The New ITSM: Empowered by Integrated Operations

EMA™

IT & DATA MANAGEMENT RESEARCH,
INDUSTRY ANALYSIS & CONSULTING

Table of Contents

Executive Introduction

IT service management (ITSM) is generally defined as a process-based practice designed to align the delivery of information technology (IT) services with the needs of the enterprise and of IT customers. However, new research from EMA confirms what some in the industry have already begun to suspect: ITSM is emerging as a center of governance and control, as well as automation and insight, across all of IT.[1]

ITSM expansion keys on a number of areas, from broader support for mobile and self-service, to support for agile and DevOps, to assimilating cloud services, to more dynamic and effective support for critical IT services through integrated operations. Of these, the most prominent and transformative appears to be integrated operations in combination with critical ITSM capabilities. Most significantly, these capabilities should include capturing service interdependencies through configuration management databases (CMDBs), through such options as service discovery and application discovery and dependency mapping, and developing service catalogs—as well as providing supportive levels of automation to optimize efficiencies and maximize insights.

This white paper discusses the trends and requirements surrounding integrated operations with ITSM based on recent EMA data, as well as ongoing industry dialogs.

Integrated Operations and ITSM: A New Bellwether for the New IT

In our many dialogs and consulting engagements, EMA has witnessed and documented a growing role for ITSM and the service desk in helping IT organizations evolve from their siloed past toward a more service-aware future. This evolution is sparked by increasing attention to dynamic currency to accommodate pressures from cloud and changing business models, both of which are accelerating the pace of change.

In February 2015, EMA researched more than 270 respondents in the U.S. and Europe—in roles ranging from executive, to service desk, to operations, to business stakeholders. What the respondents had in common was they all were, at least to some degree, actively involved with ITSM. When asked about their top three strategic priorities for ITSM—here's what the data collectively showed in ranked order:

1. Improved end-user experience for internal consumers
2. Integrated operations with ITSM for incident and problem management
3. Integrated operations with ITSM for change and configuration management

Significantly, "integrated operations with ITSM for incident and problem management" was all but tied for first place (with one percentage point difference). Moreover, improving end-user experience for IT services requires integrated operations to optimize application performance and minimize downtime. In other words, all three top priorities were variations on the same theme: operations, when integrated with ITSM for incident, problem, configuration, and change management, is a powerful catalyst for empowering IT overall. Or, to state it in a brief formula: ITSM + ITOM is a 1+1=3 (or more) proposition.

Other insights from this research also suggest that these integrations between operations and the service desk—including improving analytics, automation, and service modeling—are beginning to redefine a new IT.

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[1] EMA, "What is the Future of IT Service Management?", March 2015.

The "Service-Aware CMDB": Making Change Work in Support of Service Performance

If IT is truly a business, then its products are its services—and in many cases, these services are applications for either internal productivity or market-aware business growth. However, support for application business services has historically been fragmented—and indeed often remains fragmented—in many IT organizations. This is due to problems related to siloed data collection, poorly defined and often conflicting processes, and sometimes even a complete disconnect between those supporting day-to-day operations and those managing change and planning across IT.

One of the technology investments most critical in helping to spur IT toward a more service-aware way of working is a service-aware CMDB with sufficient currency and outreach to support both operations and ITSM. Figure 1 may surprise many in the industry. It highlights what EMA has been watching over nearly a decade—the growing role of CMDB systems in supporting application service performance and service impact. Taken from the research cited above, this data shows that "performance-related service impact" is now the leading use case for CMDB and CMS (configuration management system) deployments.

