5 Ways to Achieve Anywhere Operations with a Digital Platform Conductor

Enabling a more agile asset lifecycle management process while reducing risk and costs

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Seven years — that's how far organizations leapt ahead in digital transformation due to the pandemic, according to a study by McKinsey & Company. This means organizations are increasingly phasing out their legacy tech and transitioning to cloud-based systems and technology. Building the underlying infrastructure to support their business processes and personalized customer experiences, organizations now can be nimbler and more streamlined.

The shift to maintaining increased remote and hybrid workforces even after the pandemic further augments the need for visibility of assets throughout their entire lifecycle and automation of IT processes. The way organizations expected employees to work in the past will no longer be viable in the future. Organizations must also transform their IT operations to enable the new models and provide the business agility needed to remain competitive.

However, many organizations have a wide gap from where they are now, and the processes needed to manage modern IT programs. Managing digital IT transformation is complex. Using outdated processes for these initiatives brings significant risks to the organization.

Traditionally, organizations use manual processes to manage IT infrastructure programs. For example, data about assets, who is using them, and where they are located is collected from multiple disparate sources and then aggregated and analyzed using spreadsheets. Planning, executing workflows, and analyzing results are also typically performed manually. As a result, transformation projects are costly, prone to risk, and slow to go to market. In addition, by failing to track and manage assets from “cradle to grave”, organizations risk security breaches that not only expose sensitive information but also could result in millions of dollars in fines. Without digital processes, organizations are quickly falling behind competitors – and the gap between them is continuing to grow.

What does anywhere operations mean?

According to Gartner, “Anywhere operations creates an IT operating model designed to support customers everywhere, enable employees everywhere, and manage the deployment of business services across distributed infrastructure.” Additionally, “anywhere operations must also include digitally enhancing physical spaces to deliver unique value-added experiences that cannot be delivered remotely.”

Anywhere operations provides many benefits to organizations:

- Increased productivity & collaboration.
- Ability to hire anywhere and retain staff longer.
- Higher rates of employee and customer satisfaction.

To achieve the promise of anywhere operations, organizations are reimagining how we work and how customers consume their goods and services. A critical component to doing this comes by way of the adoption of emerging technologies, which directly impacts the underlying infrastructure of how our businesses operate today.

To execute an anywhere operations strategy, organizations need an accurate view of all assets at all times throughout their lifecycle. IT needs a more agile process to manage those assets in a constantly changing environment and through evolving business needs. Because the “traditional way of working” is no longer effective or scalable, organizations must create a foundation for their future by changing their approach and leveraging new technology.

Reducing the Cost and Risk of Anywhere Operations

IT leaders must contend with a complex, ever-changing infrastructure and fragmented, legacy tools designed as point solutions. They struggle with data silos and CMDBs that are often inaccurate and unreliable to manage growing, hybrid environments that are ever-changing. Without an accurate, real-time view of thousands of physical and virtual assets, users, and their interdependencies, the risk of business disruption in delivering digital transformation programs becomes a serious issue.

While some organizations turn to IT Service Management (ITSM) tools, these types of tools lack the full capabilities needed to conduct transformation programs and manage anywhere operations. Organizations relying on ITSM for these programs are not able to scale quickly, which limits growth.

Organizations are increasingly turning to an emerging technology – a Digital Platform Conductor (DPC) – to accelerate their digital transformation and maintain anywhere operations.

A DPC works in concert with existing tools in the IT stack to orchestrate asset lifecycle management and deliver on anywhere operations faster and with less risk. By sitting on top of the entire stack, the DPC pulls together all the information into one central view, allowing for an understanding of the data in a way that no single tool can, and then uses that data to mitigate risk, plan, automate and orchestrate tasks (human and systems), and analyze results.

A DPC benefits large enterprises across any vertical. The more assets there are to manage (both physical and virtual), the more complex the infrastructure quickly becomes. Knowing where physical assets are located, who is using them, what applications are being accessed, which OS version is running, and how data-bearing assets are being decommissioned are all critical components of reducing security risks and controlling costs. Enterprises in heavily regulated industries, such as financial services or healthcare, must also maintain up-to-date audit trails to ensure regulatory compliance.

