bmc

Thought Leadership White Paper

Five Steps to Changing Your Scheduler to an Enterprise Workload Automation Solution

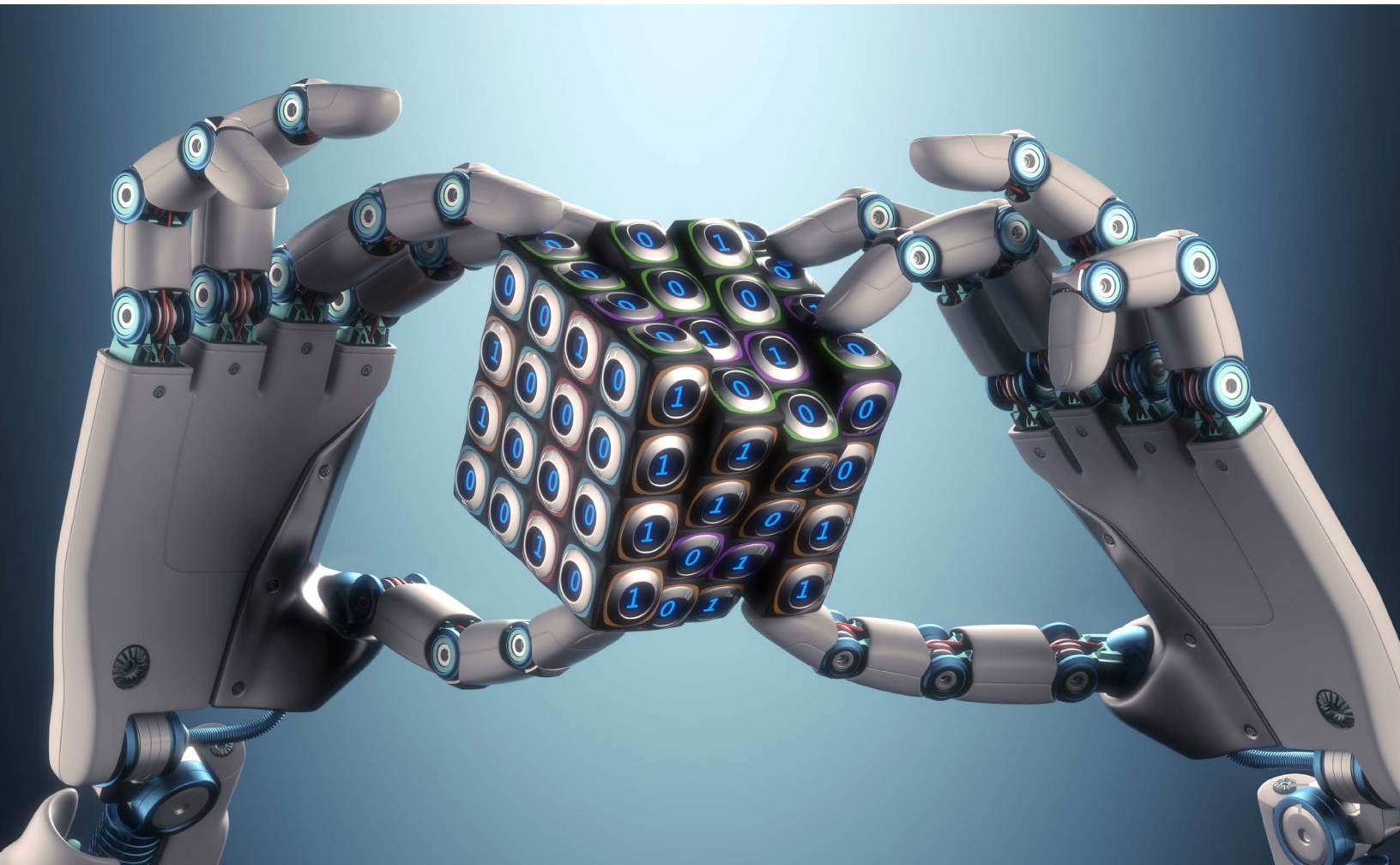
Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Do you have a patchwork of different schedulers, some provided by vendors and others based on home-built scripts? Because these different solutions require different skill sets — and administrators — they may not be as efficient as you would like and could be increasing your administrative costs. More importantly, when problems occur, it's difficult to gauge the overall business impact, and even more difficult to determine the root cause of the problems.

For these reasons, it is a good idea to replace an assortment of schedulers with an enterprise approach — one in which scheduling work across the entire enterprise is handled by a single, cohesive solution that provides top down visibility and control. By switching to an enterprise workload automation scheduler, you can achieve the benefits of increased productivity, lower costs, and higher quality service. You can also benefit from timesaving and error-eliminating automation, faster problem resolution, and a reduced batch window.

Bringing unity to scheduling may seem overwhelming, but if you approach the task one step at a time, you can convert your current set of schedulers to an enterprise workload automation solution while both containing costs and reducing risk. BMC Software has worked with IT organizations in thousands of data centers worldwide in their efforts to unify their scheduling and achieve enterprise workload automation. Through this experience, we have evolved a proven, five step approach to conversion. [1]



STEP 1. ASSESS THE CURRENT STATE

In many organizations, the decision has been made, usually at a high level, to unify the scheduling environment on an enterprise workload automation solution. Clear and compelling business reasons drove that decision. But then, things came to a standstill. Why? Because most organizations don't have a clear and complete picture of their current environment. Each group has a piece of the picture, but no group has the complete view. This can have a negative impact on planning and achieving your business objectives. The first step, therefore, is to create that complete picture so you can gain a clear understanding of how workload automation is implemented and used across your enterprise. A complete picture helps de mystify the conversion process and enables you to move the process forward. Keep in mind that the overall goal of the project is to provide all scheduled work and business processes using a single enterprise workload automation solution. Consequently, you have to know all the work and business processes that need to be converted, so your picture should include the following:

