



## **I D C T E C H N O L O G Y S P O T L I G H T**

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### **The Proactive Services Advantage: Supporting the New Style of IT**

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Adapted from *Through Hardware Innovation Comes Support Automation* by Rob Brothers, IDC #233645; *The Business Value of Adopting Advanced Support Tools and Utilities* by Elaina Stergiades, IDC #230306; and *Preventative Support: It's Not Only Tools and Automation* by Rob Brothers, IDC #236510

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*The ability to support and manage today's IT landscape entails working with a myriad of complex technologies. Decisions regarding whose equipment to invest in, the overall design and support of that infrastructure, and the overarching cost of that environment have far-reaching implications, and placing more emphasis on that life cycle can drive tremendous benefits when it really counts. Vendors and support providers have made advancements — to varying degrees — in the management and support of their equipment and service offerings. They have done so through integrated or converged solutions and system features that enable rapid problem identification and repair of systems when issues occur. In addition, such offerings can include access to account support managers (ASMs) who understand your particular environment to help prevent issues before they occur. By leveraging these capabilities, enterprises will be able to manage the equipment in their environments proactively and thereby reap immediate benefits that relate directly to operational cost savings as unplanned downtime is reduced and employee productivity increases.*

*This Technology Spotlight explores the issues enterprises face in terms of datacenter management and support. In addition, it discusses the role that HP plays in this increasingly important market for management and proactive support services as it pertains to HP's solutions.*

#### **The New Style of IT and the Impact on IT and the Business**

With global competition growing rapidly, enterprises must have the ability to respond quickly to an increasingly dynamic marketplace and changing customer demands. Many enterprises are embracing the move toward the 3rd platform to create new solutions for end-user customers and employees.

There is a considerable need for deep domain expertise to enable the new style of IT that emphasizes flexibility and agility. However, flexible solutions come at a cost in terms of complexity. The ability to easily integrate new and more capable features into an organization's support infrastructure and manage that infrastructure is key to understanding the larger picture of the business impact when issues do arise. Other issues include human error, such as mismanagement of systems, pulling the wrong cable, or powering down the wrong system. Forward-looking organizations are assessing innovative solutions and services to help reduce time to resolution, overall risks, and downtime in enterprise environments.

Support service providers have significantly advanced the features in their support offerings, which include the use of ASMs and the adoption of tools and automation for more proactive support. These service offerings have enabled a new degree of scale and automation, affording multiline service providers the opportunity to evolve their role from that of a *service provider* to that of a *service manager*. Akin to a general contractor in the building trades, this new role, a single point of contact or ASM, creates business value enabling IT operations staff to focus on results (i.e., uptime versus managing the minutiae of a large portfolio of individual technology support vendors).

## Benefits of Deep Domain Expertise

As IT managers and CIOs are tasked to move toward a more converged infrastructure, they face more pressure to deliver an effective solution they can support. Cloud and virtualized infrastructures bring a whole new complexity to an already diverse environment. Datacenters already have a myriad of applications, hardware, and middleware providers, and other top-of-mind support options for IT managers include:

- **Single point of contact.** Having a dedicated ASM who can help manage your environment increases both customer service and responsiveness.
- **Access to the right engineer.** Many customers choose ASMs to help gain access to the right person with the right skills to resolve their particular issues.
- **Time to resolution.** IT managers have critical service-level agreements (SLAs) with internal and external customers that must be met. Utilizing new proactive features in the solutions along with ASMs can help reduce outages or prevent issues altogether.
- **Security risks.** Remote support access has become an accepted and proven method to help time to resolution.
- **Utilizing a local expert to help determine the right direction and technologies for the datacenter.** A deeper relationship at the business level with an ASM allows for better solutions to be deployed in the datacenter. The ASM will understand your needs better to pair the right solution and engineering to deploy that solution.
- **Inventory data.** Most IT organizations continue to struggle with ensuring that all assets are properly covered. Utilizing a vendor that has the ability to properly track assets can help organizations with entitlement.
- **Patch and firmware management.** This involves reducing the amount of time spent coordinating, deploying, and verifying patches and upgrades and requires a well-thought-out methodology for keeping systems up to date.
- **Legacy support.** Gaining access to support tools for legacy systems is a key benefit for enterprises.

