



The State of Data Center Health Management Strategy 2017

Fall 2017

Introduction

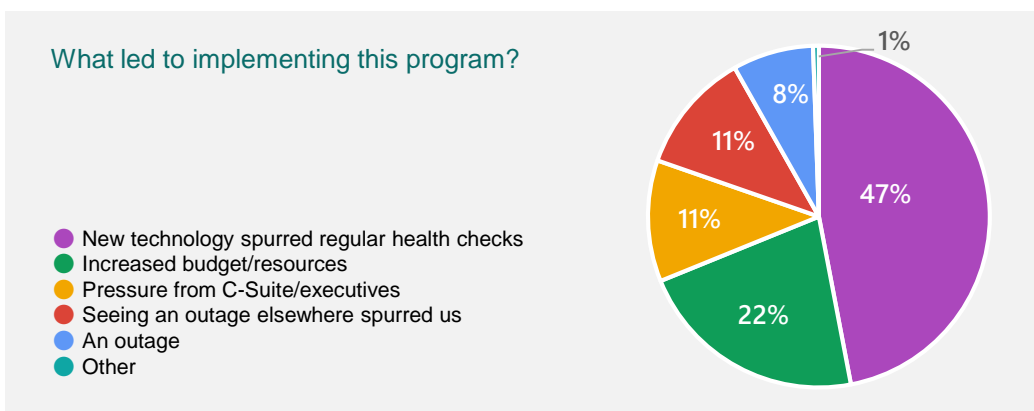
Data has become one of the most valuable assets for 21st century businesses. Organizations are in a constant state of pressure to manage a massive amount of data in their supervision. As a result, managing the health of data centers is paramount to ensure flexibility, safety and efficiency of a data driven organization. A continually developing and changing entity, today's complex data center requires regular health checks empowering data center managers to stay on the pulse of their data center facilities in order to maintain business continuity. A preventative versus reactive approach within the data center is paramount to avoiding outages and mitigating downtime. Data center managers can maintain the health of data center hardware by leveraging automated tools that conduct ongoing monitoring, analytics, diagnostics and remediation functions. With the average data center outage costing even the most sophisticated organizations upwards of three-quarters of a million dollars, implementing a data center health management strategy is mission critical in today's dynamic business environment.

A recent study carried out by Morar Consulting amongst 200 data center managers in the UK and US reveals that nearly 1 in 10 businesses do not have a data center health management system in place, showing that many businesses are potentially exposed to outages costing businesses thousands of dollars per minute in downtime. This report summarizes the findings from a study carried out in Spring 2017, highlighting today's approaches and attitudes towards the implementation of a data center health management strategy.

A reactive approach to data center health management

Current Health Management Approach

For businesses that do have health management systems in place, a third implemented these only once their backs were up against the wall, being forced into implementation following an outage, witnessing an outage elsewhere or being pressured by the C-suite to do so. In addition, the main driver (47%) to implement a health management strategy is new technology integration that spurs on regular health checks, ushering in a need for new processes across the data center management teams. Increased budget and resources (22%) was a secondary motivator to implement a health management system.



The pressure of implementing health management processes while integrating new technology is especially felt in the US where more than half of businesses report that they have implemented a program due to “new technology integrations”.

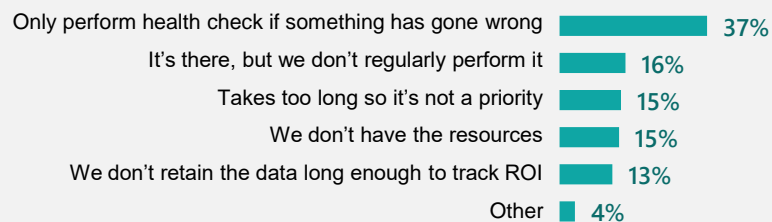
Health Check Methods

In an era of automation, 1 in 5 data center managers are still relying on manual processes to perform jobs that could be minimized or automated through innovative software solutions. This manual approach therefore suggests that data center managers are not yet reliant on or fully understand software capabilities, with more than half still using a hybrid of software and manual checking when assessing data center health. This is especially seen in US over UK data center managers (26% vs. 15%). These manual checks include physically checking lights, sensors, walking around the floor, and compiling data in spreadsheets. Data management systems have helped businesses big and small manage and streamline day-to-day operations but full utilization of a system inevitably comes down to a data center managers’ knowledge and application of said solutions.

Reaching Full Potential of Strategy

When asked what was holding back the effectiveness of a data center health management program, over half (53%) of IT Managers don't regularly perform checks, or only do so when something has gone wrong, signaling that for the most part, managers perform reactively versus proactively.

