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5 Instances Where ITSM & ITAM Are Better Together

Use Cases

Table of Contents

Solve Business Problems, Not Just IT issues

Increase your insights and improve your operations

IT Service Management (ITSM) and IT Asset Management (ITAM) have historically been separate disciplines, each providing significant value to the business. ITSM ensures timely delivery of essential services and support for the enterprise, while ITAM discovers and tracks the hardware and software assets for those services and optimizes the overall value, costs, and compliance across the asset lifecycle.

While these two practices are usually implemented in separate areas of the organization with different business objectives and goals, their processes and data are highly interrelated. But when IT is structured along operational silos, gaining visibility and automating manual processes across the entire IT landscape is often a challenge. There are separate teams, tools, and objectives that limit information and data sharing keeping ITSM and ITAM practices isolated from one another.

When ITSM and ITAM are closely aligned and integrated, many activities and processes become more automated, efficient and responsive, with fewer things "falling thru the cracks." IT teams gain more insight and are better positioned to move

from reactive activities to more proactive practices, delivering higher service levels and efficiency at lower cost.

This white paper presents five examples where combining ITSM and ITAM processes, data, and insights can be part of an overall plan for IT to maximize operational efficiencies and improve service delivery, while also optimizing compliance and cost.

1 Empowering Users with Self-Service

HDI research indicates organizations can save 50% of their ticket handling costs through self-service vs. walk-up support[1]

As the IT Service Desk often lacks the visibility to see what applications are available and how they're being used, organizations often fail in fulfilling self-service requests in a timely manner and end up purchasing more software, causing unnecessary spend and compliance issues. With unified ITSM and ITAM processes, organizations can reclaim or re-harvest unused software to cut cost and optimize existing asset performance, leading to higher customer satisfaction and improved productivity. Fully automated software requests through self-service, for instance, leverage integrated approval workflows and license compliance checks, reclaim unused software

1 HDI Research, 2014.

to optimize software spend, and can deploy software automatically to users' devices.

For example, a sales manager needs Microsoft Visio, but doesn't have the application and can't afford to lose several days waiting for the purchase and installation of the software. The sales manager tries to launch Visio, but access is denied. Traditionally, they would call the Service Desk to make the request. The support desk analyst would send a task to the purchasing department, which would order a new software license after waiting to get approval for the purchase. IT would send a confirmation to the sales manager and then the IT technician would perform a manual lookup of the device and the user and initiate the install of Microsoft Visio, this now several days after the initial request.

When ITSM and ITAM work together, software request processes can be accelerated via self-service to users. For instance, when the sales manager submits her software request for Microsoft Visio, the system checks and identifies that Visio licenses are available, yet unused. The Visio application can then be assigned to the sales manager and through endpoint management processes, automatically installed in compliance with entitlement. The service management solution documents and tracks the process, notifies the sales manager, and closes the software request.

With unified ITSM and ITAM, the whole process completes in minutes instead of days, empowering users and freeing up the service desk to work on other strategic projects.

2 Faster and Better Incident Resolution

43% of surveyed organizations achieved higher customer satisfaction with an ITSM solution[2]

The better and faster the Service Desk can resolve incidents, the more the business stays productive and employees satisfied. Incident resolution speed and quality is helped by making sure Service Desk analysts have immediate access to more asset information related to an incident, and they use that extra insight to make better and more informed decisions.

For example, an employee contacts the Service Desk because their laptop doesn't charge nor shut down properly. If the Service Desk has visibility to the complete asset record of the laptop, they can see it was acquired only a few months earlier and is still under warranty. With this asset visibility, the analyst handling the incident could choose to do a warranty replacement rather than spend resources trying to fix

the laptop internally. The analyst can also check the asset repository for an available loaner or replacement laptop so the employee can keep working. And when the faulty laptop is returned, any software licenses associated with the device can be reclaimed for re-use by other employees.

With more hardware and software information, analysts can more quickly identify possible causes for other types of common incidents, such as lower performance or application crashes, which could be due to insufficient RAM or conflicting software versions. Plus, logging all the steps and actions helps for later analysis or audit requirements.

This simple laptop example shows how the business could benefit from leveraging asset information for faster resolution times, higher employee satisfaction, and lower support costs without sacrificing quality.

3 Proactive Management of Problem Assets

53% of all data loss and systems downtime is caused by hardware failure[3]

Correlating asset information with incident and problem management helps organizations properly assess why certain devices regularly fail. IT can

proactively manage the overall risk versus trying to fix as each device fails, adding unnecessary costs and downtime in the process.

Say an IT Manager is getting ready for the next vendor negotiation and standardization initiative. Through looking at problem data and analyzing the associated device information, they find certain types of devices are failing at a 30% higher rate than other models. Diving further into the asset information, including purchase history and warranty coverage, they decide to no longer fix these types going forward and instead make a switch and standardize a different type of device to keep users productive.

