



Meeting the Challenge of Service Request Management

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Executive Summary

Imagine shopping at a catalog store that does not have a central product catalog. Each department maintains a separate list of the products it offers, so you have to know who provides what to find the products you need. There is no centralized ordering process, so you must deal separately with different departments to order different products. What's more, each department has a different ordering process, a different order form, and different fulfillment processes, many of them manual. To track the status of an order, you have to go the department through which you placed the order. So if you ordered products from different departments, that means making multiple inquiries.

Sound like an inefficient way to handle orders? It is. But the employees in your enterprise may face a similar situation when it comes to requesting the services they need. Think of the hassle a hiring manager faces when onboarding a new employee. That typically involves requesting different services from different departments — facilities, IT, security, training, and human resources (HR) — using different request processes, and tracking different services separately. This cumbersome process of requesting and fulfilling requests hampers employee productivity, results in unnecessary delays, and drives up the cost of doing business.

Enterprises are looking to technology to help them streamline their service request and fulfillment processes end to end. BMC Software is helping customers in this area by extending its Business Service Management (BSM) solutions to include the management of service requests.

The BMC solution — BMC® Service Request Management — eliminates the inefficiencies of fragmented service request and fulfillment processes. Employees can find and request the services they need from a single, centralized online catalog, regardless of the type of service or the department that provides it. The solution triggers all the necessary processes, most of which are automated, to fulfill the request. The employee can track the status at any time through online inquiry.

The business benefits are significant and include higher employee productivity, higher employee satisfaction, more effective cost management, as well as a decreased workload on the service desk.

This paper:

- > Discusses the need for a service request management solution
- > Presents BMC Service Request Management, and explores how this solution contributes to a comprehensive BSM approach
- > Describes the resulting business benefits

Why You Should Consider a Solution

Employees in most organizations have access to two types of services. The first type is core services. These are typically provided by infrastructure components maintained and managed by IT, and they include subscription-based services, such as order processing or payroll. The second type is requestable services. These are transaction-based services that employees can request, such as changing a password, procuring office space, installing a telephone, providing a laptop computer, or obtaining a new identification badge. "Requestable" services are provided by different departments, depending on the type of service.

Supported by continually evolving BSM solutions, many IT organizations have made considerable progress in improving the quality of core services while lowering their cost of delivery. This is the result of more business-oriented IT service management processes in a variety of IT disciplines, including incident, problem, change, release, configuration, and service level management. These efforts are enabling IT to meet and exceed agreed-upon levels of service quality. Moreover, they are helping IT increase agility in adapting the IT environment to changing business needs.

Encouraged by the results that IT has achieved in delivery of core services, enterprises are now looking to address the management of "requestable" services as well.

The Fragmentation Problem

In many enterprises, service request and fulfillment processes are fragmented due primarily to siloed organizational structures. Different groups or departments provide different services, and the groups typically have different service request procedures and forms. Some involve manual processes, making fulfillment both error prone and time consuming. Moreover, manual processes are difficult to track, which could jeopardize regulatory compliance.

As **Figure 1** illustrates, service requesters have to deal with multiple groups when making requests. There is no central point for inquiry into what services are available, nor is there a single place for submitting requests and tracking their status. People are frustrated by the lack of visibility and the time they have to spend tracking down sources for specific services and deciphering how to request those services. For more complex services, users can spend considerable time coordinating and scheduling all of the work required. Once a request is submitted, it's difficult to track, and there is no way to know upfront how long it will take the service provider to fulfill the request or how much the requested service will cost.

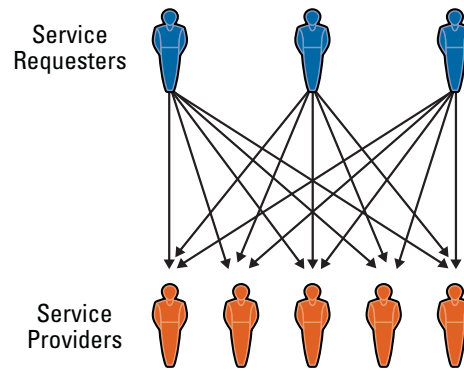


Figure 1. Fragmented service request processing

The "Funnel" Approach

Many organizations have resorted to funneling all service requests through their service desks to centralize request submission and tracking. With this approach, the requester contacts the service desk for all requests, regardless of which groups provide the services. The service desk agent initiates the proper request processes. If a request requires the involvement of multiple groups, the agent has to initiate and track multiple related requests.

