

BUILDING VS. BUYING INTEGRATION



Introduction

IT organizations need control over their data center systems. Systems need to talk to each other, even though they were never designed to communicate in these intricate ways. Whether an IT shop is trying to connect a System Monitor from HP to a Help Desk system from Remedy, this type of integration was not built into either of these products. The IT department has a choice, "do we build a solution or a buy a solution?"

Scripting or Coding a Solution

Building has the benefit of full control over the systems that you are automating and integrating. Those knowledgeable in the target systems can tune the automation to match their requirements.

Building an integration solution can be a difficult task for a burdened IT staff. Scripting or programming a solution from scratch requires deep knowledge of the system that you are connecting with as well as access to correct tools to manipulate that system. For example, one system may present their programming interfaces with web services, while others only use command line, and still others use some kind of C-accessible API. Complex and undocumented programming interfaces will take a month or more to decipher, then even more time to develop and test a working solution just for that single system. Each integration solution with another system doubles that complexity. The IT department quickly becomes a software development shop as a necessity for implementation.

Dedicating IT resources to this kind of task can leave your data center understaffed. More complex integration and automation requires more resources from different areas of expertise. When this staff is needed to solve some immediate and urgent problem in the data center, they are immediately pulled off the task and repurposed to fire-fighting. This can

end up in a long development cycle for your integration or may lead to abandonment of the project altogether.

Bringing in Consultants

Often an IT organization will call consultants to perform the integration. This prevents the complexity of maintaining a home-grown solution, but adds different kinds of burdens. The initial fee of a consultant may seem very attractive however, when something changes in the data center that requires an update to the automation the consultant must be called in again at the same or higher fee to perform those updates. The reliance of a consultant becomes a single point of failure for the organization.


Sometimes IT personnel attempt to alter the scripts or code that the consulting firm has put together and end up breaking the entire process. Then they try to fix it to the point where it works, but any future change is extremely fragile and is not done without significant consideration. This leaves the business in a worse situation where they are maintaining the solution themselves, but it is as difficult to add or change a process as it was to create it in the first place.

Buying Opalis

Buying a solution from Opalis has the benefit of encapsulated knowledge. Opalis has taken the time to understand all the systems that you are integrating in the data center and has built a single tool to join all those pieces together. The person building the automation does not need to be an expert in the systems that they are integrating. They only need to know the process that they are automating that involves each of those systems.

Opalis Integration Server has been designed to make it easy to build Policies that define how systems communicate. The configuration that is required is to define what data is going in and out of a target system. Your automation builders are shielded from the complexity of the target





system while still having control on how data is transferred between each system.

Policies are easy to read, update, and maintain. There is no scripting involved and all the documentation necessary is in the Policy or documentation. If the builder of Policy leaves, then her replacement will easily pick up where she left off.