

REPORT REPRINT

Resolve broadens its horizons beyond incident response

MAY 30 2019

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Introduction

With the backing of Insight Venture Partners, Resolve is expanding its targeted use cases in response to the growing market interest in automation. Resolve has a strong track record of serving large enterprises with very complex environments and we think it is making the right moves to build on this experience in order to meet the growing demand for IT process automation.

451 TAKE

While Resolve's heritage is in incident response automation, it is broadening its footprint in a way that we think aptly responds to the challenges that emerge when IT operations teams are faced with managing increasingly complex technology environments. We think Resolve is well positioned to compete in the IT tool chain integration and unified infrastructure management sectors. It already has a broad set of integrations with automation tools that customers are using to manage particular systems such that it can stitch them together to enable complex automations that span IT systems and organizational boundaries. It also has a vast set of integrations with the infrastructure that enterprises employ. With this platform, Resolve is setting its goals more broad than incident response and security, targeting essentially any system in use in the IT environment, and we think that it should be able to serve the needs of the many enterprises looking to further embrace automation.

Context

Headquartered in Irvine, California, Resolve was founded in 2014 after being spun out of a company that developed and introduced its core technology in 2009. Resolve was acquired by private equity firm Insight Venture Partners in May 2017. Since then, Resolve has grown from 100 people to more than 150 currently.

Resolve targets the high end of the market, considering customers in the \$10bn revenue range as its sweet spot. Customers include CenturyLink, Visa, Vodafone and CVS Pharmacy. In addition to adding enterprises, Resolve has also been winning managed services provider customers, which also present potential as a valuable distribution channel.

While Resolve's automation platform has been most commonly used for IT ops and security use cases, it has recently begun positioning it to address a wider range of uses, including network operations, service desk and cloud and server management – in short, Resolve is offering to automate essentially anything in a user's IT environment. In addition, it is positioning itself as able to handle the most complex automations, including those spanning organizational boundaries, such as an incident that requires intervention by security and ops professionals, as well as system boundaries, such as those that might encompass cloud and on-premises gear. As such, it integrates with the wide variety of tools that businesses may already use to manage their environments, including security information and event management tools and continuous integration and deployment tools, even when in some cases the functionality overlaps with its own.

We think Resolve is looking to expand its addressable market at an opportune moment. In our 451 Research Voice of the Enterprise Digital Pulse, Budgets and Outlook 2018 survey, we found that 75% of IT decision makers said that they expected their organization's IT automation investment to increase in the coming year. This significant interest in automaton is in response to a skills shortage that many IT teams face as well as a growing workload that doesn't correspond to a growth in team size.

Products

Even though organizations plan to invest more in automation, they recognize that setting up and managing automations requires new skill sets and can be difficult. Resolve is trying to address this challenge by building out integrations with hundreds of devices and offering thousands of commands that customers can employ. It offers templates and runbooks as well as a content library to make it easier for customers to set up automations. The library includes sample use cases of automations for infrastructure provisioning, patch management, continuous application delivery and incident resolution. In addition, Resolve's UI is designed to guide users through the setup of automations, with decision trees and drag-and-drop capabilities that make it easier to visualize automations.

A variety of triggers can set off an automation, including incidents, service requests, events or a command sent from a chatops system. Many of Resolve's tools integrations are bi-directional, so when tickets from ServiceNow or Remedy, for instance, flow in, Resolve sends updates back to the ticketing systems about actions taken from the Resolve end.

Resolve also aims to serve customers that have been uncomfortable embracing automation due to concerns of setting off actions that cause or exacerbate problems. One way it supports such customers is via what it calls 'interactive automations,' which allow users to alert people at different points throughout a complex decision-making process, or always require someone to approve a certain type of change. Inserting a human element should allow these customers to become comfortable that the automations they've created work well and then they can potentially remove the requirement for human intervention.

Competition

Resolve competes with legacy tools including HP Operations Orchestration and BMC TrueSight Orchestration. But it also competes with quite a number of vendors that overlap with some of its functionality, even though Resolve integrates with many of these vendors as well in order to deliver complex automations for its customers. For instance, Resolve may sometimes compete with Flexera's RightScale and Scaler for cloud management, with Resolve targeting customers that appreciate its hybrid management capabilities, but it also integrates with those tools. In security automation, Resolve competes and integrates with Phantom, which is now owned by Splunk, for security response. It may also compete at times with ServiceNow, which itself offers an automation engine.

Resolve reports that it doesn't regard tools like Chef, Puppet and Ansible competitive in that customers typically use such tools for a narrow application automation and orchestration use case. Resolve integrates with these tools to deliver complex automations that span systems and tools.

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

As a vendor that has been doing IT automation for many years, Resolve brings to the table deep expertise in very complex environments.

WEAKNESSES

In an era when businesses are increasingly accustomed to quickly trying and buying enterprise software, Resolve, despite the many resources it offers, will require a significant implementation effort that creates a barrier to adoption.

OPPORTUNITIES

Resolve already has integrations with many of the tools customers use to automate pieces of their IT environments, putting it in a strong position to serve as an overarching platform capable of complex automations.

THREATS

Resolve is likely to face new competitors as vendors that have historically focused on a single use case – like security or incident response automations – similarly branch out into new, adjacent IT systems.