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David Williams, Gartner, BTQ Magazine Oct 2006

GETTING ITIL DONE WITH IT PROCESS AUTOMATION

opalis

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Business Challenge

Better alignment of IT with business objectives, ensuring compliance, and improving operational efficiency are all driving demand for a more process-centric approach in IT management. To help meet these objectives, CIO's and IT executives alike are looking to best practice frameworks like ITIL. ITIL enables companies to identify, define, and communicate best practices throughout their organization; however it does not provide any method on how to implement processes.

ITIL process such as incident, problem, change, configuration and release management span multiple systems. Today however, many organizations operate in department and application silos and the lack of orchestration and integration between silos inhibits a process approach. This leaves a significant amount of work to be done manually, resulting in risk of error, latency, inconsistency, and lack of visibility and reporting. From a budget perspective, manual intervention has significant financial impact – spending IT dollars on managing existing environments leaves very little investment for enhancing or adding new services. In order to automate these processes and drive real value for the business, Run Book Automation Software is necessary.
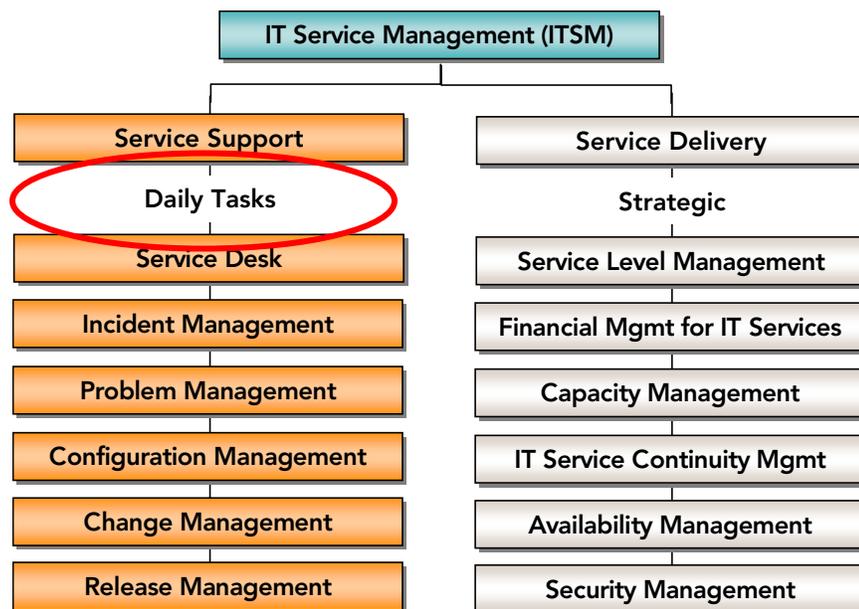
The Solution

Run Book Automation is defined as the ability to design, build, orchestrate, manage and report on workflows that support IT operations process. A run book process can cross all management disciplines and interact with all types of infrastructure elements (hardware and software). By defining and automating the end-to-end IT processes that orchestrate and integrate your existing infrastructure components, companies can meet business demands in a rapidly changing environment with greater agility and flexibility.

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STARTING WITH ITIL SERVICE SUPPORT PROCESSES

One key area within ITIL which promises to deliver greater alignment between IT and the business is Service Management (ITSM). Within Service Management, there are two areas, Service Delivery (strategic planning) and Service Support (daily tasks). This paper will focus on the ITSM Service Support area, relating the definition of best practices for managing the daily processes to the effective deployment of Incident, Problem, Configuration, Change and Release management via Opalis software solutions.

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                    IT Service Management (ITSM)

        Service Support                   Service Delivery
         (Daily Tasks)                       Strategic

         Service Desk                  Service Level Management

      Incident Management           Financial Mgmt for IT Services

      Problem Management                Capacity Management

    Configuration Management         IT Service Continuity Mgmt

       Change Management              Availability Management

       Release Management             Security Management
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Incident Management (fault/problem remediation) is responsible for restoring service quickly, with minimal impact on business operations.

Problem Management (root-cause analysis) discovers the underlying causes of incidents and identifies potential issues before they adversely affect users.

Configuration Management underlies all processes, its goal is to identify and define Configuration Items (CIs), and ensure the accuracy and completeness of the CMDB.

Change Management ensures that changes will have minimal negative impact. Detailed analyses of risk, resource requirements, business continuity and impact are required.

Release Management ensures consistency throughout rollout and version control of hardware and software and ensures accuracy of the CMDB.

OPALIS RUN BOOK AUTOMATION SOFTWARE

With Opalis Run Book Automation Solutions, you can automate cross-silo processes for incident, problem, change, configuration and release management to quickly realize the benefits of IT process automation: greater IT efficiency, improved service levels, increased productivity, and compliance.

