MODERN MANAGEMENT

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Two IT Leaders Describe How They Are Improving Employee Productivity with a Modern Approach to Management

It can be stressful to be at the heart of your organization's digital transformation initiatives. You're the IT pro everyone is trusting to balance two top business priorities: maximizing end-user productivity and minimizing threats. Modern management ensures you can do both.

Empowered employees—those in organizations that make apps available and highly accessible—are more productive and their businesses are more efficient, according to recent research. Powerful results are among the reasons IT experts charged with managing more device platforms and access to greater numbers of mission-critical on-premises and cloud applications against a backdrop of growing cyberattacks are increasingly choosing modern management.

Unlike traditional approaches, modern management simplifies processes while converging the worlds of endpoint management and endpoint security. It addresses previously complex management issues head-on by eliminating desktop and mobile silos—even extending to other form functions including Internet of Things (IoT) sensors and ruggedized devices.

Workspace ONE UEM Consolidates Management Tools and Processes for Improved IT Efficiency

IT Experts Share Their Insights

Across healthcare and high tech and from retail to financial services, IT teams are deploying modern management to leverage virtual apps and fully transition to Windows 10 on the devices that make sense for the time and place work is being done—whether it's a Mac, iOS, Android, or Chromebook. We recently checked in with two IT experts on their digital transformation journeys willing to share insights into their modern management strategies and experiences.

The first is a vice president of IT at a successful tech innovator. The second is a solutions architect for the Windows 10 platform at a Forbes Top 100 digital company with more than 20,000 employees. Here's what they shared (edited slightly for readability).

Vice President of IT, Successful Technology Innovator

Editor (ED): What made you consider and ultimately shift your organization to modern management?

IT Vice President (IT VP): When I began to manage IT operations, I was coming into an organization that had nothing in terms of management, oversight, or control. The team was hand-building Windows 7 desktops on consumer-based hardware with local accounts and no standardization. Macs would come in and be handed to the end user to go and configure however the individual wanted. Because there was no centralized account management, it was really a greenfield. I wanted to avoid classic or legacy on-premises type management solutions. I was looking for something on the forefront, cross-platform, and agnostic when it came to access control. We evaluated a handful of different products before selecting one.

ED: What modern management solution capabilities were most important to you?

IT VP: Platform support for MacOS and Windows 10, for software distribution, policy deployment, and appliance capabilities. These were all important for us.

ED: Can you elaborate on your process? What roadblocks or technical difficulties, if any, did you encounter setting up modern management?

IT VP: The set up was pretty easy. The only technical hurdle was how to use the tool because sometimes there are multiple avenues to get to the same place, which is good and bad. We got bootstrapped pretty quickly. That was really enough for us to get started; to make sure that it was scalable and easy enough to manage for our fleet.

ED: How long did the process—from evaluation to start of implementation—take?

IT VP: About three months. I was able to get an environment set up and running as part of the evaluation. It wasn't a 14-day demo account, which doesn't work because honestly, I don't have 14 continuous days to devote to something like this. Being able to evaluate it over a period of time and getting different team members' feedback was valuable. We had at least three different tools operating at the same time. We compared features and tried to see them from the end-user perspective.

ED: How has modern management changed the way your employees or IT department works?

IT VP: It's allowed me to increase my support staff ratio. I can turn compliance and auditing capabilities on and have it manage those items as opposed to having someone go in and do manual auditing of the environment. That has really saved a lot of time. If we want to quickly inventory who has what installed on the machines, in the past even though we've created automated packages, we relied on users to deploy them. So, doing something as simple as rolling out a new VPN client could take weeks or months before we had some vague understanding if we'd gotten full coverage, of course we never really would. So, having a tool where we can push out and see the failure rate is very helpful.

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ED: How does modern management help you address different computing platforms or get up to speed quickly? Do you have an employee device choice program?
IT VP: Having a software model and distribution mechanism is big. Whether I'm rolling out a new desktop application to someone or running a script because I want to turn something on or off on all the machines, having a modern management tool is invaluable. We have employees all over the world. We're hiring in places like Japan, Australia, and Dubai, where it's difficult to ship things in and out. Our goal for international staff is to do out-of-the-box deployment, leveraging the Apple Business Store and the Windows Store. *[ED note: The organization has roughly half Windows, half Macs.]* We get the vendor to register machines, then employees pull them out the box, drop the modern management agent on the device, and all the apps start to deploy. This will save us a lot of time, money, and effort in a lot of different ways.

