Ivanti White Paper

# Unify and Automate to Transform Your Service Management Environment

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## Introduction

As IT attempts to keep up with the demands of a more digitally literate workplace, the expectation on IT departments is changing. Increasingly it's presumed they will offer a service *experience* as much as the service itself, respond differently, and be more agile to business changes—yet still offer high-quality services and support.

So the role that IT assumes in business operations must morph into a driver and enabler of this new digital workplace rather than working in an IT bubble, regardless of the industry it operates in. It's essential to understand the business and industry the IT team operates in, how services are valued, and the genuine impact of services and outages—whether it be in retail, healthcare, finance, or other. With this understanding, IT should look to offer innovative solutions and services that support specific business plans and budgets.

The fact, however, is that IT teams are over-burdened with maintaining sprawling systems, supporting ad hoc business projects, and managing the onslaught of Shadow IT. As such they are typically gripped in a cycle of incremental updates to existing technology. These operational demands don't provide space for innovation, which in turn fails to help propel the business forward. It's now well established that IT innovation increases a company's success. Gaps exist between aspirational innovation and accomplishment.

To bridge the gap, Gartner Inc. proposes a "bi-modal IT approach", or splitting the IT department into two modes of operation; one traditional and the other more agile. One team works on keeping the lights on while the other focuses on new technologies. The challenge however is that IT is  often financially and resource constrained, frequently making the separation of a complete new functioning mode an unrealistic and expensive proposition.

An alternative view is to take the path hit on by Larry Downes and Paul Nunes in their book *Big Bang Disruption*.[1] Rather than inventing new products, organizations instead work with a combination of existing technology components and assemble them in the right business model to create the desired user experience. As an example, think about the employee who might previously have carried around a mobile phone, an MP3 player, and a camera. They now carry a single device that serves all these purposes. Another more modern example is the transportation network company Uber. Perceived by some as an innovative disruptor, all Uber has actually done is take existing technologies, data, transport methods, and consumer desires, and then recombine them uniquely to create an industry-shifting model—and a considerably more desirable user experience.

## Recombining ITSM

Applying this concept of recombining existing technologies would provide the agility needed to help transform your service management environment into a valuable innovation enabler, without the resource-intensive approach espoused by Gartner.

Plugging together existing technologies can help unlock greater value in your service management tool. Not only does this lead to innovation, it can potentially free crucial resources from routine, repetitive tasks to consider further projects even before the business has requested them to drive that innovative leadership.

In the past, integrating technologies together was a tough job that required engineers and developers to devote significant time and money. However, new approaches to defining processes around human and technology interaction make it far easier to integrate services to create a dramatically better user experience. Today, wonderful technology exists that is easy to deploy and use so that IT staff can spend less time on tedious, low-level tasks and more time making a tangible difference to the business.

## Defining Integration and Automation

Before going any further we should establish what is meant by integration since it's an often misunderstood and misused term. Integration defined by most people is simplistic data import or an API that, yes, can reduce manual re-input of data but alone will not aid innovative practices. Integration points should touch people and processes as well as data.

In the simplest terms integration should include:

1. Activity that you see and touch; user interface integration where it is in front of a person so they can click, touch, view, or interact in context and control.
2. Process and data integration that works silently behind the scenes to orchestrate multiple systems in real-time; where systems talk to systems as a result of a defined sequence of process steps.

Of course, integration is only one idea of how to help drive innovation, but it also provides the opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. Not only does it offer a way to bring out innovation, it reduces many of the challenges present in a service management environment that hamper operational excellence.

### Inefficient Working

Without true integration IT staff can't coordinate the right activities easily. They must jump in and out of multiple products and interfaces versus gaining access from one place to the right actions from multiple systems. If you search around your IT processes, you'll also discover examples of tasks that stretch across systems, are repetitive, and may not even require human intervention. Yet the integration, which would allow for automation, isn't present. Staff are potentially performing monotonous tasks with accompanying unnecessary delays and human errors when they could be freed up for alternative service-improvement projects.

