

What Should CIOs Ask Santa For This Christmas?

Duncan Macrae, November 27, 2015, 1:31 pm



It's that time of the year when IT managers can ask Santa and his elves for a little bit of help. But what should they be asking for? Here are a few ideas

Jim Frey, VP of Product at Kentik

“IT is often in the ironic position of having to manage shiny, cutting-edge infrastructure and end-user applications using lumps of coal, in the form of outdated management tools and techniques. Infrastructure and applications are transitioning to cloud models; it's time for IT Operations Management (ITOM) tools to evolve likewise. Legacy ITOM tools have roots in 1990's architectures that can't cost-effectively meet the scale and speed needs of digital business, and that'll get you on the naughty lists with Line of Business leaders. Many teams start their own elven workshops, trying to build replacements using open source, but that carries big long term costs as well. It's time to deck the halls with a modern, DevOps-friendly ITOM approach. Re-gift those old tools and unwrap some new toys- next generation ITOM solutions that utilize SaaS delivery, cloud-scale and Big Data architectures for big ROI at low TCO. It's a gift that will keep on giving into the New Year and well beyond.”

Jean-Pierre Ullmo, EMEA head of sales at Changepoint

“IT managers should ask Santa for greater visibility into IT projects across the organisation this Christmas.

“Many organisations are set for **digital transformations** in 2016, but for those to be effective, IT managers must be able to keep track of all the projects involved. IT managers must step back and implement a standardised structure for work planning, management and measurement. These should provide a spine that runs through every single project, keeping the overall transformation running in the correct strategic direction. “It is key to have a birds-eye view of all activity, with a continuous real-time information stream so that potential strategy-impacting updates, risks and bottlenecks are visible before the next quarterly update. With activity happening in different areas of the business, it's important for a standardised reporting tool to be provided to project teams, so that IT managers have key information to hand, and are able to easily compare progress of different areas.”



Steve Johnson, regional director, Northern Europe, Ruckus Wireless

“Just like the rest of us, IT managers should be asking for a well-earned Christmas holiday! A more manageable way for them to maintain their Wi-Fi networks wouldn’t go amiss either. A great way to take a load off their plate for the New Year would be a **high performance Wi-Fi** system that can be easily managed – completely controller-less, no expertise needed, with clever hardware that can adapt to changes in the network, such as increase in scale. Wi-Fi is no longer just about bandwidth; it’s about capacity that allows hundreds of devices to connect. IT managers want two things: everyone in their business connected without a hitch, and hardware that’s simple to configure. Fingers crossed that Santa gets the message.”

Duncan Hendy, marketing copywriter, Kentico Software

“Digital Integration – it gives you valuable insights into how your customers are interacting with your content and allows you to build profiles and define personas so that, no matter which channel your customer views your digital content on, they get a consistent experience that is truly personal to them. By defining the triggers that form the basis of your marketing automation and leveraging your users’ interactions, you can outline an appropriate communication strategy based on their behaviour and deliver them content accordingly. Make sure you choose a platform that integrates effectively. Simply forcing together solutions based on how they function individually rather than as a whole results in a poorly delivered digital experience that frustrates your customers and fails to gather the data you actually need to improve it. So if you maximise your digital campaigns correctly, you can afford to buy your own socks this Christmas!”

Adrian Crawley, regional director for Northern Europe at Radware

“If you’re in retail you’ve got to be thinking omni-channel right now and that means the IT manager has got to have fast and secure websites, however they are accessed. I think we’ll hear a lot more about HTTP2 next year as online teams demand the investment that makes their sites more responsive, richer and more dynamic. Consumers don’t want to just shop – as the latest **John Lewis** research showed – they want to be inspired first. Helping customers decide the interior design for their new home, rather than just the colour of their new sofa, will be what makes brands stand out. And of course, in light of recent hacks, people will want to know it’s secure whatever transactions they do, and whichever device they use.”

Dmitry Bagrov, MD UK of global technology consulting firm, DataArt

“Dear Santa, can you please explain to me what it is I am supposed to do in the modern world as an IT manager?”

Jes Breslaw, EMEA marketing manager at Delphix

“What’s important this Christmas, is that the channel evolves and talks about what is new, interesting and hot. Once again, IT is transforming how business work. New development methodologies like Agile and DevOps, along with automation tools are enabling companies to innovate at lightening speed. You only have to look at how often updates are pushed to the apps on your smartphone to see how quickly this is happening. Our research shows that the pace at which companies deliver and update applications has increased drastically over the last year with organisations under pressure to do more with fewer resources (64 percent), deliver software faster (61 percent) and deliver software with fewer defects (48 percent).

