

Automated IT Asset Management

Maximize organizational value using BMC Track-It!

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ADAPTING TO THE CONSTANTLY CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

The challenge in controlling the corporate IT infrastructure is that as soon as you take command of the environment, it changes. The constant addition of new devices — workstations, servers, routers, switches, and printers, as well as numerous hardware and software components — coupled with changing federal and industry regulations, leaves IT personnel in a constant reactive state. What if, instead of repeatedly responding to unforeseen or spontaneous problems as part of your everyday routine, you could anticipate and help to solve them even before they occur?

That's the premise behind BMC Track-It! Integrated Asset Management. With the right tools, an IT manager can easily take control of every aspect of IT asset management; discovering, tracking, auditing, and managing to turn a situation of chaos into one of true value for the company.

THE FOUR KEY BENEFITS OF AUTOMATION

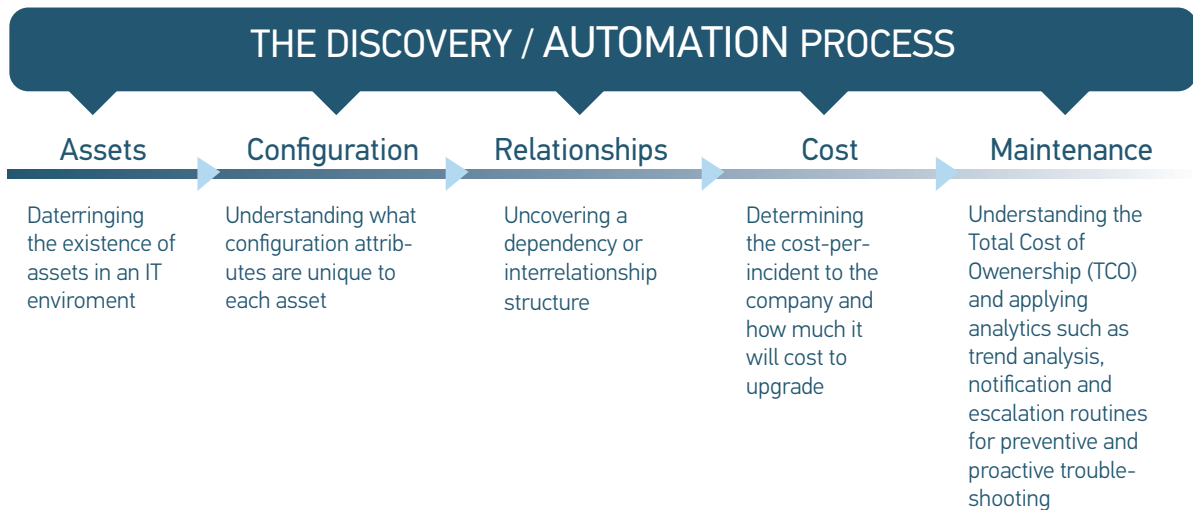
Automating the asset management process results in many important benefits for the corporation. Chief among these are better accountability of IT assets, improved IT service levels, and more reliable risk management. These three benefits are part of BMC's "find, fix, and prevent" strategy that ultimately leads to a fourth, measurable benefit of cost reductions.

BETTER ACCOUNTABILITY

Step one toward a proactive approach to asset management is the "find" aspect. This strategy involves the need to account for all of an organization's IT assets.

For example, the IT department within a company needs to know asset location, configuration, and usage to effectively keep the system up and running. At the same time, finance and executive management are concerned with software upgrades, support renewals, equipment warranties, and compliancy issues in order to avoid unnecessary fines and expenses. Complicating matters further, company acquisitions, mergers, consolidations, and even organic growth challenge IT departments to quickly expand and combine complex environments with an up-to-date view of assets and infrastructure.

The BMC Track-It! automated discovery process takes away the guesswork and helps determine exactly what you have on your network. Furthermore, it continuously monitors and detects any new network devices or software added to the system, eliminating the need for someone to manually search for new additions, spend time logging them into each system, and physically maintaining them throughout their lifecycles. As a result, the solution provides IT, finance, and executive business units with the ability to easily and accurately track assets.



For those organizations looking to get the most comprehensive visibility into their IT assets, barcoding is an effective means of tracking and identifying assets that cannot be automatically discovered via network connections. In many situations, these types of assets are accounted for manually by logging asset information, such as department, serial number, location, and ownership, into a spreadsheet. This process is usually fragmented or plagued by input errors, thereby causing anomalies during verification. When attempting to achieve a complete asset management state, the BMC Track-It! Barcode extension will allow you to reach a simpler, more accurate way of gathering and verifying information in the field. This becomes the most effective means of reconciling accounting irregularities and also assists in eliminating redundancies.

IMPROVED IT SERVICE LEVELS

Step two in moving from a reactive to proactive approach in asset management is to “fix.” The integration of asset management and help desk solutions allows the IT technician to log and troubleshoot problems as they arise.

