BMC Remedy vs. IBM Control Desk

How to choose between BMC Remedy and IBM Control Desk

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

This document provides a comparison between two ITSM/ITSSM tools; BMC Remedy and IBM Control Desk. This comparison is part of product selection process of implementing ITSSM tool at the organization. The comparison looks at various aspects and factors in evaluating and rating those products. Utilizing numerous resources such as Gartner and Forrester reports. In addition to customers' reviews in the market.

The document is structured to give an outline about the vendor and the product, list product feature sets, market share, ratings, licensing and hardware sizing, pricing and total cost of ownership, support and product pros and cons. The document closes with the primary subject, the comparison showing the analysis and the scores of each product.

As a start, the following figure shows Gartner's Magic Quadrants for IT Service Support Management Tools 2014

Figure 1: Gartner's Magic Quadrant for IT Service Support Management Tools 2014

In the last three to four years no vender made it to the leader classification of Gartner for ITSSM tools. And only recently BMC and ServiceNow have made it to the leader position in Gartner research reports. It's equally important to understand how Gartner evaluates those ITSSM tools and Gartner report titled (Gartner, Criteria for the 2014 Magic Quadrant for IT Service Support Management Tools, 2014) helps in understanding the criteria in which Gartner classify against.

It's recommended by Gartner that organization would assess their I&O capabilities and afterward determine their choice based on their readiness and desire to go beyond ITSSM for a broader context. The following figure shows the organization choice based on the maturity level.
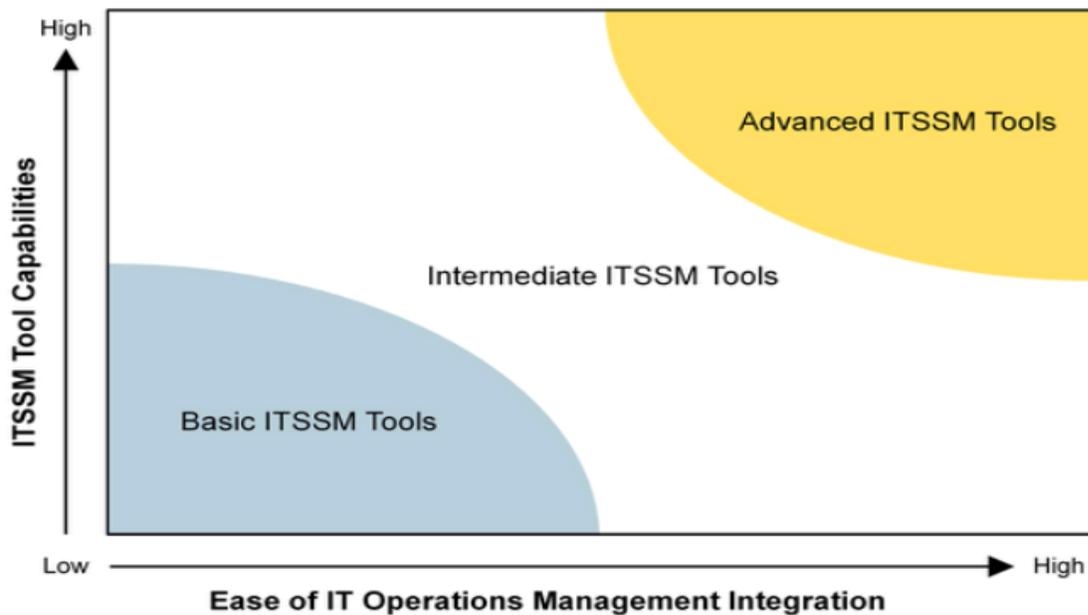
Figure 2: Gartner's How to classify an ITSSM tool

1.2 Purpose and Objective

The purpose of this document is to draw a comparison between two ITSML tools BMC Remedy and IBM Control Desk. This comparison would be utilized to make final decision on the ITSSM tool selection as part of the ITIL processes implementation project.

1.3 Scope

This analysis is scoped to only two ITSSM tools as part of product selection process after short listing the ITSSM tools that are part of the selection process.

