Zyrion's Traverse Brings Proven BSM Advantages to Challenging Distributed Datacenter Environments

Abstract

On December 15, 2009, Zyrion introduced its Traverse Data Center Edition, a Business Service Management suite designed to support challenging distributed datacenter environments in enterprises where scalability, flexibility and reliability are key requirements. This report looks at Zyrion's unique strengths in market context, in support of IT management planning and investment decision making.

HIGHLIGHTS

Vendor name: Zyrion

Product name: Traverse

Production function: Business Service Management, Service Level Management

Operating systems:

Vendor contact:

Pricing information:

Availability:

What is Business Service Management?

ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES® (EMA™) analysts define Business Service Management as *Optimizing IT processes and technologies to more effectively manage, monitor measure and govern IT from a holistic business contribution perspective in terms of costs, value and competitiveness.* This definition is based on extensive 2009 research, as well as ongoing industry dialog and consulting. It is a definition deliberately designed to include software functionality and architectural requirements, as well as best practices and attention to process and organizational improvements.

For instance, in ITIL v3 "Business Service Management" is very focused around metrics and mindset: "*Business Service Management (BSM) is a strategy and an approach to enable IT components to be linked to the goals of the business. This way the impact of technology on the business and how business change may impact technology can both be predicted.*" But to succeed in the real world, BSM also requires selective architectural and technology investments to support areas of automation in diagnostics, business impact, optimization and planning across multiple domains.

In the past, there has also been some confusion between BSM and SLM, which EMA defines as *Optimizing IT in terms of processes, monitoring, remediation and governance in support of implicit and explicit service commitments between an external service provider and IT, and/or between IT and the business it supports.* While SLM and BSM have very distinctive histories and focal points, current data strongly suggests that most in IT view SLM as the single most important technology in their BSM initiatives – or in other words a critical subset of BSM. And so SLM-centric BSM can be viewed as a key part of BSM's core. BSM's focus on business alignment in all of its dimensions, while also enabling IT managers to visualize and understand service-to-infrastructure interdependencies has been one of its most salient features in taking it beyond traditional SLM.

In 2009 research, *Business Service Management: Strategies for Success in 2009,* EMA documented the following from more than 150 BSM adopters:

- Seventy-six percent of the respondents viewed BSM as *important* or *very important.*
- Visibility into IT's impact on the business, and improved user satisfaction, were the two chief business benefits from BSM. (See Figure 1)
- Conversely, better quality and consistency for IT services, improved levels of organizational and process maturity, and reductions in costs through automation and higher levels of productivity were the chief IT benefits of BSM.
- Respondents valued Service Level Management and End-to-End Service Monitoring as their top two BSM solution components.
- Respondents view expense, protracted deployments, and overarching complexity as the three most egregious defects in BSM solutions. (See Figure 2)

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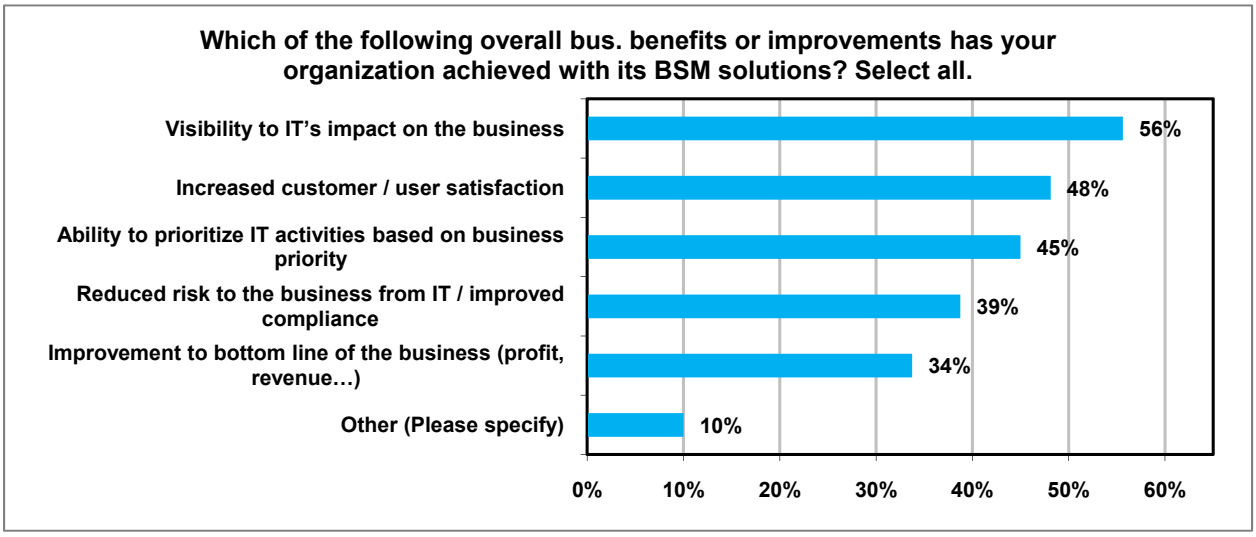