IT departments are increasingly required to manage ongoing IT operations with fewer resources. As a result, IT managers are starting to look to support providers for assistance in improving overall performance while reducing and improving resource allocation in the IT environment. In a recent IDC survey, only 18% of respondents stated that they wanted to support their virtualized environment themselves, hence support providers have responded by altering packages and features to include new tools and utilities to help address management and support issues. Among the features that customers value are the following:

- An ASM or a local single point of contact who understands your environment and business (IDC survey data shows that over 90% of customers feel that ASMs add a lot of value to their overall support contract.)
- Advanced call escalation and fast access to level 3 engineering
- Proactive monitoring
- Inventory management
- Software support options to varying degrees

## Market Trends

IT departments are becoming stretched to the limit in terms of supporting new technologies and initiatives. The Internet of Things is also affecting the future of support as a result of both the connection of devices and the amount of data generated. The emergence of converged IT infrastructure is also affecting support services.

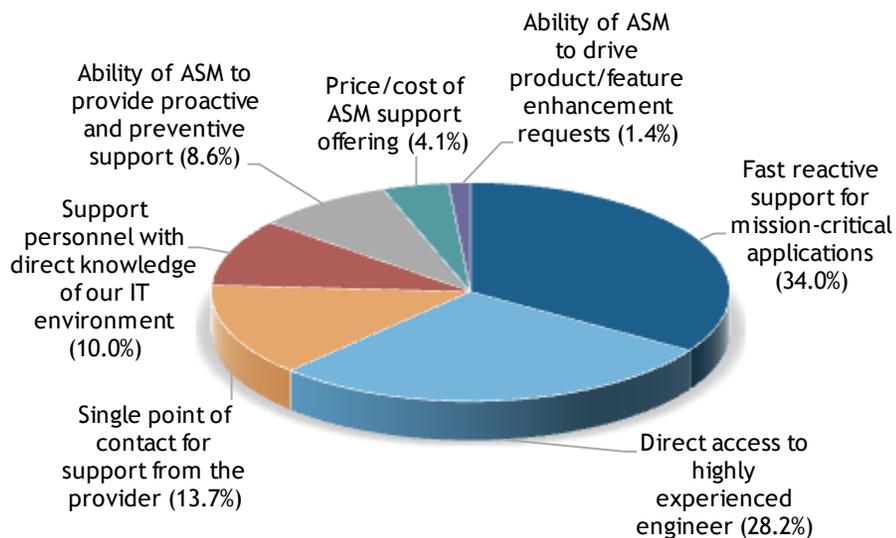
New IT solutions leverage greater automation and self-service capabilities. This next step is the key to making the transition to private compute and application clouds. As vendors develop new systems, storage, and network devices, tools and automation functionality will be an essential part of what will be embedded in these new designs. As the complexity of these environments increases, the ability to easily support and troubleshoot the fundamental components will be essential to datacenter staff and engineers. Some of the capabilities these new technologies will include are:

- Single point of contact for all support issues
- Local expertise (lead service provider or ASM)
- Agentless management and preventive maintenance
- Automated support
- Legacy support

Over 54% of enterprises utilize an ASM, and over 91% of those that use them are very satisfied to extremely satisfied. An ASM provides numerous features that are valuable for enterprises (see Figure 1). The presence of ASMs can lead to better customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

**Figure 1**

Most Important Features of ASM



n = 291

Source: IDC's *x86 Attach Rate Study*, 2013

The growth in the ASM discipline is being driven by the following key trends:

- **Dramatic changes in the IT landscape.** Technologies such as cloud, big data, mobility, and social media coupled with complex virtual environments have made datacenter workloads more complex.
- **Transformation toward a project-based approach or implementing new business initiatives as opposed to deploying new IT assets.** As IT department staffing models have changed, IT departments will need to shift from an on-demand model of providing services to a more self-service approach to providing IT services to their end users.
- **Evolution of the lead service provider.** The changing IT landscape and IT's shift in the way IT services are provided have led to the development of the lead service provider as a trusted provider, one that is responsible for coordinating and providing IT services to enterprise IT organizations. This role, lead service provider, can be either an internal resource or an external resource.

