

eGuide series



ADDING VALUE TO MANAGED SERVICES

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Adding Value to Managed Services

Essentials

SlipStream

is a multi-cloud application management platform. Built on open source software, SlipStream is a real multi-cloud solution. It isolates you from the details of the cloud, giving you freedom of choice and leaving you to focus on your business.

Enterprise App Store built-in:

Self-service IT delivered for the enterprise, simplifying application provisioning dramatically.

Recipe/template/blueprint:

Define and execute deployments, based on high-level recipes (script, Puppet, Chef, Ansible, etc.)

Cloud Broker Enablement:

Supports most public and private IaaS.

Multi-cloud Management:

Supports hybrid and multi-cloud deployment scenarios.



The managed services sector represents the fastest growing component of the IT services market. Many Managed Service Providers (MSPs), however, are falling behind in the race to benefit from this opportunity for growth and profitability. MSPs need to move quickly to stand out in the cloud market and demonstrate their ability to differentiate services, increase margins, and improve customer loyalty. How can they become more agile, expanding their customer base and improving their bottom line? Automation of services is the key.

Improving Managed Services

Key to being a successful Managed Service Provider (MSP) is the creation of a large, diverse catalog of reusable application components or full-fledged specialized applications that can easily be started by the MSP's customers

MSPs can also venture into providing "Platform as a Service" features, providing reusable application components, like authentication systems, security monitoring services, high-availability failover, or other high-level features. By easing the development of robust, sophisticated applications, these components can be used internally to expand the MSP's catalog rapidly. Additionally, these features could be exposed to customers, attracting developers in addition to the MSP's usual clients.

The Challenge

The MSP must be able to manage the full application lifecycle with a minimum of personnel and cost. Similarly, the MSP must acquire the knowledge for particular applications (installation, configuration, and management) and maintain that knowledge as the underlying components evolve.

Robust, high-value applications tend to have complex lifecycles. An MSP must be able to manage the application lifecycle efficiently, for numerous customer-specific instances. Efficient lifecycle management requires that an MSP:

- Automates the deployment/termination of the full application,
- Coordinates the configuration of individual services, and
- Monitors applications for load and faults.

Manual interventions for each deployed application are not economically feasible, so automated tooling is critical for success. The MSP may also want to provide geographic redundancy as a feature, enabling more robust deployments optionally for its customers. For this, the MSP must be able to handle multi-cloud deployments.

Neither the automated tooling nor the application knowledge can be fully exploited unless its customers can easily access a full service catalog of the applications. The catalog must allow users to search for appropriate applications, understand their characteristics, and run the selected applications quickly.

Why SlipStream?

SlipStream from SixSq helps MSPs meet the challenges they face, allowing them to take advantage of automation. SlipStream allows them to:

- Capture and manage their application knowledge, the core value of the MSP.
- Share that knowledge between employees to allow efficient support and to promote reuse for new applications.
- Create a rich application catalog via the App Store, allowing customers to easily browse, start and run a selected application.
- Scale an application dynamically, responding, for example, to peaks in demand.
- Deploy multi-cloud applications across regions and clouds for application redundancy and scale out.

The provider can expose the App Store directly to its customers with a standard or customized skin, allowing its customer to build on the MSP's applications. Alternatively, MSPs can use SlipStream internally and provide a more limited portal to its customers, keeping more control over the application definitions and deployments.

One of SixSq's MSP clients has deployed SlipStream internally following the second deployment scenario. This customer benefits from reduced costs compared to the manual deployment of the application by avoiding human installation and configuration errors. Its customers in turn receive better service because the automated deployment drastically reduces delivery time.

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**Boost your team's
creativity**

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SixSq Sàrl

Rue du Bois-du-Lan, 8
1217, Geneva
Switzerland

+41 22 544 17 33
info@sixsq.com

Summary

Increasing competition in the cloud service market is forcing Managed Service Providers to differentiate their services from their competitors or to live with ever reducing margins. MSPs face increasing pressure offer advanced services without incurring additional costs.

Offering advanced services yet maintaining economic viability is the challenge MSPs must face. Largely this means that the application lifecycle management and the application knowledge must be managed effectively through automation.

For an MSP, taking advantage of process automation is critical to becoming more agile, expanding its customer base and improving its bottom line. This automation improves core features of their business: creating a rich application catalog, fast provisioning of applications, and permitting service-level agreements with high levels of accessibility and availability.

SlipStream automates the application delivery processes of MSPs, allowing them to improve their offerings and taking advantage of the huge revenue opportunities presented by the cloud market.

What's next?

To learn more about SlipStream and the rest of the SixSq product suite, visit our website <http://sixsq.com>. Or get in touch with our business development team to discuss how SixSq cloud solutions can help your business to transform and grow.

