

2015

State of the Sysadmin Report



Strategic IT Helps
Sysadmins Move Up
the Ladder, Command
a Higher Salary



Table of Contents



- 3** Sysadmins Know They Are Important, But Feel Undervalued
- 5** The Numbers: Gauging Sysadmin Sentiment
- 6** The Other Side of Perception
- 7** The Link Between IT Strategy and Your Paycheck
- 8** Ranking Tools of the Trade
- 9** The Verdict: Start Showing Your Strategic Value
- 10** The Next Step

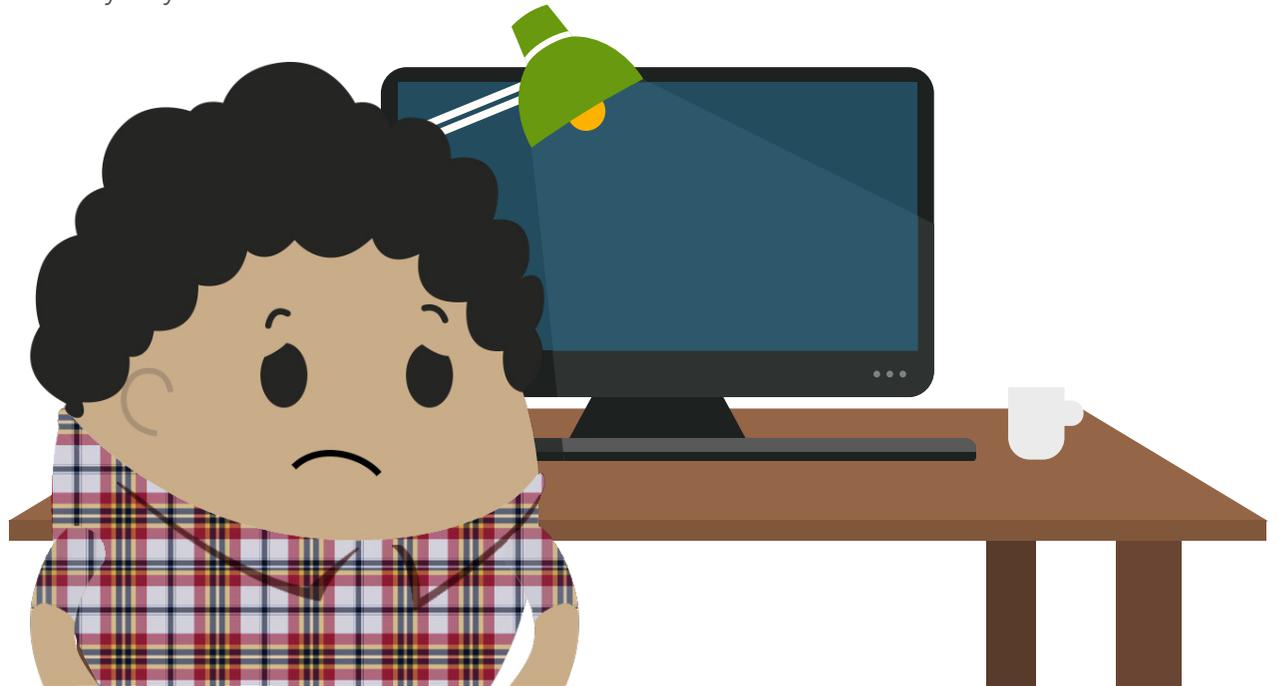
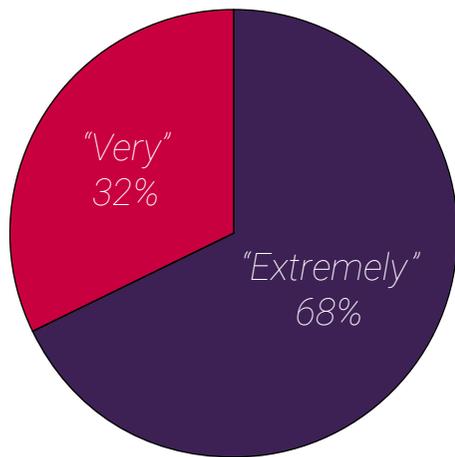
Sysadmins Know They Are Important, But Feel Undervalued

Value is a matter of perception. System administrators (sysadmins) know that all too well, and many feel that their personal views on the value of IT administration aren't shared by their co-workers.