> ReadyWorks is a Digital Platform Conductor. It reduces the risk and cost of IT infrastructure programs. ReadyWorks integrates and normalizes critical program data, analyzes risk, automates and orchestrates workflows, and provides real-time status in a single command and control platform.

5 Top Plays for a DPC in Conducting Anywhere Operations

To tackle anywhere operations, teams should focus on five areas:

1 | Automate endpoint operations

CHALLENGE: Organizations often struggle to get a clear, real-time view of all their endpoints, where they are located, who is using them, what group they belong to, and which applications are running on them. Managing the endpoint lifecycle from acquisition to disposal typically involves many manual, inefficient, and error-prone processes, from collecting and analyzing asset information in spreadsheets to communicating with and scheduling thousands of end users for upgrades through emails, to orchestrating hardware replacements and OS updates through multiple tools including systems management and ITSM tools.

HOW DPC HELPS: By orchestrating and automating endpoint operations from one central command and control platform, organizations can reduce the risk and cost of endpoint operations.

CASE STUDY: A large global financial organization with over 90,000 endpoints needed a better process for managing their estate. The firm was accustomed to replacing 1/3 of their endpoint estate each year, but with the introduction of Windows 10 they found themselves overwhelmed and unable to keep up with the demands of application testing, hardware replacement, and upgrade scheduling. They were out of compliance, behind on security updates, and delivering a poor end user experience. They were essentially running an upgrade program for 90,000 users with overworked delivery managers and mountains of spreadsheets. They needed a solution that could help them modernize the approach to their endpoint lifecycle program.

The firm uses ReadyWorks, a digital platform conduct (DPC) to identify whether systems are ready for the upgrade or need to be replaced. Once identified, ReadyWorks serves as the central orchestration platform for conducting hardware upgrades/ replacements and OS updates. They use ReadyWorks to automate end-user communications, scheduling, workflows, analysis, and reporting, saving over 13,000 labor hours in one year and ensuring security compliance.

2 | Adapt I&O to new ways of working

CHALLENGE: For decades, manual methods have been the mainstay of IT operations. This approach results in siloed systems without integration of apps and data. With the overwhelming increase in remote and hybrid work, the traditional approach creates many obstacles and holds organizations back from digital transformation. Without a full view of the environment, the number of issues increases and system management becomes very complex, which results in consuming expensive resources and costly systems to maintain.

HOW DPC HELPS: By using a DPC, organizations can integrate their current systems and data to create a single source of truth. IT teams can then make informed decisions and use dependency mapping to reduce the risk of business disruption during a migration. Additionally, the DPC uses artificial intelligence (AI) to help collect, clean and manage the data, which allows for business decisions to be made based on accurate information.

The DPC also eliminates the need to interact with each system to execute a workflow, (e.g., push out an update). I&O leaders can leverage a DPC to orchestrate all workflows for both systems and people through one central command and control platform and analyze results.

CASE STUDY: Tradeweb, a global financial services company that operates financial marketplaces, had a number of complex infrastructure environments that had grown organically over time. They needed a system that could manage their infrastructure and serve as the definitive system of record for everything in their environments. They also needed a faster way to deploy mission-critical applications while meeting unique end-user and regional requirements. Using ReadyWorks, the team now has an accurate, real-time view of their estate and is able to run programs from one system.

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3 | Sustain employee productivity and collaboration

CHALLENGE: While it is unlikely that organizations will need to move their operations online overnight again, as happened when the pandemic first hit, they will need to adopt a faster, more agile response to business changes. They need to accelerate the delivery of tools that will allow end users to work from anywhere and be more productive. They also need to include end users in decision-making and deployment processes for new tools and applications.

HOW DPC HELPS: By leveraging self-service capabilities, IT teams are working with end users to improve productivity and collaboration through communications, scheduling, and attestation of data. For example, users can access self-service capabilities to confirm or update organizational information, location, hardware and application requirements, and more. This eliminates the exchange of countless emails, improves productivity, and helps organizations realize faster time-to-value while reducing risk for implementation of new applications.