Although the service desk approach makes life easier for requesters, it does not fully address the problem. Processes are still fragmented, so the service desk agent must take on the task of struggling with different groups, processes, and forms to get requests fulfilled. (See **Figure 2**.) The enterprise suffers from poor visibility of service fulfillment and quality. It is cumbersome to track request sources and types; problematic to establish service goals and track success in meeting those goals; and difficult to determine the associated costs.

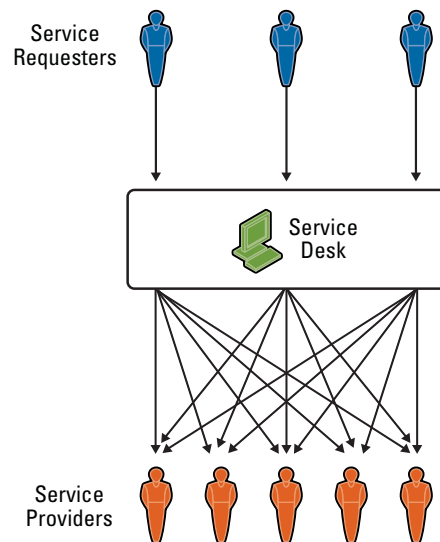


Figure 2. Funneling requests through the service desk

Another problem with funneling all requests through the service desk is that it floods service desk agents with service requests and status inquiry calls, greatly increasing their workloads. The service desk of one large enterprise, for example, reports receiving 1,800 calls a week from people just submitting or tracking service requests. In addition to driving up costs, handling service requests distracts agents from other, more business-critical tasks, such as keeping critical systems running at agreed-upon service levels.

Characteristics of an Effective Solution

The right tools can make managing the large and growing volume of service requests straightforward and economical. An effective solution permits an organization to improve and streamline service request and fulfillment processes by:

- > Enabling people to easily find, request, and track delivery of the services they need — all on their own
- > Applying repeatable, best-practice processes to fielding, fulfilling, and tracking service requests to ensure consistency of service quality and maintain regulatory compliance
- > Automating processes wherever possible to improve efficiency
- > Providing increased visibility into request fulfillment (track request status from entry to completion, and also track resources used, associated costs, and quality of delivery based on SLAs)

The BMC Solution

To help organizations address the challenge of improving the service request and fulfillment process, BMC offers BMC Service Request Management, a key contributor to a comprehensive BSM approach. Built on BMC Remedy Action Request System v7, BMC Service Request Management is an automated, online service request system. It permits people to find and request the services they need, and also track the status of those requests on their own, without assistance from the service desk. In addition, it permits service providers to publish available services in a centralized, Web-based catalog, and automate the fulfillment of these services.

As **Figure 3** illustrates, the solution provides a central point for accepting, managing, tracking, and fulfilling service requests — with only minimal intervention by the service desk staff.

With this innovative BMC solution, a requester can view an online service catalog that lists all services available to him or her. **Figure 4** shows a sample catalog page. Requesters can easily drill down for pricing, delivery times, and other details. When the requester finds and selects the desired service, the system presents an online service request form similar to the one shown in **Figure 5**.

