline networking events, conferences, workshops and executive education programmes all tailored to top-level management. CIONET also provides exclusive access to the latest research through regular online and offline publications and a number of value adding partnerships with key players from the academic and corporate worlds.

Faced with the rapidly changing role of today’s IT executive, CIONET not only helps its members keep up with the pace of change but empowers them to take an active role in shaping the future of their field, always challenging them with “What’s next.”