Compliance Depends on Executive Support
Speak the "C" Language to Executives
ITAM + CMDB = Success

Taking IT Asset Management from Pen and Paper to the CMDB

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“DEC’s new mainframe computer is the world’s smallest at 5 feet high and can handle up to 80 different tasks concurrently.” Excerpted from New York Times article, 1978

Information Technology has come a long way since I began my career in the days of punch cards and mainframe computers. At that time, the Internet was known only to a select few and communicating by computer meant physically pressing a landline phone into a coupler modem, allowing a terminal to connect to a mainframe. IT Asset Management had not yet been given a name, with equipment assets recorded in a rudimentary way with pen and paper. While the technologies have certainly changed, IT’s basic goal has not – the collection and sharing of critical information for the purpose of increasing business value. With the progress of technology came a new set of problems, namely, how to count and manage the now immense inventory of IT assets. In this article, I will focus on the importance of a centralized physical and/or virtual location for effective management of asset data and how that data can be used to support other service management disciplines.

My job today provides me the opportunity to connect and speak with many IT Directors in a variety of organizations. I have been privileged to be given a unique view into what IT issues are of the greatest concerns to IT Management, including CIOs, IT Directors and other IT decision-makers. One of the leading topics of conversation is IT Asset Management and how best to collect and leverage the information gained through efficient and reliable asset processes in the support of overall business value. The problem boils down to: how do managers take IT data and convert it into a Single Trusted Source of Truth in support of overall IT Service Management processes. The current

A configuration management database (CMDB) is a database that contains all relevant information about the components of the information system used in an organization’s IT services and the relationships between those components. A CMDB provides an organized view of data and a means of examining that data from any desired perspective. http://searchdatacenter.techtarget.com/definition/configuration-management-database
Best practice focus is on Configuration Management Database, or CMDB. In short, the CMDB provides an organized view of data and a means to examine that data from any desired perspective such as incident, problem, or change.

I recently met with an IT Director who provided me with keen insight into her major concern with IT Asset Management: how to use the IT asset information they’ve collected to support the services they want to deliver to their internal users. She had made the decision to implement an ITIL® Best Practice approach to IT Service Management but was stuck as to the means to leverage asset data for areas of immediate concern, such as Incident Management, Problem Management, Change Management, and Request Fulfillment.

The IT Director was frustrated with having as many recommendations on how to solve the problem as there were staff members involved. She also mentioned that this was not a new problem; there had never been a time when they felt confident enough in the asset data collected to make informed business decisions. She was fully aware that they were not equipped to maintain and reconcile the asset data they had and, therefore, the information became outdated and useless quickly. She admitted they needed my assistance.

For this project, the first step was to design and integrate a CMDB capable of providing a Single Trusted Source of Truth for IT Asset Management which, in turn, would provide the basis necessary for better incident management, problem management, change management, and request fulfillment.

The Service Desk product the company was using already had a mature CMDB but they were not leveraging the capabilities. The following steps were performed in order to allow the company access to the full benefits offered by the CMDB. We:

- Federated data into a single, logical data store, eliminating the need for a monolithic repository both virtual and physical
- Merged data from multiple discovery tools into a single, reliable dataset through a reconciliation engine
- Integrated to third-party IT processes and tools through open APIs
- Maintained data accuracy in rapidly changing IT environments through seamless integration
- Used an enterprise integration engine that simplified data mapping
- Organized and standardized applications in a definitive software library to make deployments more precise and discovery more accurate

The IT Director reports back that they are now able to support the business with accurate information and plan adequately for new IT initiatives.

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**Know thy assets.**

You can’t manage what you don’t know you have.

RightStar simplifies and automates the IT Asset Management process with the technologies you need to track assets from purchase through retirement, optimize IT costs, increase business value, control risk, and ensure quality of service in accordance with best practice.

For a Datasheet of RightStar’s ITAM products & services, email: itam@rightstar.com

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She reported that since the CMDB centerpiece is integrated they can leverage other technology such as barcode scanning, RFID and automated Software Asset Management; with plans to continue to roll out a user portal to allow users to request and order services and tools.

IT Asset Management has come a long way since the days of pen & paper, but you can stay on top of the change with a sound Asset Management program built on a Single Trusted Source of Truth, the CMDB.

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**Highlighted Speaker**

**ACE Session: ITAM Customer Stories You can Learn From**

Dan is a Founding Member of RightStar Systems, a leading provider of IT Service Management solutions. One of Dan's primary focuses is on Asset Management solutions, gaining a breadth of knowledge from his personal involvement in a diverse range of asset management projects. Throughout his career of 25+ years, Dan has made it a point to listen to his customers in order to provide targeted and innovative solutions unique to the situation. His Asset Management Blog ~ http://danwilsonconsultant.wordpress.com/author/danwilsonconsultant/ ~ keeps those who need practical advice and information on the latest technologies up to date. Most recently, Dan has produced a 5-part Asset Management webinar series with completed webinar recordings available for viewing on RightStarTV, the company’s YouTube channel.

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