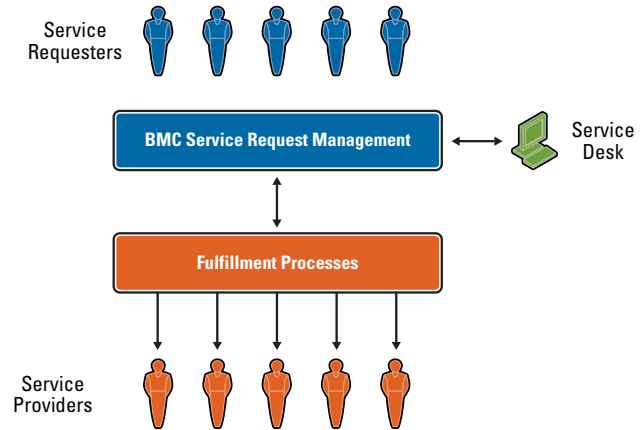


Figure 3. BMC Service Request Management

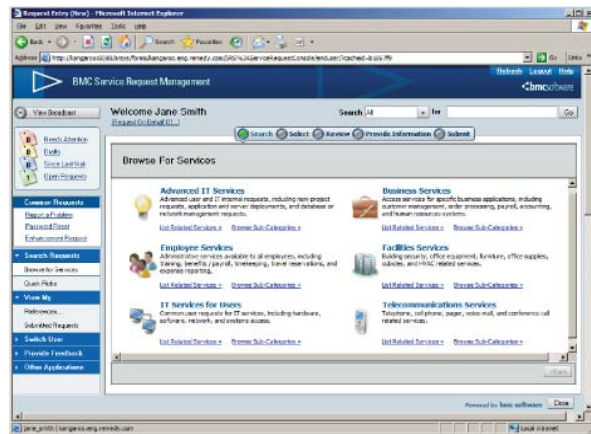


Figure 4. Online catalog page



Figure 5. Online service request form

To facilitate the request process, the solution can autopopulate certain fields based on information already available to the solution. For example, an administrator can link the solution to the BMC Atrium Configuration Management Database (CMDB), so that if a user requests an update to an application on his or her personal computer, descriptive information on that computer can be accessed from the CMDB and automatically populated in the appropriate fields in the request form. The solution may prompt the user to verify the information, if necessary — for example, if the user has both a desktop and a laptop computer, the system may ask the user to indicate which computer is to be updated.

When the user presses the submit button to request a service, BMC Service Request Management initiates, manages, and tracks all the necessary processes, performing full request lifecycle management. It routes requests for approval where required, and when approvals are obtained, triggers and tracks the appropriate fulfillment processes. Users can check the status of their requests at any time through simple online inquiry. The system sends an e-mail message to the requesting user when the request has been successfully fulfilled.

A Comprehensive Solution

The BMC Service Request Management solution provides many innovative and advanced features that simplify and streamline service request processing.

Actionable Online Service Catalog

BMC Service Request Management provides a single, actionable, online service catalog from which employees can view all requestable services available to them, regardless of the group or department providing the services. Services are presented in a format and language that are meaningful to business people. Employees can request services right from the catalog, and check on fulfillment status. In other words, the solution provides one-stop shopping for all requestable service needs. What's more, the catalog sets clear expectations for service delivery with descriptive information, such as service delivery turnaround time, price, support policies, and terms.

The catalog display is tailored to each user according to that user's entitlement. The catalog displays only those services to which the user is entitled to request. And, it presents only those delivery times, prices, support policies, and terms that are appropriate for the specified service. Entitlement can be based on a variety of factors, including the user's role, the

user's location, and the user's authorized level of service, such as gold, silver, and bronze. The ability to manage multiple levels of entitlement permits a service provider to serve multiple constituencies concurrently.

Integration with Fulfillment Systems

Some service request systems require you to integrate them with third-party back-office systems to perform request fulfillment. This may involve costly consulting and development. Other systems implement their own processes to fulfill requests. Some of these processes may parallel or even short-circuit processes already provided by existing fulfillment systems. This exposes the enterprise to risk, such as the risk of downtime due to improperly managed change processes, or the risk of regulatory noncompliance because of inadequately tracked processes.

BMC Service Request Management leverages your existing fulfillment systems to execute fulfillment processes. With its first release, the system is integrated seamlessly and out-of-the-box with the BMC Remedy Service Desk, BMC Remedy Change Management, and BMC Service Level Management applications — as well as with the BMC Atrium CMDB. Later releases will include out-of-the-box integration with additional BMC Remedy applications. (Because the solution is built on the same foundation as other BMC Remedy applications, integration with these applications is easily accomplished through customization of the service request management solution.)