The IT Manager also looks at incident and problem data to assess which hardware still has value beyond its initial lifecycle. Instead of running with the market standard of three-year hardware refresh cycles, analysis shows they can initiate an extension to four years. This allows the organization to gain more life out of existing devices. Just making a few key changes to procedures and device standards, savings can be realized and costs can be optimized across the enterprise. With a traditional approach, the IT manager would have only seen problems coming in through the Service Desk and looked at call resolution to determine how long it took his analysts to solve this particular user's problem.

2 EMA, Reinventing ITSM 2019.

3 http://www.infostor.com/backup-and_recovery/disaster-recovery/data-loss-and-downtime-costing-enterprises-1.7-trillion-a-year-survey.html

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By creating "one system of truth," one repository where information is collected, filtered against, and analyzed, you can correlate results and make more informed decisions. This way, you know if a problem impacts the wider organization and proactively trigger actions to remedy the issue while checking into the hardware contracts, licensing information, etc. Having the insights to know the exposure and risks involved to draft a clear remediation plan — now that's really turning a problem into an opportunity.

4 Effective Change Management

32% of surveyed organizations achieved IT operational efficiencies through improved insights[4]

Making asset information available as part of the Change Management process only helps ensure changes are more effective and successful, partly by identifying potential risks up front as well as making the process more efficient.

For instance, with more asset insight readily available, the Change Advisory Board (CAB) can review and answer key questions as part of the review cycle. Questions such as: Are appropriate licenses available and properly allocated, including desired and needed

versions? Are any additional software packages, drivers, or hardware add-ons required, and are needed licenses also available? Are the hardware configurations acceptable or do they need to be enhanced with more memory, connections, capacity or storage to cover unplanned incidents or failures?

Having more complete asset information can also speed up emergency change requests where resolution times are critical. Say a server running a business-critical application crashes and needs to be replaced quickly. The incident response team can immediately check the asset inventory to see if there's another replacement server readily available. Once a replacement is found, the team can initiate an Emergency Change with complete information on the replacement server, including its exact location, where it needs to go, and any necessary software and add-ons.

In this example, resolution time is critical, so having complete asset information shortens the time before the application is available again but without introducing potential failure points due to missing components or configuration.

Including asset information and processes in change management make it more likely potential risks can be identified and resolved before changes are approved and implemented. Without complete asset

insights, the alternative result can be a costly clean-up effort after a rollout with potential increases in cost, performance issues, unplanned downtime or non-compliance.

5 Complete Lifecycle Visibility

56% of organizations verify asset location only once a year; 10-15% only every five years5

Many organizations still use spreadsheets to track their hardware and software, noting purchase information and linking the device to the initial user who requested it. Full visibility of what assets are in the environment, where they are and how they are used — all without cumbersome spreadsheets — is vital for Service Desk analysts to do their job efficiently, with quicker resolution times on incidents and problems.

However, many IT organizations often only verify an asset's location once a year, some only every five years. Imagine a temporary staffing company that is providing devices at the start of an assignment. Across different job roles, devices will be switching hands, changing locations, and demanding access rights at an exploding rate. If an IT organization is

4 EMA, Reinventing ITSM, 2019.

carrying out a manual inventory audit, these user changes would either be poorly tracked or not tracked at all. This poses a significant security risk, not to mention denying IT much-needed visibility into a device's health and performance.

With unified ITSM and ITAM processes and tools, organizations can perform real-time scans and reconcile user and location information. This enables the Service Desk to resolve incidents much faster, increase customer satisfaction, and enable more self-service. Also, knowing where all organizational assets are, at all times, is not only vital from a service and support perspective, but from a security standpoint, where lost or stolen assets become a risk to data integrity.

Furthermore, it's critical to manage assets throughout their entire lifecycle by tracking performance data, issues, fixes, patch information, contracts, and licensing to ensure software and hardware investments are running at optimal performance and not impacting employee productivity. Complete lifecycle visibility through unified ITSM and ITAM is often the missing piece to the IT puzzle for many organizations.

Key Benefits to Your Organization

When ITSM and ITAM are closely aligned and integrated, IT organizations can accomplish more while minimizing costs and administrative efforts, providing more value directly to the business. Organizations are equipped with better insights to make informed decisions for improved business operations. Employees stay productive with better self-service and faster incident resolutions. IT staff are freed up from reactive activities to focus on more strategic projects.

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5 http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY_-_Navigating_through_the_complexities_of_the_fixed_asset_management_function/$FILE/EY-navigating-through-the-complexities-of-the-fixed-asset-management-function.pdf