

RIGHT TO THE POINT

IT Service Management for Forward Thinkers



Is your data
safe in the
cloud?

Page 3



Incident
Management
Best Practices

ITIL

BMC's new star
in the Service
Support galaxy

SMART IT

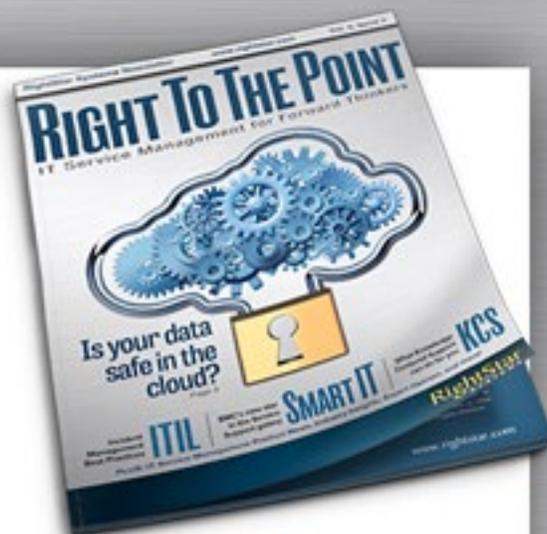
What Knowledge
Centered Support
can do for you

KCS

PLUS: IT Service Management Product News, Industry Insights, Expert Opinion, and more!

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



Is Your Data Safe in the Cloud?	3
Smart IT, BMC's New Star in the Service Support Galaxy	4
ITIL Series: Incident Management Best Practices	5
The Value of Knowledge Centered Support	6
7 Misconceptions Around Upgrading to BMC Remedy 8.x	7
The Making of a Well-Built CMDB	8
The 5 Phases of DCIM Maturity	9
What's New at RightStar	10

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Is Your Data Safe in the Cloud?



With IT's infrastructure-altering move toward the cloud, the question begs to be asked, "is your data safe in the cloud and no longer housed on your organization's premises?"

Many believe that data stored on their premises is safer than sending it into the seemingly intangible Web atmosphere; however, the cloud may offer tighter security than what your IT environment can.

On-premise risks

Security is typically not a core competency of most IT organizations and, therefore, they lack the internal resources to fully meet compliance and security needs and to mitigate risks that may exist, such as insider threats and user-error data loss.

Security is a priority

For the cloud service provider, security is a top priority because without it they would be continually at risk of business failure. Says Parker Harris, Executive VP, Technology, for Salesforce.com, "Nothing is more important to our company than the privacy of our customers' data." Within most IT organizations, securing data may not be a first priority as it is with cloud service providers who perform around-the-clock threat and impact analysis using advanced tools and feeds so that they can identify and address threats immediately.

Cloud Service Providers are not all equal

It's important to note that not all cloud service providers are created equal. The key is to choose a security-focused cloud service provider that is committed to supporting data security best practices. When researching a provider, ask what security policies they have in place.

RightStar partners with Rackspace to provide BMC FootPrints service management in the cloud. Rackspace is a great example of a cloud service provider with a strict set of security policies that

they freely share with prospective customers. Rackspace maintains 9 world-wide data centers, each of which is engineered with fully redundant connectivity, power and air conditioning to avoid any single point of failure, and staffed 24 x 7 by highly trained technical support staff. Security of your mission critical data is of paramount importance. Multiple levels of security are employed to ensure that only Data Center Operations Engineers are physically allowed near the routers, switches and servers.

Rackspace security policies include:

- *No Public Access.* Public access to the Rackspace data centers is strictly forbidden.
- *Video Surveillance.* Each data center facility is monitored 24x7 with live video surveillance.
- *On-site Security Personnel.* Security personnel monitor each data center building 24x7.
- *Biometric Security.* Biometric hand scanners are used to restrict access to each data center.
- *Pass Cards.* In addition to biometric hand scanners, access to each facility is restricted to those who hold a pass card.

This is just a partial list, however, it's plain to see how storing data in the cloud can actually be safer than it is stored on your premises when you use a cloud service provider similar to Rackspace.

