3 simple ways to drastically cut-down Active Directory administration costs

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The evolving IT landscape

Any Active Directory (AD) administrator knows that managing AD using just native tools is a chore.

To make matters worse, today's IT requirements are more diverse than ever. The increasing cloud adoption coupled with remote working has made IAM more complex, which in turn has made AD management more complex, cumbersome, and time-consuming.

As a result, trying to force-fit AD to address all of today's complex IAM challenges challenges would lead to inefficiency and result in wasted expenses.

If you have the right tool, these challenges can be easily addressed, efficiently and without straining your IT budget.

In this e-book, we'll look at 3 routine AD management tasks that, if performed using ADManager Plus, can save you a great deal of time and funds.

ManageEngine's ADManager Plus is a web-based AD management and reporting solution that simplifies employee life cycle management, improves user experience, increase productivity, enhance security and save time and money.

Costs associated with performing 3 common AD management tasks

1. User provisioning and de-provisioning

When an employee is hired, their account must be set up— this includes configuring user attributes, mailboxes, home folders, etc. Likewise, when an employee leaves the organization, all their access to IT resources must be revoked without fail.

Enterprises are opting for more cloud services to address the unique challenges of the evolving IT landscape. As a result, provisioning and de-provisioning users across these siloed cloud services in bulk becomes more complex, error-prone, and manually exhaustive.

This is a greater challenge if an organization's workforce expansion and turnover rates are higher.

a. The costs incurred when using native AD tools

Let's assume that an organization has 1,000 employees. With 10% employee growth and turnover rate, the total number of provisioning tickets would be 300 (new users added: 10% x 1000 = 100, users leaving the organization: 10% x 1000 = 100, users added to fill existing positions: 1000 x 10% = 100).

In an organization with 1,000 employees	For 1 ticket	For 300 tickets
Average time required to provision an AD account and other cloud identities	15 min	75 hours
The average hourly wage of a help desk technician	$22	$22
Total cost incurred in using native tools	$5.50	$1,650

The average time required to provision a user account in Active Directory can typically range from 5 to 30 minutes depending on the number of attributes associated with that account.

b. The costs incurred after deploying ADManger Plus

ADManager Plus lets you seamlessly provision multiple users across platforms in hybrid AD from a single console. Using built-in templates and CSV update features, object creation, modification, and management can be done in just a few minutes. These templates can also be customized as per organizational policies.

In an organization with 1,000 employees

The time required by the administrator to create multiple user templates [This is mostly a one time activity]	1 - 2 hours
The time required by the help desk to import a list of users into an existing template	1 minute
The number of tickets raised by HR (Approx). Let us assume each ticket includes 10 new user details	30 tickets

Total time required for provisioning the entire list of users sent by HR in a year = 2 hours of admin time + 30 minutes of help desk time for a total of 2.5 hours

This means the total annual cost = [2 x hourly wage of an IT administrator] + [0.5 x hourly wage of a help desk technician], or [2 x $32] + [0.5 x $22] = $75

2. Resolving password reset and account lockout tickets

According to Gartner, between 20 and 50 percent of all help desk calls are for password resets.

Resolving a single password reset tickets follows the following process flow:

The user raises a ticket in the help desk tool or calls up the IT help desk. The technician resolves the this ticket and closes it. This typically takes 30 minutes on average.

Forrester research estimated that the average help desk labor cost for a single password reset is about $70. This doesn't even include the cost end users waiting for their password to be reset instead of working.

According to the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average hourly wage of an employee is $25.72 (for simple calculations, let's round down to $25).

As the average time taken by the help desk technician is 30 minutes, the end user also loses 30 minutes on average. This means the cost incurred due to an idle employee is $12.25 ($25 x 0.5).

a. The costs incurred using in resetting passwords using only the native AD tools.

Let's assume that an organization has 1,000 employees with 30 percent of its employees forgetting their passwords at least 4 times a year.

In an organization with 1,000 employees	For one employee	For 300 employees
Approximat number of instances of users forgetting passwords in a year	4	1,200
Help desk cost for a single password reset	$280 ($70 x 4)	$84,000
Cost incurred due to end users, being idle, waiting for a new password	$49 ($12.25 x 4)	$14,700
Total cost incurred in resolving a for password related tickets	$329	$98,700

b. The cost of resolving password resets and account lockouts after deploying ADManger Plus

Using ADManager Plus' built-in Password Reports module, an Active Directory administrator can schedule the "Soon-to-expire user password report" to run regularly, so they'll always know which users' passwords will be expiring soon.