1.4 Key Findings

The followings are the key findings:

- Fewer resources and customer reviews available on BMC Remedy & IBM Control Desk comparisons, thus indicating less desire and cases of customers' attempting to acquire the two solutions, as in normal cases BMC Remedy is commonly compared to ServiceNow.
- IBM is able to sell Control Desk within its customer based, thus indicating the customer choice was based on ROI and the benefit of acquiring a tool from a known and compatible vendor.
- BMC retains a large number of customers and have a market share of 29% mainly due to its offerings' comprehensiveness and been in the market for a long time.
- BMC capabilities go beyond ITSSM whereas IBM offering is not develop to compete in broader market.
- BMC is widely deployed on national/local public and private sectors compared to the offering from IBM.

1.5 Recommendations

This comparison shows without a doubt BMC Remedy predominant IBM Control Desk offering in term of feature sets, completion, offering, integration, ease of use, Licensing scheme, and market share. Most importantly BMC broader context in IT operations management and ability to extend outside IT and into business. In addition to compliance to the strategic principles of tool selections and criterions. For the previously mentioned justifications and conclusions, BMC Remedy is the recommended ITSSM tool to implement ITIL processes in the organization.

1.6 Definitions, Acronyms and Abbreviations

A list of abbreviations and their definition.

Abbreviation	Definition
ITSM	IT Service Management.
ITSSM	IT Service Support Management.
ROI	Return on Investment.
ITOM	IT Operation Management.
I&O	Infrastructure & Operation

1.7 Assumptions and Constraints

The document assumes the comparison is between two ITSSM products; BMC Remedy and IBM Control Desk; and does not take into account other products.

2 BMC Remedy

2.1 Company Overview

BMC is an American software company established in 1980, specialized in Business Service Management (BSM) software and tools (Wikipedia, BMC Software, 2014). The company provides several products in the field of IT services, data centers automations, performance management and cloud computing management. It has over 6,900 employees, and always been credited as with pioneering the Business Service Management field (Wikipedia, BMC Software, 2014).

2.2 Product Overview

BMC Remedy is an ITSSM tool that manages IT Services in an organization. Remedy provides a data driven configuration and rich functionalities divided into several modules. Remedy can be deployed On-Premises or on Cloud and is highly configurable and extendable.

2.3 Product Features

BMC Remedy has many features and the following are the key ones:

- Comes with preconfigured out of the box ITIL suite that includes incident, change, problem, release, assets, service request, and knowledge management systems.
- Out of the box integrations.
- Flexible integration to event and discovery management systems.
- Service level guarantees for service availability with penalties.
- Adaptive automation and powerful workflow engine.
- User experience with simple user interface to reduce required training and speed up problem resolution.
- Rapid service delivery.
- Intelligent ticketing, create tickets with information available about the possible causes of the incident.
- Data driven insight.
- The choice of full installation of client users or use a light weight browser based UI.
- Large partner and community that have built their long term business on consulting based on the product.
- Monthly based subscription for cloud offering.
- Comprehensive management and administration with tons of reports.
- Mobility support.
- Localization is supported and BMC has created a tool-kit for localization.

2.4 Product Components

The following lists the products within Remedy suite:

2.4.1 Remedy Service Desk

Incident and problem management.

2.4.2 Remedy Change Management
Manage the change and release across the entire IT.

2.4.3 BMC Service Request Management
Provide service definition and fulfillment that support the catalog of services presented by MyIT's self-service portal.

2.4.4 Remedy Asset Management
Manage the entire lifecycle of the IT assists from procurement till the retirement.

2.4.5 Remedy Knowledge Management
Provide a knowledge base for the service desk analysts.

2.4.6 BMC Atrium Service Level Management
Measure, track the performance of the SLA and compliance in real-time.

2.4.7 Remedy Virtual Agent
Provide service desk agent and chat capabilities.

2.4.8 Remedy IT Service Management-Process Designer
Build and deploy new request and processes using a workflow designer.

2.4.9 BMC MyIT
Provide an interface for business users to help them achieve self-service capabilities.

2.4.10 Remedy with Smart IT
Provide collaboration and comprehensive mobile functionality.

2.5 Market Share & Rating
The product is positioned the second in the leading of Gartner's magic guardant 2014. The product market share is around 29% (Gartner, Magic Quadrant for IT Service Support Management Tools, 2014).