Due Diligence

The bottom line is that when considering a move to the cloud, due diligence is required. Understand the service provider's environment and protections. Know what you can expect in the way of incident response, encryption use, and security monitoring. You'll avoid taking on unknown levels of risk that could potentially devastate the business.

Smart IT, BMC's New Star in the Service Support Galaxy



On October 8, 2014, BMC launched Remedy with Smart IT, a revolutionary new interface for the IT side of the Service Desk.

"IT has often been left behind when it comes to a compelling, modern use of technology," said Robin Purohit, president of the service support business at BMC. "BMC is changing this paradigm and recognizing IT service desk employees as the first-line enablers of employee productivity. By extending Smart IT to the back-office, IT workers can now realize the same engaging, transformational experience that MyIT brings to the consumers of IT services."

Why Remedy with Smart IT?

1. Faster and efficient ticket logging

Smart IT provides a single interface to create multiple ticket types like Incidents, Work orders or Service requests. Ticket creation is faster with limited number of required field values.

- *Automatic creation of the ticket as you take notes during a customer call.* The Smart Recorder provided as a part of Smart IT allows you to take notes while talking to your customers. You can add users or assets using special indicators and have the system provide a list of available options as you type your notes. Based on keywords in your notes, Smart IT starts to create the ticket in the background. After you complete taking your notes you can create the ticket with the click of a single button.

- *Easy identification of users, related assets and incidents, and available incident templates while creating tickets.* With the use of special characters when taking your notes while talking to a customer, the Smart Recorder displays a list of users or assets available in the system. You can select the appropriate user or asset as you type.

Once you identify and add a user, the related assets are automatically displayed within the ticket that is created. The Smart Recorder, based on keywords in your notes, displays a list of incident templates available for use as you type your notes.

2. View of knowledge articles from within a ticket for faster ticket resolution and easier searching

As you create or when you view a ticket, based on keywords used in the ticket, Smart IT displays a list of related Knowledge articles. You can review and use the information applicable to the ticket.

3. Collaboration tools to share knowledge

Smart IT provides a chat application that allows you to communicate with other members of your team to get help or provide help in resolving a ticket.

4. Single level categorization selection

Directly select the Categorization values from a single level menu, without having to browse through multiple menus.

5. Customization options for adding additional field to your views

As a BMC Remedy ITSM administrator, you can add additional custom field values to your Incident, Work Order, or Task Views, or the People Profile page.

Smart IT is available now!

The BMC Remedy with Smart IT solution is available now with no additional license fees to existing Remedy customers (version 7.6.04 SP2 or above).

To try BMC Remedy with Smart IT now online, go to RightStar's website: <http://www.rightstar.com/request-bmc-remedy-itsm-8-trial/>

Incident Management Best Practices



Incident Management is the most commonly practiced ITIL process because it addresses interruptions to normal service operation. Assuming a proactive approach, effective Incident Management can often prevent or mitigate incidents with the potential to negatively impact the business.

Here are 6 guidelines for implementing an Incident Management program founded on proven Best Practices:

1. The Right Software Tool

The software you choose to handle Incident management should possess the ability to:

- Manage an incident throughout its lifecycle
- Enforce standardized methods and procedures ensuring productive handling of all incidents
- Automatically escalate incidents, prioritizing and routing according to your requirements
- Classify incidents
- Report at all levels of an incident in real-time
- Allow any user to request/track incident status
- Integrate a searchable knowledgebase
- Manage and report on Key Process Indicators

2. Process Automation

Automation is important to Incident Management because it minimizes processing errors, facilitates faster response times, and helps to ensure process compliance. There are many options for automating Incident Management processes, therefore, it's important to select the automation tools that can best help you manage incidents with optimal effectiveness.

3. Knowledge Integration

Appropriately configured and updated knowledgebases helps analysts identify known problems, recommend fixes and workarounds, and alert analysts of potential issues. Providing customers with access

to a knowledgebase can empower them to find answers on their own, thereby optimizing the service desk resources.

4. Executive Buy-In

Executive buy-in is foundational to realizing the benefits of a formalized Incident Management process. IT must educate executives about the many potential benefits (e.g., more efficient use of resources, increased productivity, greater reliability of IT services, etc.) and how they apply to all facets of the business. In addition, it may be helpful to present the downside of not using best practices in managing IT services.

