

BMC MyIT: Consumer-cool for Business apps

BMC Software recently announced and made available MyIT for general use. In response to the trend toward the consumerization of IT, MyIT was designed as a simple, intuitive app that provides end users easy access to enterprise IT services any-time and anywhere from any device. MyIT improves IT operations efficiency as users submit service requests, retrieve information on enterprise assets, create information libraries about company resources, schedule appointments and more.

That the response and uptake by the market has been swift, wide-spread and enthusiastic should come as no surprise. Even as many enterprise IT professionals show little interest in developing apps¹, users are becoming more and more accustomed to (as BMC describes it) 'friction-less access' to a wide-ranging variety of productivity enhancing, easy-to-use apps in their private lives. And, this interest is reflected in their professional lives as device variety increases and unmanaged, unofficial productivity enhancing apps make their way into the enterprise. All too often, the outcome is an increase in problems because the apps don't meet minimal corporate standards for security, robustness, etc. Meanwhile, employees fail to fully utilize existing enterprise tools designed to automate access and delivery to IT services.

MyIT combines the ease and familiarity of interface and access of today's consumer apps with the stability, security and strengths of the enterprise IT infrastructure. It contains functionality that either directly or through optional extensions addresses major pain points that result from today's most active driving forces in technology, including the trend to consumerization, the opportunities and benefits of BYOD, the mobile enterprise, the flexibility of cloud computing and the industrialization of IT operations. The following describes why and how this is happening.

Why MyIT?

An on-going enterprise challenge has been the high cost of delivering high-quality IT services to employees. Costs driven, in part, by repetitive requests for low-level, time-intensive and resource consuming tasks, such as password resets, login restores, etc. Adding to the challenge is a growing dependency on an increasingly diverse set of devices (a result of BYOD) and staff mobility.

The situation is made worse as executives, managers and employees compare their interactive enterprise IT experience with what is occurring as they use consumer apps in their private lives. Consumer-oriented apps evolve rapidly to deliver a high quality, consistent end-user experience across multiple devices. They deliver a wide variety of consumer services that improve and increase over time and in response to consumer demands. Consider: location sensitive results to on-line searches, Passport app-like services for ticketing, purchasing, etc. This is the consumerization of the front-end.

¹ At a recent IT industry event, a speaker asked the audience of enterprise IT pros 'who thinks we (IT) need to develop enterprise apps?' – Not one person (out of approximately 150) raised their hand!



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Contrast this with the repeated frustration of users as they attempt to solve a problem through the typical enterprise IT self-service portal. Submitting a problem for resolution requires repeating the same data at each level of escalation as the problem bounces up until it reaches the right level of expertise or authority necessary for resolution. Frustration worsens with the extended, poor-response times endured as requests for new or enhanced services involves days if not weeks to complete.

Finally, there are the IT departments struggling to provide high-quality services and timely responses to their users, maintain and manage infrastructure and create new services with budgets that barely grow - if they grow at all - in the face of rising complexity and demand. The solution lies in combining consumerized front-end service access with highly resilient, industrialized back-end services to meet enterprise and corporate requirements. BMC's MyIT does exactly that.

The content and value of the MyIT product

BMC conducted an extended pre-announcement field trial of MyIT that included select customers, as well as BMC staff. As a result, the features and options available have been tested and proven to be attractive and of significant value to the enterprise user, IT staff, IT operations and business functions. Let's look at some of the features and functionality that make MyIT attractive as a result of its design goals and field testing.

MyIT removes the demonstrated reluctance of employees to use typical IT service, web-portal driven, designs. Its friendly, consumer-like interface with simple, intuitive buttons leverages the proven attractiveness of existing consumer-oriented interfaces of the iPhone iPad that are easy to understand. Employees can, in BMC's words, "have easy accesses to IT services anytime, anywhere and from any device". Simplifying the delivery of IT services, i.e. "reducing IT friction," provides users a compelling online experience that is attractive to and improves the productivity of both IT and the employee.

MyIT is designed to seamlessly fit in with today's contemporary styles of mobile working. It includes the ability to provide services, such as location and availability of offices, conference rooms, printers, etc. that is specific to where the user is currently located. Also, it can proactively inform the user of the status or changes to services that are important to them.

By automatically resolving or automating the processing of services or status requests and other low-level, repeatable, but time consuming tasks, the overall volume of the most common repeatable problems are significantly reduced. This frees IT service staff to concentrate on the real work of resolving more complex problems, which has the effect of making the staff, as well as overall IT operations, more effective, more efficient and more productive. The result of all of this is to optimize resource utilization, lowering the cost of services and leading to faster problem resolution.