ED: Do your employees choose their devices, or do you? What apps do they get?
IT VP: It's role based. With modern management, we can distribute Win32 applications or SaaS and cloud-based services.

ED: What skill sets are on your team?
IT VP: My team is mostly packaging experts. They've used a variety of different MDM-type solutions. They're somewhat familiar with deploying things. There was just a little bit of a learning curve figuring out which of the deployment options worked best for us.

ED: Are employees satisfied with the solution? Has modern management helped them be more effective or productive in their jobs?
IT VP: We've had good success with the modern management agent. It hasn't caused any problems for developers or our more security conscious users. I don't think typical end users realize what these tools do for them. When I have to roll out a new version of something, I do it within a matter of two or three days, and I have full coverage. It's an intangible benefit to them.

ED: What's next for your organization?
IT VP: Extending it with out-of-the-box experiences for end users. We've got a pretty streamlined new hire process and we've got folks all around the world, so having the out-of-the-box experience is going to be a huge benefit to the team as well as employees that are remote, and whose machine for one reason or another starts acting odd. We can do a remote redeployment and we capture all their data in the cloud, so unless they've squirreled something away that we don't know about, there should be no data loss on their system and they should be back up and running, literally within an hour or two.

Solutions Architect, a Forbes Top 100 Digital Company

Also relying on modern management, the solutions architect we interviewed described his large organization's transition to the new platform.

ED: What has your organization's experience been as it has moved from Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) to a modern management platform for Windows 10?
IT Solutions Architect (SA): Over the last year, we've been slowly moving workloads over from SCCM to modern management. There are so many components to managing Windows 10 and we've been tackling them as we go, through co-management where we take different chunks, bite-size pieces to add more and more to the stack. It was just too hard for us to go cold turkey and cut everything over.

ED: Where do you recommend other IT teams start?
IT SA: We started with encryption. It's been really good for us to have that managed by a modern platform because it has given us new features, control, and the ability to do recovery. Patching was next. We first targeted a few sites to make sure we got it down. The migration from patching in SCCM to modern management is going from traditional patching to more of a Windows update for business model. So, it's been a bit of a learning curve in how it works, what are the differences, how do we get into the new cloud world, and how do we patch systems.

ED: Is patching really fundamentally different with Microsoft?
IT SA: Absolutely. The Windows update for business mechanism is built into Windows 10. Microsoft hasn't made it easy to understand this new way, and it calculates changes every six months. That's been the hardest thing—understanding what different settings mean, how we get that experience. Microsoft also has taken away some of the control. IT teams used to having high control in SCCM may feel like they lose a bit of control with modern management, but they gain simplicity. That's been the biggest paradigm shift for an administrator.

ED: How does modern management make it simpler to manage a Windows 10 computer?
IT SA: You don't have to manage servers, infrastructure, distribution points, secondary servers, Windows Service Update Server (WSUS), and SQL. Half my job with SCCM, just for patching, is to keep my WSUS from taking down our server and the scripts. The recommendation from Microsoft is a massive, convoluted SQL cleanup script, so you don't have to deal with any of that in your launch plan. You can just click approve patches and roll them out and clients get patched. That's a really nice feature and I'm excited about it.

ED: Are you happy with modern management?
IT SA: Absolutely. iOS and Android are mobile platforms that are fairly simple in what they can do. iOS is really simple because it's fixed. Android gets more complex. When we start getting into computer OSs like Windows and MacOS, it gets much more complicated. Windows 10 is a hugely complex platform. There are more things that you have to deal with, so mobile management is a huge step forward.

"Built on a foundation of modern management and bolstered by our expansive ecosystem of capabilities, VMware Workspace ONE is empowering IT organizations with the ability to provide a highly automated, on-demand workspace platform that delivers valuable insights, greater employee experiences, dramatic cost savings, and increased security."

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SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
AND GENERAL MANAGER
END-USER COMPUTING, VMWARE

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Modern Management with the Digital Workspace

In today's ever-changing organizations, employees increasingly seek flexibility and seamless experiences at work. At the same time, businesses need to protect all of their resources. End-to-end modern management through the VMware Digital Workspace helps companies transition from traditional endpoint security and management approaches, older OSs, and legacy applications to simplified, automated, secure, and intelligent device and application management.

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Fully migrate from SCCM to Workspace ONE to maximize benefits.

IT pros adopting the digital workspace are driving down costs and accelerating the transformation of legacy Windows applications. They're enabling Windows apps to be presented and securely accessed alongside SaaS, web, and mobile apps within the digital workspace.

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