WHITE PAPER

Supporting a New Style of IT: The Value of the 3rd Platform

Sponsored by: HP

Rob Brothers
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IN THIS WHITE PAPER

Enterprises have seen the value of what IDC defines as the 3rd platform, which consists of mobile, social, cloud, and big data solutions and applications. This white paper outlines the importance of support services in managing and maintaining the IT environments that host these new solutions. In this iteration of enterprise IT, organizations are required to support legacy systems, converged infrastructures, cloud-based applications, and software-defined storage, networks, or datacenters in heterogeneous environments. The datacenter manager has to compete with resources such as Rackspace and Amazon Web Services to keep the corporate enterprise datacenter relevant. That said, the increasingly critical role of vendor-supplied support services is highlighted in addressing these emerging IT environments going forward. Among the array of factors to consider when maintaining and managing the datacenter are:

☑ Increasing uptime assurance and security to deliver a high-quality end-user experience

☑ Matching IT needs with proper support contracts and contract consolidation for proper SLA coverage and cost savings

☑ Utilizing proactive services through experts and automated tools for problem prevention and faster issue resolution

☑ Simplifying and enhancing the support experience with a single point of contact for support issues and simplified service contracts

TODAY'S INFRASTRUCTURE TRENDS

In today's rapidly changing world of IT, enterprises are deploying extensive, complex infrastructures that enable critical business processes and provide secure and easy access for end users from a variety of desktop and mobile devices. These advanced infrastructures allow access to real-time data that can greatly increase productivity, allowing businesses to respond quickly to market dynamics to achieve strategic advantage.

In this environment, the traditional challenges associated with IT maintenance and management are changing dramatically. Yesterday's challenges included managing virtual machine sprawl and dealing with isolated silos of resources and the

disproportionate investment of IT resources in maintenance versus innovation. Those challenges are now being replaced with new ones, such as how to support converged infrastructures, cloud-based applications, and software-defined environments. As businesses move forward and modernize their IT infrastructure to take advantage of big data, social, and mobile opportunities, IT vendors are also investing in these areas to provide better technical support for their customers' emerging requirements.