Whenever the help desk receives a call for assistance in troubleshooting an end-user workstation problem, BMC Track-It! can perform an audit of the device to reveal what components and software are affected or may possibly be the cause of the incident. The technician can check data revealed by the audit or even check behavior against any known issues. If this doesn't solve the problem, the next step is to take remote control of the machine, perhaps duplicating the process that triggered the problem. Once the cause is determined, steps to remediate the issue should be easily accomplished. For instance, if the prognosis is one related to software or lack thereof, BMC Track-It! can then be used to automatically pull or deploy software as needed. If the problem is one of system vulnerability or if it is related to system updates, BMC Track-It! can be used to patch the system.

The incident and its solution are then recorded so that future problems can quickly be linked to the same source for faster resolution. This not only saves time for the IT technicians, but it also reduces downtime for the end user. Equally important, the IT manager can use this information to establish metrics, such as time to resolution, with regard to the established service level agreement.

RELIABLE RISK MANAGEMENT

The third step in the automated asset management process is to “prevent.” This is the point where an organization realizes the most substantial cost savings.

By establishing a foundation of information from which to draw, the IT department can either prevent, or substantially reduce, the effects of problems. For example, if a particular problem is known to be caused by a defective video card, the IT manager can make sure there are plenty of replacement cards on hand to fix future problems based on an understanding of the total number of affected systems in production. Furthermore, mission-critical resources within a data center or server room require monitoring in order to maintain uptime. System variables can be monitored, alerting IT administrators to events that can cause downtime. For example, in the event of a performance threshold being breached or a service outage being detected, the help desk is automatically notified and knows about the problem before their end users. Simultaneously, IT administrators will be notified immediately and can quickly initiate the steps necessary to remediate the problem or plan appropriately to prevent an imminent outage. This proactive stance can reduce the number of help desk calls by allowing help desk technicians to proactively communicate to end users that a problem has been detected and is under repair.

Whatever the problem, the BMC Track-It! framework helps establish processes around best practices to help drive efficiency within an IT department.

In addition, having an automated asset management solution and discovery process enables IT professionals to assess compliance and software license agreements. This accurate, up-to-date accounting of information is critical for effective risk management.

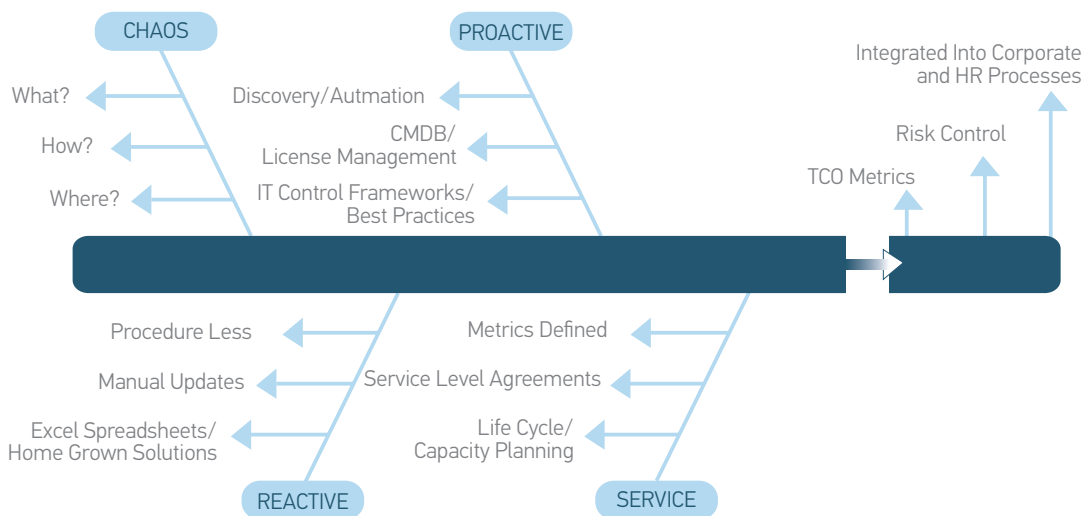
COST REDUCTIONS

At this point, the IT manager becomes an efficiency expert, anticipating problems and solving them before they materialize. Processes have been streamlined and downtime has all but been eliminated. Regulatory and compliancy violations, along with the resulting heavy fines, are no longer issues.

ACHIEVING THE PROACTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Now that the day-to-day problems are under control, attention can turn to anticipating growth and laying the appropriate framework to accommodate it. By analyzing cost per incident, the IT manager knows when it is cost efficient to purchase new equipment. Analytics and process frameworks can be applied for preventive and proactive troubleshooting. Information is available to determine total cost of ownership. In short, having a complete asset management solution has helped maximize organizational value.

ASSET MANAGEMENT MATURATION MODEL (The Chaos Theory)



SUMMARY

Automated IT asset management is a simple, effective and cost-efficient means to discover, audit, track, and manage the many and various elements of a company's IT infrastructure. This process allows IT managers to go from a reactive state — solving problems only after they arise — to a proactive state in which optimum efficiency is realized. As a result of this integrated approach to automated IT asset management, processes are streamlined, corporate downtime is dramatically reduced, and substantial cost savings are realized through the reduction of compliance penalties, better management of equipment lifecycles, and by laying the groundwork for a controlled approach to future growth.

To learn more, please visit <http://www.bmc.com/products/track-it/track-it.html>.

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