5. Integration with other IT Processes

Integrating Incident Management processes with Configuration and Problem Management allows information to be share for improved proactivity. Problem Management processes enable you to eliminate root causes of incidents for improved efficiency. Configuration Management allow potential configuration problems to be identified and resolved to prevent the occurrence of incidents.

6. Continuous Improvement

Adopting process-oriented approaches to managing IT services and infrastructure enables the continuous improvement of the organization's service offerings. Best practice mandates require that everything in IT be measured and recorded, something that is often ignored without the ITIL framework in place. Evaluation of recorded measurements provide IT with the intelligence it needs to improve unsatisfactory delivery of services.

To explore BMC software tools for handling ITIL-based Incident Management processes, call RightStar at (703) 242-7200 or contact us via our website: <http://www.rightstar.com/contact-us/>

The Value of Knowledge Centered Support

by Dick Stark, President & CEO, RightStar Systems



Recently, RightStar hosted a live Mini eClass with RightAnswers entitled *How Knowledge-Centered Support (KCS) Methodology Can Empower Your Service Organization*. This session described the methodology behind KCS and the value that good knowledge management (KM) provides. Most eye-opening was a statement by RightAnswers that one of their customers saved \$3M annually as a result of improved KCS.

The value of good KM to me is obvious and real. When my laptop died right before a presentation to a group of IT executives at a F500 prospect. (Fortunately, I had a hard copy backup.) Later I called our service desk and was helped via remote control. The agent googled “laptop won’t boot all the way up,” but there were too many scenarios to sort through. He suspected this was a disk error and made the decision to drive to HQ to provide the fix. Had we had a better KM system in place, this trip may have been avoidable and the cost to RightStar significantly less. So how can KM help situations like this at RightStar and other organizations?

Address Mean Time To Know

MTTK is the amount of time it takes to figure out how to solve the problem. Forrester reports that MTTK is 68% of the total time required to resolve a problem, meaning shortening MTTK can significantly reduce the cost of solving an issue. RightAnswers stated that a good KCS process could cut this cost in half or more. Since the average support call costs \$75, according to Gartner, than reducing MTTK can save as much as \$50 per call.

Self-Service Success

A successful KM system must be fast, articles must be easy to find, and the system must be user friendly. There must be enough articles and the user-experience must be outstanding enough to ensure user adoptability and repeat business.

Knowledge Impact on Self-Service Channels

According to the State of Unassisted Support 2013, only 49% of self-service searches are successful. This means that more than half the time, users end up calling the service desk. This contrasts significantly with RightAnswers own customer survey where 78% of self-service channel searches were successful. This means that when users find their own answers, they don’t call the service desk. This increases user adoption and lowers costs.

RightAnswers also found that self-service channel success is due to the user interface, search-ability, and knowledge. Of the three, a clean and accurate knowledge database was most significant to success.

In reality, users will search anywhere. End users are not concerned with source or company standards. They just want results quickly. Likewise, support agents browse online and create knowledge articles based on web results. Fortunately, external databases such as Google and RightAnswers can co-exist and service desks should promote the value of KM and search engine integration.

One thing is certain: IT is becoming more and not less complex so continuous service desk process and technology improvements will return tremendous value to the organization. An effective KCS process that relies on a KM tool such as RightAnswers is an effective way to reduce costs and increase agent and employee productivity.

Visit Dick Stark’s blog at <http://dick1stark.com>

7 Misconceptions around Upgrading to Remedy 8.x

by Mark Lev, Sr. Remedy Consultant, RightStar Systems



Are you still on BMC Remedy 7.x because you've heard that upgrading to 8.x is a formidable undertaking? I'm here to assuage your fears by tackling the 7 most common misconceptions around upgrading to Remedy 8.x.

Misconception #1:

Upgrading will take too much time!

Time is relative. While transitioning from the old non-overlay model to the new overlay model may take some time, the investment is quickly repaid. The real time savings comes with future upgrades which will take a fraction of the time you're used to. The cost benefit of future upgrades based on the performance, capabilities, and other significant improvements is worth every moment spent on the upgrade process.