Today's environments are dramatically more productive and cost effective. However, the need for easy access to management and performance information, rapid problem identification and resolution, and proactive guidance on best practices from technology experts has not diminished. Datacenter managers must continually improve on their processes to prevent line-of-business owners from looking externally for resources. Enterprise datacenters need to provide IT resources in a manner that is easily consumable by their IT users. To that end, vendors must provide the platforms, associated services, and highly trained engineers that customers rely on for new converged, software-defined, virtualized, and legacy systems. Providing this level of support ensures that the performance needs of end users who rely on these datacenters are met. It is also not enough for vendors to support just their own technology with software-defined infrastructures on the horizon; they must also be able to provide support for the other hardware and software providers involved in the delivery of an organization's workload.
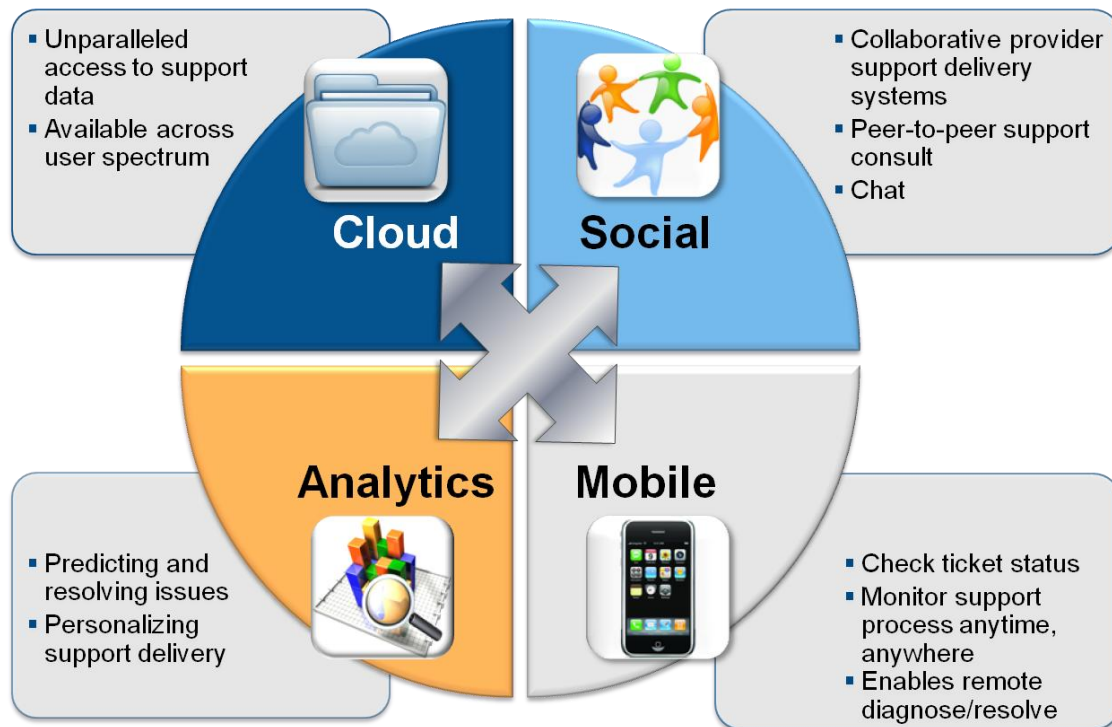
Managing operations in these new environments will continue to present significant challenges for resource-strapped IT departments. In addition, talent shortages in areas such as big data, software-defined architectures, and cloud computing are already apparent. IDC believes that as a result of all of these factors, CIOs and IT managers will increasingly look to external support providers for help in building, managing, and maintaining the enterprise IT infrastructure of the future. In turn, support providers will need to modify their offerings in line with these changes. Customers are looking for multiple attributes, including more personalized support that is responsive to their unique needs; proactive products, tools, and technology to avoid the business risks of downtime; and an uncomplicated support experience.

ASSESSING THE SUPPORT NEEDS OF TOMORROW'S NEW STYLE OF IT

Enterprises are realizing the benefits of the 3rd platform in evolving their own business. Because this new style of IT has increased the complexity of the datacenter, the new underlying infrastructure — such as converged and software-defined architectures — that organizations are implementing to take advantage of the 3rd platform must be supported at a critical level. Enterprises must look at their support providers and ask, "Are they providing me with a support service that is equivalent to my needs?" Enterprises can evaluate support providers and their level of use of the 3rd platform in delivering support services, which should bring a more holistic approach to supporting the datacenter. Figure 1 provides examples of how support providers are utilizing the 3rd platform.

F I G U R E   1

Value of the 3rd Platform for Support

- Unparalleled access to support data
- Available across user spectrum

Cloud

- Collaborative provider support delivery systems
- Peer-to-peer support consult
- Chat

Social

- Predicting and resolving issues
- Personalizing support delivery

Analytics

Mobile

- Check ticket status
- Monitor support process anytime, anywhere
- Enables remote diagnose/resolve

Source: IDC, 2013

As the technology landscape evolves, IT organizations will need to change how they procure products, services, and support. The traditional model of maintaining a comprehensive staff of qualified employees who can address the spectrum of IT needs across the business will evolve toward what IDC calls a lead service provider (LSP) approach. The role of the LSP is to take the worry of downtime and less-than-optimal availability off the IT organization's plate by putting it in the hands of highly skilled engineers, consultants, and technicians who can handle the variety of hardware and software issues that can arise.

IDC believes that many enterprises will increasingly adopt an LSP approach going forward. Organizations that embrace this shift will be in a better position to sharpen their business focus in increasingly unpredictable market conditions, especially if they do not have sizable internal IT departments or are in the process of downsizing their IT staff and/or resources. The new support landscape will be defined by systems vendors that meet these needs by offering smarter products and services with the goal of helping drive innovation forward for their customers. In the remainder of this section, we discuss these other support aspects.