This helps the administrator notify users well ahead of password expiration time, which in turn reduces the password reset or account lockout tickets to 100— one-third of the original number (300).

The time required to reset the password for a single user or an entire list of users is less than a minute. (For the sake of simplicity, let's go with 1 minute.)

In an organization with 1,000 employees

In an organization with 1,000 employees	For one employee	For 100 employees
The time required to reset passwords/ unlock accounts for a list of users	1 minute	1 minute
Number of password reset tickets from end users after deploying ADManager Plus	1	100
Total time taken to resolve the ticket(s)	1 minute	100 minutes
Hourly wage of a help desk technician	$22	$22
Help desk cost for password resets and account unlocks with ADManager Plus	$0.37	$37

3. Account management and modification tickets

From the moment employees are onboarded until they leave the organization, the IT administrator is responsible for managing the user's account. The administrator has to create an AD user account, modify its properties when the employee moves to a different department, assign sufficient appropriate access rights, and delete the user account when the employee is offboarded.

Each of these modification tasks is manually exhaustive and time-consuming when performed using native AD tools or PowerShell.

a. The cost of resolving account management and modification tickets using traditional AD tools

A typical account modification task takes around 20 minutes. This includes the time taken for a user to raise a ticket, for the technician to resolve the management or modification task by accessing Active Directory, and close the ticket.

In an organization with 1,000 employees

The time required for a template-based user modification task	20 minutes (or 0.33 hours)
Hourly wage of a help desk technician	$22
Total cost incurred in processing one modification ticket	$22 x 0.33 = $7.26
Total number of account modification tickets raised	1,000 x 1/3 = 333
Total cost incurred in resolving all the modification tickets	$7.26 x 333 = $2,418

b. The cost of resolving account management and modification tickets after deploying ADManager Plus

Using ADManager Plus' User Modification Templates, Active Directory administrators can simplify the process of modifying user accounts across their organizations. These templates empower administrators to modify multiple attributes of user accounts in bulk in just a few minutes.

This helps drastically reduce the response times for user management or modification tickets. Tasks that require hours to complete using native tools can be performed in minutes— without the inconvenience of complex PowerShell scripts.

As a result, ADManager Plus' template-based attribute modification feature drastically cuts down the costs associated with resolving account management and modification tickets.

The cost of account modifications after deploying ADManager Plus

It is estimated that at least one in every three employees raises an account modification ticket in a year.

In an organization with 1,000 employees

Total number of account modification tickets raised	1,000 x 1/3 = 333
The time required for a template- based user modification task	1 minute
Total time required if the tickets are made individually	333 minutes (or 5.5 hours)
Total cost incurred in resolving all the modification tickets	5.5 x $22 = $121

However, not all management or modification tasks are sent as single tickets. Most of the modification tasks are done in bulk. Assuming 40 individual tickets and 20 bulk tickets are submitted, the total time taken to resolve them would be around one hour, and the total cost of performing these modification tasks with ADManager Plus would be $22.

Summary

The table below shows the comparison between the cost of performing three common AD management tasks using native AD tools, with the cost of performing the task using ADMP.

AD management task	Cost incurred annually using		Percentage of savings
	Native tools	**ADManager Plus**	
User provisioning and de-provisioning	$1,650	$75	95.45%
Resolving password reset and account lockout tickets	$98,700	$37	99.96%
Account management and modification tickets	$2,418	$22	99.09%
For all three tasks above	$1,02,768	$134	99.86%

ADManager Plus' capability to cut down your AD management expenses isn't limited to just these three tasks. ADManager Plus can also help you cut down on unnecessary spending by:

⊘ Eliminating the need to use scripts (Eliminatesthe cost associated with hiring a skilled workforce).

⊘ Offering organized help desk delegation (Lowers the costs incurred from security lapses related to incorrect privilege distribution).

⊘ Automating stale account clean-up (Eliminates the cost of potential account compromises related to stale accounts).

⊘ Offering comprehensive reports to meet regulatory compliance mandates (Avoids the cost of potential fines due to non-compliance).

If your organization is looking for a cost-effective, time-saving, and robust AD management solutions, ADManager Plus is the solution for you.

ManageEngine ADManager Plus is a web-based Windows AD management and reporting solution that helps AD administrators and help desk technicians accomplish their day-to-day activities. With an intuitive, easy-to-use interface, ADManager Plus handles a variety of complex tasks and generates an exhaustive list of AD reports, some of which are essential requirements to satisfy compliance audits. It also helps administrators manage and report on their Exchange Server, Office 365, and Google Apps environments, in addition to AD, all from a single console. For more information about ADManager Plus, visit manageengine.com/ad-manager.

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