Customer Benefits

- Rapid return on investment while significantly improving business processes and IT service levels

- Minimize support costs and reduce time to repair by defining a visual end-to-end processes that orchestrate and automate the systems involved in incident remediation

- Reduce service interruption risk and provide a holistic view of service impact by proactively automating service mgmt processes including maintenance tasks, application support tasks and problem remediation

- Define and control change/config mgmt processes in a single environment with the agility and flexibility to update processes and modify policies as business needs change

- Reduce cost, complexity, risk and latency associated with manual management of physical and virtual environments by automating repeatable IT activities

- Enforce internal compliance by automating processes into standardized, repeatable and secure best practices

Run Book Automation Features

End-to-End Process Orchestration
The visual mechanism to design, build, monitor and report on the process.

Opalis lets you automate the end-to-end IT process. The self-documenting workflow provides full visibility into each step and all the systems involved. Behind each workflow object is a configuration dialog, not code or scripts, which provides a quick and easy way to create, deploy, and modify processes when business policies change.

Out-of-the-Box Integration
The ability to read and modify data and control or initiate tasks in all IT management products.

Opalis provides the ability to control and interact with your existing management tools, just as if it were an operator at the console. Opalis ships with pre-built processes to automate IT best practices in incident, problem, change, configuration, and release management. Opalis also provides over 250 workflow objects (reusable actions) and integration to leading infrastructure management tools so users can rapidly deploy custom processes without modifying existing tools.

Process Workflow Automation
The ability to create rule-based workflows.

Opalis delivers intelligent and flexible decision making capabilities so you can incorporate the business logic required to automate your processes. This is achieved through rule-based workflow, dynamically configurable dialogs, branching, and granular security options – all the features you need to create an agile and dynamic process that will adapt as your infrastructure changes.
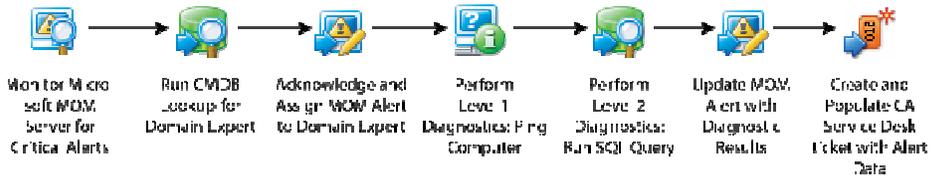
OPALIS SOLUTIONS

Incident management

Automating incident remediation improves response time, ensuring SLAs are met, with a lower cost of service delivery. Opalis can be used to standardize triage, diagnosis, and notification procedures, eliminating latency and errors associated with manual data entry.

Problem management

Proactive maintenance minimizes service outages and helps to prevent incidents from occurring. Opalis is ideal for automating routine administrative and maintenance tasks, enabling companies to maximize their limited maintenance windows without requiring staff to intervene during off-hours.
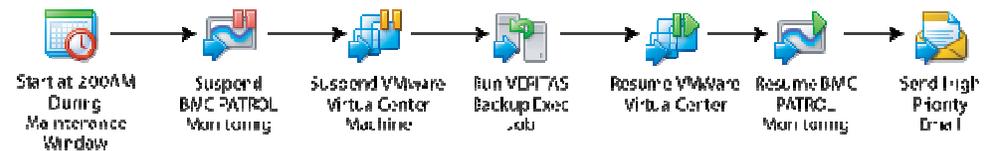

Configuration management

Coordinating processes between IT silos prevents a negative impact on service availability and ensures corporate compliance. Opalis automates configuration changes to ensure that approval is granted before a change is made.

Change management:

Standardizing and automating change processes such as adding new employees to the network reduces the time to meet service requests, while eliminating the latency and security risks associated with manual coordination.
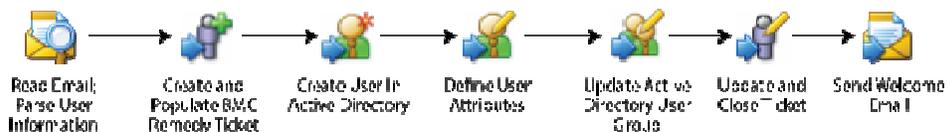
Release management:

Automating release management procedures ensures all systems are up-to-date and in compliance with corporate policies. This prevents service interruption and incident.

ABOUT OPALIS

Opalis is the leader in IT Operations Run Book Automation. It provides orchestration, integration, and automation of IT processes across multiple data, departmental, and application silos. This enables companies to define and standardize best practices and improve operational efficiency. Currently, more than 750 global companies, including Toyota, Harley Davidson, State Street, Nokia, Xerox, BlueCross BlueShield, and Woolworths, rely on Opalis to quickly and easily manage the critical components of their data centers.

Opalis is headquartered in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, and has strategic industry partnerships with HP, CA, IBM, Microsoft, BMC, Symantec, Oracle, EMC, and VMware.

The Opalis Difference

- Opalis is the only Microsoft Gold Certified RBA vendor
- Opalis delivers POC in less than 2 days
- Largest install base of customers using RBA
- Out-of-the box capabilities (Predefined IT Best Practices)
- Vendor agnostic (adapters for all major IT components)
- Script/Code free Automation

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