

# Automating IT Systems Management

Kaseya offers a complete and automated IT systems management solution for small to medium-sized enterprises that works 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and doesn't complain about overtime!



**Kaseya**

Our Automation. Your Liberation.™

[www.kaseya.com](http://www.kaseya.com)

IT professionals at small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) wear many hats. You are responsible for ensuring that employees have access to the tools and information they need when they need it and where they need it. You must secure your organization from malicious cyber attacks and maintain compliance. You need to be prepared to support business growth. And you must accomplish all this in the face of shrinking budgets and a small staff.

The problem is that IT systems management is tedious. There simply isn't enough time in the day or money in the budget to deploy new systems and software, update machines with required patches and software releases, monitor systems devices and network traffic, run daily maintenance routines, log and take action on computer failures and security, remove and update antiquated systems and software and finally, report key findings to team members and the executive staff.

However, a complete, proactive and automatic IT systems management strategy can eliminate much of the tedious manual tasks associated with IT maintenance at small enterprises, allowing IT professionals to improve efficiencies, increase performance, reduce risk and manage growth. However, there are a plethora of IT systems management solutions for the SME market—each with different feature sets, service levels and ease of use.

### **This white paper will discuss:**

- The importance of an automated IT systems management solution
- What features SME IT professionals should look for in a solution
- Different types of IT systems management solutions and architectures
- How the Kaseya Small/Medium Enterprise Edition (SMEE) best fits the unique needs of small enterprises at a price-point they can appreciate

### **Tedious Administration Can Sap Your Time**

Most IT professionals that work for small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) do so because they enjoy the freedom, flexibility and start-up feel that only smaller companies can provide. Hierarchy is typically flatter than large corporations, and you often have access to the management team and the owner. You have a wider range of job responsibilities where you can learn on the job and become a jack of all trades. The employees appreciate you as a person rather than as a distant administrator who they only call when they lose an email. You actually care about how the company is doing rather than working strictly for the paycheck.

The trade off is that you are often on an island, left alone with a smaller staff to figure things out on your own, crossing your fingers that today won't be the day that the Web site goes down. Rarely do you get to coast. There are always desktops to configure, software to provision, email accounts to reset, Web servers to rebuild and coffee-soaked keyboards to hold under the bathroom hand dryer.

Working for a small enterprise can be rewarding. But it's certainly not without its nuisances. The number one annoyance is always manual administration. According to a recent IT user survey, 49 percent of IT professionals spend more than half of their time conducting basic maintenance.<sup>1</sup> They'd rather be designing an innovative business intelligence program for the sales staff or a new content management system for the marketing department. Instead, they're downloading patches, configuring new users and resetting passwords. These tasks are important but hardly get your blood pumping.

<sup>1</sup> Kaseya. "The State of IT Systems Management". 2010.

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What percent of your time is spent doing basic administrative tasks?	%
25-49 percent	47%
50-74 percent	67%
75-99 percent	12%
Less than 25 percent	49%
More than 75 percent	11%

According to our survey, half of IT professionals spend more than 50 percent of their time on administrative tasks, and 12 percent said they spend more than 75 percent of their time on administration. This is too much.

A complete and proactive IT systems management strategy can eliminate much of the tedious manual tasks associated with IT maintenance at small enterprises. Tasks like patch management, software deployment, setting up new users, monitoring, reporting and ticketing can be automated. By streamlining IT maintenance and heading off problems before they become major issues, SMEs can improve IT service, mitigate risk, manage growth and reduce operational costs.

### Features You Should Look for in a Solution

Small to medium-sized enterprises require a complete solution that integrates all aspects of IT systems management on a single platform and eliminates much of the tedious manual administration that saps time and resources.

#### The solution should:

- Come pre-populated with out-of-the box automation to help you get up and running immediately
- Automate regular maintenance and monitoring
- Consolidate all management functions and integrate all management data in a single console
- Provide the framework to automatically remediate IT issues quickly

### Out-of-the-Box Functionality

Getting started with a new IT systems management solution takes capital, time, expertise and patience—all things that small enterprises have in short supply. Often, the complexity of deploying a solution company-wide erases any efficiency benefits that are derived from implementing a centralized management strategy. In some cases, organizations would have been better off keeping their inefficient and decentralized solutions. Don't let this happen to you. Make sure you choose a solution that includes out-of-the-box functionality and automation that allows you to get up and running immediately.