2.6 Licensing & Hardware Sizing
The company provides an enterprise license and then customer can add products from the Remedy suite as they wish and the license is either fixed number of users or concurrent. There's an additional license for MyIT.

2.7 Pricing & Total Cost Of Ownership

The price is not available publicly. However, the pricing is very high compared to ServiceNow products and in many customers' reviews it show the total cost of ownership is high compared to other offerings.

2.8 Support

The company provides an enterprise support service and also a premier support service that serve as managed service for managing the product installation, upgrade and maintenance.

2.9 Product Pros & Cons

The following the major pros and cons of the product and the vendor.

2.9.1 Pros

- Remedy is a leader in Gartner's magic quadrants for IT Service Support Management Tools for 2014.
- Very powerful tool with variety of capabilities.
- Powerful integration.
- It has been implemented widely and particularly within Saudi Arabia in many public and private sectors.

2.9.2 Cons

- Many clients are moving to ServiceNow and favoring their cloud offering over Remedy.
- Gartner believe the high debt of BMC will likely limit them from further acquisitions within the ITSSM family of products.
- There is a confusion around which BMC ITSSM tool to choose.
- According to Gartner, customers of RemedyForce and FootPrint don't have the same integrations options and experience across all products in BMC portfolio.
- In many customer reviews the license scheme is said to be expensive compared to other ITSSM tools.

3 IBM Control Desk (formally known as IBM SmartCloud Control Desk)

3.1 Company Overview

IBM needs no introduction, it's one of the largest and deep-rooted corporation in the IT industry. The International Business Machines Corporation (IBM). IBM is an American multinational technology and consulting corporations with headquarter in Armonk, New York, United States. The company was founded back in 1911 as the computing tabulating recording company (Wikipedia, IBM, 2014).

3.2 Product Overview

IBM Control Desk is a unified IT asset and service management software that provide common platform for managing the IT Service Support Management set of tools. IBM Control Desk is complaint with ITIL foundation. The solution can be used as on premise or SaaS (software as service) or VM image.

3.3 Product Features

IBM Control Desk has many features and the following are the key ones:

- Service request management.
- Change, configuration and release management.
- IT asset lifecycle management.
- IBM Control Desk supports all ITIL v3 processes and functionalities out of the box.
- Web based access: that enables users to access from anyway.
- Service catalog: helps users solve their own problems.
- Support for service providers.
- Self-service storage provisioning: enables users to provision storage within an easy to use web interface.
- Monitoring, reporting and chargeback service.
- Arabizing out of the box from IBM with right to left support.

3.4 Market Share & Rating

There's not much details on IBM market share whether from Gartner or Forrester. However, from Gartner recent report (Gartner, Magic Quadrant for IT Service Support Management Tools, 2014), IBM offering seems not to be developed to compete aggressively within a broader market of potential customers.

3.5 Licensing & Hardware Sizing

The license is available as user based or on concurrent users.

For system requirement to deploy and run IBM Control Desk:

Single Topology:

Software	Hardware
- Administration station - IBM DB2 (or any alternative Database) - IBM Websphere (or any Java EE container) - IBM Tivoli Directory Server (optional component)	2 GHz processor 40 GB disk space 7 GB RAM

(IBM, 2014)

Figure 3: IBM Control Desk Single Topology System Requirement

Distributed Topology:

Software	Hardware
Administrative workstation	2-6 GHz processor (minimum) 4 GB RAM (minimum) 10 Mbit/s network connection between administrative workstation and middleware servers (minimum) 11 GB disk space You must have a minimum of 11 GB disk space available for a fresh installation. Ensure 7 GB of disk space is available if you are performing an upgrade. An additional 6 GB of disk space must be available in the TEMP directory of the administrative workstation during the installation.
IBM DB2 (alternative database can be used)	Minimum 20 GB disk space.
IBM WebSphere Application Server Network Deployment (alternative J2EE server can be used)	2-6 GHz processor 40 GB disk space 6 GB RAM
Oracle WebLogic Server (alternative J2EE server can be used)	2-6 GHz processor 40 GB disk space 6 GB RAM
IBM Tivoli Directory Server (optional component)	Linux and UNIX systems require 1 GB of space available in the /opt directory.

