



Cormant's December 2012 Study On DCIM Adoption & Implementation Barriers

Over the past two years, as the data center infrastructure management (DCIM) market has grown out of the realization that there needs to be a better solution to the management of the IT infrastructure and supporting facilities infrastructure than stove pipe solutions and spreadsheets along with an explosion of environmental monitoring options, there have been many articles written about why DCIM fails or the myths and common misconceptions of DCIM. However, few, if any of these articles dealt with what was truly holding organizations back from purchasing and deploying a DCIM solution. So, in an effort to better serve the IT and Facilities teams in charge of managing infrastructure within global data center and enterprise environments, Cormant, Inc. a software development company specializing in DCIM solutions conducted a study of the main barriers to DCIM adoption and implementation in the current market. While the specific basic barriers uncovered in our questioning of data center, network, IT, and facilities management personnel are not out of the ordinary or contradictory to industry norms, the percentages and order of the barriers uncovered certainly is.

Beginning with the understanding that DCIM is still a relatively new solution within the IT world, and definitely a new solution insofar as bridging the gap between IT and Facilities management groups, we defined our test group as those individuals within enterprise, government, military, educational, and non-profit responsible for the evaluation, procurement, deployment and usage of DCIM. We posed the following question to them: **"What are the 3 biggest hurdles/barriers to DCIM adoption & implementation?"** A summary of the answer is in Figure 1.

%	Barriers To DCIM Adoption & Implementation
>31%	COST: Deployment costs; Complexity in system integration; New hardware needed; Too hard & time consuming to install; lack of manpower to deploy; not priced for SME market.
20%	VALUE: Not high enough ROI demonstrated; Perceived value too low; Gathering and ensuring data is correct in solution; Benefits not properly described (saving time not enough); Vetoed by Finance Dept.
>17%	ALIGNMENT: One product doesn't fit all; Different departments have different solutions in mind leading to paralysis; Alignment on which problems need to be solved cannot be reached and hence the solution needed can't be properly selected.
>14%	PROCESS: Averse to new process adoption; Lack of standards to give new process meaning & therefore make the process better/faster.
17%	OTHERS: Who owns the solution both from payment as well as deployment and strategic upkeep; Poor solution support; Unable to deploy in a hybrid environment (both co-lo & on-site data centers); Requirements too broad leading to indecision & belief that nothing will truly help

Figure 1 - Statistical breakdown of answers to the question "What are the 3 biggest hurdles/barriers to DCIM adoption & implementation"

Raw data from the answers indicates that the top statistically relevant answers to the question “What are the 3 biggest hurdles/barriers to DCIM adoption & implementation” can be grouped into four main barriers: COST, VALUE, ALIGNMENT and PROCESS.

While we have not seen it in any DCIM industry analysis, we have heard from IT & Facilities employees in many LinkedIn data center centric groups, that upwards of 50-60% of organizations who decide not to purchase DCIM site cost as the prime barrier. Our study does indicate that it is still the highest ranking barrier, but nowhere near the high percentage we anticipated. However, we find it interesting that the disparity between Cost and the second highest barrier, Value, is closer than the discussions in DCIM specific groups would lead one to believe. This could indicate that those evaluating DCIM are becoming more understanding of associated costs, but not yet convinced that the value for the cost is currently present. As well, this could indicate that many DCIM vendors and vendor-partners are not properly demonstrating the value and return on investment (ROI) potential in their solutions. It is possible to argue that Cost and Value are two sides of the same coin; however we believe they are different enough in this case to be split apart. We believe these two top barriers are still very much on the vendor side, meaning DCIM solution vendors have these areas within their control, whereas the Alignment and Process barriers lie more on the side of the prospective end user.

Once an organization sets out to evaluate DCIM for a possible procurement, it is imperative that they define the groups that will be involved, the problems these groups want to solve, and therefore the key feature sets and resulting benefits of a DCIM solution they’d like to see demonstrated by the solution vendor. One of the keys here is to be explicit in defining the top problems and outcomes each group wishes to achieve and then weigh and score solutions based on these definitions. In addition, solutions should be scored based on the process by which they will be implemented and used. This will make selecting a solution much easier as well as help define value and drive adoption of a new process to utilize the DCIM solution selected. Done right, a cost effective, value driven solution that aligns to the business process will yield a trusted data set from which infrastructure management decisions can be made. Otherwise, the risk is that the solution will never be fully adopted and will become shelfware.

Before closing, it is also interesting to note that, while only a small percentage of respondents claimed that poor solution support is a barrier, it is still a barrier that all DCIM vendors and partners must address if they want to succeed in the growing DCIM market. In today’s global economy and society, the lack of product and/or service support is inexcusable and will be broadcasted to anyone and everyone willing to listen, thanks to social media outlets.

For more information on DCIM, please visit www.cormant.com. To speak with someone about your DCIM needs, or even for help uncovering and defining your DCIM needs, call Cormant globally at +1 805 747 4178 (USA: 1-855-CORMANT).

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