Leveraging Monitoring Governance

How service providers can boost
operational efficiency and scalability

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Executive Summary

Monitoring sits at the foundation of the service provider's business. If monitoring operations aren't optimized, service providers will continue to struggle to meet current demand—and find it increasingly difficult to adapt as new demands and opportunities arise. This white paper outlines how critical monitoring governance is to optimizing operations, and it details the key requirements to instituting effective monitoring governance in your organization.

Introduction: The Application Economy and the Opportunity for Your Business

In a world fueled by ubiquitous mobile devices and services, innovative cloud offerings and dynamic social networks, a new paradigm is arising: the application economy. In the application economy, applications will grow increasingly critical to your clients. More than ever, applications fuel an organization's production and prospects.

Given the criticality of applications to customers, the demand for services to help support application quality, innovation and availability will grow increasingly urgent. As a result, effective, proactive monitoring is an increasingly critical requirement. Those service providers that can meet this demand with high-value monitoring services can capitalize on significant and long-term business opportunities.

"The application economy is emerging fast, and placing a premium on business agility and acceleration."

The Challenge

For your clients and your business, change will continue to occur, grow more significant and keep coming more rapidly. While the application economy is placing an increased emphasis on speed and agility, the reality is that many service providers are currently struggling with suboptimal monitoring infrastructures and operations. As a result, keeping pace with existing workloads and demands is challenging, while speeding innovation to deliver advanced new offerings is next to impossible.

Too often, service providers are running their monitoring services in an ad hoc fashion. Each customer engagement, each specific technology and device and each monitoring service are managed in a largely unique fashion. Working with a series of one-off configurations, these service providers lack standardization, documentation and repeatability. Each device monitored is handled uniquely from the one next to it, even though they may be running the same technologies and be handled under the same SLA.

As a result, these organizations operate in a manner characterized by:

- **Fire fighting**. Service providers are reacting to issues after the fact, and as a result, customers receive a poor experience and inadequate service levels.

- **Lack of scale**. Mired in one-off, labor-intensive service delivery models, operations teams simply can't scale cost effectively.

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▪ **Inefficiency**. Each new service and each new deal represent uncharted territory. After each sale, the operations team has to scramble to learn, define and implement a new solution. Given the manner in which tools and monitoring are set up and configured, it is difficult to establish the repeatability that can set the stage for effective automation.

▪ **Lost opportunities**. If struggling to keep up with existing service demands, service providers will be hard pressed to innovate or to help customers innovate.

Ultimately, when struggling to tread water, service providers won't be able to deliver innovative new application-focused services and will be ill equipped to adapt in the rapid fashion today's market realities require.

The Solution: Monitoring Governance

To contend with increasingly rapid change, and capitalize on your opportunities, your service provider organization needs to more fully optimize its monitoring operations. Toward that end, establishing effective monitoring governance will be a critical endeavor.

Through monitoring governance, you can set up a solid, efficient operational foundation that enables your organization to more quickly adapt, scale and innovate. Effective monitoring governance requires people, processes and technologies. Following is more information on each of these areas:

People

Monitoring governance needs to be instituted and managed by expert staff that work with key stakeholders across business units and technology silos to understand the interconnection of infrastructure, applications and business services. This understanding is vital in establishing and sustaining sound monitoring governance.

Process

Operations teams need to start with clear definitions of each of the services sold in the service catalog. Next, they need to formulate standardized definitions of monitoring set up, including what to monitor, when to have alarms generated, what data to collect and so on. These definitions set the groundwork for standardized processes, including notification, escalation and remediation.

By establishing these standards, your organization can more effectively spot suboptimal parameters and configurations and make incremental improvements across services or devices. Through these defined, standardized procedures, staff have a clear course of action, which fuels more rapid response and remediation.

Technology

While it's vital that there are standard processes for each specific technology being monitored, the full value of monitoring governance will only be realized when standardization and repeatability can be applied across all your monitoring services, clients and business groups. This requires a unified monitoring platform that offers the following characteristics:

- **Scalability**. You need a single platform that can scale to support all your clients and monitoring services, both immediately and in the long term.

- **Comprehensive infrastructure coverage**. Your monitoring platform has to provide support for all the servers, storage systems, network equipment, virtualization platforms, databases and other systems that are running in your clients' environments.

- **Extensibility**. If customers need monitoring support for a new technology, you should be able to deliver that support—without having to invest in another monitoring platform.

- **Application visibility**. Further, it's vital that your monitoring platform offer coverage of all your clients' applications and that it offer capabilities for tracking performance of these applications from the end user's perspective.

- **Automation and efficient deployment**. To facilitate faster adaptation to changing client needs, your monitoring platform needs to be fast and easy to deploy, and offer the automation that enables it to dynamically respond to changes in clients' environments.

By leveraging a single platform that can deliver these capabilities, your organization can significantly reduce the ongoing effort associated with supporting and aggregating data collection from multiple tools, which can fuel breakthroughs in efficiency. Through this unified, comprehensive visibility, you can more fully leverage the metrics captured to gain actionable intelligence and more effective control.

The Payoff

By establishing this mix of people, process and technology working together to deliver sound monitoring governance, your organization will be able to realize a range of advantages.

Improve service levels

Monitoring governance gives you the visibility and control needed to improve services and service levels. Instead of having staff focused on reacting to issues, your team can proactively manage performance and availability, both of specific systems and for entire business services.

Strengthen operational efficiency

Monitoring governance enables you to build the standardization and repeatability that fuel significant improvements in efficiency. For example, when monitoring for each Windows® server is configured consistently by all administrators, it becomes much simpler to replicate and remediate issues that may arise. You can establish more uniform change controls. Further, through standardized processes and unified visibility, your organization can begin to more fully capitalize on the opportunity to automate a range of tasks and efforts.

Boost client confidence

Monitoring governance can help you establish the standardization and scalability that helps you gain more confidence in your operations, and in the process, customers will start to have more confidence in your organization.

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Deliver more strategic services

Through effective monitoring governance, you can establish a solid foundation for delivering a range of higher-level service offerings, including:

- **End-user response monitoring**. Through end user response monitoring, you can provide insights into the most significant metric: What the end user is actually experiencing from your clients' applications. Important today, this will be an increasingly vital component for your clients in the emerging application economy. Further, when coupled with comprehensive infrastructure monitoring, you can gain the timely insights you need to speed issue detection and remediation and more proactively manage client environments.

- **DevOps support**. Build on your integrated monitoring capabilities to provide agile development teams with instant feedback on application changes. Enable development teams to test applications in real-world environments and workloads. Deliver real-time dashboards to developers, so they can instantly track how code changes affect the end user experience. Help managers gain better insights into balancing tradeoffs that may arise between functionality and performance.

With these premium service offerings, you can establish your organization as a strategic partner, deliver more value and boost competitive differentiation. At the same time, you can work from premium pricing models that help boost you margins. Further, effective monitoring governance can help boost existing customers' adoption of these advanced services. For example, by delivering agile operations and the benefits they deliver, clients will be more apt to trust that you can support their DevOps initiatives.

The Takeaway

With effective monitoring governance, you can establish the operational efficiency, agility and control your organization needs to succeed. Ultimately, through effective monitoring governance, your organization will be better equipped to thrive in the application economy. Visit the **CA Service Provider page** and find out how you can establish the tools and framework that establish effective monitoring governance in your organization.

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