



Jumpstart IT Innovation

How to Unify Infrastructure and Service Management and
to Meet Rising Business Expectations

HELP DESK

Business Expectations Rise, Pressure on IT Intensifies

Improving business processes is the number one business priority for the fourth consecutive year in Gartner's worldwide survey of 1,500 Chief Information Officers (CIOs). Yet process improvement is only part of the strategic contribution expected of CIOs. Managing complexity and change ranks high as well. Of the CIOs surveyed, 83% anticipate significant change in their enterprise over the next three years. These priorities and predictions pose a challenge for overburdened IT organizations. Management processes must evolve and scale to meet growing complexity and increasing change. Workflows must become more automated and integrated to optimize efficiency. Operational execution must more closely align with service processes to contain costs. Addressing these imperatives requires the elimination of traditional IT silos. Consequently, an innovative approach to IT is emerging: unified infrastructure management.

An Innovative Approach

Unified infrastructure management combines IT operations and service management, tightly coupling operational execution with control processes. This enables IT to meet rising expectations by delivering broader and more proactive services to the business. To support this unified approach, PC lifecycle and service management solutions must be combined.

PC lifecycle management solutions are focused on operational execution, helping ensure that system availability is high and that IT assets are optimized throughout their lifecycle. By contrast, service management products are focused on control processes and function to ensure that service quality, customer satisfaction, and first-call resolution levels are of a consistently high standard.

Blending these critical applications facilitates unified infrastructure management by arming the service desk with tools to perform remote desktop support, reset passwords, and redeploy software in an automated fashion. It also provides first-line support with capabilities to deploy standard changes using automated service request fulfillment processing. This benefits the business by increasing first-contact resolution rates and enhancing infrastructure availability, and benefits IT by controlling complexity and costs.

Jumpstarting the Process

Below are five tangible use cases that can jumpstart your unified infrastructure management approach. As you use these innovative processes to solve traditional problems, you are laying the groundwork for end-to-end automation, merging control processes with IT operations systems. This distinctive approach brings together the capabilities, processes, and resources within your cross-functional IT team to meet rising business expectations.

Use Case 1: Employee Provisioning

Use Case 2: Software Upgrade Requests

Use Case 3: Remote Control

Use Case 4: Reactive Break/Fix

Use Case 5: Proactive Patch Management

Use Case 1: Employee Provisioning

In its 2008 benchmark report, Aberdeen Group observes that while many businesses focus on metrics such as time and cost to hire an employee, it is actually the time to productivity that is critical. You need automated tools to simplify new employee provisioning. And, with the rapid pace of employee transition, these tools must streamline internal moves as well. This allows employees to start their first day with workspace, phone, computer, required software, and email fully functional, so they can hit the ground running.

¹ "Making the Difference: The 2008 CIO Agenda," Gartner, Inc., January 2008

²All Aboard: Effective Onboarding Techniques and Strategies, Aberdeen Group, January 2008

HELP DESK

Your company has hired a vice president of marketing, and a new employee setup is requested from the service catalog. Upon submitting the service request, auto-tasks are routed to various departments including human resources, facilities, and IT operations. Behind the scenes, standard provisioning policies have pre-established the appropriate hardware and software to be issued based on the employee's job profile: a dual-core computer with 2GB of RAM and the entire Adobe® CS3 suite of software might be appropriate in this example. Automated business processing with PC lifecycle management identifies the new "bare metal" PC in inventory, auto-boots the system, then selects the software profile and installs the operating system and applications defined in the standard configuration. Within an hour the configuration setup is verified, and the task is automatically closed in the service desk.

Benefits. The unified infrastructure management approach allows the service desk team to leverage policy-based compliance to drive provisioning. Additionally, the approach reduces the governance burden and cost associated with desktop configuration management while providing the process transparency required for regulatory audits.

Use Case 2: Software Upgrade Requests

Policy-based compliance is utilized to reduce unauthorized changes to servers and employee PCs. However, there are cases where individual employee needs dictate an addition or upgrade to the standard software profile. When a user submits a valid request, IT must respond quickly to ensure the employee remains productive.

A marketing department employee is using Microsoft® Project to manage a partner marketing campaign, and needs to collaborate on the project plan with the partner to hit an end-of-day deadline. Because the employee is using a different version of Microsoft® Project than the partner, collaboration has stalled. The marketing department employee calls the service desk to request an upgrade to the latest version. Because the telephony system is integrated, the service desk receives an auto-generated ticket, pre-populated with relevant employee information, which pops on the agent's screen as the call is answered. Using integrated PC lifecycle tools, the agent verifies the software upgrade is authorized for this user and initiates the standard request fulfillment process. Once the request advances to the "approved" state, the PC lifecycle management tool remotely installs the appropriate software on the target machine, and updates the ticket with the installation status. Upon completion, the service desk ticket is automatically closed and the telephony system phones the user, notifying her that the software installation process is complete. The entire approval and upgrade process is accomplished within 15 minutes, minimizing downtime and empowering the employee to meet her deadline.

Benefits. The unified infrastructure management approach allows the service desk agent to manage the end-to-end process, without escalating the incident to IT operations. The rapid remediation reduces infrastructure management workload and costs and improves end user satisfaction and productivity.

Use Case 3: Remote Control

Adoption of self-service is on the rise. In fact, Gartner projects that by 2010 self-service will account for 58% of all service interactions, up from 35% in 2005. Because self-service addresses many of the frequently asked questions, calls to the service desk are increasingly more complex and difficult to solve. Rather than walking through methodical step-by-step recovery procedures or detailed settings, remediation can be dramatically simplified when agents take control of end user machines.

