



5 WAYS IT PROS
AUTOMATE BUSINESS

ENTER EBOOK

Introduction

When we talk to IT professionals today, the question of automation often comes up. They all want to run their departments efficiently, and automation frees up time spent on repetitive tasks, so they can focus on responding to the changing needs of the businesses they support.

Streamlining manual tasks frees up technicians to work on more valuable activities while still reliably taking care of the maintenance work you've automated. On the other end of the spectrum, there are companies who are growing quickly and need a way to streamline how they onboard new employees and devices. Eliminating manual activities during the onboarding process allows the IT department to bring on more users and devices with less hassle and give users a more predictable experience.

The exact needs of each IT team are going to vary, but we've discovered five things that the most successful IT professionals are doing to automate their department today. Read on to see how your business can automate its way to increased productivity and better practices while reducing stress on your technical team.




1. If a task is repetitive, they **automate** it

Great IT departments automate as many routine maintenance tasks as possible.

Maintenance can consume a significant amount of time from technicians. Every IT team member should be focusing on how to automate as many of the day-to-day maintenance tasks as they can. As a general rule, if you are doing something repetitive, something with a similar set of steps on a recurring basis, then it is something you should be automating.

Automate the basics: One of the first and easiest things that you should be automating is preventative maintenance such as desktop cleanup (temporary files, flush DNS, etc.). These are simple tasks that many technical teams today are still doing manually; focusing their time here instead of on important issues, higher value projects, or strategic planning.

Automate the specifics: Some of your systems and users are going to have specific needs. If your environment has numerous SQL databases, then you can automate database table maintenance and cleanup for them to keep the servers running at peak performance. There are hundreds of items you can be automating with the goal of giving your busy IT team the breathing room necessary to focus on the tasks and planning, which many teams today overlook or simply just can't find time to address.

A background image showing a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The laptop is open, and there are several documents with sticky notes on the desk in front of it. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an office environment.

Great IT departments spend their time on high priority tasks and use automation to resolve minor issues.

Service Level Agreements are a big part of the relationship between customers and the IT support team. Your customers need their infrastructure available at all times, and one of your primary goals is to minimize downtime. The fact is that many issues simply require a software or hardware reboot; simple tasks that pull technicians away from more urgent issues that require their expertise.

Use automated self-healing: Your RMM software of choice should provide extensive self-healing capabilities. If a device or service changes to a warning or error state, the system should automatically launch an automation policy to remedy the situation. Common automation policies will involve restarting key services, flushing DNS, and in some cases, rebooting the workstation or server.

Exceed your SLAs: When you automate remediation, you provide an almost instantaneous response to a problem. These quick resolutions are going to build up good will with your users and management. No business likes any amount of downtime, so minimize the risks by fixing problems before they have a chance to have an impact.

2. They **automate remediation** for common problems

3. They **streamline** user onboarding



Great IT departments ensure that new user onboarding is as quick and painless as possible, for both the user and IT.

Automation is as much about best practices as it is about technology. Once you have defined the maintenance and remediation that you want to automate, you have begun defining the best practices for your business. You are defining the maintenance schedules and response times your users can expect and planning your strategy for meeting and exceeding those expectations.

Deploy agents automatically: In order to streamline the onboarding of new users, you need to have a platform that can discover their devices and deploy agents automatically. This can greatly reduce the time it takes you to add devices to your management software and begin the setup process. A great RMM will begin the setup as well!

Schedule maintenance automation: Once you have set up your monitoring, you need to schedule all of your automation policies to take care of routine maintenance. This way, in the early days of a user's onboarding, you are spending less time doing maintenance and are available for any support issues that may come up.

Schedule remediation: By automating remediation, you can more efficiently meet your SLAs for many common issues with minimal effort on your part, resulting in happier, more productive users.

Great IT departments know that it's not enough to just do great work, they make sure the business sees the hard work they are doing.

It isn't cheap to maintain a qualified IT team, and providing your management with meaningful updates about the work you are doing goes a long way towards proving your value. As the saying goes, "out of sight, out of mind." Status reports are a great way of giving weekly updates about the maintenance and other issues you are resolving—and doing a regular review with your management to take a deeper dive reminds them of the value you provide. Your RMM system should make available graphical reports for review and allow you to schedule when they are delivered. Graphical reports have a much bigger impact than any spreadsheet or written summary, often providing insight into hidden trends within your organization.

Executive reports provide an overall status of the network, including a comparison to last period's performance. Security reports show you how protected the business is and how many issues you have prevented. They can also assist in determining what kind of training or information your vulnerable users would benefit from.

Backup reports reassure the business stakeholders that their data is secure in the event of any failures. Patch reports demonstrate that you are keeping business-critical systems fully up to date.

Help non-technical staff understand the complexity and performance of your department in easy-to-produce reports.

4. They **wow** their management





5. They **take credit** for automation effort

Great IT departments ensure that they dedicate time to automation and count their results as successes.

Just because the system is doing the work for you doesn't mean you shouldn't be recognized. Every IT department has the choice of performing tasks manually or investing in the proper tools to automate their business. By automating maintenance and remediation tasks, you are improving your response time to users and providing your business with better service.

Automate ticketing: Your automation policies should be capable of updating your ticketing system so that when they complete, you are logging time and details. You can assign 15 minutes for small tasks and more time for larger tasks. Before you know it, the system will be executing policies left, right, and center, and your utilization metrics will show a tremendous effort on the part of your IT department.

You can reasonably do the work of several technicians, without the stress that typically accompanies that level of work, while keeping the details of that work properly organized.

About SolarWinds MSP

SolarWinds MSP empowers IT service providers with technologies to fuel their success. Solutions that integrate layered security, collective intelligence, and smart automation—both on-premises and in the cloud, backed by actionable data insights, help IT service providers get the job done easier and faster. SolarWinds MSP helps our customers focus on what matters most—meeting their SLAs and delivering services efficiently and effectively. For more information, visit solarwindsmsp.com.

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