Something is wrong...

What's Missing in the IT Infrastructure Management Approach?

Top-down...

Traditional… Missing...

Empty promises...

Who fixes it…?

Fixing Affects...

Root Causes...

Real-time, not some-time...

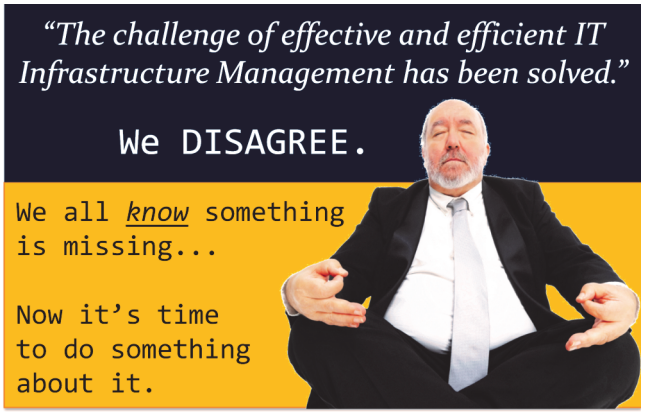
Bottom-up...

Something is Missing in our IT Management Approach

It's clear something is wrong. Business interruptions, outages, and other negative consequences happen far too often. Many problems reoccur – only to be "fixed" again. Cost containment remains an ongoing battle. We can't debate the IT experts because they have all the answers, but at the same time we instinctively know something is not right. The feeling remains.

Something is missing.

We are often told the problem has been solved and in many cases are inundated with facts and figures to support that conclusion. But those disassociated facts and figures won't solve this problem. It's solved when worry stops, issues don't occur, and IT cost of ownership exhibits a trend of year-on-year cost decrease (those are the facts that matter). When that happens, we know it – end of story.

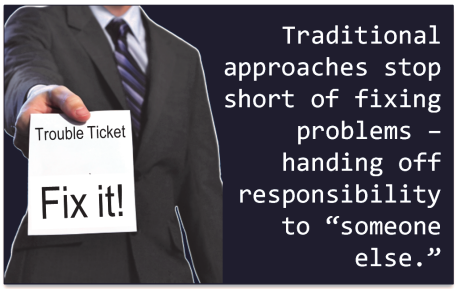


We are promised year-on-year IT infrastructure cost of ownership reduction. We are promised uninterrupted service we can depend on without using the brute force approach of overwhelming manpower deployment. The promises sound great but what we get falls far short of these marks. There is only one conclusion that can be drawn; something is missing in the traditional IT Infrastructure Management approach.

The Traditional Approach to IT Management

The traditional approach is to apply technology that attempts to alert on service degradations before failures occur. Alerts are handed-off as trouble tickets or incident tickets. The problem is that the traditional approach—by itself—doesn't fix anything. Resolving issues in the IT infrastructure is someone else's problem.

The technologies deployed in the traditional approach are by their nature, technologies which view the problem from the top down. For example, they may alert that an application has issues which affect the business process, but they are not focused on detecting the underlying root cause of those issues. It should be no surprise that the same issue keeps coming back and service degrades.



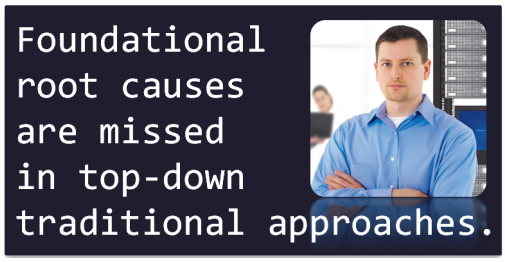
The traditional approach doesn't address the majority of important issues that occur in the IT infrastructure itself – the foundational root causes of most application outages. These are the issues that are the primary drivers behind those service degradations.

