BMC Adds Service Request Catalog

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The new SRM offering uses BMC's Remedy Action Request System for its foundation to reduce the cost of help desk calls and to better prioritize service request responses.

BMC Software on April 16 aims to bring a greater level of self-service and automation to the IT help desk when it releases its new service request management offering.

The new SRM offering uses BMC's Remedy Action Request System for its foundation and leverages data from its Atrium Configuration Management Database to reduce the cost of help desk calls and better prioritize service request responses.

The aim of BMC's new offering is to help IT better understand what its service goals should be for various requests and whether IT is meeting those goals. It also aims to help IT better align resources and identify the costs associated with different service requests and set clear expectations for how long it should take to fulfill different service requests and how much it will cost.

The main component of the new offering allows IT operations to create a Service Request Catalog that users can browse and request services from. Users access the SRC via a Web portal.

"The actionable Service Request Catalog is a place where users can see available services, they can request - a service - online and track - progress toward fulfillment - just like Fedex shipments," said BMC

Chief Technology Officer Tom Bishop in Austin, Texas.

The services "are advertised and described in language that makes sense for users and allows service providers to set clear expectations on service delivery, time and cost," he added.

The SRC, which represents a sort of storefront of services that IT offers to help desk clients, works with another component that makes it possible to tie service requests to back-end fulfillment processes, whether those are based on internal IT resources or come from third-party service providers.

"Customers can start to measure service delivery milestones obtained, and from a process improvement perspective, organizations can look at applying automation in a more targeted way to reduce service delivery costs and increase quality," said Bishop.

A third component provides a single point of contact for logging requests through to completion, allowing IT to build business-level service level agreements rather than low-level technical agreements. "It can track service deliver and customer satisfaction to effectively manage demands, resources and costs," said Bishop.

Although BMC is late to market with a service delivery catalog compared to competitors such as IBM, HP and CA, the new SRM system leapfrogs those vendors' offerings in better integration, said Rich Ptak, managing partner at Ptak, Noel & Associates in Amherst, N.H.

"BMC is responding to competitive pressure in the market and they moved quickly to fill an obvious hole in their offering. - But - they built a solution that is integrated out-of-the-box into their Business Service Management offering, which other competitors don't have," he said.

The SRM system, built on top of the Remedy Action Request System, takes a few days to deploy. For IT shops, "the hard part is defining the services themselves - basically the tasks for delivering the services," said Gerry Roy, solutions marketing manager at BMC in Houston, Texas.

The services can be as simple as restoring a file that was accidentally deleted or as complex as preparing IT resources for a new employee.

The average cost to deploy the system is between $70,000 to $90,000.

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