Integration with BMC Remedy IT Service Management applications permits the solution to leverage standard, repeatable, best-practice processes based on ITIL guidelines to manage, fulfill, and track requests for requestable services provided by IT. These include incident, problem, change, release, and configuration management processes. In addition, integration with BMC Service Level Management permits IT to track and report on fulfillment of all requests to agreed-upon service levels. What's more, the solution can take advantage of the workflow capabilities of the underlying BMC Remedy AR System foundation to create work orders for handling processes that are not directly supported by automation.

The solution can also be integrated with business applications, such as HR, facilities, security, and procurement systems using standard Web Services interfaces. Through this integration, you can also manage requests that are fulfilled by groups or departments other than IT.

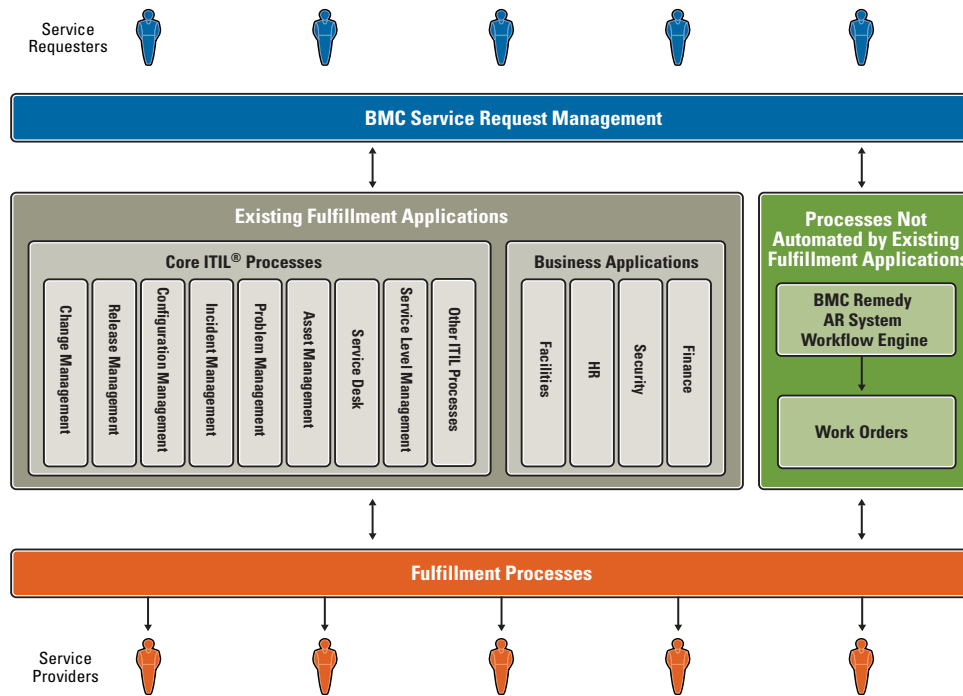


Figure 6. Integration with fulfillment systems

Because of its ability to integrate with existing systems, BMC Service Request Management can handle a wide variety of service requests. (See Figure 6.)

Within a single catalog, you can include requestable services that are provided by different groups and departments. In fact, you can also include requests that require more than one group or department to fulfill. For example, you can create a single request to onboard a new employee. That one request can trigger fulfillment of services provided by multiple functional groups in the organization, such as IT, human resources, facilities, security, finance, and training. Request processes can be built flexibly, using parallel, serial, and nested structures. By consolidating multiple services into a single request, you greatly facilitate service requests and tracking.

Simplified Service Publishing

With many service request management systems, it's difficult for service providers to publish their services to the catalog. That's because catalog additions may require low-level programming by experienced programmers.

The BMC solution, on the other hand, facilitates service catalog management and publishing. A service is published in the service catalog by creating a Service Request Definition. (See Figure 7.) The definition includes request attributes, lists the questions to ask the requester, and specifies user entitlement. It also defines the links to the fulfillment systems, specifying the automated process to be called to fulfill the

request. The request process can specify the forwarding of predefined work orders to the appropriate people to carry out work that is not automated by existing systems.

Service Request Definitions are created by filling out BMC Remedy AR System forms. Because this step does not require low-level programming, it can be done by a system administrator or catalog manager, making it considerably easier for service providers to add their services to the catalog.

When completed, the Service Request Definition is automatically routed for approval. When the required approvals have been gathered, the new service can be published in the service catalog.