An easy-to-deploy, easy-to-use solution should help you automate configuration changes, system clean-up, disk management and network testing from the moment you plug it in. No one wants to spend weeks detecting remote systems, updating the machines for deployment, installing agents, configuring systems and then testing the connections. Your IT systems management solution should do that for you in a fraction of the time.

### Automation

Once installed, your IT systems management solution needs to eliminate redundant tasks and streamline basic maintenance. Here is an example. If you've been in IT for any amount of time, chances are you dread Patch Tuesdays, the day Microsoft releases software updates to its customers. Unfortunately, it's a misnomer. Patch Tuesday usually bleeds into Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. It's common for it to take up to a week for administrators to download and install all the Windows and Office patches on their organizations' computers, and even then, there are likely to be some systems that are overlooked.

Automation allows you to take back your work week by automatically downloading and installing patches at the press of a button based on predefined patch policies and schedules that minimize network impact. Immediately, a process that used to take days is reduced to mere minutes. Magic.

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An effective management solution should also automate disparate management and monitoring functions, enabling a fully-integrated and holistic IT systems management strategy. Asset management data can be integrated with desktop monitoring to ensure all systems are being covered. The help desk can be populated with inventory data as well, making useful information such as model numbers, operating systems, installed applications and user details available to help desk personnel.

The automation possibilities are endless. It's important that your solution helps you streamline IT operations while saving time and money. A proactive management strategy ensures that potential problems are identified and remediated before they become major issues. Not only does this improve IT service levels, performance and availability, it reduces the time you spend fixing problems and increases the time you spend solving problems.

### **Integration**

No one wants to manage a hodgepodge of management solutions. Why would you deploy separate solutions for server monitoring, desktop monitoring, patch management, remote access, ticketing, asset management and reporting when you can deploy a single and consolidated IT systems management solution? You wouldn't.

The ability to view all IT systems management features from a single management console is extremely valuable, giving you a holistic view of the entire IT environment. It also makes configuration and integrating the management of disparate systems easier, speeding equipment upgrades and the deployment of new systems.

The result is streamlined operations that eventually lead to reduced costs and increased productivity—a formula anyone can appreciate from the IT administrator to the CFO.

### **Remediation**

IT systems management solutions that simply monitor and identify issues are essentially worthless. You need an integrated platform that allows you to remediate issues as well. Again, automation is the key. Make sure your software can automatically create tickets when problems arise. If the monitoring module detects a downed server, wouldn't it be helpful if it also generated a ticket and routed it to the appropriate administrator? What if it automatically rerouted traffic to another system? In the same vein, what if the solution detected an unsupported application that was downloaded to a user's laptop? Shouldn't the solution automatically delete the application and quarantine the system before it causes security, performance or compliance problems?

Some solutions even empower users to conduct basic maintenance on their own under predetermined policies and procedures. Why can't users submit, track and update their own tickets? Given the right guidance, why can't they download the latest Windows service pack on their desktop? Why can't users install the latest version of the sales application? As long as system changes and access are managed appropriately, self-help features can save you hours of work while giving users more of a stake in the health of their systems.

### **IT Systems Management Options**

There are dozens, if not hundreds, of IT systems management tools, software and services out on the marketplace, and it's easy to become overwhelmed. However, choosing the right IT systems management solution is probably one of the most important decisions an IT professional at an SME can make. If powerful and effective, IT systems management can transform the way IT service is delivered in your organization. In addition to the characteristics above, it's important to think about how the solution will create efficiencies, improve end user service, reduce risk, manage growth and keep costs under control.

### **Free Management Tools**

Hardware vendors from EMC to Sun to Dell often throw in free management software when selling systems to small businesses. These tools come pre-installed and are free. However, the benefits stop there. The software only works with specific hardware, doesn't integrate well, is short on features and is a pain to manage properly. We'll just stop there. There's no need to pile on.

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### Point Products

Single-feature point products—such as an asset management solution, a help desk solution or monitoring software—actually work quite well for what they are engineered to do. However, deploying multiple management platforms can be confusing and may lead to a “siloeed” management strategy. Critical inventory data isn’t seamlessly shared with other management solutions such as monitoring software or a patch tool. Sure, these vendors often tout their open architecture and interoperability, but integrating disparate tools requires hundreds of hours of configuration, and you still don’t get a holistic view of the entire network. Instead, you get a dozen dashboards cluttering up your desktop, sapping bandwidth and requiring constant attention and manual labor.