## Product Profile

HP provides support and management services through its Technology Services division with offerings that deliver a high-quality support experience for the enterprise and the new style of IT. HP's latest portfolio enhancement is Proactive Care Advanced, which offers comprehensive services for both software and hardware technologies. As part of an ongoing effort to enhance the customer support experience, HP has developed an integrated management and support offering that personalizes, automates, and simplifies the support process. The experience offered by HP begins with fast deployment of support and automation tools, continues with 24 x 7 remote monitoring, and culminates with a personalized support staff for ongoing operations and management. These capabilities are provided for state-of-the-art network, server, and storage systems as well as legacy systems.

HP Proactive Care Advanced is designed to provide a new style of support for the new style of IT through personalized operational and technical guidance and best practice advice (see Figure 2). According to HP, organizations are looking to the vendor for help in avoiding problems, as well as a single point of contact and access to technical specialists. To address these requirements, HP Proactive Care Advanced includes the following features:

- An assigned, local advanced support manager with access to account support managers who have specialized technical expertise
- Personalized proactive reports designed to help prevent problems
- Critical event management when needed
- Emergency technical response providing rapid access to technical experts

**Figure 2**

Roles of HP's Proactive Care Advanced Support Personnel

**'I need to reduce cost and maximize IT staff utilization'**  
Expert support resources



**Account Support Manager**

**Provides expertise and guidance**

- Assigned and local
- Access specialist technical resources

**Customer Engineer**

**Speeds on site repair**

- Assigned, local CE for customers with call to repair option



**Critical Event Manager**

**Oversees incident resolution and reduce impact of outage**

- Critical incident management when a system is down
- Manages case and provides on-going updates
- Critical case follow-up to prevent repeat incidents



**Technical Solution Specialist**

**Technical incident management**

- Advanced technical skills
- Manages your case from start to finish
- Works closely with the Critical Event Manager

**98% of customers ranked the Account Support Team most valued\***

\*HP Customer Satisfaction survey, Dec 2013

Source: HP, 2014

HP's understands that enterprise IT needs to do more with less and has to maximize resources to get the best return on investment; hence HP developed Proactive Care Advanced. IDC recommends utilizing vendors and partners with deep domain expertise in these complex heterogeneous environments as well as knowing your business needs. That partner can then optimize the datacenter environment to run your business-critical workloads to their proper SLA.

**Challenges**

IDC understands the need for more advanced services in these new dynamic IT environments, but educating the customer about the benefits and effective use is another story. HP and its partners will need to help bring new features to light when selling new systems and cross-selling on existing environments. They will also need to show how new software tools can help support legacy assets and that they are not just for the "new" system but will enhance the support of the entire datacenter. The design of HP's new services and solutions will need to be easily understood.

Organizations may need some time to get used to the new design changes, but if the newly incorporated features are used as designed, they should help diminish the amount of human error in the repair of these systems.

Security concerns remain a factor for some customers, but they are becoming the minority. Customers tend to fall short with regard to the training, time, and effort required to set up tools. Taking the time and making the effort to enable these features will help in the long-term support of the datacenter.

## Conclusion

The enterprise and the new style of IT will continue to grow in complexity and sophistication as organizations increasingly deploy advanced technologies such as business intelligence applications, mobility solutions, private clouds, and virtualization through converged infrastructures. Managing ongoing IT operations in these heterogeneous IT landscapes will continue to present significant challenges for resource-strapped IT departments. As such, enterprise IT departments will increasingly look for more advanced services to assist in addressing ongoing IT operations.

IDC believes that as the IT landscape continues to shift, IT organizations will concurrently evolve their IT acquisition and consumption models. The traditional staffing model of organizations maintaining a comprehensive staff of domain experts will evolve to leaning more on ASMs from their support providers for those needs. If HP can address the challenges highlighted in this paper, IDC believes the company has a significant opportunity for success.

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