The compelling case for a business focus in IT service management

IBM delivers integrated, optimized, automated IT service and asset management

Contents

Introduction

The business user who needs software installed on a laptop or a computer system moved to a new office most likely is not interested in the IT processes, requirements or challenges that make the change possible. That is as it should be. And importantly, that is something the IT professional should take as a compliment. Business users need to stay focused on the business. The challenge for IT organizations is that, to do their jobs right, teams and individuals have to see both ends of the business/technology spectrum. They have to succeed at the demanding, in-the-trenches job of managing the technology that delivers IT services without losing sight of the fact that technology-based services exist to serve people.

This is true regardless of the form a service takes—whether IT staff are delivering a service catalog to help users request assistance, or are managing incidents, problems, changes, configurations or new technology releases behind the scenes. The hierarchy of importance should place people first, followed by processes and technology, not the other way around. What IT organizations need in order to make this possible is a management approach designed to help ensure that the delivery of services supports the necessary business results. And as IT infrastructures grow in complexity, IT organizations increasingly need a unified, automated system that can help manage the full range of digital assets—from individual endpoints to software deployments to large, cloud-enabled data centers—and that can simplify, streamline and speed the functions necessary for effective service delivery.

This white paper explores the challenges, benefits and ideal capabilities of automated IT service management. It describes how IBM can help move the organization from conventional, fragmented management of services to a comprehensive, automated next-generation approach designed to simplify administrator service delivery as well as end-user service access, enable interoperability of diverse systems and information, support continuity between business and IT processes and goals—and deliver all these results more efficiently than ever before.

A constant focus on business and user needs is critical

An engineering team needs a virtual machine provisioned to run testing on a product in development. From a catalog that describes services provided by IT, a responsible team member locates the provisioning icon in the catalog's graphical user interface and clicks. This simple action kicks off workflow processes that roll through a series of policy-based approvals governing areas from asset availability to cost. Once approvals are received—either automatically or from a manager, depending on the policies in place—service management applications interface with other solutions to handle requirements such as software configuration. And within a short time—often as little as 10 minutes—the service is complete. The engineers have the virtualized system they need.

Streamlined, automated practices for service delivery such as these constitute today's best practices. But while efficient delivery is made possible by technology, and while the service a customer receives is often based in technology, arriving at the point where IT services and their delivery meet business needs requires more than technology alone. And achieving best practices is more than a cookbook approach.

IT teams need to understand which services they deliver and which customers they are serving. And they need a constant focus on how they can make services better—whether faster, more secure, less expensive or improved in some other way that is important to the customer. IT needs to establish and improve the processes that support services, with a constant focus on delivering value and usefulness, not on managing or enhancing technology for its own sake. When the time for service improvement comes, the question to ask is how the service and its delivery can be better than they are now. Comprehensive, automated service management delivered in this way can help business personnel—and IT personnel as well—do their jobs better and more easily.

Asset and service management offers challenges and opportunities

Today's enterprise asset- and service-management capabilities are wide-ranging—from pushing new software out to endpoints, to giving employees a self-service portal for managing passwords and supplying IT with standardized processes for improving system performance.

To deliver these capabilities, organizations need an effective and affordable model that meets both IT and business needs. They need the ability to deliver hundreds of relevant features and regular enhancements in a simple, manageable and reliable way. Yet many organizations lack these very tools. And they are particularly challenged in three core areas: technology boundaries that are fading due to the increased use of mobile devices and cloud computing, the velocity of change in IT, and the demand for simplified processes and solutions. As infrastructures grow in size and complexity, the challenges of managing service processes across the full scope of the enterprise can be overwhelming.

Challenge: Fading boundaries, need for control

Virtualization and cloud computing have completely redefined the relationships between IT assets, processes and the people who use them. These changes make IT more efficient, more effective and more agile—but also more complex. And traditional, manual approaches to managing IT can't keep up. Automated controls become essential.

At the same time, old boundaries between assets and processes are fading away. This can be good for the organization—because people and technologies can now interact in new ways, opening up business possibilities and value. But organizations clinging to old management approaches can miss these opportunities. To achieve optimal benefits from service management, they need a new, automated approach.

Challenge: Velocity of change, demand for agility

As the infrastructure grows, change occurs more frequently. And to provide necessary services to users, IT teams find themselves patching, enhancing, updating and testing more components. Simply keeping up with basic changes can be difficult—if not impossible—without automation. This is especially true in cloud computing, where changes can occur so rapidly that manual processes are out of the question.

Importantly, the ability to keep up with change can provide a compelling business advantage. An automated, comprehensive approach to service management can enable users and IT staff alike to take advantage of leading-edge enhancements and drive efficiency.

Challenge: Growth in tools, need for simplicity

Traditionally, improvements in IT service management have occurred on a small scale. Point-solution tools have offered capabilities only for specific needs, and combinations of tools into a single product often haven't provided the efficient integration they promised. The result is a large accumulation of narrowly focused solutions—and an overwhelming task of manually managing their workflows.

