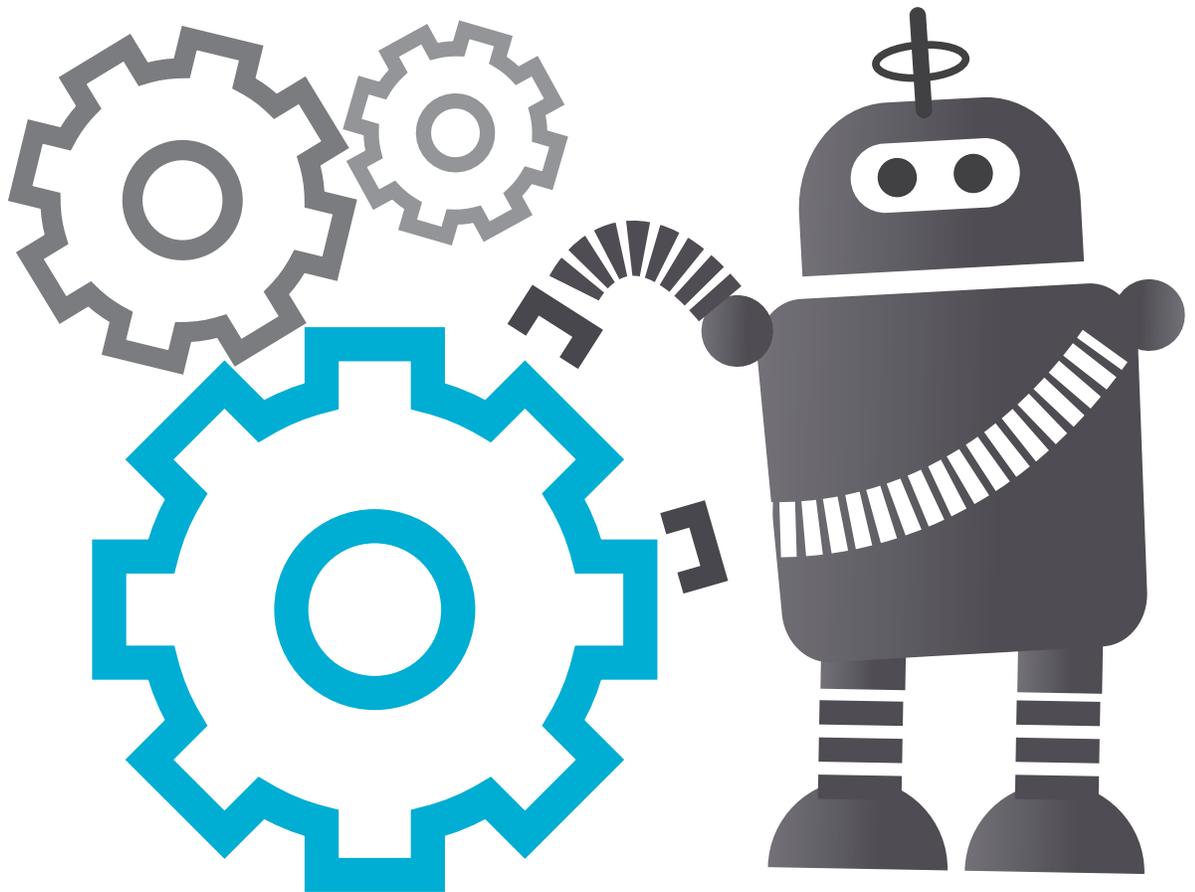# Best Practices: Maximizing Efficiency Through Service Automation

An ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES® (EMA™) White Paper
Prepared for HEAT Software

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EMA™

IT & DATA MANAGEMENT RESEARCH,
INDUSTRY ANALYSIS & CONSULTING

Introduction

Survival in today's dynamic marketplaces is dependent on the prompt and reliable delivery of IT services. The demands from both customers and employees for more simplified access to IT services are driving organizations to become more agile in how the services are delivered and to ensure they meet rapidly increasing requirements for security, compliance, and user convenience. Making matters worse, IT organizations are consistently pressured to reduce operational costs while meeting these increased demands. It is simply no longer practical for enterprise IT organizations to rely on manual processes alone to meet these new challenges and evolving service delivery requirements. Enabling a business/service-centric IT strategy requires the effective adoption of service automation.

