Business Perspective Management Views
Operations Strategies, Service Management Strategies
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As pressure for IT organizations to demonstrate business value increases, infrastructure and application management systems are being augmented to represent higher-level service abstractions. New products from established vendors and new vendors are emerging to address this need. These products all enable powerful abstractions, even business process representations, but manual effort is still heavy in this nascent market.

Pragmatic demands for demonstrable business value are forcing IT organizations (ITOs) to measure and convey business-level information about the behavior of supporting infrastructure. Traditional infrastructure and application management (IAM) tools focus on IT-centric details but generally have been poor at representing higher-level abstractions for consumption by business users. The intensified demands for these business views, combined with a need for IAM vendors to broaden their portfolios, are coalescing into a fast-growing market for business-level management tools. Technically, many traditional IAM tools have offered limited abilities toward this goal, but the process was cumbersome and required a more comprehensive set of inputs.

This market has been small because of low demand, incomplete solutions, and relatively low IT operational maturity. A shift in all three drivers is accelerating adoption from 1%-2% of Global 2000 (G2000) enterprises in 2001 to 6%-7% currently. By 2005/06, 30% of G2000 organizations will embark on business perspective management. Only 10%-15% of the G2000 will proclaim success by then because product capabilities will fail to meet user expectations. Operational immaturity (especially around process execution) will also impede necessary political and cultural shifts. Technical innovation and operational maturity will finally yield pervasive business perspective management (more than 60% of the G2000) by 2008/09. Whether the needed business models are manual, as they currently are, or automated, as they will increasingly be through 2009, model change management will be mandatory to prevent their irrelevance.

Managed Objects, a vendor with a primary focus on business perspective management, currently dominates this small market. Some traditional IAM vendors (e.g., Micromuse, Mercury Interactive, SMARTS) and other specialized startup vendors (e.g., Opticom, Silas) are now offering competing products and services. A notable evolutionary step is that the "Big Four" IAM vendors (CA, HP, Tivoli, and BMC Software) now see a lucrative opportunity to leverage their presence to offer business perspective views, with Tivoli's TBSM in existence for a few years. The commitment of these large vendors signals improved market maturity. Vendors are rapidly crowding this market, with a shakeout inevitable. Figure 1 contains a list of current vendors and products. Mercury's BTO and BMC's BSM initiatives are broad and ambitious efforts to drive business pragmatism into ITOs. Although each offers commendable visions, none can yet deliver complete tools necessary for full business visibility.

Several marketing terms have emerged to describe these tools (e.g., business service management, business impact management). All relate some truth, but business perspectives often do not easily relate to IT infrastructure, and business process management (BPM) has a different meaning to business leaders than it does to IT staff members. More accurately, these tools offer higher-level service abstraction

> *META Trend: During 2003/04, influence from non-IT personnel on infrastructure and application management (IAM) purchases and priorities (e.g., business views, user response time, service-level management) will accelerate. Through 2004/05, expanded instrumentation (e.g., Web services, Java Management Extensions, infrastructure vendor supplied) will continue to drive commoditization, leading vendors to explore automation of more complex processes (e.g., change, configuration) for varied infrastructure (e.g., desktop, networks, servers, wireless devices). By 2005, desire for data-level integration will spur added demand for XML as the management data exchange layer, but true mass standards adoption will not occur prior to 2007.*

views of core IAM information. These abstractions can be business level or they can be intermediate levels of IT services or applications. Most represent intermediate levels, though the term "business perspective management" is a suitable compromise.

Building and maintaining relationship models will remain the primary difficulty through 2005. Without sufficient instrumentation, relationship extraction cannot be automated. Infrastructure relationships (e.g., network topology, server configurations) can be extracted because these environments are heavily instrumented (see SMS Delta 1044). Instrumentation of abstracted services must possess knowledge of the service behavior and the necessary infrastructure components. Some can be inferred from the infrastructure itself (e.g., server XYZ supports shipping, and the network to the shipping users is known). More promising instrumentation lies within business intelligence (BI) products (e.g., from Cognos, PeopleSoft, and SAP) and application middleware (e.g., from WebSphere, BEA, and webMethods). However, without standards, integration with such products will develop slowly. Standards promoted by the Business Process Management Initiative (BPMI) show promise to automate relationship discovery by 2005/06. Until then, model definition and maintenance will be heavily manual. Alas, many relationships will never be automated, perpetuating some manual work.

