

ASG's Delivery of BSM Maturity

ASG Software Solutions (Allen Systems Group) has created a pragmatic focus on how IT customers must deliver both a reliable IT infrastructure (...“plumbing”) as well as business benefits (...“finished construction”), making the BSM message one of ASG’s visible attributes. This analysis focuses on how the ASG product line actually delivers benefits at multiple levels of the BSM maturity model.

Level	Description	Business Goals	Business Benefits	Business Metric
5	Pervasive	Market Leadership	Sustained Competitive Advantage	Market Expansion
4	Optimized	Competitive Differentiation	Product & Service Leadership	Market Penetration
3	Aligned	Business Value	Customer Acquisition & Retention	Profit Maximization
2	Predictive	Secure/Reliable Operations	Cost Effective Operations	Revenue Focused
1	Essential	Business Fundamentals	Technology Supporting Business	Minimize IT Investment

Figure 1 – BSM Maturity Levels

Rather than identify the business maturity contribution of each specific product within ASG’s portfolio, ASG emphasizes the contribution of its ASG Foundation Technology that enables its BSM portfolio (“collection”) of software solutions. This vendor’s approach starts with the customer need or problem and addresses the nagging issues that are hindering achievement of the company’s business goals.

Level 1: Essential for Business Fundamentals

At Level 1, ASG delivers the basics of IT service management through point products and low levels of integration ...similar to any credible ITSM vendor ...small or large. IT network and system events are monitored, problem incidents are reported, help desk technologies are used to capture end-user issues,

Vendor Series on BSM Maturity:

The requirement for technology within current business initiatives is well recognized. What is also recognized is the frequent disconnect between the IT organization responsible for sustaining that technology and the business entities responsible for achieving business goals. Too often, both parties are speaking different languages, representing different cultures and focused on different objectives. The discipline of “business-oriented service management” (BSM) is emerging as a requirement to align IT and business.

In the white paper “Why Doesn’t the Business Drive BSM?” five business maturity levels (see Figure 1) are identified that assist IT in knowing how to better position and package their deliverables to the business community. Each business level has critical yet different demands upon their IT counterparts. Satisfying the IT needs of a “Predictive” (Level 2) company when that business is operating at an “Aligned” (Level 3) creates undue conflict and handicaps to revenue, growth and profit achievement.

IT management vendors frequently package their IT Service Management (ITSM) solutions to address the BSM needs of their IT customers. This series of articles reviews how selected vendors effectively position their product and service offerings in a BSM context.

reports and graphs are delivered to IT managers that allow basic analysis of system availability and asset identification. Business fundamentals are supported with service management 101.

ASG Product (Example)	BSM Capabilities (Samples)	BSM Business (Samples)
ASG-Automation Center™	Tracks problem records Escalation of alerts Access to repair records	Reactive support for IT assets used by business
ASG-TeVISTA™	Network & app perf monitoring; response times and availability measurement; web-based	Ensures end-user availability and response time objectives are met

Level 2: Predictive for Secure and Reliable Operations

Appropriate IT deliverables for business operating at Level 2 are the bread and butter of most effective IT organizations. In stepping up to the business requirements of predictability and “no surprises,” ASG’s goal is to allow their partners and customers to buy this foundation technology “out of the box” and, once deployed, enable Level 2 business alignment with integrated, customized solutions as needed. To accomplish this goal, ASG offers multiple Business Service Portfolio™ (BSP™) solutions, depending on the specific reliability or security issues, which deliver IT metrics for performance and availability.

ASG emphasizes that the “business” usually does not care about these types of metrics ...but are more concerned about the quality and cost effectiveness of their IT infrastructure and operations as it relates to “can I make X, can I sell X, can I distribute X, can I do whatever my business model requires?” Furthermore, the actual source of the IT service is immaterial to the business user. ASG tools recognize this independence of source by accommodating internal, outsourced or third-party providers.

ASG delivers the ability to track metrics for Level 2 operational efficiency. An example used in ASG’s approach deals with a company’s use of service desk metrics. A dashboard focused on this level of IT management creates an alert when a certain threshold of open trouble tickets is exceeded. The service desk manager can click on the path of opened trouble tickets and readily identify that there has been a 50% increase in issues at the Atlanta facility during the last 3 days. ASG provides insight into why that spike is happening, along with recommended options ...meeting the needs of the business community for reliable IT operations.

ASG Product (Example)	BSM Capabilities (Samples)	BSM Business (Samples)
ASG-Discovery and Dependence Mapping™ (ASG-DDM™)	IT asset discovery Map asset to application Application configuration	Reports of IT assets used for audits, issue resolution
ASG-Automation Center Change & Configuration Management™ (ASG-CCM™)	Creates change records Change prioritization Predefined change workflow	Introduce change w/out risking quality of business service
ASG's BSP z/OS Performance Management	Monitoring of mission-critical z/OS systems/apps Manage IT complexity, achieve SLAs, reduce costs via Web-enabled dashboards	Business insight into mission-critical business applications and infrastructure
ASG's BSP Distributed Workload Automation	Monitors, manages, and automates real-time, event-based, and batch scheduling across the entire distributed operating environment	Critical workload automation status to prevent IT infrastructure issues from interrupting the business

Level 3: Aligned for Business Value

At some point in the business maturity process, there is a need for the business to better align with customer's expectations and requirements (Level 3). Within business operations, focus is increased on acquiring and retaining customers, and in ensuring customer delight with the business' product or service. Business executives expect IT to assist them in measuring that "customer-oriented" business value, usually through metrics of profit and growth.

