

Using Methodology to Take Away the Madness

FNT's Patrick Buech, Head of Business Line Service Management, looks at the company's innovative concept to delivering through the supply chain

Q: What are the challenges facing the ICT provider market today?

A: What we are seeing is thanks to digitization, companies such as Google, Apple, Amazon and Uber are using new business models to enter traditional markets, where they are changing the rules forever. The agility of these companies is achieved through a strong focus on customer service combined with systematic deployment of the latest IT technologies and platforms.

The existing players in these markets require a new set of tactics to compete with these "digital natives". Most Service Providers have the problem that they are not on par with digital natives who use 21st century technology as

they are encumbered with 20th century legacy technology. With complex hybrid IT they have to make their IT infrastructure more flexible and agile to meet market challenges and changes.

Q: How fast can I get a product to market? How can I simplify reducing man hours, outsourced services, data management and customer relationship management? How can I make that process cost effective?

A: The first thing we can observe – and this applies across all sectors – is the transition from the conventional, well established build-to-order model to a more product-oriented approach, i.e., from a purely reactive posture to a proactive

Challenges

COST

The increasing complexity and the assurance of agreed quality standards increase operating costs tremendously.

Business Analyst ICT - Telecommunication Service Provider

TIME-2-DELIVER

I can give you a private cloud in 5 minutes, if you can just give me 100 days notice.

Director of Cloud & Hosting – Managed Service Provider

STANDARDIZATION

In our business customer sector we provide 1000 services for exactly 1000 customers. If we gain customer No. 1001, we will provide the 1001st service.

Head of IT Service Management – Internet Provider and Network Operator



AGILITY

My sales should have a truck with pre-defined products on it.

Director of Cloud & Hosting – Managed Service Provider

TRANSPARENCY

My sales need to sit down with a team of 5 architects to design a solution every time our sales wants to sell something."

Director of Cloud & Hosting – Managed Service Provider

one. As part of this transition, the product catalog is moving center stage and becoming a major driver when it comes to competing and succeeding in markets that are being transformed by digitization. We need to move away from being in a continuous situation of trying to reinvent the wheel.

To use a quote from a director of a managed service provider which illustrates the current challenges very well, "I can give you a private cloud in 5 minutes, if you can just give me 100 days notice."

Q: So could we talk through how FNT is making this transition possible?

A: As mentioned before, the product and service catalog needs to move center stage, and as a result it serves as a centralized data hub for products and services, supplying information to wherever it is required, be it an end user portal, a service monitor, ERP system, CMDB, or helpdesk. This catalog-driven model covers the entire end-to-end process and provides a central database for all participating roles.

However, the product catalog alone is not the only thing we need. Taking a product-oriented approach requires the adoption of industrial production principles, such as standardization, modularization, version management and variable vertical integration. This can only be achieved when the product catalog is created with the aid of a consistent methodology that allows providers to plan the production of their services in the same way carmakers plan the building of their cars.

Using this type of methodology is particularly important in product management, since the resources required to deliver a service are usually a hybrid mix of conventional, outsourced and cloud-based IT. Through careful modularization and disassembly of a product into its component parts, and through the application of variant management, it is possible to bridge the gap between

marketable units and the resources required to make and deliver them. This enables product managers to assemble new products quickly and easily based on ready-made modules – just like using Lego – and adapt existing products to suit changing market conditions.

A consistent methodology is especially important when combining classic IT services with telecommunications services and then marketing the finished article as a single, standalone product. Without such a methodology, it is utterly impossible to combine multiple service components from these disparate industries to create an integrated offering.

The tried-and-proven bE_Method® from FNT's consulting brand bluEDGE is a best-practice methodology that provides the ideal platform for building product catalogs using industrial principles. It also serves as the basis for the standardized FNT ServicePlanet software package, which enables users to generate new services by means of rule-based instantiation based on predefined products. FNT ServicePlanet not only fulfils the central role of a product catalog, it is also fundamental to the entire service tool landscape through the service catalog that is generated. Provisioning is controlled with the aid of status models and workflow engines. Functions such as lifecycles and versioning, as well as offer and contract management, enable easy management of the product and service catalog as a coherent, integrated whole.

For instance, if we take the example of one client who had over 147 different types of server configurations in the catalog. Through our methodology which leverages the usage of variant management we were able to reduce this to just three configurable items that covered all of their needs and client expectations.

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// when transparency matters.

The Lego Analogy