What's more, to get the most value from service management solutions—and enable non-technical users to easily request services—organizations need simplified, streamlined, self-service ways to access capabilities, ideally from any device.

Managing asset and service processes across the enterprise
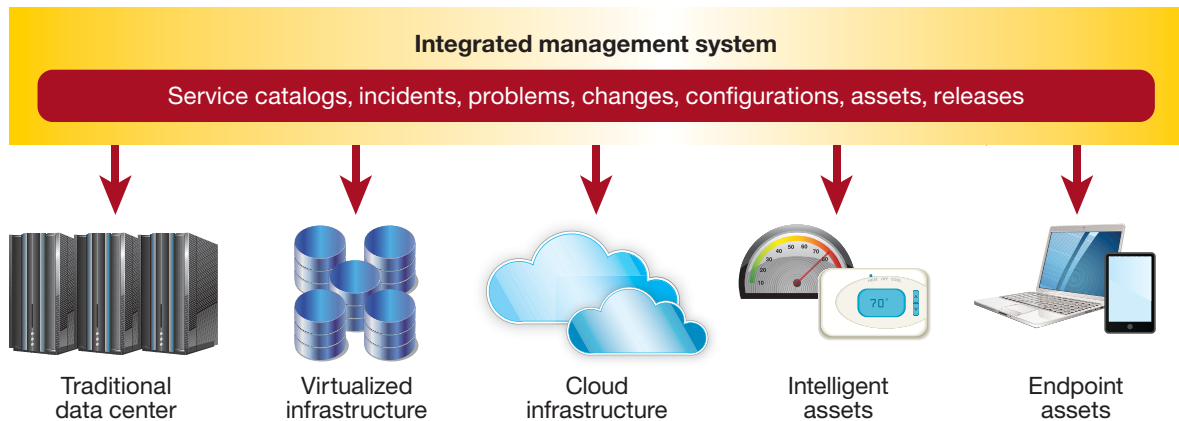
An integrated management system can eliminate the complexity of specialized, point management products to meet the full range of asset and service needs.

The benefits of IT asset and service management automation

Integrated IT service management processes are essential parts of coping with the demands of complexity and the need for simplicity. Organizations today need service management solutions that can:

- Coordinate unified asset, change and incident management across the infrastructure from the physical data center to a virtualized cloud
- Reduce the longstanding complexity of tool sprawl that continues to plague many service management operations—and lower the total cost of ownership with one unified solution to license, install and manage multiple service-management processes
- Improve quality of service for users with streamlined access and business resiliency provided by the ability to tightly link service requests with asset and change management
- Lower costs and mitigate the risks of license compliance by managing the IT asset lifecycle
- Help ensure integrity of existing infrastructure during releases of new hardware or software with standard, automated change procedures
- Reduce the overall risk of service problems by minimizing manual intervention

Streamlined management gets the job done better

Like many organizations, Melbourne Airport, the second busiest passenger airport in Australia, had accumulated a large number of management tools targeting specific needs of the business. But as it had grown over a 40-year period, the airport had found that these tools increasingly suffered inefficiencies and roadblocks in the way they worked—or did not work—together. A repair ticket generated for the operations team, for example, would need to be generated again for the IT team if the problem turned out to be digital rather than physical.

Working with IBM Business Partner Kalibrate, the airport deployed IBM SmartCloud Control Desk to complement its existing suite of IBM management solutions. Unified management capabilities that reach across silos to manage assets together now mean that a service ticket is automatically routed to the correct team for the problem, streamlining management and repairs, saving time and money, and—most importantly—helping ensure the safety and security of air travel.
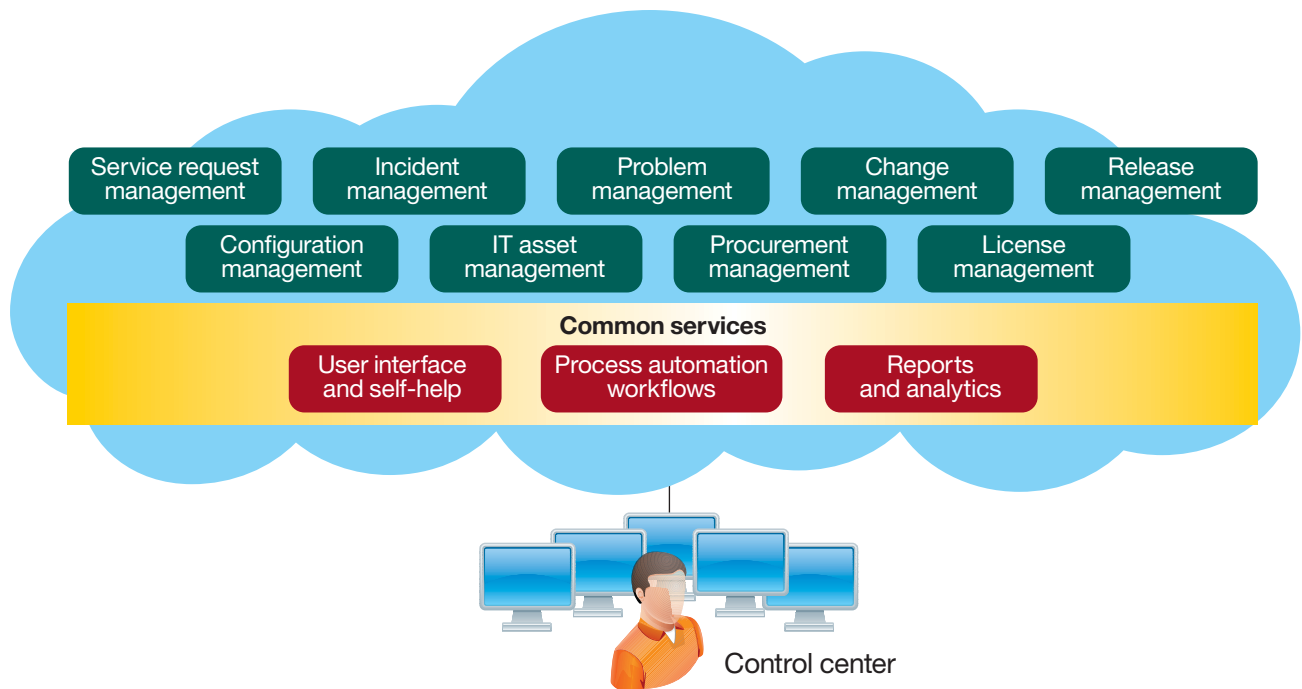
IBM SmartCloud Control Desk