CASE STUDY: Maxar, which specializes in manufacturing and maintaining satellites, has grown rapidly through mergers and acquisitions. As a result, deployment of collaboration tools such as O365 are made more complicated by multiple management systems, numerous AD forests, inconsistent data, and other complications common in merger scenarios. By using ReadyWorks, Maxar can now easily deploy applications faster while maintaining business continuity. In fact, Maxar reduced O365 delivery time by 25%.

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4 | Optimize cloud and edge infrastructure

CHALLENGE: Optimizing cloud infrastructure can provide cost savings, greater flexibility, and higher performance. To capitalize on these opportunities, you need a clear, 360 view of your entire cloud infrastructure and interdependencies across the organization. Whether migrating to the cloud or leveraging a hybrid or a multi-cloud strategy, you need an understanding of current applications, who is using them, and workload requirements, as well as identify future needs.

Edge infrastructure is also becoming more complex as more and more connected devices and sensors are supported.

HOW DPC HELPS: By collecting data through a DPC, organizations have the insights they need to optimize both their cloud and edge infrastructure while moving from legacy applications to the cloud. Through dependency mappings I/O leaders can visualize the various infrastructure components supporting workloads across the business. How those IOT components are collecting and processing data across applications directly impacts optimal design options for edge placement and overall cloud spend.

Furthermore, as emerging tech evolves along with our customer and staff experiences, the underlying infrastructure will be in a constant state of optimization and improvement. A DPC becomes the as-built blue print for any of those ongoing transformation activities.

CASE STUDY: Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) used ReadyWorks to get a comprehensive, accurate view of its data center and then applied this information to determine optimal workload placement as part of its cloud migration strategy. The migration was completed without business disruption and ahead of schedule.

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5 | Improve digital experience for customers and employees

CHALLENGE: As companies amalgamate physical locations and adapt to new ways of working, they must deliver services to more remote workers while enhancing services for in-office employees and customers. For example, companies are:

- Allowing user devices to interact seamlessly with the space itself to enable workplace hoteling.
- Enabling employees to pre-book office space tailored to their individual or team requirements or allowing end users to scan a workspace, when they make an unscheduled call into the office, to understand if it is available for them to use.
- Allowing customers or employees to access information on their devices as it interacts within an environment, for example, to help them to navigate an unfamiliar building and get where they need to be.
- Integrating the digital and physical shopping experience by allowing customers to scan an item in a store to discover how others have reviewed or implementing facial recognition to allow contactless payments.

However, with each new digital component added, the complexity and risk associated with managing these assets increases.

HOW DPC HELPS: Through data aggregation, orchestration and automation a DPC reduces the complexity and risk of managing IT assets – both physical and virtual – used to improve digital experiences for both customers and employees.

CASE STUDY: One of the top five investment banks in the world created the "innovation center" designed to enable internal experimentation of emerging technologies. By adopting the capabilities of a DPC, everyone has visibility into the center's inventory and is able to determine what equipment is available at any time. They are also able to check in and check out equipment without the need for IT personnel to be on site. The entire process is fully automated and user-friendly.

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Moving into the Future with DPC

The number of digital systems and applications as well as the complexity will continue to increase as organizations move closer to digital transformation. With the number of connected devices predicted to triple by 2024, enterprises will quickly find themselves woefully unprepared for deploying and managing the millions of physical and virtual assets required to manage for Anywhere Operations.

By leveraging the DPC capabilities of ReadyWorks, organizations can reduce the risk and cost of managing these connected devices to provide the experiences that customers and employees both expect and deserve.

ReadyWorks conducts data, systems and people to cut through IT complexity and enable more efficient and agile operations. ReadyWorks connects to all the other IT and business systems to integrate and normalize data, analyze risk, automate and orchestrate workflows, and report on program status.

Teams that use ReadyWorks reduce 50% or more of the manual tasks associated with anywhere operations and eliminate millions of dollars in operational inefficiencies.

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ReadyWorks was built by a team of engineers and project managers that have been conducting IT infrastructure programs to enterprises for the last 20 years. Knowing the challenges, pitfalls and risks that repeatedly cause delays and increase costs, we created a better path forward.

To learn more about how ReadyWorks can reduce the risk and cost of IT infrastructure transformation, visit www.readyworks.com.

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