Predicting Issues and Providing Best Practices Through Online Tools and Automation

Online tools and automation are important elements in the support mix. These resources can help mitigate risks, provide preventive steps to bypass potential issues, and provide efficient problem-solving. With them, IT specialists can gain access to technology experts who can provide information about updating patches and troubleshooting. Other online resources include databases that allow IT staff to view a single pane of glass for ticket and contract management.

IDC recommends considering support services providers committed to ongoing investments in online tools and processes that can maximize performance and minimize downtime. Specifically, support providers should include functionality that expands proactive and preventive support delivery, improves advanced self-diagnosis and resolution, and simplifies patch and upgrade management. The tools and utilities provided should be easy to deploy, have an intuitive user interface, and require minimal training for an already resource-constrained IT organization. In addition, IDC recommends an integrated approach to patching systems, which can greatly simplify the management of IT environments.

Many enterprises struggle to maintain an accurate, consistent, up-to-date inventory of their technology and associated warranties and support contracts across their IT landscape. Most IT organizations attempt to track this data with a spreadsheet or other documents, which can require significant configuration and tracking efforts and can be difficult to maintain in a rapidly changing IT environment. Enterprises should consider support providers with online, customizable tools to manage inventory for deployed technology and support contracts. These tools should include the capability to populate the database through an automated process that scans infrastructure for existing systems.

Faster, Faster, Faster Resolution

To maintain high availability of business-critical resources, IT organizations need to have ready access to extensive technical resources. However, maintaining focus is important, so a single point of contact or a dedicated account team for complex solutions involving vendor hardware, software, and services bridges these two needs. With converged infrastructure hosting cloud-based solutions, the era of cross-vendor finger-pointing support is a thing of the past. IT organizations have little tolerance for circuitous and delayed responses that waste valuable time when issues need to be resolved quickly. According to IDC's *Virtualization Services Survey* in January 2012, 47.1% of respondents planned on utilizing a single point of contact to support the majority of their virtualized datacenter.

In line with this, silos such as the classic division of labor between hardware and software have also negatively impacted the customer support experience. Support programs need to address this by being able to deal with both hardware and third-party software issues that arise, especially if they are routine in nature. Robust and well-designed support programs have recognized this reality and can provide access to a single individual who has first-line accountability for problem resolution and, only if truly necessary, referral. A single point of contact for both legacy systems and current infrastructure is also highly valuable.

Customization Options

Support needs will vary considerably from company to company. IT organizations must be able to choose a support level that best suits their needs. Fortunately, many vendor support programs have increased the sophistication of the granularity they provide to address this, optimally matching IT needs with the proper level of support and contractual options. IDC has researched the topic of how IT managers are buying different levels of support to match their needs and conducted a worldwide survey of enterprises to determine support attach rates and contract duration for server purchases. One of our major findings was that there was a mix of the type of contract a customer chose. We included basic, midtier, premium, and custom support contract options, and we found a clear mix across all surveyed, which means customers like choices in what will work best for them. Vendors with a mix of support levels will be able to address the needs of most customers.

Deep Domain Experts and Dedicated Engineering

Support providers need to have deep domain experts and a strong bench of engineers who can help with a range of complex IT issues. Cross-domain expertise is an important aspect of this. A support partner should also have intimate knowledge of an organization's business and business processes. A partner who knows an organization's infrastructure can quickly assess problem situations and act swiftly to get the environment back up and running. Extensive knowledge across all aspects of the IT landscape from hardware to packaged software to the customization required for specific solutions is a critical consideration when selecting a support services provider. Support personnel should have detailed knowledge of the complex technologies present in today's heterogeneous IT environments and the policies and procedures necessary to address the multiplatform issues that can arise.