So the downsides become apparent—increased time to resolution, drop points, and disjointed practices and processes that can also lead to conflict and disharmony between IT teams as well as with the end users they serve. Couple this with the inability to receive alerts from other

systems; for example in the case where an outage damages a service management team's ability to work proactively and resolve issues before their end users report them.

### Limited Visibility

A further hindrance is the time taken to access information in other systems and databases that affects response and resolution times. A lack of information to build context for front-line staff means they have limited situational awareness when dealing with IT issues and with the end users who are experiencing those support issues. Interactions take longer as the picture of information is formed—asking the end user questions to gain data or undertake repeated calls or other interactions that would otherwise be at their fingertips through integration.

### Employee Downtime

It's no secret that any inefficiency in the service and support environment will translate either to a reduction in the quality of service and support or, as a worst-case scenario, an increase in downtime for individual employees or the business as a whole. For employees, the delays that they perceive are caused by the IT team in addition to their service not working compounds the frustration they already experience. The IT team becomes the target of their dissatisfaction as they speak to co-workers or managers.

### Weakened Investment

Lack of integration with existing IT tools reduces the ability to leverage investments, damages the expected return on investment, and increases the total cost of the IT estate. What's more, lack of integration increases the number of new toolsets staff need to be completely proficient in, simply to find that one action or piece of data they need to use. Of course, this affects business operating costs. Follow that through and it's easy to see why doing more than basic incident support becomes difficult for the service management team that has no access to integrated processes, technology, and data. If the team has access to the part they need then gaining proficiency in the entire toolset won't be necessary.

## A New Mindset

### Get Started, Get Innovating

In the typical over-worked service management world, the need to keep the lights on in an increasingly complex infrastructure—and where unknown risks are continually introduced through the back door by Shadow IT—can all lead to a heads-down, blinders-on approach to work. But it's time to gear up for a more innovative future by shifting and pivoting from values that have traditionally driven IT, and for changing the mindset from a "we provide support and tools" to "we serve the needs of our IT business users" for the industry sector we work in.

A good exercise to get started is to step back and focus on the experience of an individual user of IT across a number of typical activities. By identifying where the delays and difficulties are as well as shortfalls in user experience, IT staff can capitalize on easy integration opportunities that will close the gaps and make users happier and more productive.

In addition, aim to improve the ability to recognize and respond to the signals of change occurring in the consumer world that alter customer habits and spill over into the business world before they take hold and frustrate employees. One example is the rapid adoption of mobile phones and the fast delivery of apps in everyday life that has caused employees to demand that same experience while at work.

### Transitioning to Innovation

To support the transition to innovation, seek out technology that can interact with, influence, and impact the individual user of IT. The ability to define processes of human and technology interaction should be a fundamental part of any solution, rather than a bolt-on option or afterthought. Agility won't come if IT departments rely too heavily on expensive, low-level software code engineering. Technology that integrates with an existing infrastructure, orchestrates technologies, and automates processes will enable the recombination of existing tools to provide that unique innovation you need to support today's businesses. This is not to say that technical skills will vanish; they will still be in demand. However, there's an expanding need for technology capabilities and understanding that can move at the speed of the business—with an understanding of the business. Indeed, this is precisely how Shadow IT has found a foothold in many organizations.

Use the inherent automation capabilities to integrate process flows to eliminate human error and delays, to ensure that user requests are handled faster and more effectively. This also frees up talented IT staff from low-value work, giving them time to really use their skills. What's more, by using automated workflows to stitch together business processes and create new value for the business, the IT department can simultaneously free staff from repetitive tasks and focus on further innovation.

Achieving integration and automation will depend on developing comprehensive capabilities across service management, asset management, and security and systems management. Finding a single vendor with proven, joined-up solutions spanning both worlds will pay dividends in time and effort versus deploying solution silos. It will also enable a more comprehensive approach to innovation, driving greater potential value for the business.

