

Changing Job Schedulers Is Easier Than You Think



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Executive Summary

What if you needed different automobiles for various transportation uses? Imagine needing one car for doing your shopping, another for transporting children to school, a third car for commuting to work, a fourth car for your weekend activities, and another one for vacationing. You would have to purchase, insure, license, fuel, maintain, and park all of these vehicles. The extra work and expense required to juggle multiple automobiles would make this an inefficient and cumbersome way to meet your transportation needs.

Luckily, one automobile can be used for many different purposes. Likewise, **using a single workload automation tool is a much more efficient way to meet your batch processing needs than by employing multiple job schedulers.** And converting your scheduler to a workload automation tool can be less complicated than you think. How did organizations wind up with so many multiple job schedulers? Over time, many organizations installed additional schedulers for specific applications, either because they wanted to support a specific application or they inherited the scheduler through an acquisition. Each scheduler is different from the other, and in some cases what you end up with are many islands of

expertise—people who are experts in one specific scheduling product but are unable to back up or otherwise support the other scheduling team(s). Therefore, many companies have redundant scheduling teams in their environments. In fact, some organizations today have as many as eight or more schedulers in use.

This quagmire of scheduling tools—combined with the increasing volume and complexity of batch jobs—is overwhelming help desks, extending resolution time, endangering service level agreements (SLAs), and increasing the cost of batch processing to the business. To relieve the strain, many IT organizations have adopted an enterprise scheduling strategy: They have switched from multiple, task specific schedulers to a single enterprise workload automation scheduler.

With an enterprise workload automation scheduler, data centers can reduce costs, improve their ability to meet SLAs, and get top down visibility and control of the whole enterprise from a single product. They can also benefit from timesaving and error eliminating automation, faster problem resolution, and a reduced batch window.



WORRY-FREE CONVERSION

Many organizations are still afraid to make the switch to a single enterprise workload automation scheduler. Why? Because of three big fears about conversion: the risk of outages, the assumed difficulty of converting custom code, and the risk of losing staff or having to retrain them. However, conversions today are simpler and safer than in previous years, and the benefits are vast. BMC has the expertise, tools, and methodology to guide you through a successful conversion. ¹ Read on to learn how to minimize the risk and maximize the benefits of converting to enterprise scheduling.

1. Minimize the risk of outages

Some organizations hold back on conversions because of concerns about outages, broken SLAs, and business interruptions. These fears are not unfounded. You can't perform conversions effectively without having an effective methodology, the necessary expertise, and the right conversion tools. The conversion tools should be created by developers who know how to build scalable, "bullet proof" products. Without these tools, you limit your chances of success. You can reduce risk by leveraging BMC's expertise, technology, and methodology, which have been used to perform thousands of successful, trouble free conversions.

Conversions today are simpler and safer than in previous years, and the benefits are vast.

It's important to convert as few applications at a time as possible. During each conversion, you need to run the old and new schedulers in parallel until you are confident enough to cut over the application(s) to the new enterprise workload automation scheduler. Problems are isolated and quickly solved—and later prevented during the conversion of other applications. And your staff can ease into the new paradigm as the conversion proceeds, one step at a time.

2. Automate and eliminate custom code

Some organizations may be concerned that their schedulers are too customized to convert. They worry that the customized functions will not operate correctly after conversion. This challenge can be addressed by carefully unraveling the custom code, learning what it was intended to accomplish and why, and identifying its dependencies and business impacts. In nearly all cases, the enterprise workload automation solution should be able to natively perform the function for which custom code was designed, eliminating the need for custom code. This removes worries about what happens when the single expert who supports the custom code leaves or retires. In some cases, a comprehensive, pre conversion assessment may reveal that the original purpose of the function is no longer useful, and the code can be retired.

3. Allay the fear of losing staff

Some organizations are concerned that the conversion may eliminate staff or require costly retraining. For example, a department may have been running a scheduler for 20 years without the scheduling vendor making many changes. People in the department are experts in that tool, so the department may be uneasy because its experts could become novices after the conversion.

This issue can be addressed when the staff understands how the new enterprise workload automation scheduler will add value to their jobs. They can be shown how they can avoid a lot of tedious work with a workload automation solution and will no longer need to cut and paste information from their schedulers into Visio or Excel. They will no longer have to spend a whole day or more trying to figure out how a failure happened and what its upstream and downstream effects might be.

As the conversion progresses, the staff will begin to recognize that an enterprise workload automation tool will make their lives much easier by eliminating parts of their job they dislike. They can become more productive and valuable because they will be released from their silos: they can work as a team, back each other up, and become more flexible and promotable. Staff can focus more of their time and energy on higher quality consultative work that improves the business, instead of spending 20 to 40 percent of their time and energy on redundant, rudimentary work. Enterprise workload automation scheduling allows them to take on more of the strategic work. So as more applications come into the environment, you can take on the additional workload without increasing headcount. It's a way to continue to control costs while also increasing the level of service delivered to the business.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

With the right process, technology, and vendor, your workload automation solution can begin delivering benefits when the first application(s) are converted—and keep delivering benefits while the rest are converted. A gradual, application-by-application process prevents the biggest time-waster of all: total failure.