“With expectations continuing to get much higher, the channel needs to understand this need for speed, and the solutions and services that achieve it. New design methodologies like Agile and DevOps and tools like Chef, Docker and Delphix are helping companies do more with less and update applications daily instead of monthly. By embracing this shift, the channel can demonstrate its value by offering solutions to manage the increase in application demands and move towards a culture of continuous delivery.”

Karl Mendez, MD at CWCS Managed Hosting

“This Christmas, **IT managers** should ask Santa for experienced managed hosting providers to handle parts of their hosting needs. One of the biggest challenges faced by IT managers is running a website and ensuring it is online and operational at all times. Many organisations are also often faced with additional web traffic during busy periods like the festive season as well as the January sales. Managed hosting providers like CWCS Managed Hosting can take the hassle out of running a website, providing a fully managed cloud platform to deliver web hosting as a service and not simply a piece of technology.

“Not any managed hosting solution will do though. When writing their wish list, IT managers should ask for one that will deliver performance, scalability and guaranteed uptime. Ask for a provider that can handle all aspects of maintenance, including essential security updates, hardware and operating system updates and server administration.”

Atchison Fraser, VP marketing, Xangati

“An uber analytics tool based on algorithmic heuristics – machine learned pattern recognition – that automatically reports on and remediates any threat to business continuity or infrastructure disruption in real time.”

Steve Wharton, Office of the CTO, Enterprise Solutions EMEA, SanDisk

“If there is one thing IT managers should ask for this Christmas, it should be getting their hands on the benefits of a flash-transformed IT infrastructure. Advancements in cloud computing, big data analytics, mobility and other areas have created exciting new possibilities for businesses across the world. However, these

advancements have also brought with them an exponential increase in workload and many legacy IT infrastructure systems are struggling to cope with the new performance demands.

“Some IT managers have been employing flash technology, with its speed and performance proficiencies, to efficiently address this workload demand and they have been enjoying great dividends. The adoption of flash started in niche performance use cases, but as the price has come down and benefits have been proven, adoption is spreading across various tiers of IT infrastructure.

“It is easy to confine the benefits of flash to speed but closer examination shows that flash is an enabler, facilitating the next wave of business computing and making it safer, faster and cheaper for businesses to perform their process and maintain their competitive edge.”

Sam Rehman, CTO of Arxan

“Santa-baby we need the coolest application self-protections that would enable IT managers to relax with a hot toddy and get optimum enjoyment during this holiday season knowing that their applications can thwart even the most sophisticated cyber-attacks with mobile payments, health device apps, and more.”



Joan Wrabetz, CTO of Qualisystems

“Santa, we need to speed up the clock and deliver actual reliable and production ready versions of DevOps tools and Containers. And if they came with candy, it would be even better! IT managers are tired of the usual hype cycle that comes with every promising new technology or approach. This year it has been DevOps and Containers. But, as with every new idea, it is not mature and usually generates one-two years of frustration for IT managers before they see any positive results from the effort of deploying them.”

Partha Seetala, CTO of Robin Systems

“Instead of cobbling together several point solutions in a DIY manner, IT managers are asking Santa for holistic solutions that seamlessly integrate various resources like storage, network and compute into an easily deployable and manageable platform that offers self-service capabilities, policy based automation and a

holistic management view from App-to-Spindle. The secular shift within enterprise IT is the adoption of a DevOps culture resulting in applications being not only developed but also tested and pushed to production in an agile manner. This increased scale and velocity of change means that IT managers are faced with an unprecedented challenge to elastically grow and manage resources while meeting SLAs, Cost Compliance and Performance guidelines specified by LoB owners.”

Barry Castle, CMO, Symphony

“According to Forbes, cyber-attacks cost businesses \$400bn to \$500bn a year, and we know that it’s a top concern for IT managers. So this Christmas, IT managers across the globe should ask Father Christmas for better, easier solutions to secure their business and customer data from criminals. Previous technologies which have aimed to fully secure corporations have either been difficult to administer and use, or prohibitively costly.”

Paul Silver, VP EMEA, Tegile

“If IT managers have been good this year, then they should definitely be asking Santa for a new flash storage solution this Christmas. With the increasing data needs of businesses showing no signs of slowing down and intensifying regulatory requirements to meet, IT managers need to ensure they are one step ahead of the curve and have adequate storage provisions in place for 2016. This is where flash storage comes in. It has the power to fundamentally transform how businesses operate, without compromising on performance and price. But you can’t just install any old flash array, IT managers need to ensure their flash arrays have the latest in data reduction technologies such as deduplication and compression which can significantly reduce the cost of flash systems. With flash systems dropping in cost, there has never been a better time for IT managers to invest in storage.”