A graphic designer in the marketing department is facing a tight deadline on the CEO's board presentation. Every time she tries to embed a movie file into a slide, her machine crashes. Based on the priority of the project, when she contacts the service desk, the agent immediately takes control of her machine with PC lifecycle remote control tools. In the background,

HELP DESK

a service desk ticket is auto-generated and pre-populated with relevant information. Because the agent “sees” the error situation first hand, he determines that re-installing the software is more practical than isolating and diagnosing the problem. The PC lifecycle management tool accesses the workstation, verifies the inventory and compliance information, and remotely removes and re-installs the software. Behind the scenes, the installation process is automatically noted in the service desk ticket. The agent remains in control of the machine, verifying the re-install solved the user's problem by watching her successfully embed the movie in the slide. With the problem resolved, the ticket is closed.

Benefits. The unified infrastructure management approach allows the agent to resolve the problem immediately, avoiding multiple calls or email communication to gather additional information. The first-call resolution improves the end user experience and minimizes the negative impact on business operations.

Use Case 4: Reactive Break/Fix

Because users are increasingly mobile and can easily bypass the network perimeter, PCs may be exposed to malicious code and become corrupted. And despite your best efforts to lockdown configuration, users may add their own applications, exposing PCs to further security risk. Whatever the culprit, you must isolate, diagnose, and repair issues before problems exacerbate and spread across the entire network.

The vice president of sales is having trouble booting up his machine and calls the service desk for assistance. With integrated telephony, a ticket is auto-generated, and based on the VP's service level agreement (SLA), his call is escalated to the top of the queue. Using PC lifecycle management tools, the agent pings his machine and identifies software that is out of compliance: an unpatched application is the culprit. Automated policy compliance triggers an installation of the required patch. The agent confirms the compliance status has changed to “yes” indicating the new software is installed correctly. The status is updated and the ticket is closed upon confirmation of the successful installation.

Benefits. The unified infrastructure management approach allows the agent to quickly troubleshoot the problem by identifying deviations from the standard configuration. The agent automatically repairs the software, thus managing the end-to-end process without escalating the problem to IT operations. The rapid remediation reduces infrastructure management workload and costs and improves end user satisfaction and productivity.

Use Case 5: Proactive Patch Management

Patch management has emerged as a central operational process. Organizations have found it necessary to formalize and refine the patch management process in order to address patch multiplication and heightened security and regulatory concerns. Yet effective patch management requires a careful choreography among many service management processes including security, change, configuration, and asset management.

An emergency Microsoft Windows XP security patch is available. Based on your defined compliance policy, the PC lifecycle management tool verifies that the patch is relevant and triggers the standard change request process. By leveraging integrated telephony, members of the approval board are immediately notified by phone regarding the priority change request. Each member approves the change using interactive voice response (IVR) inputs, which update the service desk ticket, automatically progressing the change request to the “approved” state. With integrated PC lifecycle management, the rules-based patch implementation process is initiated automatically from the service desk. The tool identifies all target systems, downloads the patch, tests for incompatibilities and resolves dependencies, then automatically distributes the new patch to all identified network-based endpoints including mobile devices, laptops, desktops, servers, and storage assets. Upon confirmation of the successful installation, asset, security, and configuration profiles are updated and the change request is closed.

HELP DESK

Benefits. The unified infrastructure management approach allows operations to manage the end-to-end patch management process, while providing process transparency to comply with security, change, configuration, and asset management policies. The speed of approval and deployment using integrated telephony and PC lifecycle tools delivers tremendous business benefits including improved service levels, reduced risk, and enhanced infrastructure availability.

Conclusion

IT is challenged to meet rising business expectations while managing increasing infrastructure complexity at the lowest cost possible. Generic IT processes are no longer effective. Combining PC lifecycle and service management solutions enables IT to produce the process innovation required to efficiently meet rising business expectations – without breaking the bank.

About FrontRange Solutions

FrontRange Solutions develops award-winning software and solutions used by more than 130,000 companies and over 1.2 million users worldwide. FrontRange solutions help manage a wide variety of business relationships and help provide exceptional service. The FrontRange family of products is designed specifically for distributed and mid-to-enterprise organizations. They include:

IT Service Management with FrontRange™ ITSM and HEAT® for complete service management.

PC Lifecycle Management with Enteo® for the ability to optimize the full lifecycle of a company's assets.

Communication Management with FrontRange™ Voice for reduced telephony costs and increased agent productivity, streamlined customer service, and communications.

GoldMine® CRM solutions for business relationship management, team-based contact management, and sales force automation solutions.

Legal Information

Copyright (c) 2008 FrontRange Solutions USA Inc. All Rights Reserved.

GoldMine, HEAT and other FrontRange Solutions products, brands and trademarks are property of FrontRange Solutions USA Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and/or other countries. Other products, brands and trademarks and trademarks are property of their respective owners/companies.

USE OF THE SOFTWARE DESCRIBED IN THIS PAPER AND ITS RELATED USER DOCUMENTATION IS SUBJECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE APPLICABLE END-USER LICENSE AGREEMENT (EULA).

The information contained in this document is provided "as is" without warranty of any kind. To the maximum extent permitted by applicable law, FrontRange disclaims all warranties, either express or implied, including warranties for quality, accuracy, merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose, title and non-infringement; and in no event shall FrontRange or its suppliers be liable for any damages whatsoever including direct, indirect, incidental, consequential, loss of profits or data or special damages, even if advised of the possibility of such damages.

