



Service Management: Many Sizes Fit

By Simon King, Senior Director of Remedy Product Management, BMC Software



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ITSM MATURITY LEVEL	3
A CLOSER LOOK.....	4
ACCOMMODATING CHANGE.....	4
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER.....	4
ABOUT THE AUTHOR.....	5

Today, virtually every business organization — from mom-and-pop retailers to multibillion-dollar global enterprises — relies in some way on IT services. As businesses have become more dependent on technology, their interactions with IT have broadened dramatically. Facilities groups, for example, now deal with technology-based equipment in conference rooms such as LCD projectors and network connections. Consequently, the need for IT service management (ITSM) has risen in almost all market segments.

Organizations differ widely in their needs for ITSM due to many factors, including the following:

- » Company size (i.e., small, midsize, or large enterprises)
- » Scale, complexity, and rate of change of IT environment
- » Geographical spread of the company
- » Distribution of user groups supported (field, desk-based, etc.)

ITSM Maturity Level

In the past, IT groups have done much of the work themselves to address these differences and meet growing business demands. In prior years, organizations that didn't want to run the tools themselves had options such as managed services and full IT outsourcing. But more recently, additional solutions have been created such as software as a service (SaaS) and cloud infrastructure (IaaS).

Along the way, IT groups have discovered that one size no longer fits all. Some organizations — especially smaller ones — are finding that ITSM delivered in a SaaS model better suits their needs because it's more affordable. Others still see the need for on-premise solutions due to stringent security requirements. And some are benefitting from a hybrid implementation, which uses a SaaS delivery model for some services and on-premise for others. Some organizations are just beginning to use ITSM and mainly require simple tools to meet the needs of individual silos. These organizations are looking primarily to ensure efficient help desk operations. Others are at a different ITSM maturity level and wish to accelerate the development of best practices and increase efficiency across groups. They need more sophisticated solutions that implement best-practice processes across multiple IT disciplines based on IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL®) guidelines. ITIL provides the capability to implement and support the delivery of high quality IT services and to adapt them to changing business needs.

Your ITSM solution vendor should have a sales and support staff with collective ITSM experience a cross a broad range of capabilities. For example, the vendor should have people who understand the ITSM needs of small to midsized businesses. Does the vendor offer a range of solutions to meet the different requirements and appropriate level of implementation effort needed by a wide variety of businesses? The staff should also include people experienced in helping large enterprises put together solutions that span multiple disciplines and geographical areas. Having a diverse level of sales and support expertise allows the vendor to bring forward the right products in the right way, regardless of where the customer is positioned in the ITSM space. Also, the vendor should have an upgrade/downgrade path, both commercially and technically, between the different offerings in their portfolio. Can you flex up or down to a more suitable product, or version of the product, as business needs change, as when a new business unit is added or an old one is spun off?

[An organization with a high maturity level generally has established processes that transcend multiple service management disciplines, such as incident and problem management, change management, configuration management, and asset management.](#)

Enterprises are dynamic, not static. Consequently, ITSM needs are likely to change over time, driven by such factors as shifts in the business environment, growth of the IT infrastructure, business expansion, and advancements based on the ITSM maturity level. With that in mind, look for a solution that is flexible so you can adapt your implementation to evolving business needs. For example, you may want to move from an on-premise solution to a SaaS offering, or vice versa. Or you may want to add capabilities, such as implementing a change management solution or service catalog to complement your help desk solution.

A Closer Look

The breadth and depth of ITSM requirements are not necessarily directly proportional to a company's revenue or the number of employees. In retail and manufacturing companies, for example, employees often share workstations. In the financial industry, on the other hand, some employees may have more than one workstation. In addition, some organizations outsource part or all of their ITSM activities to external providers, while others assume full responsibility.

The most appropriate indicator of ITSM requirements is the size of the IT organization. An organization with 10 to 20 seats on a single help desk has fewer requirements than an organization with 100 to 200 seats spread across multiple help desks. The organization with the distributed help desk may require a solution that provides multitenancy so that each location can keep its help desk operation and data separate from the other locations.

Another factor is the service management maturity of the IT organization. The higher the maturity level, the greater the breadth and depth of ITSM needs. An organization with a high maturity level generally has established processes that transcend multiple service management disciplines, such as incident and problem management, change management, configuration management, and asset management. Such an organization requires an ITSM solution that integrates tools across disciplines and fosters close collaboration among the various IT groups involved. In addition, the higher maturity level organization may require processes based on those outlined in ITIL.

Accommodating Change

Change is continual and inevitable. Companies grow organically as well as through mergers and acquisitions. IT departments move up in maturity level. New technologies emerge and drive wholesale changes to the IT environment.

All of these changes affect ITSM needs. For example, a company may opt initially for ITSM services delivered through SaaS, because the company does not have staff administrators and there is limited space in the company's data center. As the company grows, it may decide to bring its ITSM tools on-premise to address more critical integrations or meet regulatory compliance requirements that are not available with a SaaS solution. Or a company may wish to expand its existing ITSM solution to include additional tools that address other processes.

The ability to accommodate change in your ITSM implementation without having to change or add vendors can be a significant advantage. Vendor change disrupts both users and administrators. Users have to adjust to different tools, which typically also means different processes and different user interfaces. Administrators have to adapt to different administrative tools and procedures. Historical reporting comparisons are difficult. In addition, combining tools from multiple vendors puts the burden of tool and data integration on the customer — a difficult, expensive, and time-consuming effort.

Instead, you should be able to change and grow with the same vendor. That means having the flexibility to move between implementation types, such as SaaS and on-premise. You should be able to add tools that integrate out of the box with the tools that you already have. In addition, look for the ability to scale up easily as you increase workloads and add IT staff.

The vendor should not only provide best-of-breed tools but also offer them at different levels of sophistication. That approach enables you to move up both the growth and maturity ladders without making wholesale changes or performing difficult integrations. The vendor should also have the experienced sales and support staff to help you develop your ITSM strategy to handle not only your current needs but also your future requirements.

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Putting It All Together

BMC Software has acquired Numara Software, which extends BMC's considerable experience, expertise, and technology to serve small to midsized companies, as well as large enterprises. With this acquisition, BMC adds Numara's industry-leading FootPrints solution, which meets the requirements of small to midsized businesses. The acquisition includes Numara's sales team, which is highly experienced in delivering ITSM solutions to small and midsize companies.



The combined BMC and Numara product offerings result in a broad portfolio of SaaS and on-premise ITSM solutions. This portfolio, combined with the collective know-how of the BMC and Numara sales forces, uniquely positions BMC to satisfy the ITSM requirements of organizations, regardless of their size and level of IT maturity.

To learn more, visit www.bmc.com/solutions/bsm/midmarket.html.

About the Author

Regarded as a thought leader and innovator in the software industry, Simon King directs Product Management for BMC's Remedy product line and evangelizes BMC's Business Service Management vision and strategy. Previously, King was director of strategy for the Remedy product line. He was involved in the Version 7 release of BMC IT Service Management and subsequently led the acquisition of Service Management Partners' Process Model for Remedy ITSM. Prior to joining BMC, King served as senior director of Product Management at SupportSoft, vice president of Product Management and Product Marketing, and director of Technical Support and Quality Assurance at BroadVision. He has also held Quality Assurance positions at Borland Interactive (now Inprise), Mentor Graphics, Siemens SDG, and Mars Electronics.

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