People *are* addressing these issues, otherwise traditional solutions would be overwhelmed with service degradation alerts. Yet the traditional approach does not take these people into account and their work suffers from the lack of meaningful support. They are left to fend for themselves – to find their own ways to get work done in an environment that neither acknowledges their critical role nor supports that role with the tools they need to succeed.

Is it any wonder that promised benefits are never fully realized? This tells us why something is wrong, but it doesn't solve the problem. Solving the problem requires a more foundational understanding of what is missing in the traditional approach.

What's Missing in the Traditional Approach

Issue resolution is missing. To determine root causes and fix them right the first time requires a data-rich environment that aggregates as much information as possible into one place. The traditional approach does not capture this information. Instead it focuses on a small subset of service degradation, failure and performance (speed, temperature) data captured periodically. There is no rich environment for root cause analysis in the traditional approach. In most cases the only thing passed on to the person responsible for resolving the issue is a trouble ticket.



The traditional approach focuses on application outages and does not take into account the foundation of the IT infrastructure. Yet that foundation is often where the root cause of an application outage will be found, forcing the management practice to fix affects rather than root causes.

The traditional approach doesn't support the people who perform remediation in the foundation of the IT infrastructure. There is no facilitation, management, or oversight for the people accessing the most highly privileged interfaces in the IT infrastructure on a daily basis, performing mission-critical tasks. Yet their work must be done otherwise there is no foundation for the applications the business depends on.

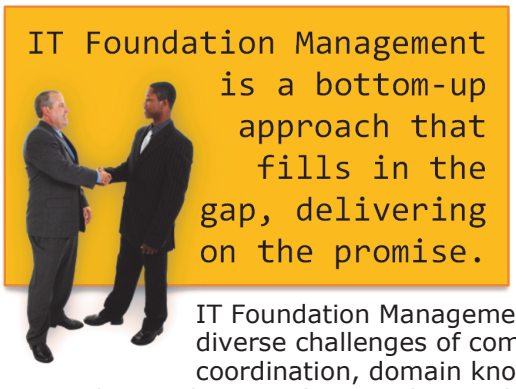
Meanwhile inconsistencies and human-error can directly impact priority business services. The traditional approach only sees these as service degradations or failure alerts. There is no capability to help these people do their work and protect the organization from inconsistent practices or unintentional error.

While the traditional top-down approach clearly provides value, it does not cover the whole problem. The remaining gaps are often addressed by deploying large resources to overcome the issues, and frankly, sometimes outages occur. The better way is to actively support the activities of the people who actually keep our IT infrastructure healthy, reliable and effective.

IT Foundation Management is the Solution

This is exactly what the bottom-up approach of IT Foundation Management addresses. By collecting data from the IT infrastructure at its foundational level (privileged interfaces) on up, IT Foundation Management captures all of the data needed to solve IT infrastructure problems – in real time.

The real-time nature of IT Foundation Management is very important. Many issues cannot wait for 15 minutes (common in traditional approaches) before an alert is generated. Root cause analysis demands issues be placed within context instantaneously. To effectively solve problems, the IT infrastructure needs to be monitored in real-time, not some-time. IT Foundation Management solves this problem.



In fact, IT Foundation Management provides a complete system-of-management for IT foundation infrastructure activities – the place where the traditional approach stops. With IT Foundation Management, the work of identifying foundational issues, isolating them, determining root causes, and then performing remediation are supported directly within a single application, through a single window. This is the only way to achieve a high level of efficiency and effectiveness within the IT infrastructure itself.

Where the traditional approach is primarily an oversight practice, IT Foundation Management is an operations practice. IT Foundation Management meets the diverse challenges of complex IT environments including geographical diversity, team coordination, domain knowledge capture, oversight, security, and organizational transparency. The emphasis on how work gets done from the bottom-up with IT Foundation Management is the piece we have been missing.

Because if that work isn't done, and done right, then the promises of year-on-year IT infrastructure cost reduction and dependable service will never be realized.