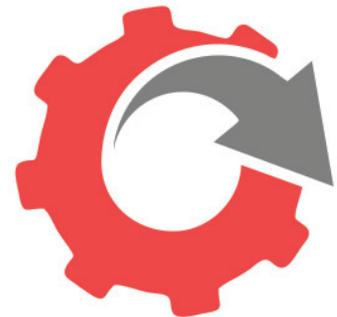
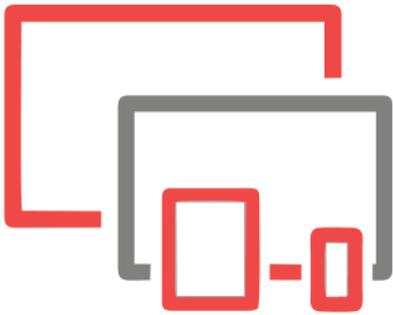


The Ultimate Guide to Automating Your IT Operations



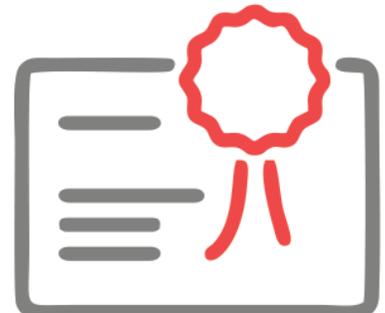
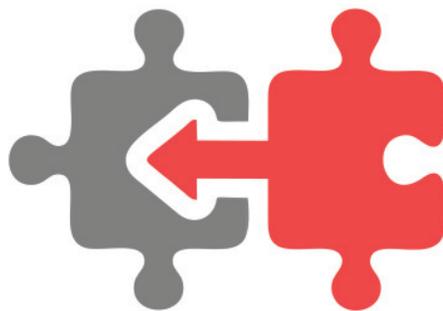
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According to a survey by Spiceworks, IT budgets have remained flat in 2016 and will continue to do so in 2017. This comes as no surprise given the general macroeconomic situation. But the pressure on CIOs continues to build with increasing onus on them to drive innovation within the organization. Given this bimodal challenge of increasing agility and innovation with flatlining budgets, CIOs are left with no choice but to make their IT operations leaner and translate those savings into innovative solutions.

In this white paper, we will explore the reasons why IT automation has become an essential part of every CIO's strategy, what aspects of their operations can be automated and how they should go about it.



Why Automation?

We get it. Every business wants to be digital. They want to be part of the burgeoning sharing economy, the one-click sale economy. They want to be the connected enterprise, the agile enterprise. While this might be easy for a fresh upstart building an organization from the ground up, enterprise organizations with legacy cannot just flip a switch and expect to transform overnight into a modern organization. Unless it is Suneratech's SWITCH framework that is.

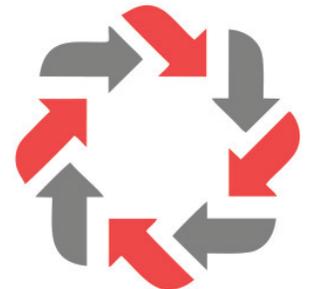
The SWITCH framework by Suneratech is a practical guide for legacy enterprises to transition to digital enterprises without incurring the risk of disrupting their existing business. The framework has 3 switches:

1. Automate
2. Migrate
3. Innovate

Per the SWITCH framework, Step 1 (automate) is an enabler for Step 2 (migrate), and Step 2 is an enabler for Step 3 (innovate). Enablement of the next step happens for the following reasons:



1. Cost savings which can be invested into the next step
2. Agility induced into the culture which braces the organization to perform like a modern enterprise
3. A technology foundation that can be leveraged by the needs of the next step



So let us recap. For an organization to transform into a digital enterprise, it needs to setup a foundation of apt technologies, transition its workforce into a new culture and find the budgets required for innovation. This is possible with the sequential process of automating IT operations, migrating technologies to a digital stack (SMACIT) and then building innovative solutions with the newfound budget, the new work ethos and the new technology stack.

The first step to make all this possible is automation. Over the years, IT operations have expanded to become voracious budget eaters – lethargic and slow-moving, much to the chagrin of business users that are dependent on IT for their daily operations. IT operations are today inflated, redundant and dispensable. And business users have realized that, giving birth to shadow IT. So, CIOs are at crossroads today – either to embrace the changing landscape and become successors to the CEOs by driving innovation, or to stubbornly maintain the status quo and let the mind-boggling statistic of CIOs being replaced every 3 years catch up with them.



What should you be automating?

Here is what we have so far. We have established that automation of IT operations is necessary for a business to transform into a digital enterprise. We have also established that there is a lot of inefficiency in the IT operations system that can easily be automated. Now let us try and break down IT operations to identify the key aspects that can be automated.

To automate an IT operation and drive efficiency, we need to be discerning about the operations we pick. Here are the top characteristics of IT operations that are primed for automation:

1. It is repetitive with a high frequency
2. It is resource intensive
3. It is a major bottleneck

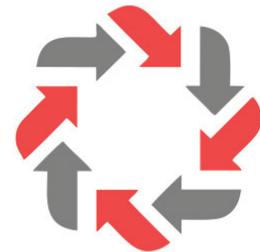


Now that we have established the criteria to automate an IT operation, let us look at those operations that can be automated to make the maximum difference to an IT organization:

1. Testing Automation

Testing is one of the most laborious and time-consuming aspects of an IT operations cycle. To boot, it is repetitive and needs to be conducted with every release cycle. With release cycles getting shorter and security concerns getting bigger, it has become imperative that testing is automated to ensure that there is no compromise on either quality, security or speed.

Given the magnitude of testing effort required in any organization, this problem should have been solved. Yet it isn't. This is primarily because most testing automation tools have a very short lifespan. They are built for testing a certain release or upgrade and they cease to be relevant after that change is done. There is a need for a platform, as opposed to a tool, that can automate testing across various technologies and several release cycles.



2. Application Maintenance Automation

Another IT operation that sucks up resources and delays production cycles is application maintenance. While vendors have been getting more aggressive in changes and updates, application maintenance hasn't been able to catch up because of the labor-intensive processes. Most organizations today are several releases behind their vendors because of this, and are exposed to some serious risk as a result.

The key challenge with automating application maintenance has been versatility. While application maintenance is a repetitive process, the nature of changes varies from one change to another. To ensure that application maintenance is truly automated, the system needs to be able to learn from past changes and automatically apply them when they occur in future.

3. DevOps Automation

The third big bottleneck is devops. From provisioning to development, testing and finally deployment, a lot of aspects of change management are repetitive and can easily be automated to make the cycle faster, smoother and most importantly, safer. By automating devops, you would be able to eliminate rollout failures, delays and budget over-runs.



Conclusion

Automating IT operations is a foregone conclusion that needs to be acted upon immediately. If you are not yet on the bandwagon, then you are too late. Automation helps in freeing up budget for more innovative solutions, while laying the technological foundation and creating an agile culture within your organization. This will equip you to migrate to a digital stack and then drive innovation.

It is important to assess the components of your IT operations that will deliver best ROI through automation. The usual suspects are testing, application maintenance and devops. While there are a handful of automation products in the market, watch out for those that are one-and-done deals versus those that can serve you in the long haul.

Suneratech's proprietary AutoMas is a machine-learning, predictive, self-healing platform that automates the application maintenance cycle and gets even more efficient with time. Another platform, DOX, not only helps in automating your devops cycle, but also in migrating from on-premise to the cloud. Finally, the testing automation platform, Cloudtestr, is a versatile platform that works across testing scenarios in different technologies and will stay relevant for every release cycle.

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