Post-Warranty Systems Support

IDC research shows that many organizations are keeping IT assets for more than three years or past base warranty or warranty uplift. This may be due to economic conditions or the fact that a technology refresh is simply not in the budget. In this scenario, maintaining legacy assets is often the right business decision. In addition, keeping those systems covered by extending the warranty is a prudent step that organizations should take. Some of the challenges that IT can face if support contracts lapse are prolonged time to resolution and issues associated with patch and firmware upgrades.

The need to support not only the latest technologies but also legacy systems is a critical dependency when support services are selected. In today's business climate, IT organizations are managing legacy systems and at the same time working to transition business-critical applications to more contemporary solutions such as virtualized or cloud environments. Typically, hardware will be in play from different suppliers with different operating systems, capacities, service delivery procedures, and service levels. The ability for a vendor to support legacy assets and advanced technologies is a great benefit for IT departments.

A u t h o r i z e d   P a r t n e r   P r o g r a m s

Today's IT organizations have a number of options for procuring support services: directly through the vendor, through third-party maintenance service firms, or through value-added resellers (VARs). While vendor-direct support is often a suitable choice, IT organizations should also consider vendors that offer an established network of authorized support providers (ASPs). ASPs can be utilized when vendor-direct support is not available or convenient for the IT organization's location and circumstances. Although third-party support providers are common, ASPs — typically VARs — can often provide more assurance in the delivery process. In this case, high-level certification and authorization from the systems vendor are important to ensure the right level of expertise.

A comprehensive understanding of integrated systems means the support team (i.e., vendor and VAR) will be in a good position to identify potential issues that can occur during ongoing operations. A highly knowledgeable team is able to anticipate potential issues based on an aggregated knowledge base and quickly address problems to mitigate the potential for significant systems downtime. One trend that IDC has observed over the past few years is the increased levels of skill in VAR delivery of high-value support services. This is the result of investments made by many channel partners to increase technical expertise coupled with higher levels of collaboration with vendor partners.

IT managers and CIOs should evaluate these attributes to determine if a particular vendor's solutions and support will be suitable for their datacenter environment and business needs. IDC recommends looking at vendors that have some, if not all, of these abilities. In the following section, we examine HP's services support solutions.

HP: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SUPPORTING THE NEW STYLE OF IT

IDC believes that enterprises will continue to add new technologies to their IT infrastructure to quickly adapt to changing market dynamics. This new style of IT, which includes technologies such as converged infrastructure, virtualized, software-defined, cloud, and as-a-service environments, increases the complexity associated with managing and supporting IT across the enterprise. HP's services portfolio represents a strong effort by the company to simplify and streamline the customer-facing aspects of its offerings and enhance key aspects of the customer experience. HP's offerings provide customers with a broad range of services that will help embrace these new technologies and drive their businesses forward. These advanced offerings are designed to help customers choose the right service that best suits their enterprise's needs. Offerings include:

⊡ HP Datacenter Care

- ❑ Datacenter Care Primary Service Provider

- ❑ Datacenter Care Flexible Capacity Service

- ❑ Datacenter Care for Cloud

- ❑ Datacenter Care for Hyperscale customers

- ⊡ HP Lifecycle Event Services

- ⊡ HP Proactive Care

  - ❑ Personalized Support

  - ❑ CloudSystem Matrix Support

- ⊡ HP Foundation Care

  - ❑ Collaborative Support

HP's portfolio is in response to the company's identification of a number of key customer expectations centered on the notion of an enhanced service experience. HP customers have shown a desire to have a more personalized experience, which suggests a particular emphasis on two areas: single point of contact and the ability for support contracts to offer appropriate levels of customization.

HP Datacenter Care

HP Datacenter Care focuses on tailored support agreements enabled by proprietary HP tools and analytics for customers that are utilizing advanced infrastructure solutions and want a unique support experience. The service utilizes much of IDC's "four pillar" approach to supporting a customer's datacenter shown in Figure 1. Deliverables are individually sized and priced depending on specific needs and are not based on per-device pricing. Additional devices can be added over time.

