



## QUESTION AND ANSWER

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Recently ***Packet Pushers***, an organization providing resources and community for network professionals, invited **Charlotte Patrick**, an independent industry analyst to be the guest speaker on ***Heavy Strategy*** the popular podcast hosted by Greg Ferro. Following the podcast, **Greg asked** Charlotte to answer questions submitted by the listeners.



**Q** Greg:  
Some organizations may see this as a very big project at a time when they may be struggling with a merger, absorbing an acquisition, a major expansion. What advice would you give them?

**A** Charlotte:  
Start internally – gain consensus on the business objectives – is the objective to improve service quality, reducing downtime, optimizing resource allocation. Then identify key performance indicators (KPIs). Establish metrics to track progress, document where you are starting. Good metrics might be mean time to resolution (MTTR), customer satisfaction scores or operational cost reduction. Then assess your IT environment – inventory the data sources. More important than anything is to start with a small project like improving observability then scale incrementally. Pick a well-defined use case like anomaly detection for a troublesome network segment and then move on to scenarios that are more complex and may impact a larger percentage of the organization. You can't automate what you can't document – document how you are doing a process now and where you can automate for value.

**Q** Greg:  
Would you say that AIOps will lead to better customer service? Will it mean that problems get fixed faster, or better yet fixed before the customer knows there is a problem?

**A** Charlotte:  
The simple answer is yes! The industry is aware that not everything can be handled by AIOps. There are some things that require human intervention. One example that I think about is the role of the level three engineer in reviewing the results of the automation. VIA AIOps allows you to enable automated response. It also works against the increasing volume of data to provide insights. Level three engineers can review the results of the automation and make changes to

the prescribed response for that type of failure going forward. VIA AIOps puts more insights into the hands of your best people so they can make systems changes, personnel changes, even choose to change out certain hardware based on the data. Data driven decision making is a big plus for achieving service assurance and providing for advanced projects like self-healing networks.

**Q** Greg:  
What advice would you give organizations who might be evaluating an AIOps solution?

**A** Charlotte:  
First have a clear vision about what you want the outcome to be. Is the focus to generate new revenues by spinning up new services faster? Is it reducing costs that could mean getting more from existing hardware or choosing which hardware to replace. There are **five areas to consider**: first is **data integration** – does the solution integrate with your existing NMS and other relevant data sources. Second, evaluate how effective the solution is in identifying issues, pinpointing root causes. Check the **accuracy of actionable insights**. Third, assess the level of automation – look for solutions that automate repetitive tasks to free up engineering resources. Fourth, consider the **ML algorithms** – are they suitable for analyzing telco-specific network data. Finally, **evaluate the security posture of the AIOps solution** – does it meet industry standards for data security and access control.

**Q** Greg:  
Do you think AIOps, from a business point of view, will AIOps result in headcount reduction?

**A** Charlotte:  
AIOps, the powerful combination of automation and intelligence, can simplify complex tasks and eliminate redundant, manual, and often error prone tasks. For several organizations this has resulted in a reduction of staff in network operations. But I wouldn't say that the headcount was reduced, rather it was redeployed. Companies redeploy staff to revenue producing services.



VIA AIOps reduces the noise generated by the network, automates many tasks, but critical response to failures will still require your best level three engineer

**Q** Greg :  
When we talk about AIOps we don't have to be limited to the network, is that right?

**A** Charlotte :  
Yes, that is correct. We can expand to the OSS and even reach into the customer databases – with VIA the AI engine operates on all the data. One historic problem in telcos is the operational silos of data. The silos prevent an orchestrated, complete view of a problem and how it's manifesting and impacting a service and the population of subscribers using the service. What VIA AIOps can do is look at all the components of a service – across the silos and up and down the stack to create the best response. This comprehensive view auto generates a response that corrects the problem, restores the service –

entirely using machine intelligence or combining machine with human intelligence.

**Q** Greg :  
Looking into the future, what do you think the 'next big thing' will be for telcos?

**A** Charlotte :  
I hesitate to say it but **generative AI** presents some opportunities. It seems we are victims of a little generative AI washing these days, but there are use cases coming that can make a difference. One area is providing digital assistants for internal and customer support. Another area is knowledge management. The body of knowledge required to solve complex problems is growing larger and more complex. Generative AI can be valuable to query large data warehouses for the most current information required during an emergency. I don't really see generative AI doing classic anomaly detection as an example.

#### About VIA AIOps

**VIA AIOps delivers the process automation capabilities to shorten the incident lifecycle and improve the overall service experience.** VIA's total ecosystem observability, internet-scale noise reduction, machine learning based anomaly detection, and cross silo correlation transforms and optimizes operational practices. The result is lower costs, superior customer experience, and augmented intelligence to support a more efficient and effective operational staff.

