InfoWorld

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The Real-Time Enterprise

Nine Steps to a Service Utility

Virtualization is the topic du jour in IT today. The technology is cool, the attributes are slick and now the stock market even is tracking it. The adoption problem that is facing virtualization strategies stems from a bottom up IT driven approach versus a top down business aligned approach. Furthermore, the technology is limiting in value unless it is implemented as a "virtual service oriented platform architecture" with a dynamic operational model.

In our experience, we took a business aligned approach and created a virtual oriented utility platform that incorporates the needs of the business, the control over execution and the leverage of everything virtual. This Virtual Oriented Utility Strategy can be implemented & leveraged by following the 9 step blueprint below.

What can a Virtual Oriented Utility Strategy help organizations do…

- become more flexible and responsive to the dynamic needs of the business
- simplify & reduce the complexity of the IT environment
- get more value out of project & operational IT spend – both systems & people
- reduce costs while delivering improved service
- eliminate dedicated silos of data, systems and infrastructure as they exist today
- educe the time it takes to build and deploy new business services
- implement and sustain predictable qualities of service

The 9 step blueprint for successfully creating a Virtual Oriented Utility…

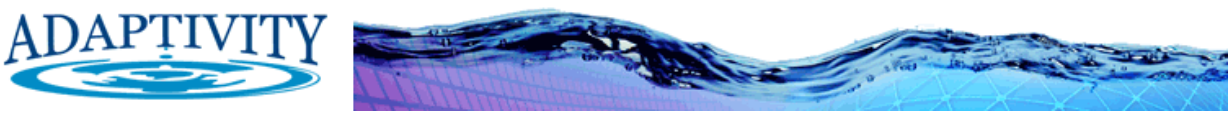
1. Economic Model – define the Business & IT linkage of demand and supply. Orient the analysis and model creation around the interactive dynamics of: consumption of IT resources by the business and the fulfillment behavior of processing by IT.

2. Demand Mapping – in natural language terms (no geek speak) define and capture the day in the life of the business, what they expect, where there are problems today, and understand sensitivities to cost, bottlenecks, and timing constraints.

3. Consumption Management – instrument and capture "objective" factual data of which users, using what applications, consume what app, server, network and storage resources for how long. Ensure you trend this over a period of time to accurately identify peaks, valleys and nominal growth.

4. Virtual Runtime Management – runtime control and execution enforcement of ensuring the right work gets done at the right time with the right resources. Business operates dynamically in real time, your infrastructure needs too also!

5. Virtual Resource Management – infrastructure and information resources should be exposed as services that are made available (provisioned, re-purposed, etc…) to virtual runtime management in an abstracted, on-demand nature as required.



6. Implement Virtual Resources – once runtime management, resource management and instrumentation is in place, then and only then do you implement "everything virtual". This is a critical lesson that traps most organizations where they start bottom up without any ability to manage and ensure business alignment.

7. Standardize & Optimize the Plumbing – agility comes from a consistent foundation and optimal resources. All applications , information and infrastructure services should be built on top of standardized plumbing (client, server, mediation and data). Self contained pods of resources (compute, storage, network and specialized processing appliances) should be utilized in concert with virtual runtime management to provide "more with less" processing capabilities.

8. Product & Portfolio Management – coalescing business and technical priorities in aligned continuous capability adoption – will ensure sustainment and differentiation of your business thru IT.

9. Service & Change Management – dynamic models of operation require processes and procedures of service delivery and change management to be able to accommodate "on the fly" and "as needed – when needed" operation of IT.

The bottom line from our experience is – if you want to create a business aligned IT operation, the approach, the methodology, the technology and the operating model must be top down driven – not bottom up. The value of this lesson resulted in 10-50x greater efficiencies than the traditional bottom approaches firms take and vendors sell.

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