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#2
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#4
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#5
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Top 5 Tips for Evaluating Management and Monitoring Automation Solutions

Turn the “promise” of the cloud model into positive IT outcomes.

The move is on: Companies of all types and sizes are harnessing the cloud for automated infrastructure provisioning and dev/ops tasks. But let’s not overlook the possibilities for automating management and monitoring as well. The potential benefits are huge, and the incremental investment is small. Here are five key considerations as you explore cloud-based management and monitoring automation solutions.

#1. It should be built on an open foundation.

The sheer number and diversity of IT resources are exploding, with new systems, technologies, applications, configurations, and permutations emerging daily. Therefore it is important, when evaluating management automation solutions, to select an option that is specifically built to integrate into and interoperate with heterogeneous resources. Specifically, the automation solution should be built around:

- **A shared service model** that allows services to be called from various management products, a service portal, or partner ecosystem applications.
- **An open interface** that exposes those services through APIs, command line interfaces, and user interfaces and gives users the flexibility to combine and consume services
- **A policy and orchestration engine** that provides the logic and workflow needed to abstract and guide execution to maintain control
- **A partner ecosystem** that extends the management capabilities through a common service and open interface to a wide range of solutions that offer additional functionality

#2. Extensibility is critical.

An absolute requirement for any cloud-based management automation solution is that it should unify the management and monitoring of complex environments—not add yet another layer of complexity. Specifically, it should enable you to provision and manage IT services across private and public clouds with a consistent experience; it should discover and bring existing resources (VMs) under management; it should enable you to prioritize operational activities according to criticality levels; and it should automate the detection, enforcement and remediation of security, configuration, and regulatory compliance requirements.

#3. It should combine automation with control.

Your cloud-based management solution should automate the management of IT services with policy-based control—from the delivery of infrastructure, application, and custom IT services via a service catalog to intelligent placement of applications and infrastructure based on policies such as cost profiles, resource reservations, resource limits, and service level agreements.

#4. It should transform routine monitoring into business insights.

Ideally the solution should do more than automate routine management and monitoring tasks; it should also provide new operational and business insights. For example, it should deliver:

- Comprehensive visibility and reporting across physical, virtual and cloud environments
- The ability to proactively identify performance, capacity and configuration issues based on predictive analytics and root cause analysis
- Manage capacity to balance performance needs with risk associated with insufficient resources (CPU, memory, storage, network), and provide insight into future capacity requirements based on scenario-based modeling
- The ability to establish fully-loaded internal infrastructure service delivery costs, as well as compare those costs to similarly configured public cloud services
- The ability to track and analyze LOB demand and usage patterns and provide consumption and cost reports to each organization (chargeback/showback)
- Insights into the business impact of performance issues and change events

#5. It should allow you to benefit from the knowledge of experts.

Even the most talented and skilled IT teams benefit by supplementing their knowledge with the expertise of product specialists who have hands-on, day-to-day experience and can provide documented, real-world-tested best practices. Your cloud-based management and monitoring automation solution should allow you to fully exploit the know-how and knowledge transfer of your vendor.

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