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6 Reasons Why
The Right Automation Platform Solves Your Hybrid IT Challenges

Hint: It's All About Cloud

We live in a data-driven, digitally connected world, and perhaps nothing demonstrates that more clearly than the complexity of today's IT environment. According to Netskope's 2019 report, the average enterprise uses nearly 1,300 cloud services[1], often spread across multiple public and private clouds.

For IT Ops professionals, maintaining the integrity of this ever-expanding IT environment is essential to keep business running smoothly.

Data needs to flow seamlessly and accurately between applications, platforms and databases, and each application and platform needs to perform automated IT tasks and jobs properly. But this can be challenging in hybrid IT, hybrid cloud and multi-cloud environments.

Terms to Know

HYBRID IT – An overarching term that describes IT systems comprised of a mix of infrastructure options, such as on-premise, public cloud and private cloud.

HYBRID CLOUD – An environment where data and applications span across private and public cloud networks. For example, housing a database in a private cloud that interfaces with an application layer residing in the public cloud.

MULTI-CLOUD – An environment that uses multiple cloud computing and storage services as part of a single network. For example, using a mix of cloud platforms like Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Microsoft Azure to store data and run applications.

Adding more complexity, these definitions can also overlap. For example, a hybrid IT environment can use a multi-cloud approach as part of its overall network infrastructure.

But no matter what your environment is like, coordinating automation across these disparate systems can be difficult.

BENEFITS OF AN AUTOMATION PLATFORM
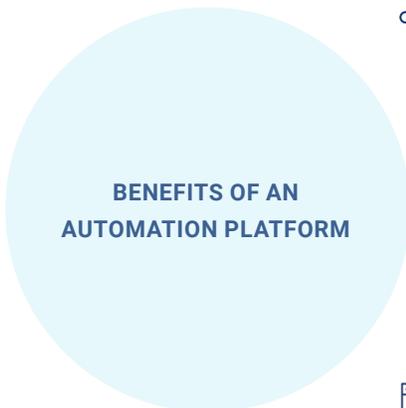
Efficient, Centralized Automation

Complete Workflow Orchestration

Empowered End-Users

Event-Based Triggers

Future-Proof Automation

Scale Infrastructure Management

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Challenges of IT Automation

While each on-premise, private and public cloud resource in your environment might have a native job scheduler to manage automation internally, these tools do not easily integrate, leading to breakdowns in your data pipelines and increasing manual tasks for IT Ops teams.

In fact, to demonstrate the difficulty of managing an environment full of in-built schedulers, just add up the number of cloud solutions your company uses. (Hint: an enterprise with 1000+ employees has an average of over 200 SaaS applications[2].) Managing such a large number of subsequent jobs and workloads across each scheduler would be nearly impossible, underscoring the importance of centralized automation.

To unlock the true power of digital transformation at your business, you need event-driven, centrally managed automation that orchestrates workloads across your entire IT environment; you need an **automation platform.**

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6 Benefits of an Automation Platform

Many enterprises rely on native job schedulers in the early days of their cloud transition. However, it isn't long before they turn to a more feature-rich cloud automation solution. Some of the primary drivers of this change are:

1. Efficient, Centralized Automation

Simply put, disparate cloud solutions work best when connected. But individually managing IT jobs or workloads in each cloud solution becomes cumbersome and time consuming as organizations grow. An automation platform solves this problem by integrating with each of the cloud solutions in your environment. Once this connection is made, IT Ops is empowered to manage, control and monitor all automation activity from a single vantage point.

2. Complete Workflow Orchestration

An automation platform allows organizations to build sophisticated workflows that seamlessly run workloads across a hybrid cloud or multi-cloud environment. These workflows can automate diverse processes, including moving data between systems, updating applications en masse, spinning up cloud infrastructure and more.

3. Empowered End-Users

Citizen automation is a growing trend in business, enabling employees to run automation without the help of IT. For example, self-service automation allows employees to provision cloud space from their own native applications. Some automation solutions even have jobs-as-code and infrastructure-as-code features, making this process straightforward and intuitive for users.

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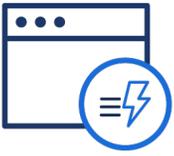
4. Event-Based Triggers

Event-based triggers for automation include various actions taken by users or end users that trigger an IT automation software to either start, stop or change a process. For example, a certain type of data becoming available in a specific environment can trigger the scheduling, analysis and delivery of that data from its origin to its final destination, regardless of whether that destination is on the mainframe or in the cloud. By triggering automation via system events, IT tasks run in the moment, eliminating the need for nightly batch updates.