Analytics: HP Datacenter Care focuses on tailored support agreements enabled by proprietary HP tools and analytics for customers that are utilizing advanced infrastructure solutions and want a unique support experience.

This service package offers:

- ⊡ Enhanced Call Handling that provides a customer with a personalized experience and start-to-finish management of issues

- ⊡ A single point of accountability and rapid access to technical specialists for incidents

- ⊡ The selection of reactive and proactive services needed to support the systems in the agreement

HP is dedicated to making investments in and continual enhancements to the offering to help deliver a high-value support experience to its end users. HP Datacenter Care also includes Integrated Multivendor Services (4 walls agreement). This key feature under Datacenter Care Primary Service Provider (see the list that follows) presents customers with a support team to address server, storage, and network infrastructure sourced from multiple suppliers under a single consolidated service contract. This capability is designed to reinforce the single-point-of-contact value proposition and avoid cross-vendor "finger-pointing." HP Multivendor x86 Server Support Services provides scalable hardware/software support for industry-standard servers and software environments. It's available for IBM and Dell x86 platforms as well as HP platforms and provides ITIL-based service management. Other products in the Datacenter Care portfolio include:

- ⊡ **Datacenter Care Primary Service Provider** consolidates vendor management and service delivery into a single service agreement, helping track inventory and providing a matrix on performance and availability.

- ⊡ **Datacenter Care Flexible Capacity Service** is an as-a-service infrastructure option, which can help datacenter managers provide opex options and self-service features and functionality to their users.

- ⊡ **Datacenter Care for Cloud** allows for multivendor support while orchestrating SLAs across a cloud environment and providing expert guidance on managing application workloads.

- ⊡ **Datacenter Care for Hyperscale customers** provides on-premise resources and support options to help with large scale-out compute environments.

HP Lifecycle Event Services

HP has developed a service portfolio to help enterprises achieve a ubiquitous compute environment that will enable them to take advantage of the 3rd platform as they journey to a new style of IT. HP Lifecycle Event Services is a comprehensive portfolio of technical per-event services that integrate support and consulting into one set of offerings. Areas included are:

- ⊡ **Strategy Services.** Evaluating an enterprise environment helps customers see how they can evolve their business and datacenter environment to take advantage of the 3rd platform.

- ⊡ **Design Services.** After strategizing on what this new style of IT can do for the business, HP can design what the architecture should incorporate.

- ⊡ **Deployment Services.** An important factor of a successful install is the number of disruptions the implementation of a new solution creates. Utilizing experts that have best practices and years of experience can keep disruptions to a minimum.

- ⊡ **Operational and Improvement Services.** Tools and automation are keys to keeping an environment efficiently running. These infrastructures are very complex, and utilizing outside services can help focus resources on driving the business forward as opposed to focusing on day-to-day operations.

- ⊡ **Education Services.** Staying up to date with technology is paramount, and it starts with education and training. Knowing how technology can be used to help an enterprise evolve goes a long way, even if the information is not used in actual hands-on work.

HP Proactive Insight Experience

HP's service packages provide a spectrum of online resources and preventive tools to help customers manage the life cycle of products. HP Insight Remote Support service is integrated into HP Insight Online, the newest addition to the HP Support Center. HP Insight Online is intended to allow customers to gain access to relevant IT information anytime, anywhere to proactively manage IT infrastructure.

HP and its customers can automatically access devices remotely monitored by HP tools. These new tool sets allow customers to track service events and support cases, view device configurations, and proactively monitor the status of warranties, HP Care Pack Services, and contractual support agreements. The tools may also be used to manage HP Proactive Select service credits from a single interface.

Cloud and Mobility: HP Proactive Insight experience is intended to allow customers to gain access to relevant IT information anytime, anywhere to proactively manage IT infrastructure.