Figure 1: Leading business benefits actually achieved from BSM deployments feature visibility into business impact and user satisfaction

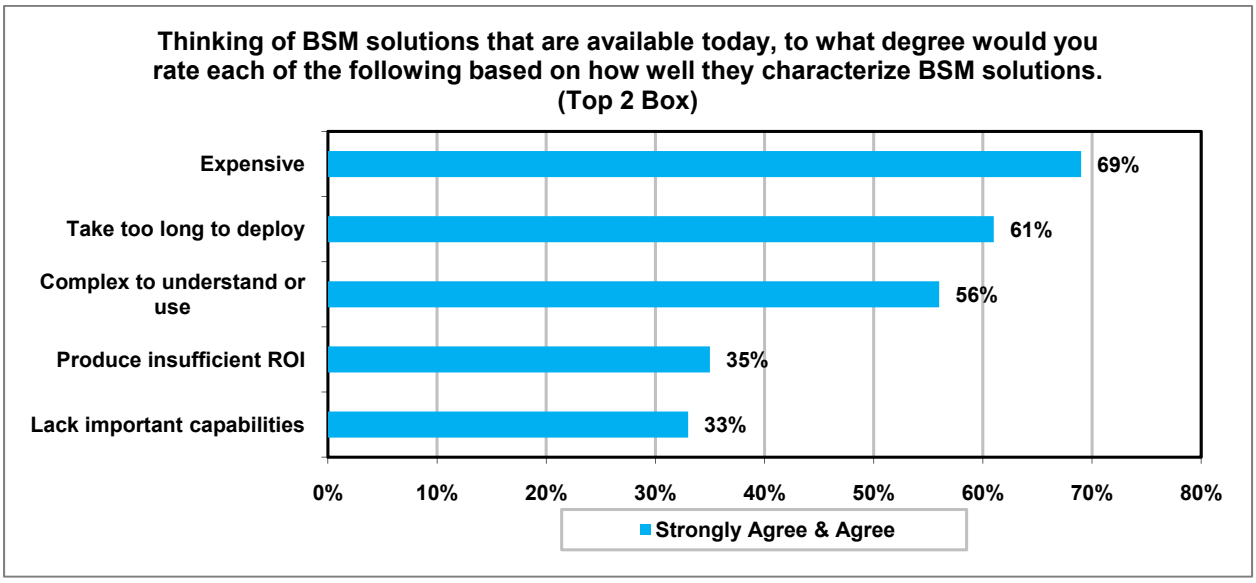

Figure 2: Cost, deployment challenge and complexity topped the list of respondents' issues with BSM solutions

These issues for BSM overall are especially challenging for mid-tier adopters with limited opex and capex resources, but increasingly larger enterprises are also discovering that solutions optimized for efficient administration and deployment are bringing strong added advantages.. Mid-tier IT organizations have often been forced to contend with complex, expensive, and hard-to-use solutions, or an array of fragmented point tools, or both. As one such adopter once put it regarding his service management options, "What's usable isn't strategic, and what's strategic isn't usable."

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Zyrion's Traverse

Zyrion, in Sunnyvale, California, was established in 2007, when NetScout acquired Network General. However, Zyrion has a history in infrastructure management that dates back to 1990, and was already introducing advanced service management technologies a decade ago, as Fidelia. Through the years, Zyrion has retained a remarkably loyal customer base and continuing to enhance its technology and is now growing in healthy double digits through its own customer base and through the acquisition of new customers.

Zyrion's focuses on usability and ease of deployment and administration have always been some of the things that distinguished it in the marketplace. Zyrion has targeted fast growing enterprises facing complex technical and service management problems with rapid IT infrastructure growth. Its customer base is diverse geographically and includes significant investments from a wide array of verticals including defense, government, healthcare, retail, finance, telecommunications, education and energy. While its traditional base has been operations-centric, Zyrion is experiencing a significant rise in senior executive attention due in part to Traverse's capabilities to provide business views and sometimes support entire business models as they are reflected in IT services. In a recent Zyrion survey, some large enterprises had over a hundred active users of Traverse ranging from operations to engineering, product managers and senior IT directors.