The features and capabilities included in MyIT have been carefully tailored to meet the needs and desires of today's mobile enterprise users. This includes an option that allows users to build and share libraries of information.

MyIT delivers a range of features with more planned for the future. Those available today include:

- **Simple, intuitive interface** – provides an easy-to-use and familiar ‘app’ interface that is consistent across devices and desired by end-users today.
- **Context and location-based support and services** – all interactions and initiated activities take place ‘in context’ with the role, status and the precise location of the end user that is detectable and known to MyIT. Therefore, the support, data and information available matches the needs, role and on-line history of the user.
- **Concierge level service scheduling** - users are able to make appointments with IT experts to meet at the time, location and day most convenient to them.
- **Access to help, information and updates** - provides easy and quick access to data and information assets, status information on the health of critical services and requests for service.
- **Seamless integration into existing ITSM and other ITOM solutions** – it is designed to act as the ‘consumerized front-end’ to today’s optimized and ‘industrialized back-end’ of IT infrastructure, IT support processes and configuration automation tools.
- **Global Services offerings for MyIT** - BMC Consulting and Education Services offer a complete set of services to expand and securely utilize all of MyIT’s capabilities.

To further build and enhance the embedded MyIT capabilities, the following options are available:

- **Access a Corporate App Store** - MyIT can be extended to provide access to a built-in corporate app store with a range of public and corporate managed apps.
- **Secure Content Locker** - allows end-users to collaboratively build and store a shared library of personal files and documents that can be added or accessed from any location or supported device.

One of the optional functions that especially attracted us is the ability for users to build knowledge and data libraries and to share those contributions by making them accessible to others. This greatly enhances the value and attractiveness of the tool as it allows professionals in sales, marketing, IT, facilities, etc. to expand the utility of the tool with role-based enhancements. Such enhancements will require business functions to communicate with IT. Thus, the ability to ‘customize’ the tool’s content will help to tear down the walls and silos that hinder collaboration in business and IT operations.

The seamless integration with the industrialized back-end attacks head-on one of the major risks posed when employees ‘import’ externally purchased, potentially non-compliant app-store software into the enterprise. MyIT offers an attractive and compliant alternative by providing an authorized app store. It also paves the way for IT to easily create and add apps that leverage the existing enterprise-compliant, robust and secure ‘industrialized’ back-end infrastructure.

Business benefits to the enterprise

We've touched on many of the benefits that the end-user can see and experience from the introduction of MyIT into the enterprise. However, the weakness of much of social media and consumerization has been the inability to identify and concretely measure the business benefits it brings to the enterprise.

BMC has taken care to document what some of these are and they include improved access to services, lower costs of service delivery, increased security, more efficient utilization of scarce resources, improved compliance to policies and guidelines of infrastructure and operations.

By simplifying, personalizing, automating and speeding the experience of accessing and using IT services, MyIT tends to help end-users become less dependent on personal interactions with IT staff and become more comfortable with and willing to use self-service IT support. Positive interactions with IT can make users more proactive in turning to IT for help in developing creative solutions to existing problems, defining and implementing new services as they recognize IT's potential to help them achieve business goals. Positive interactions with IT can make users more proactive in turning to IT for help in developing creative solutions to existing problems, defining and implementing new services as they recognize IT's potential to help them achieve business goals

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The Final Word

MyIT represents a successful effort by a major IT vendor to implement and provide a fully 'consumerized app' targeted to and for the benefit of enterprise IT users. BMC has impressively managed to duplicate the ease of use and access of today's popular consumer applications in its interface. It then connects this interface to the services and capabilities that reside in the policy and operationally compliant backend IT infrastructure and IT organizational processes.

MyIT was designed to eliminate the frustrations that drove users to reject the use of self-service portals designed by internal IT organizations or supplied by the enterprise, i.e. poorly designed UIs, little feedback or control, redundant questions. Users can track the progress of a service request, even initiate and implement corrective action to address common problems. At the same time, BMC addresses frustrations of the IT staff and operations by allowing them to provide improved automated responses without risking the security and compliance of the infrastructure. The status and image of IT operations is improved because problems are solved and requests for services are delivered more quickly and consistently.

With MyIT, BMC makes it easier for IT to do its job, It does this by increasing the visibility of IT's operational relevance. MyIT highlights IT contributions to business success. The options for dynamically building and sharing information libraries through the content locker and providing apps through a corporate store, the bond between IT and the business user becomes more valued and visible. BMC is showing the way for IT to continue as a vital part of business operations.

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