Always On at a Lower Cost

Charlotte Patrick, Independent Telco A3 Consultant interviews

Chris Menier, President, VIA AIOps, VITRIA on how with AIOps you can achieve more with less.

There's suddenly an enormous amount of interest in analytics, intelligence and the value that can be derived in improving service assurance. Chris, could you talk to us about what you've seen around your client's expectations for the adoption of AIOps in particular?

No doubt that you're getting more and more interest in the research you've been doing because it is just front and center of what we're seeing from the operators as well. In the end, it's all about customer experience. Because in the end, if we don't have customers, we don't have a business. There is a continued push on improved customer experience through assurance, automation, analytics, AI and reducing customer support contacts. I don't want customer to have to call and tell me something's broken.

Another expectation is to rationalize the amount of time being spent in various tools and breaking down operational silos to deliver cost savings and improve efficiency. This is ultimately measured in outage time reductions.

With AIOps, the expectation is that the product will positively impact all these points. Detecting issues more quickly, leads to less outages. Correlating faults and anomalies across operational silos, leads to more efficient operations and faster issue and outage remediation. All of this improves the customer experience.

Can you give us some hard number examples that you've experienced by implementing VIA AIOps?

We have a customer that's turning up a new network and there's a lot of noise coming from the various network elements. And what we're helping to do with VIA AIOps is cutting through that noise. We're delivering over 99.9% noise reduction. That means we can get to the root of the problem more quickly.

For one of our large OTT providers, we've been able to help them reduce streaming service failure rates by 28% and identify the root of the problem versus just the symptoms of the failure.

For a fixed line provider, we reduced call center interactions by over 700 a day and eliminated hundreds of technician visits. That represents over a couple million dollars per year in savings from those reduced phone calls alone.

Everyone is really interested to hear about the downstream cost savings. Could you just talk to us about what's changing in operations and how these results were delivered?

The days of operators in the NOCs and the SOCs staring at screens are quickly eroding. Those tools and those processes won't adapt to rapidly changing environments because they are rules based and rigid. Looking at a red dot or waiting for a line to turn red on your screen to triage an alarm, just doesn't scale. It requires users to click through and try to find the answer. In most cases, AIOps can find that answer for you. We're augmenting the operational process; we're augmenting the intelligence. But the operations teams need to trust the conclusions of our product. And the way we do that is by delivering results like the ones that I mentioned.

The idea of augmenting the experience for those in the NOC or in the SOC or in the customer services domain to have a system that identifies an issue and then provides the answer is very useful, particularly if you haven't got 50 years experience sitting in chairs. Your staff can have less experience and still operate effectively.

There is a lot of discussion in the Tech industry about recession and the drag that we're seeing in the sector. I haven't heard too much talk from operations about reducing headcount. They're reasonably lean. But no doubt Service Operators will be wanting to talk about reducing investment. What are Service Operators telling you?

We're seeing some macro changes. We went through the great resignation and high turnover, sometimes higher than other parts of the industry. With fewer people with high levels of subject matter expertise, you require augmentation. AIOps is helping drive that. We may not see headcount reduction now, but we certainly see the need to do more with the people we have. Doing more is resolving issues faster. Doing more is being able to turn up a new network while you're maintaining assurance on your legacy network. If we can do those things with the same staff, then we're winning, and the customers are happy in the end.

Traditional operations triage issues one at a time. Filtering through your list of high priorities, looking for that one fault or that one anomaly that explains why something is happening. This just doesn't scale and won't scale in this new macroeconomic environment.

In the traditional environment, the operator says --"Why did I have this red alert? Is that red alert related to a link failing? Let me click down through and identify the device that's impacted or the connected devices that are impacted."

Let's consider when a power fluctuation across the optical card causes a link flapping issue, which is then disconnecting attached radio units and causing a network reconvergence from an IS-IS adjacency or the BGP adjacency side. This initiates 5, 6, 10, 12, 15 reactions and generate hundreds if not thousands of different faults.

We're bringing that all together, not on a thousand lines in a screen, but in a single line that's automated and opening a ticket that indicates, "Here is the root cause, here's what we need to go and troubleshoot." And it will remediate all these downstream faults. Instead of triaging 20, 30, 40 issues, we're triaging one. A lot of times we're automating the triage and closing incidents out before someone even has time to pick them up off a traditional work queue.

Very useful everyday operational stuff that needs augmented operational support particularly as we get more 5G traffic and new services. Thank you very much for chatting with me today. Appreciate it.

About VIA AIOps

VIA AIOps is a next generation AIOps application that enables intelligent automation across all layers of service delivery to improve the customer experience and optimize operations. VIA AIOps provides total ecosystem observability, and explanatory AI to increase confidence in automation. VIA AIOps delivers noise reduction, correlation, and intelligent automation across operational silos to enhance customer experience and reduce operational cost by enabling more rapid issue detection, mitigation and resolution.

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