We recommend that ITOs adopt business perspective management tools but judiciously choose managed service abstractions and execute pricing due diligence. Most current products carry high prices, but price erosion has already begun. Because of the manual effort required, only the most important business services can be effectively modeled. In addition, ITOs should not embark on such projects without input from business users, mediated by a strong business relationship management (BRM) process (see SMS Delta 1027). Building abstraction models in an IT-centric vacuum will result in business user dissatisfaction with the ITO and with the business perspective management concept itself. The idea is attractive to many parties, but failures could tarnish future attempts. Clients should adopt tools carefully and exploit strong BRM to prevent such failures.

An interesting discovery from our analysis is the strange similarity of most products in this market. Aside from user interfaces and partnerships, the basic functions (e.g., aggregated event views, model construction) are comparable. This similarity resulted from each vendor responding to the same market stimuli, the fact that all need to build partnerships for complete solutions, and a certain amount of copying successful ideas from each other. There is little actual intellectual property necessary to carry out the fundamental concept of business perspective management. The true power lies in the models, not the tools themselves. The better tools in the group do, however, use clever object-oriented data structures in their underlying code to offer flexibility and easier integration to third-party management information.

Because the secret to success is in the models, clients should pursue easy-to-use tools. Because model maintenance is such a manual effort, user interfaces for building models, linking to the data sources, and model change management are important. Simple GUI interfaces are preferred over methods that require custom scripting or interfaces that require deep technical knowledge (e.g., state machines, logic circuits). As these tools evolve, automated relationship discovery will become the intellectual property goal. Vendors that master this automated discovery earlier (e.g., those exploiting application intelligence) will move ahead of the competition. We expect progress to be slow and tied to standards. Any adoption or developmental delays in standards like the BPMI's BPML will impede full business perspective realization.

None of these products can effectively act alone. All perform an aggregation function for the lower-level management tools. Data sources for business perspective tools include a wide variety of tools that monitor network (e.g., OpenView NNM, SMARTS, Aprisma), system (e.g., BMC, NetIQ, Tivoli, CA), database (e.g., BMC, Quest, CA), and application (e.g., Mercury Interactive, Precise/Veritas) infrastructures. Clients should seek vendors with the broadest partnerships and included integration capabilities to support heterogeneous environments.

Bottom Line

Business perspective management products offer powerful capabilities to translate data from traditional infrastructure and application management tools into business-level representations. Clients should implement such tools but limit the scope of functions and involve targeted users to prevent failures that could damage relationships with the business community.

Business Impact: Business perspective management tools help relate IT infrastructure to business requirements, but clients must be realistic about the scope of business functions through 2006.

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Addendum

Figure 1 — Business Perspective Management Views: Partial Vendor List

Vendor	Product
BMC Software http://www.bmc.com/bsm/	Business Service Management strategy and Service Impact Manager product
Bristol Technology http://www.bristol.com/bam/	TransactionVision
CA http://www3.ca.com/Solutions/Solution.asp?ID=4572	Service Management
Fidelia http://www.fidelia.com/	NetVigil
Hewlett-Packard http://www.openview.hp.com/products/servnav/index.html	OpenView Service Navigator
IBM Tivoli http://www-3.ibm.com/software/tivoli/products/bus-sys-mgr/	Tivoli Business Systems Manager (TBSM)
Managed Objects http://www.managedobjects.com/	Formula
Mercury Interactive http://www.mercuryinteractive.com/products/topaz/business_avail/	Topaz Business Availability product and the Business Technology Optimization strategy
Micromuse http://www.micromuse.com/products/suite/slam.html	Netcool/SLA Manager
MQ Software http://www.mqsoftware.com/qnami/	QNami!
Opticom http://www.getiview.com	iView
Silas Technologies http://www.silastechnologies.com	Reveille
SMARTS http://www.smarts.com/products/business/impact_manager.shtml	InCharge Business Impact Manager
Systar http://www.systar.com	Business Bridge

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