Taking Charge, Leading Change: Your I&O Transformation Can’t Wait

TRIP REPORT

The Gartner Data Center Summit 2013 was held on 25 – 26 November at the Lancaster Hotel in London. This report summarizes and provides highlights from the event.

Overview

2013 marked the 9th annual Gartner Data Center Summit with close to 500 attendees from EMEA. The theme of “Taking Charge, Leading Change: Your I&O Transformation Can’t Wait” focused on providing tactical and strategic advice to achieve IT transformation goals with haste. The agenda addressed issues including: Cost optimization, Improving quality and processes of IT services, Mobile and Client Computing, Information security and management, Data Center Modernization and Consolidation and Virtualization and Cloud Computing.

Analyst sessions covered current thinking encompassing the full scope of these issues in addition to sustainability, sourcing practices, organizational efficiency and staffing optimization. Our Gartner for Technical Professionals advised on some deeply technical issues in Cloud Management, BYOD and Mobility.

The event inspired Data Center leaders to identify and prioritize areas of infrastructure, process and organizational transformation to drive increased levels of efficiency and become true enablers for business agility.

Highlights include guest keynote speakers; Robin Sieger — whose inspirational closing keynote urged attendees to face their fears and foster success at the individual and organizational level; and Nisha Pillai whose deep understanding of communication techniques had attendees on their feet, networking and realizing the true power of peer connection, empathy and understanding.

In addition, our end user case study speakers, BP, Commerzbank, Morgan Stanley, the Met Office and others provided thought provoking, pressing and relevant content that their peers readily identified with.
Key Take-Aways

We’d like to leave you with these key takeaways from the event.

Best Practices in Data Center Design and Optimization

- Design to scale vertically, then horizontally
- Don’t be wed to the past — innovation in design will yield reduced capex and opex
- Think small, think dense — the objective is the highest compute performance per kilowatt
- Use technology refresh as a capacity planning tool
- Design data centers to evolve with the times — not remain static

Data Center Economics — How to Run a Financially Efficient Data Center

- Proactively plan your data center delivery model — It WILL be hybrid
- Do a complete financial analysis of all the options: Focus on cash flow, EVA, ROE, TCO, and so on
- There is no “silver bullet” to help decide whether cloud is the way to go forward — each case is different — one size does not fit all
- When calculating the ROI keep in mind the cost of capital, and the opportunity cost

Market Profile: Cloud Management Platforms, 2014

- Set expectations (the market is significantly immature) but don’t wait forever for the perfect solution
- Prefer cloud management platforms with modular architecture and licensing to avoid buying shelfware: Almost certainly you don’t need all features in a CMP offering
- Expect customization and integration as significant efforts: Consider professional services in your TCO analysis

As we prepare to redesign our data center operations for the next decade, the Gartner event has helped to distinguish the business value from the hype around emerging technologies.

Billy Crowley, IT Infrastructure Manager, ESB

Lancaster Hotel, London, UK

Rakesh Kumar speaking at the Gartner Data Center Summit 2013
Megavendor Focus: Cisco, IBM, Microsoft and Oracle

- Let the vendor know what’s important to you and if they want your business in the future, they should engage
- Focus on mutually beneficial business outcomes
- Cost is still important, but focus on bigger picture issues that may give you strategic importance to the vendor

Mission-Critical Workloads: To Virtualize or Not to Virtualize?

- Consolidate infrastructure and optimize projects by rationalizing proprietary infrastructure, and drive toward (well-managed) x86 platforms
- Use virtualization and cloud initiatives to improve all data center workloads, including mission-critical and physical
- Set your own virtualization (80% today, 90% max 2015) — not a vendor or supplier

To the Point: Organizational Impacts of Cloud Computing

John Rivard, Research Director

Best Practices in Data Center Design and Optimization

David Cappuccio, Research VP

Case Study: Data Center Transformation in Financial Services

Michael O’Toole, MD, Global Datacentres, Morgan Stanley

You don’t have to wait another year until you can catch up with the latest I&O research
Keynotes

Gartner Closing Keynote: 
The Intelligent Data Center — What to Expect over the Next 5 Years
David Cappuccio and Rakesh Kumar

Over the next 5 years, the role of the data center as a service delivery mechanism will change. It will evolve from running specific applications in specific locations to running workflows intelligently. The major drivers such as mobility, data growth, analytics, data center topology and global business continuity will force organizations to move away from traditional silos to an intelligent orchestration mechanism with analytical policy engines. Data center organizational structures will evolve to self governing; agile teams and data center managers will have to embrace new skills such as risk management.

Gartner Closing Keynote:
Automation: The Foundation of the “Nexus Of Forces”
Milind Govekar

The closing keynote, by Milind Govekar, on Automation: The foundation of the ‘Nexus of Forces’ provided the underpinning to the concept introduced in the opening keynote of the intelligent data center. Automation technologies in I&O enable the movement of workloads across data centers — on premise and in the cloud, to the most appropriate location to match resource requirements. This movement takes place based on the characteristics of the workloads so that regulatory, latency and other requirements are met. This approach enables organizations to optimize their capex versus opex investments in data center environments.

However, accomplishing this vision of automation is non-trivial considering the opportunistic (as opposed to systematic) investment that enterprises make in automation. This usually leads to I&O organizations investing in multiple, usually more than 4 to 5 automation technologies that end up as islands of automation. Furthermore, organizations need to look at investing in a role of a automation architect that enables them to take a systematic view of their environment and put in an automation governance framework. Automation technology itself is evolving also from a deterministic to a heuristic approach where learnings from system administrators can be combined with heuristic analytics to create a knowledge items database for knowledge reuse, refinement and improving automation. Thus I&O organizations can systematically harness the power of automation to significantly lower cost and enable dramatic scaling, in line with their business goals.

Useful networking opportunity with a chance to meet new vendors applicable to my areas of interest — essential opportunity to understand market trends — good investment of my time.

Alison Bradley,
Principal Solutions Architect, Fujitsu UK
Closing Guest Keynote:
Creating A Success Culture
Robin Sieger

1 CLEARLY DEFINE YOUR GOAL
Never use vague terms to define your objectives

2 CREATE A FLEXIBLE PLAN
Events rarely go to plan, so we need to adapt to any changes and re-think our plan as often as required, just a journey may have detours, our challenges too will change.

3 CONFIDENCE
You must have a faith that you can and will achieve your goals

4 NO FEAR OF FAILURE
It is natural to experience fear, but fear of failure has a way of stopping us growing and having new experiences

5 PURPOSE AND PASSION
You need a reason why do want to achieve your goal

6 COMMITMENT
Sticking to it, and persisting through all obstacles is the most critical of the keys to success

7 CELEBRATE SUCCESS
Reinforces a positive self image and brand identity

“The Summit summarizes what I need to learn with Data Centre technologies within 2 full-pack days. Excellent use of time!”

Francia Peralta, IT Officer, UN

ATTENDEE SNAPSHOT
Who participated in the 2013 conference?

Top 5 job titles
1 Management
2 Director
3 CIO
4 Architect
5 VP

Top 5 job roles
1 IT Infrastructure & Operations
2 IT Infrastructure & Operations — Data Center
3 Enterprise Architecture
4 CTO
5 IT Infrastructure & Operations — Planning & Project

Top 5 industry sectors
1 Banking, Finance & Insurance
2 Technology and Telecom
3 Government
4 Manufacturing
5 Energy & Utilities
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Post-Event Resources

Customizable post-event worksheet
Take a moment to complete your own post-event trip report, a valuable resource for future reference and a great way to share with colleagues what you learned. Click here to access the trip report worksheet.

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