### Appliances

Some vendors offer a pre-loaded appliance that you can plug into your environment and start managing the infrastructure right away. These cost-effective solutions in a box are often simple to install. However, their feature set is often simple as well. Appliances sacrifice functionality for ease of use and cost. The problem is that the watered-down appliances don’t automate basic maintenance and fail to reduce manual tasks—the one benefit that IT professionals at SMEs really need. The appliance saves you time and budget during the installation stage, but operational costs tend to remain flat.

### Agentless Software

Agentless management solutions provide many of the same features as agent-based solutions but don’t require that software be deployed on each system. This eliminates the consequence of sapping memory from systems—which could affect system performance—but requires additional bandwidth—which can affect network performance. In addition, since data collection and processing occurs over the network, agentless solutions are rendered useless if the network goes down. While agentless architectures are easier to deploy and use they are not as robust or reliable as agent-based software solutions—potentially taking away your visibility and the ability to access systems when you need those capabilities the most.

### Agent-based Software

Robust IT systems management software solutions provide the feature set, reliability and robustness required by any sized organization from a 20-user mom and pop to a large enterprise with 5,000 employees. A complete, scalable solution, agent-based management software often integrates audit and inventory, monitoring, remote control, ticketing, reporting, software deployment and patch management in a single solution, ensuring that data is shared and analyzed throughout the system. Automation is the biggest benefit, allowing you to streamline administration, eliminate manual labor, ensure consistent service levels and reduce operational costs.

However, agent-based solutions can be complex and expensive, though innovation and pricing pressure from agentless vendors are bringing costs down.

### Enterprise Functionality and Performance with Rapid ROI

Armed with the understanding that SMEs face many of the same IT challenges and business issues that large enterprises deal with, Kaseya is offering Kaseya Small/Medium Enterprise Edition (SMEE)—an integrated, automatic IT systems management solution at a price point small enterprises can appreciate. The solution includes the core functionality from Kaseya’s large Enterprise Edition with additional features ideally suited for smaller deployments. Integrating software deployment, audit and inventory, monitoring, remote control, ticketing, reporting and patch management in a single solution, Kaseya combines the feature set, reliability, robustness and scalability of enterprise solutions with the ease of use, simplicity and cost of SME solutions.

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### Improve User Service

Kaseya's proactive approach creates a more robust IT systems management strategy. Automatic monitoring, alerts and self-service modules ensure that systems are up and running at optimal capacity. Business software is properly installed. Patches are updated in a timely manner. Memory and storage capacity is enhanced. Resolution time evaporates and availability dramatically improves. Reliable access to systems leads to better user productivity and customer service. The organization runs more smoothly and flourishes. Revenue increases. Management recognizes your contribution and gives you a raise. You retire early to a life sipping pina coladas on the beach. It all starts with automation.

### Reduce Risk

The Kaseya IT Automation Framework enables consistency. Through remote control and network transparency, systems in branch offices can be managed at the same level of service as systems in the company's headquarters. Pragmatic security policies and data protection strategies can be reliably applied, protecting all aspects of the organization. At the same time, internal, industry, state and federal regulations can be met, ensuring compliance.

### Manage IT as your Company Continues to Grow

SMEs need an IT systems management solution that can grow with the organization, scaling appropriately in accordance with new employees, new users and new opportunities. Whether the organization is launching a new product line, opening a new office or acquiring a competitor, IT needs to be ready to scale up to meet demand. Kaseya's agent-based architecture and modular approach enables infrastructure to be scaled quickly and pragmatically.

The scalable Kaseya architecture allows IT to support new business opportunities rather than inhibiting growth.

### Conclusion

IT maintenance can be a drag for IT professionals at small to medium enterprises. Tedious and repetitive administration can sap time, energy and staffing resources, preventing IT professionals from meeting the goals of the organization. Fortunately, a complete and proactive IT systems management strategy can automate operations, facilitate seamless integration between management functions and enable quick, reliable remediation. However, most available options are either too complex and too expensive or lack the functionality and integration required for proactive IT systems management.

The Kaseya Small-Medium Enterprise Edition brings enterprise-level functionality, reliability and integration to the SME market, helping you enhance IT service, cut costs, reduce risk and manage growth. No longer will you have to "make do" with watered-down management software or struggle with complex solutions. Kaseya offers reliable, robust, complete and automated IT systems management at a price point you—and your small enterprise owner—can appreciate.

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### About Kaseya

Kaseya is the leading global provider of IT Systems Management software. Kaseya's solutions empower virtually everyone — from individual consumers to large corporations and IT service providers — to proactively monitor, manage and control IT assets remotely, easily and efficiently from one integrated Web-based platform. To learn more, please visit [www.kaseya.com](http://www.kaseya.com)

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