Functional breadth

Zyrion has evolved a number of features for Traverse that reflect years of market presence with strong sensitivity to customer requirements. Among the more distinctive features are:

- In-depth monitoring across a breadth of infrastructure elements including network devices, servers, firewalls, storage devices, content delivery devices, power systems, environmental systems, as well as support for virtualized systems, VoIP and wireless.
- A very mature and in-depth set of capabilities to support unique application monitoring – including an array of scripts optimized for actively testing application availability and transaction performance. The application environments include databases such as Oracle, DB2, SQL, and MySQL, communications software such as Exchange and Lotus Notes, and application servers such as Apache, WebLogic, and WebSphere, with IIS, Java and JMX support. Zyrion is also very strong in its support for custom applications thanks to an open API.
- Support for application flows over the network via NetFlow integration. Partly in anticipation of existing packet and flow solutions in large enterprises, Traverse has developed an open architecture for interfacing with third-party products.
- An SLA Dashboard with correlated views of business services in context with committed levels of performance. These dashboards support drill down analysis and are easily customized to different constituencies (e.g., network, applications, service, executive, client/customer, etc.)
- A highly scalable architecture with a distributed database and reporting layer which is very effective in enterprises with distributed datacenters.
- Zyrion's Business Containers, which are its crown jewels from a BSM perspective, and which enable an easily administered way to group service-related elements (applications, databases, systems, network, etc.) and then set rules to capture interdependencies, business and customer impact, and prioritized areas of automation for diagnostics and remediation. Zyrion's simple approach combines basic auto discovery with manual component selection. The business containers are also architected so that they can be auto-populated if integrated with a CMDB or CMS environment with pre-existing reconciled views of service interdependencies.

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Zyrion introduces Traverse Data Center Edition

On December15, 2009, Zyrion announced the *Data Center Edition* of Traverse targeted at increased scalability, flexibility, and multi-tenant support for MSPs and other service providers. The Data Center Edition exploits Zyrion's highly reliable, distributed architecture which includes multiple Data Gathering Engines or DGEs. These DGEs can each monitor about 1,000 devices, and are designed so that IT buyers can choose to place multiple DGEs across multiple data centers or remote locations without losing cohesive service analytics, monitoring or analysis.

Another feature within Zyrion's architecture, the Config Database, creates a warm standby record of changes across the infrastructure, so that DGE-collected information is preserved centrally in a rough equivalent to a CMDB. In this way, information is preserved from DGEs that have been temporarily disabled, while in parallel a DGE that may temporarily lose connectivity can continue to monitor locally and then update the ConfigDB when connectivity is restored. The ConfigDB also contains a permission matrix and a list of users and groups, including definitions for customers and departments as applicable. This allows for the creation of multi-tenant, constituency-sensitive access to information, so that network, systems, applications, executive, and business or customer users have, to use Zyrion's words, their own "virtual NMS."

EMA Perspective

EMA has spoken with a number of Zyrion customers over the years, and they have been typically happy with Traverse's ease of deployment and administration, its advanced service management features, and its support for unique application types. Zyrion's largest current customer deployment includes 7,000 devices, in which Traverse is monitoring 400,000 metrics every five minutes using fifteen DGEs in multiple datacenters across the world.

Current customer comments shared through Zyrion have reinforced Zyrion's advantages in monitoring custom or homegrown applications with a lot of kudos to its API. Traverse's service container approach also gets consistent mention – both because of its capability to support real business alignment, but also because of its intuitive ease of administration. Time to value and scalability also feature in many current customer comments. It is typical for Zyrion's customers to monitor their entire IT infrastructure including UPSs, HVACs, and environmental sensors using Traverse.

Zyrion customer perspectives are not only consistent in themselves, they are also consistent with Traverse's design point, which has undergone two decades of pragmatic evolution in largely mid-tier enterprises and organizations. It is heartening to see a growth in breadth of functionality – e.g., support for networked application flows via NetFlow integration, or power-supply monitoring – combined with a core architecture that is both resilient and versatile. There is no way to say that a given product is categorically right for a generic set of buyers, but if you are seeking cost effective control of complex application services in a challenging, budget conscious environments, and want an investment that can scale as you grow, Zyrion should definitely be on your short list.

About EMA

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