BSP
monitor · report · manage

Beyond Business Service Management: To Monitor, Report, and Manage

A WHITE PAPER

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> *"74% of problems are reported by the end users through the service desk, not detected by infrastructure management"*
>
> *Managing IT From The End User Perspective In 2006,*
> Forrester Research, Inc., February 2007

For more than a decade, true Business Service Management (BSM) has been a goal for businesses, as well as a promise from potential providers. In reality, a good BSM plan goes beyond the standards of typical IT management; it fuses the goals of IT and business. This white paper introduces the use of a Business Service Platform (BSP) as the foundation of an effective BSM solution. By employing a BSP solution, the entire business uses tools that monitor, report, and manage business services. In addition, the overall strategy includes a powerful relationship mapping data repository as the foundation of a robust and versatile cross-platform configuration management database (CMDB). Ultimately, a BSP will provide real-time monitoring of business service health and status.

Essentially, IT is a set of tools designed to help organizations meet their corporate objectives and business goals. Regardless of the existing technology or applications, it is critical that services provide accurate information immediately.

In a perfect world, IT offers streamlined solutions for complex management issues by leveraging the power of technology to process large amounts of data, and to transform that data into meaningful information. In common practice, however, this is not always the case. In many real-world situations, IT can actually pose new challenges for businesses. IT may slow a business's response time substantially, especially in environments that combine multiple, disparate systems under one major business activity.

That said, how could IT be better positioned to provide this quick response time? How can IT and business goals be properly aligned? During the late 1980s and early 1990s, BSM was introduced as a strategy to align IT and business goals once and for all by helping management know how the performance and availability of IT resources affected the mechanisms that power business.

While this strategy promises a lot, it is often difficult to determine how well BSM is working, or how well it might work. To do so, IT executives must evaluate how quickly they are able to understand and locate the root causes of any problem. To do this, a BSM strategy should provide effective monitoring, reporting, and managing for multiple, disparate systems.

A BSM implementation that consistently incorporates these three key components moves beyond a typical model and is, effectively, a Business Service Platform (BSP) solution, offering an actual platform. It is from this platform that management can gain full control of the response time of IT functions through monitoring, reporting, and managing mechanisms. To successfully implement a BSP solution, the overall plan should include a powerful relationship mapping data repository as the foundation of a robust and versatile, cross-platform CMDB. In addition, a BSP should provide real-time health and status monitoring of business services.

Monitoring Challenges

Disparate Systems

Separate, disconnected systems typically result in IT/business goal disconnects, generating real-life business problems from IT issues. Problems may arise, but they are not effectively detected, diagnosed, or remedied by the IT management tools in place. In these cases, operators can miss indicators of possible service trouble by focusing only on one element of a disjointed system. Disparate systems, confusingly distributed information, or disjointed applications can also cause users to inaccurately identify the true root cause of an issue, leading to more inefficiency and less customer satisfaction.

When multiple systems are interconnected and must work together to achieve business goals, IT executives must have the ability to continuously and systematically monitor them as a whole system. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. In many situations IT/business disconnects can result in numerous issues going unnoticed, causing costly delays, missed opportunities, and even system failures. An effective BSM plan should always include an effective cross-platform monitoring system.

Increasing Complexity

Dynamic access to the company network has never been more necessary for the overall health and performance of the business. If an outside sales force or outsourced technical support staff are disconnected from the customer relationship management (CRM) application, that business could be losing thousands of dollars every second. In most businesses, onsite users are constantly accessing the network. Add the number of people accessing an external virtual private network (VPN), and it is easy to see how increased network traffic and bandwidth can also cause IT headaches.

With all of this activity – much of it mission-critical to the business – the probability of service desk issues can explode very quickly. Businesses should be able to monitor increasingly complicated, growing systems when attempting to deal with issues that impact services. A good BSM plan should have the capacity to monitor very large amounts of information. It should then also have the capacity to take that data and make it meaningful for management so that issues can be effectively predicted, prevented, or dispatched when they arise.

Reporting Challenges

Real-Time Status Reporting

For reports to be useful, they must be timely. For most IT functions this means real-time status reporting is vital to the overall health of the IT environment. Information, however, flows in real-time and is just the first step in clear communication of the systems' health. This challenge also demands that any good BSP model should include a flexible rules engine that can be modified from a single console. When the real-time information is processed with appropriate rules, truly preemptive reporting takes place, enabling problems to be eliminated before the end-user ever knows about them. This is an important and sometimes overlooked factor to be considered when evaluating BSP options.

Single View at Your Desk

Every IT professional wants consolidated views of their systems' status and health right at their fingertips. For many BSM solutions, dashboards have become the standard in this kind of reporting. These dashboards offer consolidated views of certain aspects of the IT environment so that a manager or CIO can quickly see a map of their IT systems' health. However, unless these dashboards are backed up with the ability for businesses to drill-down to root causes of issues or show the paths of what might be a potential problem, they have very little practical use, and are not a platform for management. In the end, a dashboard is only as good as the information behind it. The quality of this information depends on how the BSM model manages it.

Management Challenges

Configuration Management Database (CMDB): Fact or Fiction?