IBM® SmartCloud® Control Desk is designed to be the hub in the wheel driving data through service management processes—minimizing management complexity, providing simplicity and delivering automated, integrated, streamlined capabilities. Unified in a single control center, this software—

with processes certified at the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) v3 level[1]—allows management to cross boundaries and silos while keeping up with IT velocity across the organization. Importantly for today's models of business operations, it is mobile-device accessible and integrates with social media and development tools for added flexibility.

Single point of control for IT asset and service management

IBM SmartCloud Control Desk enables users to manage processes and assets across the enterprise—from a single point of control.

Capabilities: Crossing boundaries

IBM SmartCloud Control Desk helps meet the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities created by porous boundaries with a platform that unifies processes—for example, eliminating the need for multiple service desks and automating change management processes. The solution bridges data and operational silos, giving IT staff the access they need to apply powerful management capabilities across the enterprise.

Capabilities: Keeping up with IT velocity

With control and automation across rapidly changing environments, IBM SmartCloud Control Desk enables IT organizations to move beyond manual processes to automate and delegate activities to help reduce the risk of human error. Automation further helps ensure that a change due to provisioning or a machine outage does not impact services. And it allows IT staff to focus on delivering benefits—instead of simply performing manual maintenance—for all stakeholders, from internal users to customers.

Capabilities: Supporting simplicity

By helping simplify operations, IBM SmartCloud Control Desk offers good news for non-technical business users. Its self-service capabilities are designed to empower them to solve basic service issues or initiate requests for more complex technical assistance on their own. For IT teams, simplified operations encourage autonomy and independence, helping to reduce training costs and increase user efficiency.

A full range of capabilities spans enterprise needs

IBM SmartCloud Control Desk reduces complexity and supports simplicity with a wide range of capabilities, including management of:

- **Service requests**—Delivering a single point of entry for handling incidents and requests
- **Assets**—Encompassing inventory, financial and contractual functions to support strategic decisions
- **Change**—Enabling standardized procedures for efficient handling of change
- **Configuration**—Providing comprehensive configuration management and tracking across the infrastructure
- **Procurement**—Supporting the creation, routing and management of requests, purchase orders, contracts, and terms and conditions
- **Licenses**—Enabling usage accounting and chargeback, investment planning, and auditing of license terms and conditions
- **Releases**—Managing large-scale deployments of authorized software into a production environment to support critical service rollouts or to bundle related sets of changes
- **Incidents**—Enabling restored service operation as quickly as possible
- **Problems**—Helping solve the root causes of incidents to minimize impact and prevent recurrence

The solution offers an unusual breadth of capabilities built on common services that can accelerate time to value while helping minimize the total cost of ownership.

Conclusion

As organizations that began with basic siloed management processes move to more unified, automated capabilities, they face challenges managing the velocity of change, enabling business agility and supporting requirements for an enhanced user experience. With IT assets growing in their importance to business success, manual management processes simply cannot keep up.

Unlike niche products and manual processes, IBM SmartCloud Control Desk enables organizations to automate their integrated service-management approach across data centers, virtualized and cloud-based environments, and endpoints without complexity or compromise.

For more information

To learn more about IBM SmartCloud Control Desk, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit: **ibm.com**/software/products/en/smartcloudcontroldesk/

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[1] "IBM SmartCloud Control Desk is now certified as ITIL compatible," *developerWorks*, June 14, 2012. **ibm.com**/developerworks/community/blogs/e25892f0-20f7-46ff-bbe9-c7c03fb3036f/entry/ibm_smartcloud_control_desk_is_now_certified_as_itil_compatible6?lang=en

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