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Automation allows fewer support staff to perform more tasks with greater speed and efficiency. However, to be effective, automation must be comprehensive and integrated. Automated point solutions or independent scripts may resolve very specific problems, but typically cannot be easily customized to address unique and changing requirements. Even worse – these types of automation are rarely supported and may become unusable if key knowledge workers are lost. A much more pragmatic approach is to introduce an automation suite that is fully integrated to ensure the breadth of IT services is consistently delivered efficiently and effectively.

Best Practices for Maximizing Efficiency

When talking about optimizing enterprise IT, it is essential to take a service-centric approach. Business units ultimately do not care about infrastructure technology. They want the same convenient and easy-to-use application interfaces they have come to expect from their personal consumer devices (i.e., mobile app stores, simple user portals, etc.) to be adapted for enterprise use. A lack of automation within a complex environment is the natural enemy of efficient IT service delivery. Figure 1 confirms this assumption by showing that "OPEX reduction," "staff productivity" and the "reduction of human errors" – all efficiency metrics – are the top business drivers of automation adoption.[1]
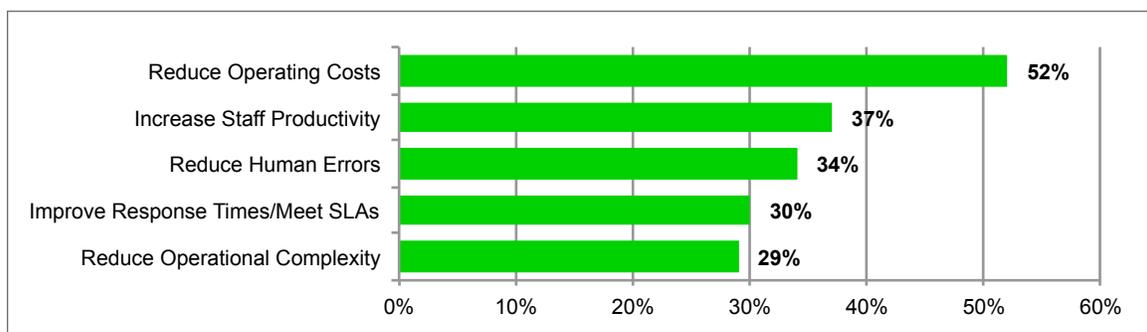

Figure 1 – Top business drivers for service automation

In order to enable the IT organizations to transform into a true broker of services, it is essential for them to look at automating those tasks that have typically required manual intervention such as provisioning, management and issue remediation. While human intervention may still be required, the automation of the bulk of these workflows introduces consistency, speed and general efficiency into the data center. In many cases automation solutions are highly specialized on a certain area of enterprise

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[1] EMA Research Report: *Data Center Automation in the Age of Cloud*:
http://www.enterprisemanagement.com/research/asset.php/2585/Data-Center-Automation-in-the-Age-of-Cloud

IT (e.g., application automation, storage automation, server automation) and not accessible by other knowledgeable staff. This results in automation silos, where only a small part of the organization can benefit from the powerful capabilities of automation software. Harnessing these often pre-existing automation capabilities for the entire organization typically results in a tremendously positive effect on IT service delivery and overall business efficiency.

Plan of Action

To maximize efficiency, there are numerous challenges that have to be addressed:

1. Cultural transformation: There has traditionally been a divide between business units and IT operations, where the latter group does not understand the business impact of its actions, while the former is frustrated about the lack of responsiveness, accuracy and efficiency when it comes to corporate IT services. Manual processes for managing IT are typically based on guesswork and technical requirements that do not directly address business needs. IT operations must understand that management of storage, network and servers, as well as operating systems, middleware and applications all serve specific business tasks and processes, such as handling HR service requests (e.g. onboarding) or the management of Electronic Medical Records (EMR). The introduction of effective automation assists with this cultural transformation by creating standardized processes and simplified practices that allow infrastructure investment decisions, IT staff allocations, and issue resolution efforts be targeted in an optimal manner.

> The introduction of effective automation assists with... cultural transformation by creating standardized processes and simplified practices.

2. Elimination of technology silos: A lack of integration and communication between IT systems –software and hardware – often constitutes the core reason for inefficient IT service provisioning. Over the years, proprietary network, storage and server hardware has piled up high within the corporate data center, with numerous groups of subject matter experts responsible for each of these individual technologies. Business processes spanning multiple of these siloes are fragile and difficult to monitor. Root cause analysis is often not guided by business priorities, leading to longer than necessary remediation times. To bridge the gap across these siloed organizations, automation solutions must be integrated across management disciplines. When independent organizations have access to a consistent set of IT information, they attain a better understanding of how conditions and planned changes will impact other teams and the business as a whole.