Key features include:

- **Personalized Dashboard.** This feature integrates support and product information into a "single pane of glass" view and allows the sharing of IT information with other users in the organization and/or HP Authorized Resellers for recommendations and advice.

- **Service Events.** This feature provides online monitoring and management of devices using HP Insight Remote Support 7.0. Users can view all key event information, such as severity, problem description, date and time generated, status, and related support case ID.

- **Contracts and Warranties.** This feature allows users to track warranty status by device and by contract. Users can see what contracts are in force along with associated access rights and expiration dates. Additional privileges are possible, such as access to certain support content or to patches or software updates.

- **My Customers.** This feature is available to HP Authorized Resellers. It allows them to view their customers' remotely monitored environments. ASPs can also view the service events generated by HP Insight Remote Support 7.0 and automatically submitted into HP's Channel Service Network. (Note: The customer needs to allow access for this information to be viewed by a channel partner.)

All of these online applications offer remote secure access.

HP Proactive Care

The other key component of the HP Proactive Insight experience is HP Proactive Care, which leverages new product technology and infrastructure investments designed to achieve dynamic proactive support and therefore represents a higher-value support service than HP Foundation Care. HP Proactive Care builds upon the HP Foundation Care base to provide more value-added features to customers facing the challenge of managing converged, virtualized, software-defined, and cloud-based environments. The program leverages:

- Remote support automation tools through the HP Proactive Insight experience, which delivers innovative call logging, rapid diagnostics, and personalized reports for all connected products

- An enhanced call experience with rapid access to advanced technical expertise managing the case from start to finish

- Proactive reports with personalized data analysis, recommendations, and advice for firmware/patch management and Proactive Scan (system health check)

These features help customers get more value out of the IT assets they have purchased and provide them with a higher level of customer satisfaction when it comes to supporting the IT environment. These services are aimed at providing an enhanced end-user experience by increasing uptime availability. Other options in the portfolio include:

- HP Proactive Care Personalized Support Option, which includes a locally assigned account support manager (ASM) who provides a more tailored solution

- Proactive Care for HP CloudSystem Matrix, which takes support to the next level by helping optimize the cloud infrastructure, increasing the value of the IT investment

HP Foundation Care

HP Collaborative Support

In addition to current hardware-only or hardware/software support services, HP Foundation Care now offers HP Collaborative Support, which is full support for HP hardware and known problem resolution support for major ISV industry-standard software products, regardless of where the customer purchases its software licenses. With this approach, HP leverages its relationships with ISVs to offer integrated support.

HP Collaborative Support is intended to provide a first and single point of contact for initial hardware and software support needs. It's designed to shift the burden of deciding whether the problem is hardware or software related from the customer to the support professional. If the incident is related to a selected third-party software product and can't be resolved by standard procedures, HP contacts the vendor on the customer's behalf under the terms of the existing support agreement. (It should be noted, however, that this feature is not intended to replace the need for a support contract with the third-party vendor.)

HP Collaborative Support offers a 24 x 7 coverage window with a two-hour remote response. Once the customer has placed a call, HP will respond within two hours to start remote diagnosis and basic software support. A six-hour call-to-repair time commitment is provided for hardware support. For hardware incidents that can't be resolved remotely, onsite technical support is provided for covered hardware products, although HP may elect to replace certain ProLiant servers rather than repair them.

Another key feature is access to electronic support information and services where HP provides customers with access to electronic and Web-based tools. This includes the ability to download HP firmware and subscribe to hardware-related proactive service notifications. It also includes participation in various support forums where best practices and other knowledge are shared with other registered users.

HP has expanded Web-based searches of technical support documents to facilitate faster problem-solving and provides access to HP proprietary service diagnostic tools. Using these resources, customers can view the status of each support or service request. Also available is the capability to search HP or third-party knowledge databases for a wide range of third-party products to obtain answers to support questions.