5. Future-Proof Automation

It's a simple truth that organizations will continue to incorporate new technological innovations, and each will bring its own set of obstacles. With an automation platform, you don't have to rebuild your workload definitions from scratch each time you change your IT environment.

Instead, the platform will allocate the resources needed to execute workloads at runtime, so the right resource is called up only when it is needed, and actions are performed on it only when certain criteria are met. As you migrate applications to new environments, these resources register their ability to accept workloads and are automatically selected without changes to the workload definition.
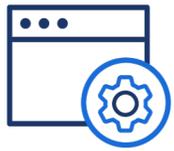
6. Scale Infrastructure Management

An automation platform also allows organizations to implement infrastructure as code (IaC). IaC is a system that uses software and code to manage and provision a data center, rather than using a cloud service provider's native toolset to manually make these changes. When developers use IaC to codify their workload deployments, they essentially make their process low- or no-touch for IT Ops teams while preserving IT Ops' centralized visibility and control over the process.

This centralization creates a common platform that both DevOps and IT Ops can use to reach their respective goals of agility and stability without the need for each team to have proficiency in each other's primary applications. Ultimately, a cloud automation platform is the glue that bonds a hybrid IT landscape together. A platform approach centralizes automation management across your entire environment, improving agility, efficiency and visibility for IT Ops teams.

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Automation in a Modern Landscape

There are many IT automation solutions on the market; some target only the cloud, while others target only on-premise. The most powerful solutions — known as service orchestration and automation platforms (SOAPs) — bridge this gap, allowing enterprises to automate across the entire hybrid IT environment.

As more organizations embrace hybrid IT approaches, SOAPs will become ever more essential to the modern business. In fact, Gartner predicts that 80% of organizations currently using traditional workload automation tools will switch to SOAPs to orchestrate cloud-based workloads by 2024[3].

Switching to an automation platform can bring tremendous value to any organization, even driving your business toward new revenue streams. But not all SOAPs are created equal.

The Universal Automation Center (UAC) from Stonebranch was designed with the modern IT landscape in mind. Leading enterprises have used UAC to enhance customer experiences, deliver demand-based pricing, create new product categories and more.

Real-Time Hybrid IT Automation

A platform approach to orchestrating processes from on-prem to cloud to containerized microservices.

Event Driven Automation
Use event-based triggers to create modern workflows that execute in real-time (in direct contrast to time-based)

Workflow Automation and Orchestration
Create and manage workflows across multiple applications both on-premises and in the cloud

Self-Service Automation
Empower business users, developers, and others to orchestrate their own jobs

Infrastructure and Service Automation
Manage both on-premises and cloud-based compute, network, and storage resources

Manage Data Pipelines
Automate file transfers and orchestrate the ingestion and processing of multiple data streams

Analytics and Visibility
Enable advanced reporting and predictive capabilities in support of improving SLAs

1 Netskope. 2019. Netskope Cloud Report - August 2019. https://resources.netskope.com/cloud-reports/netskope-cloud-report-august-2019.
2 Blissfully. 2019. 2019 Annual Saas Trends Report. https://www.blissfully.com/saas-trends/2019-annual/
3 Bhat, M., Betts, D., Ennaciri, H. and Saunderson, C., 2020. Market Guide For Service Orchestration And Automation Platforms. Gartner. https://www.gartner.com/en/documents/3983695/market-guide-for-service-orchestration-and-automation-pl

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About Stonebranch

Stonebranch builds IT orchestration and automation solutions that transform business IT environments from simple IT task automation into sophisticated, real-time business service automation, helping organizations achieve the highest possible Return on Automation.

No matter the degree of automation, Stonebranch platform is simple, modern, and secure. Using the Stonebranch Universal Automation Platform, enterprises can seamlessly orchestrate workloads and data across technology ecosystems and silos.

Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, with points of contact and support throughout the Americas, Europe, and Asia, Stonebranch serves some of the world's largest financial, manufacturing, healthcare, travel, transportation, energy, and technology institutions.

www.stonebranch.com

UAC works in hybrid IT environments across multiple platforms and business applications in real-time. Available on-premises or as a SaaS-based deployment, the UAC is a modern platform built to scale with your business.

To learn more about how an automation platform can drive your business forward, contact us today.

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