Misconception #2:

Remedy is outdated!

BMC has been investing heavily in moving Remedy up to the ITSM frontlines. Integrating new technologies, such as Smart IT and MyIT, Remedy is fast becoming a leader for the next generation of IT Service Management solutions. And BMC will continue to grow Remedy forward with some really exciting new enhancements already in the works.

Misconception #3:

Upgrading will disrupt the business!

Actually, upgrading will help the business! While there's a natural curve to implementation which impacts operational status to a point, a well planned and executed upgrade should have minimal impact and the net result will be a boon to business in terms of productivity, user satisfaction and request lifecycle management.

Misconception #4:

It's better to wait for the next version!

This thought process is really counterproductive. Waiting only increases the upgrade "path" in terms of

version-to-version matching and patching the upgrade utility has to perform, but it also costs you productivity as the enhancements made in interim releases are not being realized sooner. Once you have the overlay model in place, you'll no longer have the sense that it's "better to wait".

Misconception #5:

Remedy is no longer the best solution for us!

I suggest having RightStar provide a demonstration of MyIT and SmartIT before coming to this conclusion. With the new versions and advancements, Remedy is reclaiming the "best solution" space for IT Service Management. It's worth your time to take a look at the new technology available today and what's on the table for the near future.

Misconception #6:

Customizations will need to be recreated!

This is the radical change that Remedy 7.6.04 introduced, and that has been highly fine-tuned in Version 8.x+ to the degree where it is highly reliable that customizations will not need to be recreated. This could be possibly one of the easiest upgrade potential of any major technology system that is customizable. While it is not a one hour endeavor, it is a tremendously efficient and effective upgrade model.

Misconception #7:

An upgrade can't be justified to stakeholders!

Stakeholders should insist on the upgrade. If they are interested in return on their investment and keeping their environments up to date with the most current and efficient solutions, then the "old" must be phased out, and the "new" brought in. The return on investment, customer and support staff satisfaction and the many efficiencies attained make upgrading to Remedy 8.x an obvious next step.

To try BMC Remedy with Smart IT now online, go to RightStar's website: <http://www.rightstar.com/request-bmc-remedy-itsm-8-trial/>

The Making of a Well-Built CMDB



At the core of any sound ITSM strategy is a Configuration Management Database, or CMDB. Storing and maintaining accurate data on all components of the IT infrastructure as configuration items, the CMDB enables the integration and automation of processes throughout IT service support, IT operations, and IT asset management.

Given its foundational role, the CMDB must be built on an architecture that meets six important criteria:

1. Federation

It isn't practical to put all infrastructure information into a single database, there are too many infrastructure types, elements, types of management data, and varying granularity levels per data type. A federated approach unites multiple data stores that collectively contribute to an enterprise CMDB, providing access to a wide range of information without having to move all the data to or replicate it in the CMDB.

2. Flexible Information Model Definition

Defining information models for a CMDB using a top-down approach takes a desired view of an organization and implements a meta-data model for that view in the CMDB. A bottom-up approach relies on normalizing lower-level data sets to develop a meta-data model. A well-built CMDB supports both top-down and bottom-up approaches, giving IT the flexibility it needs in implementing a CMDB that best matches its requirements.

3. Standards Compliance

The CMDB architecture must support open standards, such as XML, and Service Oriented Architecture around Web services. Standards support enables interoperability with disparate data stores while ensuring that data sets don't violate the overall integrity of the meta-data definitions that the IT organization has developed for its enterprise CMDB.

4. Support for Built-In Policies

A well-built CMDB maintains policies that document standards used to develop, update, enforce, and track continuous compliance for a given service and its supporting components. Standards must include details on data sets, such as configuration, installation, performance, and uptime. Policies may be dynamic and may change depending on factors such as time, number of users, and service level agreements (SLAs).

5. Autodiscovery

The CMDB must automatically discover all assets in the IT infrastructure, details about them, their physical and logical relationships to each other, and their relationships to the services they support. The latest generation of autodiscovery solutions not only populates inventory information but scans the IT environment to provide live configuration insight into a given component at different points of time. Live discovery combined with time-series snapshots are vital to any analysis performed on components and the services they support.

