

CA Advisor

BUSINESS SERVICE MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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Automate the Fulfillment of Business Services With Service Catalog

By John Ulery



Some years ago, I was invited to pitch one of CA's software packages to the Chief Information Officer (CIO) of a major tire manufacturer. My team was excited to talk about our product — how it worked and how was best of breed.

The CIO said, "That's great. But by the end of the meeting, what I'll need to hear is how your product will help us sell more tires."

It's an excellent challenge: "Don't tell me what you can do for my IT department. Tell me what you can do for my *business*." IT needs to do more than just continue to support network, infrastructure and applications solutions. As IT transitions into being a service provider, it needs to leverage operational effectiveness to directly support tactical requirements for strategic initiatives. Technology investments must be made to directly support key strategic initiatives of the business.

That's a cornerstone of Enterprise IT Management (EITM) — to unify and simplify complex IT environments for greater business results. A critical component of EITM is the Unified Service Model (USM) which provides a complete 360-degree view into the technology, assets, people, projects and processes supporting any given service, and the relationships among these components.

Alignment is based on asking, "What is the importance of this service to the business?" The answer in the case of the tire manufacturer may be that it allows the business to complete 25 percent more e-commerce transactions during peak sales cycles.

When presenting available services to business users in a way that facilitates their day-to-day jobs, implementing an application like CA Service Catalog (previously known as CA Unicenter® Service Catalog) can organize and automate the fulfillment of services. From an end user perspective, it simplifies the administration of and access to available IT services. The key word in this solution is *services*, not just products. In the past, self-serve software that allowed users to buy technology goods was often a standalone proposition. The approval chain, if represented at all, was rudimentary. Specialized options that could assist in making the product or service more efficient would be rare. It remains common for service request, approval and fulfillment to be an inconsistent collection of tasks and activities. Unfortunately most service fulfillment examples are in silos, independent of the business requirement that is driving the service request.

CA Service Catalog works as part of the USM by representing service offerings in business terms, associated with business priorities. For example, say a Sales Executive needs a Blackberry. CA Service Catalog gives the executive a choice of Blackberry options. It checks to see if any are available in inventory to be redeployed. It calculates costs based on that availability

and chosen options. It automates the approval chain and opens change-order tickets to activate the device. The assigned IT staff then syncs it to the local mail depository and configures it with customized options requested by the sales executive. Along the way, it provides the executive status notification. Once the product is received and the service request is closed, then the data associated with the process is available for Service Level Agreement (SLA) reporting. CA Service Catalog implements USM by aligning each service task to a single vision of the IT service that reflects the business requirement — delivering the Blackberry as needed.

Centralizing service request and fulfillment not only simplifies and unifies business interactions, but provides a foundation of data for business planning and investment decision support.

Sometimes it's easy to overlook one of the first mandates of EITM: to speak the language of business. That's why products like CA Service Catalog can be so critical. They are

designed to communicate with users clearly and to be easy to use.

More than a functional front-end, business has also long wanted the tasks associated with service requests to be automated through one product. CA Service Catalog does that while illustrating another important tenet of EITM: teaching the business to ask for what it needs, not just what it thinks is possible or available.

Centralizing service request and fulfillment not only simplifies and unifies business interactions with IT as a service provider, but also provides a foundation of data for business planning and investment decision support. With a managed service environment, the organization can clearly understand who is using what services, what were the costs and what was the quality of services provided.

Products like CA Service Catalog enable the business and IT to work cooperatively, to meet the goals of business. In other words, they help sell more tires.

To learn more about CA Service Catalog, [click here](#).

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