- All the scheduled work currently in place
- The business processes that this scheduled work relies on
- All stakeholders in the process
- All costs associated with scheduling
- All issues that have arisen because of the shortcomings of the current environment
- The resulting impact on the business

To obtain the full picture, you need to conduct an enterprise workload value assessment. Look at all scheduled work and supporting business processes across the data center. Also look for ancillary applications that feed into and depend on them to operate smoothly and reliably. Some schedulers are more difficult to discover. For example, there may be SQL scripts as well as native Unix jobs, database jobs, or Windows batch jobs that administrators have created. The bottom line: You can't accomplish a complete conversion of your current scheduling environment unless you know all the scheduled work and business processes that make up that environment.

The first step, is to create that complete picture so you can gain a clear understanding of how workload automation is implemented and used across your enterprise.

STEP 2. MAP YOUR ROUTE

Once you understand your current state, it's time to determine where you want to go and how you want to get there. To create a meaningful road map, you need to consider what efficiencies you want to achieve and look at ways to ensure that the solution gives application owners clear and comprehensive visibility into their application environments.

This step includes the selection of the underlying enterprise workload automation solution on which to base your enterprise system. There are several major requirements the solution should meet, such as the following:

- Dynamically adapt enterprise workloads to the availability of physical and virtual resources
- Align workloads with business priorities and service level agreements (SLAs)
- Simplify installation and facilitate maintenance and updates via agentless implementation

A single portal through which all users can gain access is essential. This implies a user interface that presents information to users in a way that is meaningful to them according to their roles. IT users should be able to perform detailed technical tasks, while business users should be able to initiate jobs or check status without having to understand the underlying IT infrastructure.

STEP 3. OBTAIN BUY-IN

One of the biggest obstacles to successfully completing a project of this scope is aversion to business risk. Senior management often focuses on the potential negative outcomes that could impact the business. In addition, the groups directly affected by the conversion may fear adverse impacts on their budgets or their jobs. You must minimize these fears and obtain the buy-in of both management and the affected groups.

In Step 1, you identified the costs and risks of the current environment. In Step 2, you created a road map and a vision that established the business value of the conversion. You showed, for example, how consolidation increases productivity so that each administrator can scale as the volume of work increases. Be sure you make management aware of the business value you expect to derive from the conversion to help gain buy-in.

With respect to the groups affected by the conversion, involve them in the project to give them a sense of ownership. Make sure they understand why the project is being undertaken. Clearly convey the business value they will realize and how their scheduling pieces fit into the overall project. Be sure these groups understand the road map and what is expected of them in executing the project. "Lunch-and-learn" sessions are an excellent forum for imparting knowledge of the project to stake holders. Above all, make sure people understand how the project will directly benefit them, such as enabling them to take on bigger, better, and more strategically important responsibilities.

STEP 4. IDENTIFY AND MITIGATE RISKS

In this step, you carefully review the road map created in Step 2 to identify the risks involved in the conversion. Be sure to identify business risks, technological risks, and political risks.

You now must create a plan to mitigate the risks, especially those with high business impact. For example, you may need to increase the headcount of those involved in the conversion to ensure on-time completion of the project. Or you may need to do more education around the value and use of the new enterprise workload automation with the affected groups to bring them up to speed. Identifying the risks up front avoids costly pitfalls during the conversion. Here again, involve the stakeholders and solicit their input on identifying and mitigating the risks.

STEP 5. CONSIDER CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

Finally, you need to understand what your contractual obligations are with your vendors. You discovered all these tools and their associated contracts in Step 1. Now you need to assess the implications of these contracts with respect to conversion. For example, you need to understand costs and renewal dates.

Armed with this information, you can make intelligent decisions related to phasing out tools and transferring their functions to the enterprise workload automation solution. Give highest priority to converting the tools that are closest to their renewal dates, and then convert the remaining tools as their contracts expire.

In some cases, it may be advantageous to phase out tools even though they are still under maintenance contract. That's because the benefits of conversion may more than offset the remaining cost of the maintenance contract.

MOVE INTO THE FAST LANE

Converting your workload automation environment creates substantial business value. You'll no longer have to maintain multiple workload automation tools from multiple vendors. You'll have a comprehensive and accurate view of scheduled work and business processes across the enterprise. Because this view encompasses the upstream and downstream connections, you can readily detect and assess the impact of issues. When a problem occurs, this view makes it easier to spot a problem, zero in on its root cause, and make sure you understand business priorities when addressing issues. The result is shorter mean time to repair and higher quality service.

Give highest priority to converting the tools that are closest to their renewal dates, and then convert the remaining tools as their contracts expire.

You'll no longer need to maintain different administrator skill sets to operate the various tools. This lowers training costs and gives IT far more flexibility in assigning people to scheduling functions. The result is higher administrator efficiency and productivity, which allows for scalability, so you can take on additional scheduling jobs without increasing the number of administrators.

If you do not have a single enterprise workload automation solution, you are most likely wasting time and money. Converting to such a solution greatly improves your service delivery while lowering costs. For more information about BMC services for helping organizations move to a workload automation solution, visit http://www.bmc.com/it-services/workload-automation-services.html

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about BMC Control-M, please visit **bmc.com/control-m**

1 BMC has helped more than 2,000 organizations migrate seven million job definitions to the BMC Control-M workload automation solution.

212192