Before any conversion, your vendor should provide a free assessment delivered by their consultants—with no obligation to buy any product—to any organization that is running more than one scheduler. The assessment should include a guide to improving efficiency and controlling costs just by applying best practices to the organization's current environment.

The consultants should interview the management, the people who perform the scheduling, the applications people who are affected by the scheduling, and the support people. They should build a blueprint of how scheduling is deployed in the organization's specific environment. They should identify the risks and how to manage them. The assessment should include a comprehensive risk profile and conversion strategy.

In addition, the assessment should identify the efficiencies and cost-savings to be realized simply by following best practices in that specific environment. Finally, it should identify the additional efficiencies and cost savings to be gained from deploying the workload automation solution. Assessments can be completed in a matter of days.

It is important to follow a detailed methodology for conversions, such as a six-phase delivery product management process, from planning to deployment.

THE CONVERSION PROCESS

It is important to follow a detailed methodology for conversions, such as a six-phase delivery product management process, from planning to deployment. Most of BMC's 2,000+ enterprise workload automation scheduling customers converted from one or more schedulers. In fact, 90 percent of current Control-M customers have converted from other schedulers to BMC.

The workload automation solutions should use purpose built conversion utilities developed and maintained by your vendor's development staff. As a result, much of the manual work that was once part of a conversion can now be automated.

Three reasons why you need an enterprise workload automation solution

- 1. To attain a single enterprise view across all platforms** — This reduces complexity, increases the span of control, smoothly integrates most applications, and easily supports new applications.
- 2. To achieve scalability** — Departmental scheduling solutions are not as scalable as enterprise solutions and will quickly slow down or generate catastrophic errors if you add more jobs than they are capable of handling. This issue is compounded if you try consolidating schedulers to a non-enterprise scheduler.
- 3. To link job flows to business initiatives** — This enables you to look at all the job flows across all departments, determine which ones are critical to the business, effectively monitor those flows to meet your SLAs, and quickly find the root cause of any problem and resolve it before you hinder your ability to meet an SLA or otherwise negatively impact your business.

The enterprise workload automation scheduler should be able to forecast when jobs will run, make sure they run when they're supposed to, and report whether they ran as scheduled and on the appropriate machine. These built-in features make it easier to convert from any product to a workload automation solution.

A best practice to reduce risk is the "build, validate, and deploy" stage of conversion. This involves building schedules that will be cut over, based on the applications that will be converted. It also entails identifying the important applications and performing the conversions, and then running the existing scheduler in parallel until cutting over to the application.

As mentioned earlier, you should proceed by converting as few applications as possible at one time. If a problem occurs, it can be localized and quickly identified, then fixed and turned around immediately, which prevents problems from occurring during the conversion of other applications. This gradual approach also helps you to realize immediate value out of the enterprise workload automation solution, as well as gain experience with the product.

Avoid the “big bang” approach—converting everything at once, turning off the old product, while turning on the new one. This can cause problems if the converted applications don’t work as expected.

FOUR RED FLAGS THAT INDICATE A NEED TO CONVERT SOON

How do you know when it’s time to convert? There are four red flags, or signs of severe inefficiencies in scheduling:

1. You are running multiple schedulers in your environment (costs increase exponentially with the number of schedulers).
2. You have difficulty meeting your SLAs.
3. Your help desk is opening a large number of scheduling related trouble tickets.
4. It takes a long time to track down errors and analyze the upstream and downstream impact of those errors.

LOW RISK, BIG REWARD

The time to make the change is now. If you have multiple schedulers, it is almost certain that you’re wasting money and struggling to understand whether you are meeting SLAs. Moving from multiple schedulers to a true enterprise workload automation solution with an enterprise-class scheduler is much easier than you think. It will save you the pain of over-allocated resources. It will be better for the business because you can visualize and manage your workloads across the business and tie them to business needs, providing the enterprise-wide perspective that your organization requires.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about Control-M Workload Automation, visit bmc.com/control-m

- 1 BMC has helped more than 2,000 organizations migrate seven million job definitions to the Control-M workload automation solution.
- 2 Before any conversion, BMC consultants run a free assessment. BMC also offers a free assessment — with no obligation to buy any product — to any organization that is running more than one scheduler.

BMC is a global leader in innovative software solutions that enable businesses to transform into digital enterprises for the ultimate competitive advantage. Our Digital Enterprise Management solutions are designed to fast track digital business from mainframe to mobile to cloud and beyond.

BMC – Bring IT to Life

BMC digital IT transforms 82 percent of the Fortune 500.



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