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■ The Importance of Event Management & Monitoring for IT Infrastructure Optimization

John Worthington, MyServiceMonitor, LLC

The functional separation of '*infrastructure*' (Technical Management) from '*applications*' (Application Management) hinders effective optimization of the IT infrastructure in many organizations. Optimizing IT infrastructure – without consideration for the business applications being delivered on them – will often result in continued frustration and disconnects with the business.

ITIL® v3 has attempted to include business applications when identifying service requirements (see Service Design, Section 3.3 - Identifying Service Requirements). Few will question the importance of business applications either; they are frequently the closest link to the business that IT has.

The operational orientation of many IT Service Management (ITSM) implementations leads to an inward focus on services that may not be adequately linked to business processes. It also continues a 'bottoms-up' approach to service definition that is focused on change impacts, and avoids the need for real-time information and an ability to quickly identify service impacts.

An **IT Infrastructure** is the hardware, software, networks, facilities, etc. that are required to develop, test, deliver, monitor, control or support IT services. With **IT Infrastructure Services** (also known as Technical Services) we are referring to an IT service that is not directly used by the business but is required by the IT Service Provider so they can provide other IT services. Don't confuse the two, otherwise this limits the IT Services that support the customer's business processes to only those associated with ITIL's Technical Service Catalog, such as:

- Hosting
- Network Services
- Desktop Support
- Data Center Services
- Storage Services
- Utility Computing Services

Optimization cannot be limited to only those services that are '*not directly used by the Business*' because the IT Infrastructure supports *all* IT Services. This includes those that directly support Business Processes. The IT Infrastructure Services underpin business processes, but will optimizing them improve business operations?

In ITIL v3 we added a Business Service Catalog, which is a critical component to effective ITSM. Without it, and the associated business applications, you cannot establish alignment or even integration with the business.

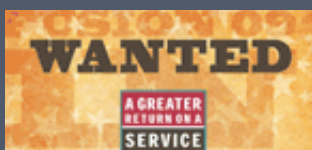
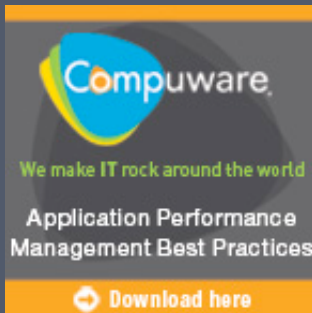
In addition, IT Infrastructure by definition does not include people, processes and documentation. So IT Infrastructure optimization is not about optimizing processes but typically leads to workflow automation and IT process improvement. This is an IT focused, **inward view** that does not connect with the business in any meaningful way.

IT Infrastructure Optimization is about Real-Time Service Impacts

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Most IT organizations have a significant Event Management gap. The shift of applications from mainframe to 'n-tier', and the emergence of virtualization have forced a tipping point. Domain-specific monitoring simply is not working in today's complex, distributed, n-tier and increasingly virtual environments.

Applications, and their associated transactions, are the key to understanding how IT underpins business processes. Understanding service impacts therefore requires end-to-end monitoring of business service topologies – including business applications, and is the key to effective optimization of the IT Infrastructure.

These applications and the myriad of interdependencies across increasingly virtual, n-tier complexities are placing new burdens on your ITSM environment (or soon will). Your definition of 'infrastructure' should --- sooner rather than later --- include these applications, and the ability to monitor them end-to-end in real time.

A critical success factor to improving effectiveness and efficiency in ITSM implementations is service monitoring intelligence. This will require both technical (IT) and business (customer-focused) competencies. Service Operations must take a leading role in the ownership and definition of Event Management and monitoring, however Service Strategy & Design must clearly establish business process boundaries and end-to-end requirements.

IT Infrastructure optimization points to a need to monitor what is happening at each layer of the service infrastructure, across an array of network, system and application components – and automatically identify which component layer, in which domain, is the source of an anomaly.

Without a business service topology, the relationships defined in ITIL's Configuration Management Database (CMDB) mirrors the fragmented organizational structure of the IT organization. Lacking real-time information that clearly shows how various metrics impact end-to-end services, it will continue to be very difficult for IT Operations staff to improve their understanding of what these metrics mean and how they can use them to detect potential problems.

Design & Operations must *both* be involved. This might include:

- Lifecycle (i.e., Design, Operation) - for staff involved in process design.
- Capability Stream - Operational Support & Analysis (OSA) and Planning, Protection & Optimization (PPO) for staff involved in process execution.

ITIL v3's Planning, Protection & Optimization (PPO) and Service Design are two logical sources of guidance for optimization. However, Service Operation -- specifically Event Management and monitoring -- lays a foundation for Service Assurance, Reporting and Improvement in addition to Operation & Control.

Virtualization: A Tipping Point

“Too few IT organizations can monitor performance of the infrastructure and proactively take action to prevent problems. In the virtualized future, these previously unaddressed tasks will become the primary focus of IT Operations.”

Managing the IT infrastructure from a higher-level perspective will require new skills in areas such as capacity planning and monitoring. For many system administrators, this situation will require a skill upgrade and a shift in perspective from tactical to strategic.”

–*Virtualization for Dummies*, Bernard Golden, MBA, CEO Navica

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Monitoring and Event Management play a critical role in IT Infrastructure Optimization, and offer a fresh approach to adopting IT Service Management that is truly aligned with the business. The irony is that with a long-standing focus on Service Operation, it may be tempting to pass the ball to the Application Management function and focus on Service Design. But doing this to the exclusion of Service Operation and Event Management can really backfire.

About the Author:

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