Research

Understand both what your challenges are, as well as what the solution(s) you have licensed can do for you.

Welcome

So, if you're here you've either decided to look into obtaining a new network monitoring solution (NMS) or have already licensed Opmantek's solutions and you're looking for where to start. This is as good a place as any to begin.

If you have not yet selected an NMS solution, please see our online guide: How To Select a Network Monitoring Solution

Why are you looking for a new NMS?

Start by asking yourself why you, or your organization, if looking for a new NMS. The more honest and detailed you are in your answer the more satisfying the outcome.

Here are some answers we often hear -

1. Tool/vendor consolidation
2. Improved product support and/or vendor response
3. Access to updates more often
4. Support for a wider range of equipment/technologies
5. Reduced cost, or cost control as you scale your business
6. Single pane of glass (SPOG)
7. Integration with 3rd party components

Now, why is answering this question important? Because the answers you give here help drive where you place your emphasis during the first round of implementation. Yes, I said the first round of implementation. Implementing a new NMS, even one for a relatively small network, is not a "one and done" thing. Your NMS is a living, breathing solution that grows and improves with time and usage. As a result, you'll need to adjust how it works, and how your team uses it, in order to get the most from it.

You'll learn more about what we refer to as "Crawl->WalkRun" in the Planning section of this guide.

If you're still in the selection process make sure you discuss these requirements/concerns with your account executive or presales engineer.

Identify Challenges/Opportunities

Now, take each requirement and create a list of challenges or goals for each. These might be 1:1, but will most likely be 1:many. By specifying the challenges you face, you help define what the solution will look like.

Example 1

"Tool/vendor consolidation" might result in a list of tools that you want to retire/replace -

Tool/vendor consolidation:

- Replace current NMS, and proprietary monitoring tools
- Replace collection of point troubleshooting tools (ICMP/ping, SNMP collection, graphing, etc)
- Replace current CMDB (spreadsheet purchasing uses)
- Automate NOC runbook (currently a mixture of wiki, text documents, and notes each engineer maintains)

Example 2

"Create a Single Pane of Glass" might result in a list of tools/views that your team needs dashboard access to -

Single Pane of Glass (SPoG); Provide central interfaces/dashboards with combined views into:

- Power Company Outage webpages
- Regional weather/radar maps
- Equipment Performance, including internet circuit graphs
- Current network events, priority, and ownership
- NetFlow/IP-Fix for core circuits alongside performance graphs

Build Use Cases

Note: Use cases can take many formats, and levels fo detail. We are using a light-weight use case format in this example; feel free to elaborate on this if needed.

Great, now you should have a list of challenges/opportunities/goals. From here you can break down each into a list of use cases - specific examples for how each of these should be handled

Use Case Example 1

For "Replace current NMS, and proprietary monitoring tools" you might create a list of the equipment you have, which technologies/methods are available to monitor those devices, along with any other requirements. These are expressed in examples, or Use Cases

Replace current NMS, and proprietary monitoring tools

- The NMS must collect performance data from Cisco 1841 routers, including core device attributes, interface performance, and BGP peer state using SNMP
- The NMIS must support MS-LDAPS for user Authentication, and include a robust RBAC system for user Authorization

Use Case Example 2

Display power company outage maps

- Allow external web pages, particularly http://mylocalpower.com/outages, to be displayed within the dashboard interface and interacted with by the logged-in user

Identify Solution Sets

Opmantek's solutions are licensed by however many devices you want to use in each solution. Solutions are broken-up by feature point making it easy for you to select the solutions you need today, and expand or grow into the solution over time.

You can learn more about Opmantek's solutions, bundles, and options HERE: Network Management System Tools

Next Up

Plan - Architect your solution, determine initial configuration/setup, create processes for deployment and rollback.