

# MIND THE GAP BETWEEN BSS/OSS

## BRIDGING THE BSS/OSS GAP THROUGH AN INTEGRATED SERVICE MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Anyone who has visited London has heard the familiar sound of a subway loudspeaker warning them to “mind the gap” between the train and platform. That same phrase could serve as a warning to today’s service providers who need to “mind the gap” between their customer-facing business support systems (BSS) and network-facing operations support systems (OSS).

In reality, this “gap” has existed for some time. BSS systems (typically including billing and CRM), have always been separate from OSS systems (such as resource management, service activation, provisioning, fault management, etc.), which included having separate business processes and people. For example, revenue-focused BSS was always run by the IT department, and cost-focused OSS was run by network operations. This traditional binary approach would have likely continued to be sufficient if not for the major transformation the telecommunications industry is undergoing, where service providers are becoming retailers of multimedia and entertainment services.

Now, this gap is posing a major problem for both service providers and their customers. The lack of integration across these functions can result in longer time to market for new services, faults between ordering and activating services, and low customer satisfaction. For example, this gap makes it nearly impossible for most providers to tell customers the actual status of an order. Once an order passes from customer-oriented systems to network-oriented systems, most providers find it very hard – if not impossible – to link an order back to an individual customer. This is complicated by the fact that many customer services are designed in parallel by multiple inventory systems and then provisioned by numerous activation systems. Similarly, OSS systems generate important data about the status of networks. In the event of a fault, they can perform advanced diagnostics that generate useful information including pinpointing the location and the cause – but trying to tie this data to affected customers can be very difficult. That means subscribers are

asking questions that the service providers’ call center representatives cannot answer. In order for service providers to deliver new services while also creating an intentional and positive experience for the customer, they must bridge the gap between BSS and OSS systems and provide a unified view that links customers, resources and services.

### TAKING AN INTEGRATED SERVICE MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Service providers are looking to bridge the BSS/OSS gap by using combinations of technical integration and business process management. Many have turned to TeleManagement Forum’s (TMF) widely used eTOM (enhanced Telecommunications Operations Map) model. eTOM is essentially an end-to-end process map that helps service providers track operational processes across these traditionally separate domains.

According to TMF, it is the Service Management layer of eTOM that in fact bridges the BSS or customer-facing CRM layer and the Resource Management, network-facing layer. Service Management is defined in eTOM as the “horizontal functional process grouping focusing on the knowledge of services and includes all functionalities necessary for the service delivery and management of services.” When we look at deployments underway as well as RFPs, we see that this approach is gaining momentum by large service providers worldwide. These vendors have realized that in order to transform their business they have to manage their services in an integrated way. In other words, service management transformation addresses the need to transform the way services are fulfilled and assured today. This is done by linking customers with the network resources, and by converging and streamlining service readiness, fulfillment and assurance processes.

## AMDOCS SERVICE MANAGEMENT SUITE

This revolutionary approach to integrated Service Management has been adopted by Amdocs and BT and has recently been implemented there as the NEO Project, which is BT's strategic service management platform. In addition, the Amdocs Service Management Suite will be used to help Telstra improve the management and fulfillment of services to its customers through the integration of its business and operational support systems (BSS/OSS). At the heart of the suite is the innovative Business and Operational Support System Manager product or B/OSS Manager. In fact, it is the only offering on the market that spans both Fulfillment and Assurance and bridges the BSS/OSS gap.

## LINKING BSS AND OSS THROUGH A UNIFIED SERVICE VIEW

Amdocs Service Management Suite enables a unified service view, a capability that is new to the market and which links OSS and BSS processes, helping service providers create a complete view of the customer, the network and services. A single access point to service instance data from multiple locations and systems is critical to delivering accurate, efficient customer service. Only through an integrated approach to Service Management can service providers devise a single repository for service data, which links customer products to network services and resources, so that you can see your services through a 360-degree consolidated view. Details of the services that are managed through Service Management are first recorded in the Amdocs Unified Service Manager during the service fulfillment process and are then used as the master reference for trouble tickets in the service assurance process.

It is important to note that even in the ideal case, in which a service provider has decided to consolidate its inventories and activation systems onto one vendor's product, providers still need to manage the services through a comprehensive service management layer:

- > OSS transformation projects take a long time to deliver – typically 3-5 years – in which the OSS still needs to function. Through an integrated service management approach, co-existence between legacy systems during the migration phase is enabled.

- > Most large service providers will find that even after an extensive transformation project, a number of legacy activation and inventory systems would still exist that would not be consolidated; for example, Resource Management systems that support Out-Side-Plant, Number Management, GIS and Equipment Warehouse. In addition, systems that support "old" technologies (e.g., Frame Relay, SDH, PDH ) would be retired in several years anyway and thus not worth the effort and risk of the long and complicated process of consolidating them.

In order to deliver the *intentional customer experience*,<sup>TM</sup> reduce time to market for new products and services, as well as reduce operational costs, service providers need to bridge the BSS/OSS gap. With Amdocs Service Management Suite, service providers can bridge this gap and create a unified view linking customers, services and the network.