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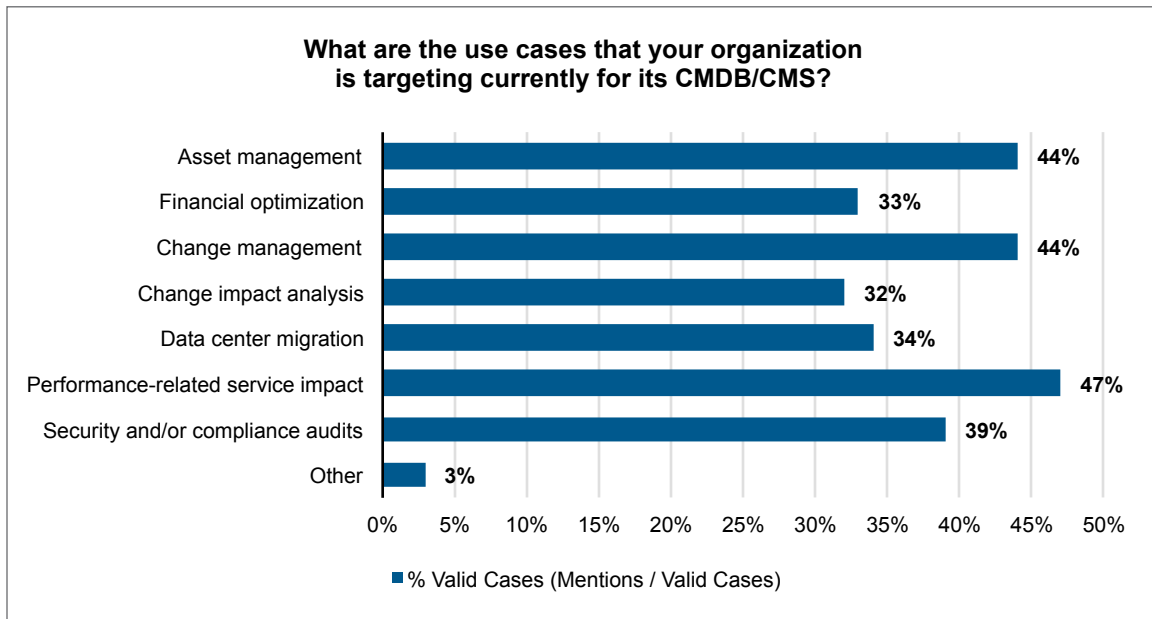

What are the use cases that your organization is targeting currently for its CMDB/CMS?

Use case	%
Asset management	44%
Financial optimization	33%
Change management	44%
Change impact analysis	32%
Data center migration	34%
Performance-related service impact	47%
Security and/or compliance audits	39%
Other	3%

■ % Valid Cases (Mentions / Valid Cases)

Figure 1. For the first time ever in EMA-driven research, we see that "Performance-related service impact" leads asset and change management as a CMDB/CMS use case. (Sample Size = 217, Valid Cases = 217)

Multi-Use/Multi-Value "System of Record"

The research data also called attention to the importance of having an integrated service modeling system with multiple use cases supported—what some in the industry call a "single system of record." For instance, the average respondent in Figure 1 indicated **three use cases** per CMDB/CMS—across service impact and performance, asset, and change management, just as examples.

A multi–use case approach grounded in a cohesive "system of record" (or "system of relevance," as EMA calls it) does even more than multiply the value of your technology investments. It also improves the effectiveness of individual use cases by providing more dimensional insights into critical interdependencies. For instance, change management impacts service performance and security; more effective asset management can help enable better change management; etc. The value of using a cohesive system of record to unify insights is another reason why EMA is seeing a growing role for ITSM and its related technologies—as well as growing levels of adoption for CMDBs.

How Application Discovery and Dependency Mapping (ADDM) Is Playing a Role

EMA has been watching the application discovery and dependency mapping (ADDM) market evolve for more than a decade. At first, the entrants were largely focused on laborious discovery of infrastructure interdependencies with some insight into application residency. However, early ADDM tools usually required a great deal of dialog and manual modeling before a business service could be captured with any kind of accuracy.

Over the years, technologies have gradually improved, and more dynamic, transaction-aware service discovery capabilities have emerged in various sectors, most often associated with application performance management investments.

