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IT Service Optimization: Reaching New Heights

White Paper

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TeamQuest specializes in IT Service Optimization

Survey Says Chaos Reigns

A global survey of more than 300 IT executives, directors and managers revealed that the majority of IT organizations (53%) rank in the chaotic level of IT Service Optimization maturity.

That means these organizations lack a consistent process to manage and improve the quality and efficiency of their services and will continue firefighting performance and capacity issues as they arise. This puts them at a significant competitive disadvantage and severely limits their ability to respond to changing business demands.

On average, IT managers say their department has to deal with eight unexpected IT issues each week and involve seven staff members for each incident. Individuals average nearly 3 hours and 30 minutes resolving these issues.

Let's contrast the differences between the low-end and high-end optimization maturity scores.

Remember the "unexpected issue" statistic? IT organizations that rank in the lower end of the maturity spectrum will add another person (9) to tackle an additional issue (9) each week and work an additional 30 minutes per person to resolve each issue. This is the reality for 53% of IT organizations.

Fewer than one in four IT managers rate their organization's current IT optimization processes as "most mature," or being able to predict the timing and consequences of a forecasted scenario to find the optimal action to resolve it. More than one in ten (11%) admit they have a fragmented view of what's going on in their environment.

Most IT optimization processes are not as mature as they could be. A huge majority of IT managers say the success of a data center is reliant on proper performance analysis and IT optimization. However, most (60%) do not believe their organization is ahead of the curve when it comes to IT optimization and performance analysis.

Accurately predicting how systems and services will perform in the real world are current game changers due to the growth and reliance upon analytics to improve business performance. Survey respondents on the higher end of the maturity spectrum say they make predictions about future demand based on the historical performance of their IT services (68%) which is a good sign for organizations moving up the maturity model.

If you want to effectively optimize your services, you must have quality data and repeatable processes that make the most of meaningful analytics and skilled staff. As stated by Gartner analyst Ian Head, take one important first step and "always begin with a maturity assessment."

Analytics, which is the transformation of raw data into contextualized and actionable information that can guide business decisions, is a hot topic among CIOs. Today's organizations are flooded with mountains of data. Unfortunately, many organizations struggle to pull the data together for meaningful analysis.

With every situation being unique, CIOs and other IT professionals can take specific steps toward gaining a more holistic view of enterprise performance and capacity, having a bigger impact on business success, and becoming one of the most efficient and impressive IT organizations in the world.

Combine your analytical efforts with refined processes and skills within your organization, But take one important first step: Always begin with a maturity assessment.

For more information, click to see
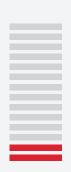**TeamQuest Global IT Survey 2014**.

Optimization Means Different Things To Different IT Organizations

Depending on your current state, competitive situation, existing business processes, etc., you may have a slightly different focus.

Increased Efficiency

Offering the required performance and quality for your services using a minimum of resources.

Reduced Risk

An ability to react to sudden changes as well as proactively predicting changes ahead of time in order to minimize the potential negative impact on service quality.

Improved Agility

Designing your operation so that you can quickly and cost effectively modify services based on changing requirements.

An optimization initiative is typically triggered by one of the drivers listed above and the focus is dictated by your overall business objectives. But singlehandedly focusing on one objective may negatively impact your capabilities in the other areas and by that reduce the overall service quality and offer limited or no real value. In order to achieve concurrent improvements in all areas, you need to balance your efforts. Our *Service Optimization Maturity Model* will help you do that.

The model suggests actions that will gradually refine your optimization efforts. It outlines five levels of operational maturity and will highlight what processes, skills and technologies that are required for each level. It's a step by step approach where each level continues to build on the capabilities introduced on the levels preceding it.

An approach built on gradual improvement, following the recommendations outlined in the model will make sure that the implemented solution delivers real, sustainable value. For a more detailed description of the different maturity levels, click to read **A Guide to IT Service Optimization Maturity.**

LEVEL 1
CHAOTIC

At the lowest level of maturity it's the lack of conscious effort that stands out. Positive effects of optimization are more by luck than by purpose.

LEVEL 2
REACTIVE

Improved ability to properly react to events combined with an ambition to automate the activities will lead to increased service quality - but limited efficiency gains.

LEVEL 3
PROACTIVE

A focus on understanding patterns of activity and forecasting them will build your confidence and allow you to increase the utilization of components, leading to increased overall efficiency.

LEVEL 4
SERVICE

Accurate predictions will allow you to optimize your investments and stay close to the true capacity need of your services.

LEVEL 5
VALUE

Decision support based on sophisticated predictions and fully aligned with prime business objectives will offer maximum value to the business.

Using IT Analytics to Achieve Better Business Performance

With ever-increasing IT complexity, many businesses are turning to IT analytics to optimize performance and cost and meet the demanding levels of service required by the business. It's best to consider a few of the ideas below to achieve better business performance for your environment.

Align with business objectives

The business wants to understand the value it's getting for the money. Define overall financial priorities to help make the business case for investing in IT analytics. Understand that the relationship between IT and the business has never been more intertwined. IT can shed light on how decisions (past, present, and future) can impact the business.

Demonstrate value...quickly

IT analytics tools can help the business make better, more informed decisions. Users want quick, actionable information, according to Ovum analyst Roy Illsley. The million dollar question: What are you trying to solve?

When you're ready to answer that question, you can define a clear course of action.

Common language is required

IT and business leaders must speak the same language in order to understand each other. IT must talk and report in business terms, like cost per transaction or lost revenue per second of downtime. Talking in terms of CPU utilization or I/O problems is no longer acceptable for IT organizations that want to remain relevant and participate in business-level conversations.

Automation is key

Automating mundane, repetitive tasks gives the IT staff time to focus on innovation and issues that require specialized skills. This can be a turning point for the CIO to take on more of a business role and be regarded as a critical voice at the table, rather than a cog in the wheel.

Choose the right analytic tool

Understand what you need from your analytics tool. Don't buy into the one-size-fits-all discussion.

Choose an analytics package that supports what is needed. According to Quocirca analyst Clive Longbottom, taking different approaches to try to solve different needs can lead to compromises and problems with tools referencing different datasets, which creates new issues.

Look at what IT analytics tools can do for your organization. Learn to walk before you run. Look at services, cost and user perception, says Illsley. Start with a discrete set of objectives and build to a point you are comfortable.

Get the right data

Data collection and event monitoring are part of the IT analytics foundation that ensures your infrastructure is working at maximum efficiency.

IT analytics can enable CIOs to introduce new IT services with confidence, ensuring they lead to cost-effective innovation and growth.

The emphasis on data collection means businesses need tools that can look for the "known unknowns" as well as the "unknown unknowns" to help inform business decisions.

Outside of the aforementioned items, IT must also maximize energy efficiency, ensure data quality and trust, and take a holistic approach to achieve better business performance using IT analytics. Traditionally, successful organizations use mature processes to optimize their environment.

Many organizations will take advantage of technologies such as cloud, and IT analytics can help smooth the journey. Ultimately, you want continuous, scalable and automated service optimization that delivers agility and impressive business performance via the most cost-efficient IT environment possible. And IT analytics can enable CIOs to introduce new IT services with confidence, ensuring they lead to cost-effective innovation and growth.

For more information, click to read **IT Analytics: The Key To Maximizing Business Performance.**

About The Author

Per Bauer leads the TeamQuest Global Services team, supporting customers worldwide with training, implementation, analysis, management and strategic services that address their planning and delivery needs. Bauer also leads the presales technical support team in the EMEA division, ensuring that sales account managers and customers have technical product advice and support during sales discussions.

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