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Enabling the control mode

ManageEngine, the real-time IT management company, hosted the fourth Middle East User Conference between March 7 and 8, 2016 at The Address Dubai Marina. In this two-day conference, senior global executives and technology experts from ManageEngine presented IT management trends, conduct product training, and discussed use cases. Raj Sabhlok, president of ManageEngine, in the following interview discusses the company's approach to IT Management solutions

Are Businesses aware of the need to deploy IT effectively? What is the state of shadow IT deployments in organizations?

Businesses run the risk of becoming obsolete if they don't keep up with user expectations and therefore need to deploy new tools. From an IT perspective, organizations need to be forward thinking. In many organizations, IT is becoming separated based on needs of organizations. Reality is you need a semblance of control for security purposes. IT needs to own that responsibility as an overarching strategy.

Shadow IT is a good thing as companies should be able to find the right tools to grow their businesses. What IT needs to do is to absorb the technologies at a rapid pace and ensure their networks are kept safe, that these new applications are not removing corporate data and putting them outside. They need to manage the shadow IT tools being deployed, whether devices or applications. The solution is not to stop people from using tools which can help them grow their business. Unfortunately that was the first responses of IT around the time when the social media apps like Facebook were cropping up. Right now these tools have become a huge marketing tool used by companies. It is the same with the mobile devices – if we could not use them at our workplaces, how would it be? IT was reluctant and in some instances, they completely shut them down in many organizations which I believe affected them.

What are the outcomes that you seek from your User group events?

We do these events every

year. It has become the way to connect with ManageEngine directly. This happens worldwide in major countries. Partners as well as customers look forward to it. Enterprise software has changed dramatically. We have played a significant role in how enterprise software is acquired, deployed, managed and optimized. When we started our business, we competed with the likes of IBM and CA and just simply based on the fact that we were a start-up, we could not compete within that model. Thankfully, we thought of getting our products and technologies to customers in a disruptive way, directly from our web and as easy to deploy and use. We have kind of propelled the 'do it yourself' mindset within IT, which fast forward to today's scenario, is exactly the kind of approach we need. IT needs to be quick to adopt new technologies or else they will be left behind. Quick getting, easy to deploy, do it yourself technologies from companies like ManageEngine are critical. But at the same instance, many of the companies that are using our technologies have wondered who we were and perceived us an enigma. So these user group events are good opportunities for us to connect with those companies. It is also a great way for us to understand the issues they face and how we can address them moving ahead. It gives us an opportunity for us to present our new products, technologies and roadmaps.

What was your product announcement at the event?

At this year's event, we announced the launch of OpManager Plus, the latest edition of our network

management platform. OpManager Plus sets a new standard for unified IT monitoring with the industry's first EXE-level integration of five network

management functions. With OpManager Plus, users get one application for NetFlow monitoring, configuration management, firewall log analysis and compliance, IP address management, and switch port management. The single OpManager Plus console provides in-depth visibility and control of all aspects of network management for faster troubleshooting.

Most vendors offer disparate tools for various aspects of network management such as bandwidth management, firewall log analysis, configuration management and more. Though these tools can integrate with one another, they do not provide a holistic view and, therefore, make admins juggle between multiple tabs. Maintenance of all these different tools is also hectic because they require separate backups, service packs and licenses.

Please elaborate on the roadmap for new products

We are now considering the

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idea of taking the service desk and extending it beyond IT. We will start addressing the idea of having an IT help desk as an internal CRM resource to manage internal business processes- managing HR, finance or legal. Some of the repetitive tasks that happen within these functional groups can be replicated.

We are introducing a new Business intelligence application which will initially take all the data that is processed out by the Management tool, initially the ManageEngine tools and churn out reports that are useful for trend analysis and making better decisions. They can turn out reports all the way from what is relevant for the departments, all the way to the CIO and the CEO. ManageEngine BI application will deliver this reporting.

We want to know how efficient IT is being from the tools but in today's world, since a lot of our products and services are dependent on IT, so want to know the business details such as webclicks from visitors to your website for

instance. Security is another aspect - we can understand trends and impact based on anomalies seen. Looking at all the machine data that is being generated, you can sit back and delve on the security issues.

We also have our cloud based ZOHO business and those are business applications to help automate business functions for small and medium sized businesses. We are also finding that as we are trying to automate business functions in ZOHO, there is some overlap with IT. We always have had a cloud based reporting applications called ZOHO reports and we have taken this technology and application and adopted it for ManageEngine as the basis of its BI application.

You will start seeing other cloud based applications that will adopted by ManageEngine and some we already do today such as zoho creator, a low coding platform to build online database applications.

Discuss your growth strategies

We have never taken venture

funding as a company. We have sought a pragmatic approach to growth. We have grown with that mindset over the past twenty years. We have stayed private and

only listened to our customers. We have seen other companies go through upheavals from public to private and private to public listing several times. Then there is no way you can stay focused on customers. We decided not to go through all of that. We decided to keep it simple, build products and listen to our customers. We spend about 40% of our revenues into our R&D.

We are up by over 35% in the region over the year in terms of growth. It continues to be a good market for us. We are vigilant in terms of the economic trends and don't take it for granted. One of the big reasons that companies turn to our solutions is because of the value propositions we deliver. Our products offer maybe over 90% or more of the functionalities of competitive product at maybe 10% of the cost. We have seen that it is in the time of economic downturns that we get our bigger customers as they are then more aware of the value propositions they get from their investments.

The All-in-One Advantage

The single product, single console design of OpManager Plus increases IT teams' visibility and control over their network and enables real-time troubleshooting. OpManager Plus includes the following network management modules:

- NetFlow monitoring module - provides visibility into network traffic by analyzing NetFlow, sFlow, jFlow, IP FIX and other flows. It identifies top bandwidth consumers by device, application and user.
- Firewall management module - collects, archives and analyzes all firewall logs for auditing and compliance. It tracks

user activities and bandwidth consumption and triggers alerts to admins if blocked sites are accessed.

- Configuration management module - backs up, restores, pushes and reverts configurations on network devices, with no device login required. It issues notifications via email and SMS for unauthorized configuration changes.
- IP address management module - manages IPv4 and IPv6 addresses for free space and availability. It tracks the entire history of an IP address, including the devices to which it was allocated.