Benefits of Intelligent PC Automation

White Paper

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Today's IT directors are faced with the challenge of managing onsite and remote PCs. Gone are the days when all company PCs could be quickly turned over to deskside support to address issues. The support costs for remote devices are significantly higher.

Most IT professionals are not aware that intelligent PC automation software, such as Swimage Attune EPM, exists and solves this problem by nearly eliminating all deskside support. In essence, automation allows for complete resolution of most PC problems, even if the PC is unreachable by an IT support technician.

This white paper analyzes the processes and costs for traditional remote PC management versus intelligent PC automation with Swimage.

Traditional Remote PC Support

Without the right software, most IT directors resort to their only known option to support remote workers. This consists of a centralized depot / repair center and shipping PCs to and from the remote locations. This is not only very expensive, but also results in long delays and reduced productivity.

In this era of tight budgets, the IT staff is expected to enable businesses to do more with less. However, simply cutting IT costs is not enough. IT professionals make great attempts to find areas that may be automated – sometimes through scripting or other tools that help streamline some of the simple, repetitive steps. However, even if they automate portions of the process, full automation seems to be an unachievable goal.

To further reduce IT costs, the IT leadership, along with the staff, find creative ways to offload the tasks to a "self-service" model. This is a fantastic idea if and when the process is mature. Unfortunately, the process is more often less mature, and in the process of offloading the IT burden to the employee, the problem of a frustrated employee worsens and subsequent cost to the company increases.

Examples of the tasks commonly offloaded to the self-service model include data restoration, application installation, post deployment customization, and configuration. If these tasks are to be completed manually by the employee, a fair amount of documentation and hand-holding are required. Additionally, if these steps are done incorrectly or out of

order, what started out as a little problem may easily become a much bigger one which ultimately ends up requiring more IT support, not less.

The self-service model, from an employee's perspective, is both tedious and frustrating. The process commonly includes the following procedures required by any remote employee that encounters a PC issue:

- Place a ticket with the support desk
- Back up local data
- Record applications that are installed
- Wait to receive the PC (at least 1-2 weeks)
- Pack up and ship the old PC back
- Wait for PC to load the base image
- Wait for policies and apps to load
- Restore data
- Reinstall missing applications
- Reconfigure settings

In Illustration 1, a remote employee follows all of the necessary steps to restore a system. The following table breaks down this cost for both IT and for the company at large:

Illustration 1 – Remote PC Restoration – Traditional Method

Task	IT Hours	Employee Hours	IT Cost	Employee Cost	Business Cost	Shipping	Total Cost
Down due to PC issues		10	$	$ 400	$ 200	$	$ 600
Create ticket	1	1	30	40	20		90
Back up data		2		80	40		120
Record apps and settings		2		80	40		120
Wait for replacement		40		1,600	800		2,400
Build new PC in depot	3		90				90
Pack and ship new PC	0.5		15			50	65
Pack and ship old PC		0.5		20	10	50	80
Wait for PC configuration		2		80	40		120
Wait for policies		2		80	40		120
Restore data		2		80	40		120
Reinstall missing apps		3		120	60		180
Reconfigure settings		4		160	80		240
Totals	4.5	68.5	$ 135	$ 2,740	$ 1,370	$ 100	$ 4,345

As shown in this example, cutting IT hours is doable, but without the proper automation and without a clear focus on the user experience, the result is incredibly high direct and hidden costs for the business.

Shifting the burden within a company may make one department look better, but hurts the company overall. The computations are for an employee with a fairly low business cost (i.e., how much the company loses in revenue due to the employee's lack of productivity). Shift this to a high-impact employee, such as sales, the business impact could be tremendous. However, this impact is only high when it's not done with the proper tools and process.

The burden of IT support does not need to be shifted to an employee. Instead, intelligent automation tools can do the work.

Intelligent PC Automation with Swimage Attune EPM

PC automation allows employees and IT staff to work on real business issues and not PC-related problems. Adding better processes to automation tools provides even more benefits.

> ### Swimage Attune EPM intelligent automation
> ### is designed to reduce the business impact of PC issues.

In Illustration 2, Swimage is applied to the equation and the result is a lower impact on the business. This example includes a slight change in process, which results in huge savings multiples. Instead of expecting the IT department to solve the problem, the employee initiates the system repair and allows Swimage to fix the issue. (This process may also be automated to run upon certain PC conditions defined by management.)

Since Swimage keeps track of everything that this PC needs, intelligent automation handles it all. This includes applications, settings, data, the operating system, desired configuration, security, and encryption. With this knowledge already gathered, all the employee needs to do it tell Swimage to start the process, and in minutes, the entire system is rebuilt to the exact specification required for the employee. The system is fully ready to use at first login. No need to wait for policies to download and/or configure the system or applications.

Using the same data-points as in Illustration 1 (the traditional process without Swimage), the following table shows the significant cost savings by utilizing Swimage:

Illustration 2 – Remote PC Restoration – Intelligent Automation with Swimage Attune EPM

Task	IT Hours	Employee Hours	IT Cost	Employee Cost	Business Cost	Shipping	Total Cost
Down due to PC issues		1	$	$ 40	$ 20	$	$ 60
Create ticket							-
Back up data							-
Record apps and settings							-
Wait for replacement							-
Build new PC in depot							-
Pack and ship new PC							-
Pack and ship old PC							-
Wait for PC configuration		1		40	20		60
Wait for policies							-
Restore data							-
Reinstall missing apps							-
Reconfigure settings							-
Totals	0	2	$	$ 80	$ 40	$	$ 120

In this scenario, Swimage Attune EPM intelligent PC automation results in a cost savings of $4,225!

Swimage, with its built-in intelligent automation, eliminates the vast majority of the tasks in the traditional PC support model. By doing so, the overall burden to the company is nearly completely eliminated. It also makes for a very pleased and productive employee, with little to no involvement of the IT staff in the process to recover a system.

Swimage has the added benefit that all content is stashed and maintained locally in its own protected recovery space. It updates in the background and continually validates the integrity of all recovery files. It changes over time as needed to ensure that what the employee needs is immediately available.   With this in place, recovery becomes a snap and does not require or utilize any bandwidth to perform a complete rebuild of the system. This is how Swimage can completely recover a system, including all data, settings, and applications, in minutes.

The protected recovery space is also available when the time comes to replace hardware. Swimage utilizes this same information to build the new PC. Swimage ensures that the new system has the exact configuration, settings, and data as the old PC.   With this, PC replacement is just as easy and ensures a positive user experience.

Conclusion

The goal of management is to offload most of the PC management burden from the IT support desk and reduce the overall IT budget. The best way to do this is to shift the workload to intelligent PC automation software, such as Swimage Attune EPM. Swimage steps in and completes all of the tasks to recover or migrate a PC without any human involvement. It also ensures consistency and provides integrity to the entire build, eliminates the majority of shipping costs, reduces direct IT labor, and increases operational efficiency. These factors all directly impact the bottom-line.

In addition to recovery and migration automation,
Swimage Attune EPM
capabilities include hyper-automated cybersecurity,
with compliance and security enforcement,
incident response,
and full build disaster recovery.

The patented Swimage Encryption Converter
automates the conversion
from any type of encryption to another,
without decrypting the PC.

To learn more about
Swimage intelligent PC automation,
visit **www.Swimage.com**.