Albie Attias, MD of King of Servers

“When it comes to the perfect Christmas present, IT managers should be thinking about the items that will help make their busy daily lives that little bit easier. So, where do we start?

“Taking inspiration from Santa, an ingenious individual, we’d recommend an infinite supply of coffee, ensuring they are alert at all times. Failing that, an invisibility cloak would be another great gift, helping IT professionals to enjoy a much-needed break from the rabble. Going a bit more hi-tech, what about a cloning device allowing them to be in multiple places at the same time? This would free up even more time to handle all the “mission critical” jobs that arise every day.

“Personally, I think a mind reading machine would be the best possible gift – imagine being able to understand what users really want, rather than what they say they want?! On a serious note though, a SAN with 20 SSD drives....”



Barry Cashman, VP EMEA, VCE

“With IT managers facing pain points from across all of the disparate infrastructure elements that power IT, converged infrastructure should be on every IT manager’s wish list this Christmas. 2016 will be the year businesses fully commit to putting it into practice. Why? Businesses are constantly striving for efficiency and agility across all departments, and when it comes to IT, that’s exactly what converged infrastructure can provide. It can cure daily headaches by making IT more cost-effective, more agile, reducing time spent on maintenance and increasing overall IT performance.

“Today’s data centres are a mass of tangled technology which has evolved heterogeneously, mainly as a result of IT trying to catch up with transitioning business needs. The fact is the world is changing and the next few years will see it change further and faster. IT needs to be prepared to change with it, and the place to start is by reducing operational complexity IT departments have built up around themselves. Converged infrastructure can transform IT by breaking down silos that have limited agility and have added cost in the past. It is time to reclaim simplicity and agility, freeing up IT expertise for value-added strategic initiatives and innovation rather than just maintaining the infrastructure.

Nassar Hussain, European sales director at SOTI

“Employees on Santa’s ‘nice list’ will receive new and shiny mobile devices this holiday season. With access to the latest technology, employees will certainly be eager to share many new pictures, videos and files throughout the busy holiday season, while staying connected to the office for business critical activities. In the season of good will, IT managers should ask Santa for a mobile device management strategy, to ensure no one goes on the “naughty list” by exposing their company network to threats and data leakage. Safeguarding the enterprise from potential threats while maintaining an enjoyable user experience will allow the IT department to sleep easy knowing corporate data is well respected and protected. Companies can reap the benefits of a mobile, connected enterprise for the New Year – the gift that keeps on giving!

Chris Pogue, SVP, Cyber Threat Analysis at Nuix

“Dear Santa, I hope you are well as you get ready for ‘the show’. I have been pretty good this year, although I did yell a lot at work, but that was only because Billy would not give me the headcount I needed to execute the security plan he gave me. I told him systems don’t patch themselves like 17 times, but he didn’t seem to hear me. Well, last week there was a big data breach in our industry and now he’s all: “Oh John...can you please resubmit the justification for additional headcount?” And I was all: “Sure thing Billy”, only in my head I was thinking, “Moron...if you would have listened to me like a year ago, I would be like a year ahead in implementing the security plan. Dummy.”

“K, so, for Christmas this year, I would like two highly skilled IT security professionals who can help me implement (and correct) Billy’s security enhancement program. They can’t cost too much and they have to be local (this is apparently akin to asking for replacement guys for my vibrating football game). Also, if the elves could patch some servers while there are in town, and help me fix my ACLs on my perimeter firewall, that’d be awesome.”

John Pepper, CEO and founder, Managed 24/7

“Year-on-year, IT teams are challenged by a growing number of connected devices and an increasing reliance on more complex, broader ranging applications. Couple this with the hyper-converged, hybrid public and private cloud environments they are situated within, and IT managers have a complex problem on their hands.

“That’s why, this Christmas, they should be asking Santa for an IT and telecommunications managed service provider that can deliver 100 per cent uptime to guarantee the unceasing availability and security of services. Predicted Managed Services is the next generation of managed service solutions, enabling intervention to problems detected up to a year in advance of them causing an issue. It’s the perfect gift for IT teams currently working to a five nines model, but who consider anything less than 100 per cent a failure. After all, in a dawning era of the Internet of Everything, who can afford to run the risk?”



Mark Evans, commercial director at Imerja

"IT managers are still responsible for ensuring their organisation's IT Infrastructure is working over Christmas, so I urge Santa to relieve the burden this year and gift them a company that provides 24/7 managed services – someone who can proactively monitor their systems and give them peace of mind that everything is in safe hands.

"After all, the last thing they need after being good all year is a call from their boss during Christmas Day Doctor Who or Downton Abbey insisting that they come in and resolve a critical issue. Therefore, give them the opportunity to switch off this year, Santa, and let them relax at Christmas safe in the knowledge that the experts have got everything under control."