Accurate, informative dashboard views across a variety of disparate environments and systems can only be made available through a careful consolidation of originally disparate data. This consolidation can be enabled by a single repository (i.e., an information catalog or holding area) for all elements in the IT environment. From an IT management perspective, these elements should reside in a federated database, commonly referred to as a CMDB. This database is the key that allows your business to unlock and decipher information from many sources, helping to convert it into useful information for IT management.

Unfortunately, a real, functioning CMDB can be difficult to find. Part of the problem with today's tools is the lack of functional and data-level integration between modules. This is in spite of the fact that many vendors offer their own CMDB solutions to solve this very problem. With the CMDB market and technology still evolving, many businesses engaged in IT management have indicated they build their CMDB manually or do not have one at all.

The secret to having a high-quality, effective CMDB may lie in a business's choice of data repository and use of a consistent architecture for managing data. With the appropriate data relationships safely organized in a unified architecture, and hierarchical dynamics effectively stored in an industry-leading repository, the full benefits of a true CMDB can truly function. With a fully functioning CMDB, businesses can expedite problem identification and resolution, lower overall costs of business service fulfillment, and unite different business services via dynamic relationships.

With consistent data management architecture, optimum performance management can also become a part of a good BSP profile. Unified internal data architecture can link together monitoring functions from separate applications and IT infrastructure, running on separate machines. A good BSP model should have all of these separate performance and infrastructure monitoring tools combined into a simple, single, and meaningful view.

Today's businesses know the truth. All IT issues can be defined as business issues, and those business issues can be impacted by better IT management. The BSP model offers real solutions for businesses due to improved technology and better communication between business leaders and IT professionals. In the end, of course, the goals of any BSP approach to IT management should be increasing the speed, efficiency, and quality of the end-user or customer experience. Today, strategic use of IT resources can enable a business to better manage all of its functions. Any forward-looking business should explore the potential of a properly implemented BSP program within their organization.

Introducing ASG's Business Service Platform™ (BSP™)

ASG's Business Service Platform™ (BSP™) solution addresses all of the major challenges of BSM. ASG's BSP is an expandable solution following a plug-and-play architecture,

so your current business issues and future problems are resolved before you even know they happened.

Integration of Disparate Systems

ASG's BSP enables substantial integration by consolidating system information from distributed applications and systems, databases, end-user performance tools, infrastructure management tools, and service level agreements. This integration of disparate systems is rare in the industry. The gaps in integration are what cause end-user frustration and potential system downtime. By implementing ASG's BSP, end-user frustration and potential system downtime are virtually eliminated.

Single View at Your Desk

ASG's BSP provides simple, out-of-the box, consolidated views of your systems' status and health. Utilizing the included Sure Start implementation service, our staff will work with you to configure dashboards to meet your system monitoring needs. We also can work with you to develop rules for various scenarios and issues.

For example, service models in ASG's BSP may detect an impaired router is affecting a critical business service. A problem ticket may be opened in a service desk application while a visual status indication is displayed. These alerts are reported and shown in a clear concise view customized to the individual; bridging the communication gap that causes users to call the service desk.

Real-Time Status Reporting

Simply put, ASG's BSP establishes mapping relationships between multiple sources, and indicators and reports them in real-time. This may not seem unique until realizing the number of resources that ASG's BSP links and the dynamically managed relationships. ASG's BSP brings business service status and health, summarized and delivered on a single view that allows you to drill down to determine potential problems. This real-time, configurable repository is only available with ASG's BSP.

CMDB

The CMDB of ASG's BSP is powered by the industry-leading repository Rochade®. Without the relationships and hierarchical dynamics that only a true CMDB can provide, user frustration can mount from different issues, including slow response time, service failure, and downtime. ASG's BSP, with its Rochade-powered CMDB, will expedite problem identification and resolution, lower overall costs of business service fulfillment, and unite different business service via dynamic relationships.

Performance

Optimum performance management is assured with the ASG-Unified Management Architecture™ (UMA™) technology of ASG's BSP. This architecture allows you to link together monitoring functions from separate applications and IT infrastructure running on separate machines. ASG's true competitive edge comes from the benefit of having all the separate performance and infrastructure monitoring tools combined into a simple single view.

ASG's BSP is founded on the ability to track the performance of your IT, as well as the performance of your systems and business services, in real time.

ASG's BSP allows you to deliver true business value by identifying, correlating, and aligning the relationship between IT investments and overall business performance. ASG's BSP allows you to effectively monitor the status of, report on the health of, and manage IT so you can, in turn, improve service to your customers.

Business Service Platform
Solutions by ASG

About BSP ASG's Business Service Platform (BSP) allows you to deliver true business value by identifying, correlating, and aligning the relationship between IT investments and overall business performance. ASG's BSP allows you to effectively monitor the status of, report on the health of, and manage IT so you can, in turn, improve service to your customers. ASG's BSP allows you to deliver the business value of current commitments, freeing you to focus on the future and the growth of your organization.

About ASG | www.asg.com Since 1986, ASG has been using cooperative business practices and more than 200 leading software solutions to help companies around the world overcome everyday business challenges. ASG is headquartered in Naples, Florida, with offices serving the Americas, Europe, Middle East, Africa, and Asia Pacific.

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