



Business Service Management - The thin line between an asset and a liability

A Management White Paper

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By acting on the critical success factors of others, it is possible to mitigate the risk of business service management project failure and increase the chance of success.

What is BSM?

The challenge to be innovative in business and to ensure the competitive edge necessary to succeed, results in greater complexity in the IT enterprise infrastructure to be managed. Exacerbated by a business need to drive down costs, whilst increasing both availability and quality of service, currently deployed technician consoles provide only a technical view.

BSM is the operational end-to-end view of the business critical processes integrating asset and operational information. The challenge is to align IT to the business needs, in short translating IT operations from an engineering element base to a business end-to-end service using a common language. This is not based on technology, but embraces business risk and impact, event management, root cause analysis, Service Level Agreement compliance and historical reporting.

To achieve this, tools must document and correlate IT components to business services, delivering process through best practices such as ITIL. It also provides a qualitative and quantitative framework for Business Continuity Management (BCM) that extends beyond the boundaries of IT and into the business itself. The ability to provide this successfully depends on the strength of the relationship between the business and the IT services.

A number of manufacturers have BSM frameworks in either deliverable or concept forms. All will fail to deliver a significant return on the investment if the correct strategy is not deployed from day one; get it right and the results will be phenomenal.

This white paper is product independent, though not all products in the BSM market place can deliver all the functionality discussed below and always rely on information feeds from several sources often already delivering to the engineering console.

Why BSM?

BSM tools, correctly deployed, provide the following benefits:

- Improved IT alignment to the business
 - Show business users and executives that state of their service, providing the ability to visualise and quantify in a common language the impact of technology faults on End-to-End business process. This provides IT operations a clear understanding of the business impact of a component failure or quality of service so it can better prioritise operational tasks. Event correlation and root cause analysis form an intrinsic element of this key decision making process.
- Higher Availability and Improved Performance
 - To reduce back to service time as IT operations focuses on solving the correct, high-priority, business-relevant issues. BSM has the capability to provide predictive reporting, facilitating pre-emptive remedial action.
- ITIL approach to Change Management
 - Change Management too is given a service perspective as a single technology element might be intrinsic in many services, adding to complexity of the risk and impact analysis
- Reduce Operational Costs
 - Operational efficiency by using a single console for viewing the status of all business services, regardless of the collection toolkit, integrating with the IT infrastructure displays.

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- Service Assurance
 - Customisable business service views enable different business groups to view their service, thus giving the line of business a better understanding of how the IT infrastructure is performing.
- Business Continuity Management
 - Providing the process framework based on ITIL that extends beyond the boundaries of IT and into the business itself, essential for Business Continuance.
- Business Oriented Reporting
 - Ability to provide historical and real-time customer aligned reporting from an end-to-end business service perspective.

The pitfalls of a BSM deployment

One of the critical factors of a successful BSM deployment is the strength of the relationship that exists between the business units and the IT services, often referred to as aligning IT to the business.

BSM identifies key business processes, which comprise services delivered to the business units. The deployment of BSM enables the easy identification of metrics to track the performance of these key business processes against pre-defined service level agreements. Without the co-operation of both parties working closely together, the key business processes will not be identified.

Whilst large enterprises have embraced BSM a significant number of deployments have become protracted or even failed as a result of inadequate planning. The process of Business Continuity Management is essential, organisations that have defined their SLAs for each service; thereby giving business value and priority to each, embracing process practices like ITIL, have a significant head start.

Simultaneously undertaking the analysis of the business processes and deploying the solution will rarely lead to success; more likely, disillusionment will set in and the project will falter. Experience has shown that with a mature and documented service and management process, deployment can be collapsed from one to two months per service, to a few days.

Tackling a BSM project across a whole enterprise can become an unmanageable proposition and the all-important co-operation from colleagues can be lost as it is seen as unachievable and a waste of time. Far better to target smaller units and build on this success as the project expands, the all-important 'buy-in' of colleagues will happen naturally.

What characterises successful BSM projects?

Critical success factors cited by BSM customers to shorten the implementation period and improve chances for success include:

- Businesses with an up-to-date Business Continuity Plan and a financial Business Impact Analysis are able to utilise this information when building the structure of the service models with business defined SLA's and Impact weightings.
- Implementation time can be reduced with organisations that have well defined and well practised procedures that relate to ITIL Best Practices, such as Service Management, Change Management and Availability Management.
 - A documented change management process that is required to keep BSM views up to date over time. The processes espoused in ITIL can help deliver this.
 - It is advantageous to fully integrate BSM into the Service Management.
- Commitment from all levels within the business with strong communication between IT and each business unit.

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- Businesses that already have clearly identified inventory information for hardware and software across the enterprise allows for simple translation into the service models.
- Enterprise event management processes, using correlation and filtering reduce events to only the most critical.

Whilst BSM is hugely beneficial to IT operationally allowing the prioritising of actions and being proactive from a holistic perspective, the greater benefit is to business management, providing quantitative and qualitative information to base strategic business decisions upon.

It can be shown that with the correct preparation, services can be modelled and delivered through a BSM solution in under a week each. In a relatively short time the business critical services will deliver against defined criteria. BSM will enable quicker response to events that affect critical business systems, thus shortening the mean time to repair.

Considerations for BSM after deployment

The complexity of the deployment can be on going. Change management in IT infrastructure is essential to deliver the enhancements demanded by the business. Mapping this into BSM must be automated. A change in a service model must be reflected in all associated views; asset management must populate configuration items, root cause analysis deliver without re-configuration.

One of the key business drivers for BSM is efficiency of IT personnel, in common with some Service Assurance tools; BSM has the ability to deliver, but consume even more. Therefore, part of the initial strategy must be how to maintain the quality and integrity of the BSM solution in a changing IT infrastructure, to embrace the new services and keep pace with the business objectives.

Successful BSM customers have achieved their business objectives, reduced operational and capital expenditure, whilst increasing the quality of service and availability.

T360

T360 is an innovative solutions provider that assists organisations to transition IT from being a necessary component to a strategic collaborator within the business.

'Aligning IT to the business is a Process not a Product'

Based upon best of breed ITIL solutions, T360 enable customers to achieve an end to end visualisation of their business services delivered by IT through the areas of:-

- Business Service Management
- Business Activity Monitoring
- Customer Experience Management

T360's philosophy is simple; we listen, understand and deliver. Our customers trust us because we provide innovation, expertise and commitment.

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