ASG empowers enterprise dashboard "views" to be built that correlate and integrate information across the whole spectrum of data ...whether that view be IT's contribution to global financials or the correlation between IT response time and fluctuations in business metrics. At Level 3, ASG's objective is to deliver real time, dynamic views that address the relationship between IT improvement and the increase of business value to the end customer ...or IT failure and the reduction of that business value. This BSM ability to demonstrate the impact of IT deliverables upon end-customers would motivate any business to listen better to its IT provider.

By delivering views through dashboards and drill downs to business intelligence (BI) reports, ASG offers analysis and recommendations of technology solutions to not only senior IT management, but also to the (business) user community. ASG believes that the user shouldn't have to worry about navigation ...or where the data is. The ability of IT to determine the "path" in resolving the high-level issue remains critical, but ASG's solution attempts to reference the business impact from the beginning.

In ASG’s sales process, examples are used that demonstrate the business value dilemma. One illustration at Level 3 is the warehouse data required for ordering and distributing cases of cola soft drinks. The BI report indicates that company B’s Midwestern distribution center averages 2,000 cases per week when the newest report jumps to 4,000 cases. The business question is whether there is an error in the business analytics or if the company is experiencing an actual growth season. The distribution manager wants to trust that the forecast is on target “today” ...without the need to spend days digging into the data to determine IT’s accuracy. This distribution manager doesn’t care about system availability or response time (Level 2) ...she cares about accommodating a 100% growth rate for improved customer relationships (Level 3.) She wants business information in real time (...IT’s responsibility) that helps her make business decisions in real time.

ASG Product (Example)	BSM Capabilities (Samples)	BSM Business (Samples)
ASG’s BSP Application Portfolio Analysis	Identify hotspots via dashboards; drill down to metric artifacts; baseline metrics for outsourcing	Ensure integrity of customer interfacing business applications
ASG’s BSP Enterprise Workload Automation™	Adapt workloads to address unplanned changes or events across the enterprise; cost effectively monitor scheduling and execution of workloads across the entire enterprise	Align real-time changes with business by mapping mission-critical workloads to business services

Level 4: Optimized for Competitive Differentiation

In the drive for product and service leadership, the business ability to create and maintain unique, competitive differentiation creates a Level 4 business opportunity. At this level, all corporate entities, especially IT, are optimized to support this competitive advantage. How does IT assist in the corporate momentum for increased market penetration? How does IT deliver real-time visibility into business metrics? How does IT apply business knowledge gained through performance monitoring of business applications? How does the top IT executive deliver technology value as a member of the firm’s top management team?

In order to provide greater immediacy of “business views” required at Level 4, ASG is exploring end-to-end integration of real time business intelligence. Believing that a Level 4 capability is not going to come from “out-of-box” solutions, ASG seeks clarity regarding how each customer understands its own competitive differentiation ...followed by “where is that information? ...where are the sources? ...what is the ‘geometry’ required of IT for the company’s customer to subscribe to the revised competitive identity?” ASG’s goal is to assist its clients with a better way to support this geometry

involving product features, product mix, distribution mechanism, buyer behavior and any other attribute that supports the competitive advantage.

ASG sees a critical role for modeling technologies and business process management in providing business “oriented” service management to IT. ASG’s contribution to this IT business role is to create intelligence or knowledge that can be applied by business decision makers. Consequently, ASG is exploring how to integrate real time content to better predict the results of business change to the IT infrastructure and operations ...thereby ensuring that IT can support and adapt to the proposed competitive requirements. Only then can IT elevate its corporate contribution to enhance what other corporate entities must do to improve and sustain competitive advantage.

ASG Product (Example)	BSM Capabilities (Samples)	BSM Business (Samples)
ASG’s metaCMDB™	Federate to multiple CMDBs and data stores; enabling data reconciliation, impact analysis of change, regulatory compliance	More accurate/ effective decision making Mitigate business operational risks

Summary

To illustrate the BSM challenge of IT software vendors, ASG draws a comparison to a furniture store selling a chair to their customer. The store doesn’t really know the value of the chair to their customers. Yet, the store sells chairs and, in order to stay in business and make money, the store has to tailor the chair’s messaging, packaging, promotion, and pricing to the value that chair brings to the actual user. In addition, the store needs to cover cost with enough margin built into the price to allow negotiation of the selling price based on the customer’s perception of the value: more value, higher price; less value, lower price.

With ASG’s BSP, value is illustrated in a fashion that can be understood by both IT and business. Illustrations of value for ASG BSP solutions are not the mind-numbing spaghetti charts that show the complexity of IT’s application and infrastructure landscapes. BSP solutions do not require the replacement of commodity products with other commodity products (there is no long-term value in that), the learning curve is short (quicker staff productivity), and they provide comprehensive, specific views of what is important to the user (i.e., understanding the impact of IT on a particular business area). ASG’s BSP solutions also allow the integration of multiple variables to understand the impact of small changes in the environment (how will it impact a specific user or business area).

Because of ASG’s BSP, the business side of the equation sees better service; they can literally see IT getting better; they can see IT controlling expenses and, at the same time, improving the service (using less and getting more). Ultimately, business is comfortable that IT is fully utilizing resources (hardware, software, staff, time, etc.), and all of these improvements are shown and demonstrated in the everyday arena of the user’s world.

This is all done visually—via a real-time, customizable, drill-down dashboards and real-time ad-hoc reporting.

ASG's BSM objective is to enhance the positioning and delivery of ASG solutions so that the business value of ASG's IT software solutions become intuitive to ASG's IT customers ...so intuitive that those IT customers can easily create a compelling BSM value proposition for their own business customers. Learning how to message, package, and promote IT services to the business maturity of their own IT customers is one path ASG is pursuing in its BSM quest for aligning business value to its customers. This approach is built on the company's ongoing dedication to its customers and, as a result, is vital to its competitive differentiation.

To learn more about Business Service Management, visit: <http://www.bsmreview.com>

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