6. Strong Access Control

A well-built CMDB conforms to security standards to prevent the implementation of any unauthorized changes to its data set. These standards can be documented through directories to identify who has access to which data sets and who is authorized to perform actions on which data sets. A CMDB, with this built-in, role-based access control, supports user authentication through directories to claim access rights.

For BMC Atrium CMDB product information, go to <http://www.rightstar.com/products/bmc-products/bmc-atrion-cmdb/>

The 5 Phases of DCIM Maturity



While your end goal may be to reach full Data Center Infrastructure Management (DCIM) maturity, understand that you don't need to have a fully mature DCIM deployment to reap tremendous value from DCIM.

Here are the 5 phases of DCIM maturity along with the benefits you can realize at each level. Taking just the first step -- from managing multiple spreadsheets and floor plan diagrams to a consolidated view with a single version of truth -- is an affordable implementation that can return huge benefits.

Phase 0: Managed Chaos

Most companies today are in this phase. Asset management takes the form of multiple spreadsheets created by multiple groups. The accuracy of the data is often suspect and grows more unmanageable over time.

Phase 1: Information Consolidation

The first step toward DCIM maturity is consolidating spreadsheets and diagrams into a single application. A good DCIM tool, such as Nlyte, has the ability to import old spreadsheets and other electronic documents directly into the asset database. The DCIM software allows users to visualize the data center floor in various ways, including space and power availability. As a result, data center managers can make better decisions and reduce the number of human errors.

Phase 2: Process Optimization

The next phase of DCIM maturity requires a greater commitment to examining and potentially changing the processes used to manage the data center. At this point, optimized data center processes are programmed into the DCIM software and the DCIM software is used to enable and enforce those workflow processes. In addition, data centers begin tracking their utilization rates over time, thereby allowing for better forecasting based on historical results.

Phase 3: Strategic Data Center Planning and ITSM Integration

In this phase data centers begin performing multiple "what-if" planning scenarios using the DCIM software to identify potential failure points in the power chain and using predictive analytics to fully optimize the use of power, cooling and space. Here is where physical to logical reconciliation technologies are deployed (such as barcode or RFID) to continuously and accurately audit devices. By phase 3, the DCIM solution should be tightly integrated with other available ITSM systems, especially change management and CMDBs.

Phase 4: Automation

In phase 4 you begin to leverage all of the instrumentation, control and analytics deployed in the previous phases to enable the self-managing data center. Supply and demand will be more closely aligned with feedback-based control mechanisms dynamically adjusting the supply of computing based upon the demands being placed upon it over time. This is a highly advanced phase that generally is reached after two or more years of production-level DCIM deployment and usage.

Nlyte DCIM products manage your data center infrastructure with predictive intelligence and the management controls you need to improve operational excellence, reduce risks and achieve more agile, efficient and highly available data centers.

For Nlyte Data Center Infrastructure Management product information, go to <http://www.rightstar.com/products/related-products/nlyte-data-center-infrastructure-management/>

WHAT'S NEW AT RIGHTSTAR

RightStar's DataSync for BMC Remedy

RightStar is proud to introduce DataSync, a rebuild of the application known as AD Sync. DataSync is a simple yet powerful means to manage data by automating Remedy ITSM Foundation Data Management.

What can you do with DataSync?

DataSync gives you the ability to create and manage virtually all Foundation Data: import, clean, normalize, de-duplicate, and synchronize your Companies, Organizations, Departments, Sites, Regions, People, Group Memberships, Permissions and more!

Just point DataSync to the location of your ITSM data (database, spreadsheet, Remedy, etc.) and eliminate the need to manually manage your items of data. Considering the significant amounts of time you'll save, DataSync will quickly pay for itself!

If your data is located in multiple systems or in multiple formats and require consolidation or you're wasting valuable time using existing data integration tools that are cumbersome and slow, or you simply don't have the time to manage data properly, DataSync is your data management solution.

For more information or to request a DataSync demo, visit RightStar's website at: <http://www.rightstar.com/products/rightstar-products/datasync/>



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