(IBM, 2014)

Figure 4: IBM Control Desk Distributed Topology System Requirement

3.6 Pricing & Total Cost Of Ownership

The pricing is not published publically from IBM. However customers are not complaining about the cost or the total cost of ownership impact on their financials.

3.7 Support

IBM provides an enterprise support with ticketing system. In addition to partner first level support.

3.8 Product Pros & Cons

The following the major pros and cons of the product and the vendor.

3.8.1 Pros

- IBM Control Desk is well consolidated IT service management product with broad functionalities and asset management.
- IBM is able to sell the product within its customer based rather than marketing for the actual product.
- IBM extensive partners in the market made it very appealing to install and deploy the solution with the wide range of expertise and support.
- The Arabization support is implemented from the mother company (vendor) and it supports Right-Left out of the box without any customization.

3.8.2 Cons

- IBM Control Desk is not developed to compete within broader market.
- IBM Control Desk has not been demonstrated to show integration with wide range other IBM products such as IBM Connections.
- IBM Control Desk is not easy to user according to Gartner report (Gartner, Magic Quadrant for IT Service Support Management Tools, 2014) which introduces a steep learning curve.

4 Comparison

4.1 Analysis

Deciding between BMC Remedy and IBM Control Desk can be quite challenging task as there are few resources to draw a clear and fair comparison. Both products have gone through many changes such as rebranding and name changes. Most of the available comparisons are very old and outdated. Moreover, the most recent comparisons tend to compare BMC Remedy to ServiceNow and more recently Gartner released a research titled (Gartner, How to Decide Between BMC and ServiceNow for ITSSM and Beyond, July 2014), that attempts to help organization and decision makers to take the next step in determining the right choice of ITSSM and beyond to broader ITMO.

Vendor (2013 ITOM)	ITSSM	IT Asset Management	IT Service Catalog	IT Financial Management	Event Correlation/BSM	Application Performance Management	Network Fault Management	Network Performance Management	IT Service View CMDB	IT Service Dependency Mapping	Application Release Automation	IT Process Automation	Server Provisioning and Configuration Management	Network Change and Configuration Management	Client Management	Cloud Management Platform	Mainframe Management
BMC	Strong	Competitive	Adequate	N/A	Strong	Adequate	N/A	N/A	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Adequate	Strong	Strong
ServiceNow	Strong	Adequate	Adequate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Competitive	Weak	N/A	Adequate	N/A	N/A	N/A	Adequate	N/A

Legend:
+ = Strong ● = Competitive ● = Adequate ▼ = Weak ○ = N/A

Based on published research and Gartner analyst opinions as of April 2014

Source: Gartner (July 2014)

Figure 5: Gartner's comparison between BMC Remedy & ServiceNow Offerings

Both BMC & ServiceNow are very strong in ITSSM domain, and thus provide comparable IT Service Support Management solutions according to Gartner's research (Gartner, How to Decide Between BMC and ServiceNow for ITSSM and Beyond, July 2014). However, BMC go beyond that where they have a strength in many other areas. Hint, this research focus on vendors' capabilities rather than stating the actual product that would ultimately serve and achieve that capability. The research recommends to perform organization's infrastructure operations (I&O) maturity level to determine the organization readiness for broader IT operations management (ITMO) strategy.

According to a use case conducted by Cognizant Technology Solutions Corp, IBM Control Desk cloud solution had helped them reduce tickets volume by 80 percent (Cognizant, 2014). IBM Control desk is very competitive product in the area of ITSSM, however it lacks the vision to go beyond and archive full IT management operation.

4.2 Scoring

The following table shows the scoring of BMC Remedy and IBM Control desk according to the analyst opinion and based on the analysis in this document.

#	Criteria	BMC Remedy	IBM Control Desk
1	Market share	5	2
2	ITSSM capability	5	3
3	Broader context capabilities	5	1
4	Vendor's leadership in ITSSM domain	4	2
5	Vender's strategic vision for ITSSM	4	2
6	Web and Access from anywhere	4	4
7	Mobility support	4	3
8	On-premise and Cloud offering	4	3
9	Arabization and localization support	3	4
10	National/local successful deployments	4	2
	Total	42	26
	Final Score: total/10	4 = Strong	2 = Adequate

Legend: 5 = Very Strong, 4=Strong, 3=Competitive, 2= Adequate, 1= Week, 0= Very weak.

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