Our data shows a growing role for service discovery and mapping in the larger system of record—as the need to model application service interdependencies and integrate them with effective capabilities for monitoring service performance is no longer merely a dream. For instance, 71% of our respondents had, or had plans to acquire, ADDM investments—up significantly from just two years ago—and more than half had integrated, or had defined plans to integrate, their ADDM investments with their CMDB. Not surprisingly, "the move to cloud" was a dominant reason for ADDM adoption, but "performance and availability across the infrastructure" and "performance and availability of business services" were also critical incentives.

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Why Integrated Automation Needs to Be Part of the Picture

Insights into services and their interdependencies, relevance, and impact, as well as their vulnerabilities to change, are undeniably critical. But change is occurring at a rate that is faster than ever, and IT requires automation to keep up with shifting technologies (e.g., cloud) and evolving business needs (e.g., agile). Sixty percent of the respondents in our research were looking to invest in more advanced levels of automation in support of change and configuration management within the next twelve months. Of these automation investments, the top three choices were IT process automation (ITPA) or runbook, systems configuration management, and workflow between the service desk and operations.

Given these synergies, it's not surprising that the top three functional requirements for assimilating and optimizing cloud investments were the following:[2]

- Integrated operations in support of incident and problem management
- Improved capabilities for runbook and IT process automation
- More dynamic support for capturing service interdependencies

A Word or Two on the Service Catalog

Not everyone would directly associate a service catalog with integrated operations for ITSM. However, effective service catalogs can provide a powerful way of combining service modeling with operational and other insights. Good service modeling is, in effect, a way of externalizing a dynamic and current system of record for public consumption at some level—whether within IT or between IT and its end-user service consumers. It can also so this by aligning usage and cost requirements with critical IT services, affording IT more insights into relevance, value and cost accountability.

Not surprisingly then, EMA is witnessing continued growth in the number of requirements to support application access, including mobile access, to end-user consumers through service catalogs. There is also a growing need to support enterprise services, another conspicuous service catalog trend. And yet another growth area for catalogs is in supporting cloud-related services both internal to IT and external to IT service consumers.

In our research, the top four categories for cloud were the following:

- Software-as-a-Service (internal cloud)
- Infrastructure-as-a-Service (internal cloud)
- Software-as-a-Service (public cloud)
- Infrastructure-as-a-Service (public cloud)

SaaS, whether from private or public cloud, can clearly benefit end-user consumers, while IaaS capabilities are clearly targeted at expanding the power of IT, whether in operations or, in some cases, development. In other words, cataloging cloud-related services can strengthen IT while also empowering end-user service consumers with a broader array of options.

EMA Perspective

EMA analyzed those respondents who reported being "extremely successful" with their ITSM initiatives and contrasted their responses with those who were only "somewhat successful" or "unsuccessful." Here are just a few of those data points.

Those who were "extremely successful" in ITSM were:

- **Two times more likely to have a CMDB/CMS-related technology deployed**
- **Nearly eight times more likely to have ADDM deployed or in plan**
- **More than twice as likely to invest in advanced levels of automation for change**
- **More than twice as likely to have a service catalog in place**
- **Dramatically more likely to support cloud and non-IT services**

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[2] EMA, Ibid.

The net result is a clear perspective on *progressive ITSM initiatives*. These, then, would seem to integrate IT operations management (ITOM) with ITSM through a cohesive and dynamic system of record, superior levels of automation, and up-to-date service catalogs for externalizing value.

Of course, not all ITSM organizations are in growth mode. Some still cling to a more fragmented, isolated, and reactive past. Moreover, the more progressive face of ITSM often gets obscured due to conventional market definitions that too often isolate the service desk as a reactive island. The very equation of combining service modeling, with operational monitoring and analytics, automation, and ITSM-to-ITOM synergies remains somewhat disruptive to conventional industry thinking. But it would seem that these values are not altogether lost on many IT organizations—which are in many ways ahead of those pundits seeking to isolate islands of IT by convention, technology, and tradition. In contrast, this data suggests a new way of working. A new IT. And a new ITSM empowered by operations.

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