Martin Ashall, CTO UK at CA Technologies

"IT managers want a peaceful Christmas. They and their elves in IT have worked hard all year getting ready for the busy trading period. IT managers dread that Christmas Eve call from Ops that their systems have gone down or worse still, hear about it on social media, as customers complain of their apps falling during those key Boxing Day sales.

"As such, a perfect gift for an IT manager would be a user-friendly and mobile application to allow them to monitor and track the performance of their infrastructure and customer transactions in real time, so that they can spot any potential risks ahead of the time and ensure they and their organisation's customers have a great, stress-free Christmas."

Tom Griffin, MD EMEA, SevOne

"It's going to be a hectic 2016 for IT managers. The industry is shifting toward agile trends, the Hybrid Cloud, and SDN, and many teams will fundamentally change how their infrastructure is built and managed in the coming year.

"With this in mind, IT managers have (hopefully) been good enough to ask for two gifts from Santa this Christmas:

1. Strong teams that can help successfully transition to a DevOps approach – IT needs teams that can collaborate during every step of the development process in a rapidly changing, application-driven environment.
2. Comprehensive tools that provide true insight into the infrastructure – When change is constant, IT teams require end-to-end visibility to understand how infrastructure impacts business applications. Being able to collect and visualise all infrastructure information in one place facilitates quick."

Len Padilla, VP Product Strategy at NTT Communications

“On average ICT managers are juggling four separate cloud platforms and over 100 apps, so understandably, all they really want for Christmas is a way of reducing this complexity.

“Many C-suite executives are pushing digital transformation to underpin a wider range of business strategies. As a result, ICT managers will need to ensure they’re maintaining current infrastructure, while also championing new technologies that support the new directions their organisation is heading in. And, at the same time, they’re also under increased scrutiny to maintain compliance and keep security water-tight.

“To meet the board’s objectives, a cloud management portal should be at the top of an ICT leader’s wish list. A single dashboard gives instant visibility across the ICT infrastructure, both on premises and in the cloud – and indeed across multiple flavours of cloud. This helps simplify tasks such as performance management and governance, leaving them to focus on driving innovation.

“January is typically a time when we declutter our lives and a cloud management portal will help ICT managers leave the cloud chaos of 2015 behind. So here’s to a New Year and a new view (of your clouds)!”

Nathalie Künneke-Trenaman, IPv6 program manager at the RIPE NCC

“This Christmas, IT managers should ask Santa to support industry-wide understanding of IPv6. IPv4 has run out across most of the world, but it’s still difficult to make people understand the importance of IPv6, which allows for exponential Internet growth and more flexibility for networks.

“IT managers are often pushed to save money and use workarounds like Carrier Grade Network Address Translation (CGNAT), but they can be troublesome when layered – if a NAT breaks, it prevents a large number of people from connecting to the Internet. Similarly, routing tables become complicated and some end-to-end business communication tools simply don’t work with NAT.

“2015 marked a huge shift towards IPv6: America exhausted its supply of IPv4, and major organisations across different industries threw support behind IPv6. BT and Apple both made big commitments, and even the likes of Spotify are experimenting. 2016 will be even bigger for IPv6, and IT managers will be hoping their companies understand its significance.

“Or, failing that, a new Kindle and some socks.”



Roberto Casula, CTO at Maintel

“While we think all IT Managers deserve some time off over the Christmas break to recuperate, there are going to be a few areas going into 2016 which they may want to ask Santa for a bit of help with:

- Next year will see new requirements under Payment Card Industry’s Data Security Standard (PCI DSS), affecting all organisations handling credit card transactions. Along with new requirements for companies regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), many organisations will need to rethink how their customer contact centres deal with credit card payments. If I were an IT Manager, I’d definitely be asking Santa for some support with this.
- The sheer number of high profile hacks and data breaches reported this year has caused a number of our customers to have a pretty big rethink when it comes to their approach to security. In the past, many organisations have assumed that they would not be a target for attack (“why would anyone be interested in attacking us?”) – for the first time, these organisations are starting to work on the assumption that they will be breached eventually, and moreover that the increased coverage in the mainstream media means they could suffer significant damage to their reputation. If you haven’t yet, then make sure you ask Santa for a revised information security strategy this Christmas.
- Coming into the New Year, several long-in-the-tooth products we’ve been will see support reduced or ending from the manufacturer, including some older Microsoft operating systems and several legacy Avaya products. We know lots of organisations will still be using these products, so IT Managers need to ask Santa for a fool-proof legacy strategy ready for when the support is withdrawn.”

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