HP Foundation Care is a portfolio of reactive hardware and software services with different levels of support and hardware/software balancing options.

HP Foundation Care extends standard warranties for HP products and provides hardware and software support options above and beyond HP's current offering. It can be obtained from HP directly or authorized partners. Support is available in multiple response levels to address the specific needs of customers.

Social: HP Collaborative Support is intended to provide a first and single point of contact for initial hardware and software support needs.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

Enterprise IT environments are growing in complexity and sophistication as organizations increasingly move to advanced solutions, including business intelligence/big data analytics, mobility, social technologies, and converged and software-defined architectures for cloud computing. All of these areas are experiencing rapid development. For example, IDC research shows that worldwide public cloud services revenue alone will grow at almost five times the rate of the IT market as a whole. Worldwide revenue from public cloud services is expected to exceed $47 billion in 2013 and reach $108 billion in 2017, representing a compound annual growth rate of 23.5%.

In the aggregate, these trends represent a major shift in IT transformation and one that many organizations are not fully prepared for in terms of staffing expertise, necessary technology refreshes, or other resources. While computer hardware has become simpler and more reliable, the holistic application system, including hardware, software, and networks, is more complex and prone to failure. Managing IT operations in this complex, heterogeneous landscape will continue to present significant challenges for budget-sensitive and resource-strapped IT departments. IDC believes that given these realities, CIOs and IT managers will increasingly look to external support providers with state-of-the-art offerings to help address day-to-day operational issues.

With IT environments increasing in complexity, IDC views support services as continuing to evolve to meet the performance and availability demands of enterprises of all sizes. Enterprises should take advantage of support service features that can help increase time to resolution, minimize downtime, accommodate an increasingly mobile and remote workforce, and deliver a high-quality, consistent technical and business-oriented support experience across the entire IT landscape.

CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES

IDC research has identified several ongoing challenges for support delivery in the current environment. HP will need to work to improve on the 3rd platform for support delivery as end users increasingly adopt new tools and utilities and increase self-diagnosis and resolution. The drive toward automation and self-care that now exists within IT organizations needs to continue to be extended into the support ecosystem. HP also needs to design new features and functionality to ensure ease of use and reduce time required for deployment, training, and ongoing maintenance. Competing with single-source integrated system providers for high-quality support services and educating customers about the importance of putting the right support contract in place for new complex IT environments will be other challenges.

CONCLUSION

The emerging reality of today's global marketplace is that people and resources now exist in an increasingly integrated web of mobility, connectivity, and interactivity. As cloud computing, advanced mobility, new forms of complex analytics, and other aspects of the 3rd platform go mainstream over the next several years, enterprise IT

environments will continue to grow in sophistication. Managing operations in this complex, heterogeneous environment will continue to present significant challenges for resource-strapped IT departments. In addition, talent shortages in areas such as big data and cloud computing are already apparent. Enterprises need to assess software-defined architectures that will further bring new technologies into the environment. IDC believes that as a result, CIOs and IT managers will increasingly look to support providers with similarly sophisticated and well-optioned support frameworks and service packages for help in building and maintaining their enterprise IT infrastructure through all phases of the IT life cycle.

IDC recommends that enterprises consider support providers with deep domain expertise across a wide variety of technologies and solutions. This expertise should extend to support state-of-the-art proprietary and post-warranty hardware and software technology as well as familiarity with the tools and automation to enhance the support experience. HP's new support portfolio has taken important steps to address these considerations by continuing to raise the bar for continuous improvement in support advancement. The company has done this by offering options, such as HP Collaborative Support, that provide tiered and highly customizable levels of hardware and software support to fill in gaps in overall service coverage. In the aggregate, HP's three pillars of support packages — HP Foundation Care, HP Proactive Care, and HP Datacenter Care — have been designed to enhance customer support experience by reducing its complexity through high-touch, single-point-of-contact access to technical expertise; ensuring legacy systems support; and providing new enhancements and additional tools for online support.