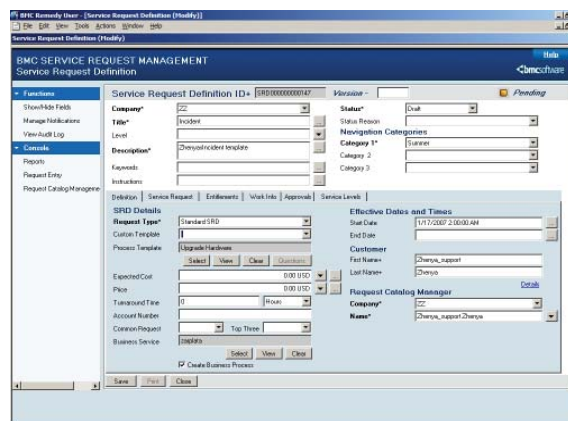


Figure 7. Service Request Definition

The system provides several out-of-the-box Service Request Definitions to permit fast startup. These working samples address frequently requested services, and can be easily configured and customized to your specific requirements. In addition, BMC offers developer programs to assist independent software vendors and BMC partners in building additional templates for specific purposes and industries. BMC Professional Services are also available to assist customers in building their service request definitions and processes.

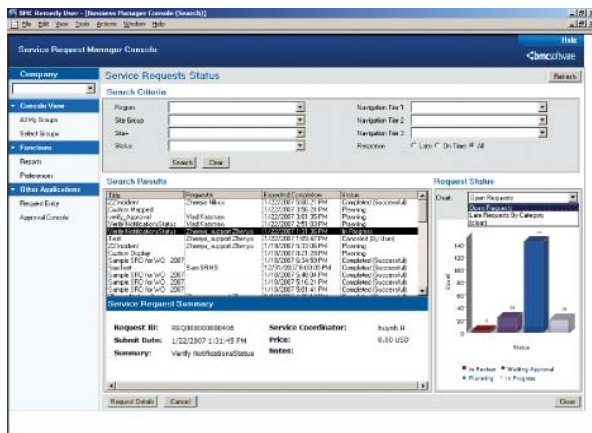


Figure 8. Real-time view of requests

Real-time Service Request Management

A manager console permits real-time management of the service request solution. From the console, you can manage the service catalog and monitor and manage service requests through their entire lifecycle.

The console provides a variety of real-time views of requests, such as a view of open requests either by category or by status. (See Figure 8.) It can also generate a variety of reports, such as request volume by business, group, or location; late requests by category; and slowest requests (based on average fulfillment time).

Business Benefits

BMC Service Request Management delivers substantial benefits to the organization, including:

- > **Higher employee productivity.** Employees can find, request, and track the services they need quickly and conveniently, all on their own. This makes them more productive and gives them more direct control over service requesting.
- > **Higher-quality service request fulfillment.** BMC Service Request Management provides increased visibility of service fulfillment performance for more effective management and higher service quality.

- > **Reduced load on the service desk.** By automating service request processing, the solution takes the request processing workload off service desk agents. This not only lowers the cost of service request handling and fulfillment, but also frees up the agents to focus on their primary mission of maintaining critical business services at agreed-upon levels.
- > **Lower cost.** The solution automates request and fulfillment processes wherever possible, increasing efficiency and lowering costs, and it permits more accurate fulfillment cost analysis for improved cost management.
- > **Improved regulatory compliance posture.** The use of repeatable and trackable best-practice request and fulfillment processes helps you ensure regulatory compliance.
- > **Manage the demand for services.** By defining the services available and clarifying service delivery terms for end users, you can better control the demand from your user base and reduce the number of ad hoc type of requests.

Conclusion

IT has made considerable progress in improving the quality of core services, while at the same time, cutting the costs of service delivery. Now, organizations are looking to improve the quality and lower the cost of delivering requestable services. To be successful in this effort, you must streamline your service request and fulfillment processes end to end by implementing software tools that bring high levels of automation and permit more effective service request management.

BMC Service Request Management can help you meet the challenge. You'll make life easier for service requesters, for service providers, and also for the IT staff. This will result in a positive impact on all aspects of your business.



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