What would you say is holding back the effectiveness of your data center health management program?



Ultimately, a solution is only as useful as a manager's ability to fully utilize its capabilities. Forty-six percent of survey respondents said the biggest factors heeding the effectiveness of their health management program were inconsistencies in performing the checkups, lacking resources to properly perform the checkup, or it simply being too low of a priority. A reactive (versus proactive) management approach was also mentioned as a secondary barrier, as 37% reported that health checks only occur when something has gone wrong.

This clearly showcases the need to streamline this process across an organization, where prioritization and low resources seem to be the biggest barriers to boosting the tool's effectiveness.

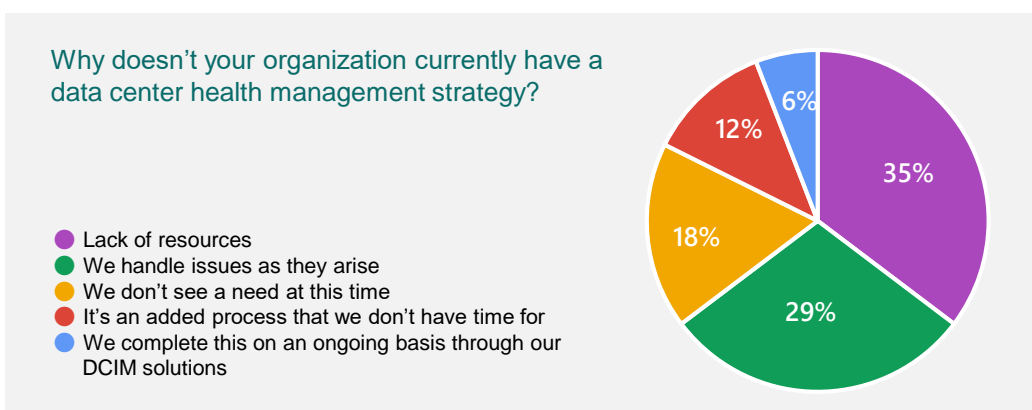
A reactive approach among managers is more prevalent in the US versus the UK (44% vs. 28%), while inconsistency ("It's there, but we don't regularly perform it") is higher in UK (22% vs 11%). Therefore, there is a lack of proactiveness in both markets defined differently by managers in the area.

Data Management Impact

IT executives, managing tens of thousands of data assets will have their fair share of system failures or problems. Alternatively, a successful DCIM solution will have the potential to help businesses automate, plan and address issues that occur within the system. The system's benefits are therefore invaluable to helping an organization run as smoothly as possible. Upon identification of an issue within the data center, the majority of Data Center Managers (54%) who utilize DCIM solutions report that they are regularly able to find and remedy issues within their data center within 24 hours, and therefore able to mitigate exposure to costly downtime and thereby minimizing business risk.

Key Barriers

For businesses that do not currently have a data health management strategy in place, although DCIM solutions are proven, powerful tools of the industry, budget continues to be a barrier to greater IT agility, with 35% of these data center managers lacking resources for a data center health management strategy. Additional barriers include a lack of motivation and foreseeable value as 29% cited that their data center was fine and issues are handled as they arise, another 18% reported that a management system was not needed at this time, and 12% said that they simply did not have the time for an added process.



Conclusions



Managers agree that having a DCIM solution in place increases efficiency and reduces manual work in maintaining business operations and continuity. Those that currently have a solution in place are very pleased with their system. Additionally, increased implementation seems very likely with more than half of managers reporting that they plan to deploy a strategy within the next 12 months. Amplifying this transition will come down to increased education of DCIM benefits and prioritization about c-suite decision makers.

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Siemens Datacenter Clarity LC™ is a Data Center Infrastructure Management (DCIM) solution that helps IT and facility teams improve operational efficiency and asset utilization. Datacenter Clarity LC offers a variety of tools, including Asset Management, Workflow Management, Cable Management and Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) analysis, ensuring precise and efficient infrastructure operation. Datacenter Clarity LC is part of the Integrated Data Center Management Suite (IDCMS) from Siemens. IDCMS is a transparent and holistic infrastructure management system which uses intelligent software to assist with the control and automation of interdisciplinary processes when optimizing facility and IT processes.

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About the Survey

A survey of 200 IT decision makers involved with Data Center management, including CIOs, CTOs, Senior Managers, VP of IT, Senior Data Center Managers, etc., was conducted online by Morar Consulting and commissioned by Intel DCM and Siemens during Spring 2017 with 100 respondents based in the US and 100 in the UK.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 6.9% percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.