3. Mobility: Business users are used to being able to monitor, provision, manage and retire their personal IT services – Google, Facebook, Dropbox, Evernote, Amazon etc. – via smartphone and tablet. Therefore, they expect the same type of access from their enterprise applications, data and services. To efficiently provision this type of access, all of these business resources, applications and services have to be pre-packaged and centrally delivered in an automated manner. To ensure security and compliance, mobile access from personal devices must be segmented into a personal and a business area.

> The automation engine must be flexible enough to efficiently facilitate complex workflows consisting of numerous automated, semi-automated and manual tasks. Only in the presence of a robust engine that achieves this goal, can the IT department efficiently support entire business processes.

4. Workflows and business processes: Corporate IT must offer automation workflows that support the individual activities constituting a business process. Within this context, it is essential to

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understand that certain decisions and tasks require human interaction. The automation engine must be flexible enough to efficiently facilitate complex workflows consisting of numerous automated, semi-automated and manual tasks. Only in the presence of a robust engine that achieves this goal, can the IT department efficiently support entire business processes.

5. End user empowerment/self service: Business units need to be able to select the services they require from a comprehensive service catalog. Approval and automation workflows ensure compliance, consistency and efficiency. This goes beyond IT and into business services such as staff onboarding, equipment acquisition, vacation requests, etc. IT will only be able to transform business tasks to make them optimally efficient if business staff can access the corporate self-service portal.

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6. Governance: Enforcing central governance across private and public cloud resources is key for successful IT service optimization. The business context determines what type and quality of IT service a specific user can request and where a specific IT service is located geographically. All the end user has to know is that compliance, security and cost efficiency are automatically enforced. Users do not need to get involved in the technical aspects of service provisioning. IT operations worries about these "details" when assembling policies and packaging applications. Business units should not be concerned about which hypervisor, SAN, server type or network infrastructure a service runs on. For the IT department the challenge lies in striking the optimal balance between providing business units with the choice and flexibility they demand to optimally complete their tasks and standardizing the offered services to enforce security and policy compliance.

EMA Perspective

When talking about optimizing enterprise IT, it is essential to take a service-centric approach. Business units ultimately do not care about infrastructure technology. They want convenient and easy-to-use solutions that can only be enabled with introduction of service automation.

Enterprise IT today is all about managing and governing massively heterogeneous IT environments, consisting of internal and external hardware and software resources, in a business centric manner. Everything-as-a-Service (XaaS) is the end goal, where entire business processes are offered as pre-packaged services that are configured based on their respective business context. While the journey to XaaS may appear daunting, the shift to a service-centric enterprise IT paradigm can be achieved with the systematic introduction of integrated and effective automated processes.

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About HEAT Software

HEAT Software is a leading provider of Hybrid Service Management and Unified Endpoint Management software solutions for organizations of all sizes. With its suite of applications, HEAT Software is the only company in the world that provides, from a single platform, Service Management and Unified Endpoint Management software on-premise and in the cloud. HEAT manages millions of service interactions and millions of endpoints every day for thousands of leading organizations across IT, HR, Facilities, Finance, Customer Service and other enterprise functions. Its customers deliver world-class service while maximizing operational efficiencies with reduced cost and complexity. HEAT Software is headquartered in Milpitas, Calif. For more information, visit www.HEATSoftware.com.

Additional Reading…

For more information on Service Automation, please see EMA's other white papers in the series:

- *Delivering Effective Service Automation through Cloud Technologies*
- *Effective Change Management: Maximizing IT Reliability Through Service Automation*
- *Empower Your Mobile Workforce: Adopting Service Automation to Achieve Unified Endpoint Management*

About Enterprise Management Associates, Inc.

Founded in 1996, Enterprise Management Associates (EMA) is a leading industry analyst firm that provides deep insight across the full spectrum of IT and data management technologies. EMA analysts leverage a unique combination of practical experience, insight into industry best practices, and in-depth knowledge of current and planned vendor solutions to help EMA's clients achieve their goals. Learn more about EMA research, analysis, and consulting services for enterprise line of business users, IT professionals and IT vendors at www.enterprisemanagement.com or blogs.enterprisemanagement.com. You can also follow EMA on Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn.

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