The need for integration extends more and more beyond existing on-premise solutions to the more diverse combination of both cloud and on-premise, increasingly where Shadow IT has stolen the march bringing potentially valuable new cloud solutions into the workplace. Therefore, IT departments should seek a vendor that offers open integration with all leading technology platforms.

### Build On Existing Approaches

Building on a foundation of proven, established frameworks, and layering new automation capabilities on top, IT departments can maintain control, consistency, and adherence to best practices while delivering a much faster and more integrated service to users. At the same time, they can re-direct staff towards higher-value, more satisfying and more creative work. Their years of accumulated IT experience and expertise will continue to add value, and they will also have more time to bring new concepts and ideas to the business.

A simple example of how this can work is in the field of delivering software and services when requested by individuals using request fulfilment. Rather than requiring users to submit a request, wait for approval, and then wait for an engineer to perform the installation, IT departments can follow the consumer model and create a corporate app-store experience. The required steps might be: 1) take a service catalog and a request-fulfilment process from service management; 2) connect it to systems-management technologies; and 3) enable users to request and then receive instantly deployed, pre-approved software on their own devices. This can be largely automated, even where approval or purchasing is required. Also, this doesn't just dramatically improve fulfilment times while also enhancing the user experience—it's also more cost-efficient since the same capability can then be used to recover unused software licences, harvesting them from devices and returning them to the pool after a set period of time.

One of the notable points about the app store example above is that it uses tried-and-trusted service management approaches to drive a better and more responsive experience for the business user. Service management concepts and best-practice frameworks such as ITIL and Lean IT will not go away, but will remain key differentiators between Shadow IT and the true corporate IT capability. Integrating services properly is what will really add value, and this is precisely where the uncontrolled, piecemeal approaches of Shadow IT falter. Integration is all about business processes, so existing IT service management principles and skills will continue to be relevant.

A further example is the ability to use automation for self-healing. Through the use of event monitoring technologies linked through to service management systems, automatic reporting and even fixing of issues is achievable. This improves the service experience for end users while freeing time for IT to work on other projects.

By introducing automation in targeted areas, the IT department can abolish the drudgery of doing the same old activities over and over again, and gain breathing space to think about how it can best serve the business.

## Transform Service Management

IT Operations is under attack. It's often perceived by the employees or the customers it serves as a lumbering, out-of-control department that has difficulty responding to employee needs. At the same time, businesses expect IT to step up the delivery and quality of IT solutions and innovations to support business productivity. If integration and automation aren't present, the service management team—indeed all of IT—lose speed and the agility to respond quickly to business requirements as they occur.

Your goal is to transform service management into a user-centred approach by leveraging the capabilities to create significant value, thereby making IT more strategic and business more productive.

It's time to think beyond the current services and technology you provide and take the longer view to improve speed and delivery of services. Take a look at technology trends, consumer expectations, and industry-wide changes to develop a clearer view and direction. Consider how entire industries are evolving by remodeling flows, technology, data, and interactions with people—and apply that thinking to the service management world. Ask your ITSM and systems management vendors to show how they can combine their technology to transform your service.

Furthermore, use this long view as an indication of the technology that will be available and how your employees' expectations of their services and support will change in the future. You require an empathetic focus on the user experience, understanding what users do and how they operate. With this knowledge and an integrated, automated approach, you can drive innovative solutions that are both operationally feasible and desired by users.

## References

1. http://www.amazon.com/Big-Bang-Disruption-Devastating-Innovation/dp/1591846900

### About Ivanti

The heart of IT is about Ivanti Empower, powered by Shavliking people—and being able to serve and secure all types of users, on all the devices they use, wherever they are. With an end-to-end Service Management solution, only Ivanti unifies and automates the delivery of all the assets and services users need across mobile, cloud, and personal computing environments. By making users happy, we make IT more strategic and business more productive.

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