Migrating to BMC TrueSight as a Holistic Answer to Application Service Delivery: A Case Study

Executive Introduction

In Q4 of 2014, BMC introduced a sweeping direction to integrate performance, availability, and capacity planning under its TrueSight brand. These capabilities included event and impact management, performance management across the application infrastructure, user experience management, capacity optimization, and middleware management—as well as support for cloud and IT data analytics.

BMC's unifying approach to managing and optimizing application business services across complex infrastructures is highlighted in the following case study.

> In Q4 of 2014, BMC introduced a sweeping direction to integrate performance, availability, and capacity planning under its TrueSight brand.

Interview with an Architect for an MSP Specializing in Customer Support

The following interview provides real-world insight into how and why a migration to BMC's TrueSight Operations Management can be "a natural and meaningful next step" for IT organizations seeking a more unified approach to optimizing application service delivery.

Can you provide some background on the business your IT organization supports?

We provide a highly secure and redundant cloud-based service to address customer support requirements, so availability is very important for us. We've also expanded our offerings to include support for a wider variety of interactions, such as text, chat, and fax, as well as voice. As an extension of customer-support-related capabilities, we can document interactions and so provide insights into operational efficiencies and workforce optimization in terms of staff proficiencies and effectiveness.

Instead of [customers] having to pick from a menu of discrete application choices, we can target each offering to address questions such as, "What type of functionality would you like?" and "How many locations would you want?" As a result of this integrated approach, upgrades and functional enhancements are generally transparent to our customers.

And our customers are busy. We estimate that as an aggregate our customers handle about four million calls a day.

What are your IT capabilities like?

We have four main data centers, two in the U.S. and two in Europe, with full redundancy in [all] cases so we can failover from one site to the other. We also have NOCs and call centers in different parts of the world, such as India and the Philippines.

We're primarily a technology company, so most of our employees have some IT role, especially if you include development and professional services. There's roughly a 60/40 split between development and operations as we have a substantial investment in R&D. We also have our own customer support team, so our own customers can submit any issues to us for remediation.

Can you say a little more about your role and your team?

I am an architect and part of operations. A lot of my focus is [on] the BMC toolset, although I work with some other solutions as well.

How are the BMC deployments going?

I've been with the company about eight months. When I came on board, we had Patrol and BMC ProactiveNet Performance Monitoring (BPPM). We also had Atrium Discovery and Dependency Mapping (ADDM)—which has been of great value in discovering and clarifying our application infrastructure and monitoring requirements. Recently we've upgraded our Patrol agents and KMs and plan to migrate to TrueSight Infrastructure Management.

> We both worked together in a prior enterprise where we learned the value of bringing BMC capacity and performance capabilities together.

We are also beginning to deploy BMC TrueSight Capacity Optimization. I work closely with another architect leading in capacity planning. In fact, we both worked together in a prior enterprise where we learned the value of bringing BMC capacity and performance capabilities together.

Finally, we have BMC Transaction Management Application Response Time (TMART) where we do some synthetic transaction analysis.

However, we are migrating to TrueSight Operations Management where we plan on using BMC's IT Data Analytics together with APM through TrueSight App Visibility Manager for a more integrated approach across performance management, user experience management, and capacity optimization. So far we see the migration as both a natural and relatively easy next step.

How do your BMC investments match up with your overall operations management directions?

Currently we've targeted three pillars, and BMC solutions stand at the center of two of them. The first is event management—where we're leading with TrueSight Infrastructure Management. We're currently optimizing our investments with what we call "boot camps" so that we can target infrastructure management requirements for key use cases and stakeholder needs. Enthusiasm continues to build for what TrueSight can do: bring unique stakeholder requirements in systems or databases together, cohesively, into a single pane of glass.

Capacity optimization is our second pillar. And here, once again, we're meeting with a range of different stakeholders, in this case across all of IT—whether system administrators, developers, network management, or service desk professionals. The goal is to prioritize what data and what metrics are most critical to our stakeholders, and for what use case, so we can enable a truly stakeholder-relevant, self-service model for our capacity analytics. Needless to say, this will bring values in both optimizing the infrastructure, but also in IT operational efficiencies, and the excitement is high. We're all looking forward to the moment when we can say, "This is what we want to look at, so I'll just push the magic button and generate the report."

In terms of current pillars, network management is the third—and today we're using Solar Winds. We are currently evaluating whether we will be best served by rearchitecting our current solution or migrating to a different one.

Looking ahead, application performance management is the next big thing, as we migrate to TrueSight Operations Management, which will include licenses for TrueSight App Visibility Manager. BMC's IT Data Analytics comes next, followed by the implementation of a CMDB that is populated by ADDM and the implementation of service modeling.

Can you say more about your interest in BMC IT Data Analytics?

Our focus on analytics is real. Today we have a personal user version of Splunk, and so the people on our team have some feel for what the capabilities of a tool like that might offer us. We are also excited about BMC's growing support for complete analytic packages for unique environments, such as Windows and WebLogic.

What benefits have you achieved to date using your BMC solutions?

Certainly we see a building enthusiasm for TrueSight Infrastructure Management as more and more stakeholders get involved with richer and more targeted event analysis. For instance, we had been often surprised when disk space became a resource issue, but now we don't seem to have that problem anymore. And we're doing more effective and complete file monitoring. We're well on the way to becoming more proactive so that we can anticipate a problem before we hear about it from our customers.

EMA Perspective

The IT industry is full of niche solutions that answer a whole array of technical and business challenges in optimizing the delivery of application services in mixed or hybrid environments. Unfortunately, many of these solutions raise more questions than they can answer—as they are designed to address specific questions on performance (and, much more rarely, on capacity) in isolation. In parallel, other platform vendors have offered a complex array of management application choices designed to cover the performance/availability waterfront. But many of these are poorly integrated and hard to deploy in pieces, let alone as a whole.

BMC's combined focus on breadth of functionality, simplification and ease of deployment is therefore a breath of fresh air much needed by an IT industry choking on fragmentation and complexity. This interview provides useful insights into one IT organization's commitment to evolve in scope as a "natural and relatively easy next step."

EMA is especially excited about BMC's forward progress in IT data analytics, as well as analytics in general in which event management, log and machine data can be brought together for more proactive insights in reducing mean time to repair and expanding mean time between failure. We are also pleased with BMC's solid track record in user experience management (as addressed by the original TrueSight solution) and its move to simplified deployments via Software-as-a-Service options. BMC's focus on the "digital enterprise"— IT services as a business enabler and even a business transformer—is also resonant with shifting role of IT toward a front-office business partner, as opposed to a back-office cost center shrouded in acronyms.

This isn't to say that BMC's proverbial "journey" is complete. For instance, its unique strengths in capacity analytics and capacity optimization still require dedicated skill sets and planning. But in general, the vendor shines above most of its competitors in realizing the need to combine complex, integrated functionality with ease of deployment and administration.

EMA looks forward to BMC TrueSight's continued evolution, as well as to its growing acceptance among IT adopters seeking more holistic values for optimizing their business services and minimizing application and business process disruptions.

> In general, the vendor shines above most of its competitors in realizing the need to combine complex, integrated functionality with ease of deployment and administration.

About EMA