Differing IT perspectives could affect everything about a sysadmin's work experience, from the type of tasks assigned to them, to the amount of money they earn. By changing how they are perceived by co-workers inside and outside IT, sysadmins could raise their value and command more respect, support and pay.

Drawing a line between "strategic" and "transactional" system administration, we asked IT pros to describe how they feel about their value to the business and how they think they are viewed by IT and non-IT co-workers. We also asked sysadmins about their work habits and approach, and what they look for in the technology they use every day.

"How Important is the Sysadmin Role to the Day-to-Day Functioning of your Company?"



Sysadmins overwhelmingly agreed that their role is important to the business, yet undervalued by their colleagues. But interestingly, attitudes change somewhat once sysadmins improve their standing in the company and take on higher-profile roles. The survey found that the more sysadmins feel strategic, and the more they are perceived as being strategic or as having a holistic view of the company by their IT peers, the higher their salary.

Though they largely may feel underappreciated, the report shows sysadmins are also eager to prove their worth. Not only that, many are already taking the steps needed to climb the ladder and change their IT and non-IT colleagues' perceptions. That includes investigating better IT solutions that can support their transition from providing reactionary IT management to proactive, strategic system administration.

Transactional IT administrators...

are notified when there is a problem and address it.



Strategic IT administrators...

participate in strategic projects that benefit the whole company.

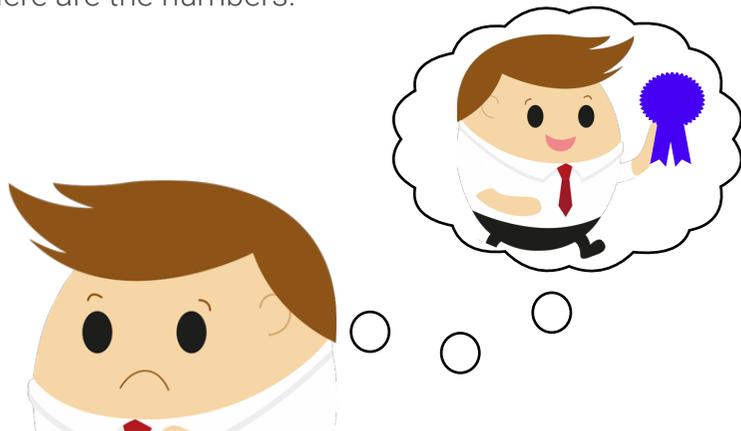
The Numbers: Gauging Sysadmin Sentiment

You know the stereotype: sysadmins live in the dark belly of the IT room, where they mess around with cables and keyboards, only to surface when a new hire needs a laptop or when Outlook is on the fritz. They inhale coffee, talk about Star Wars and don't care about what happens outside of their IT bubble.

Naturally, the sysadmins we surveyed resist this common misconception. Sysadmins are "passionate" about their work and actively thinking about ways they can help improve the rest of the company outside of the IT department. It's about more than putting out fires – they want to make their company more efficient.

Across the board, sysadmins expressed that their role was either "extremely" or "very" important to the day-to-day functioning of the business. But only 28 percent feel they get the recognition they deserve.

Here are the numbers.



Survey Says...

95% say they are passionate about system administration

93% believe non-IT colleagues trust them to find technology that can help with work

84% say they frequently think about how IT fits in the overarching business strategy

28% believe they get the recognition they deserve

23% say their only job is to run IT, and they have no sense of business needs

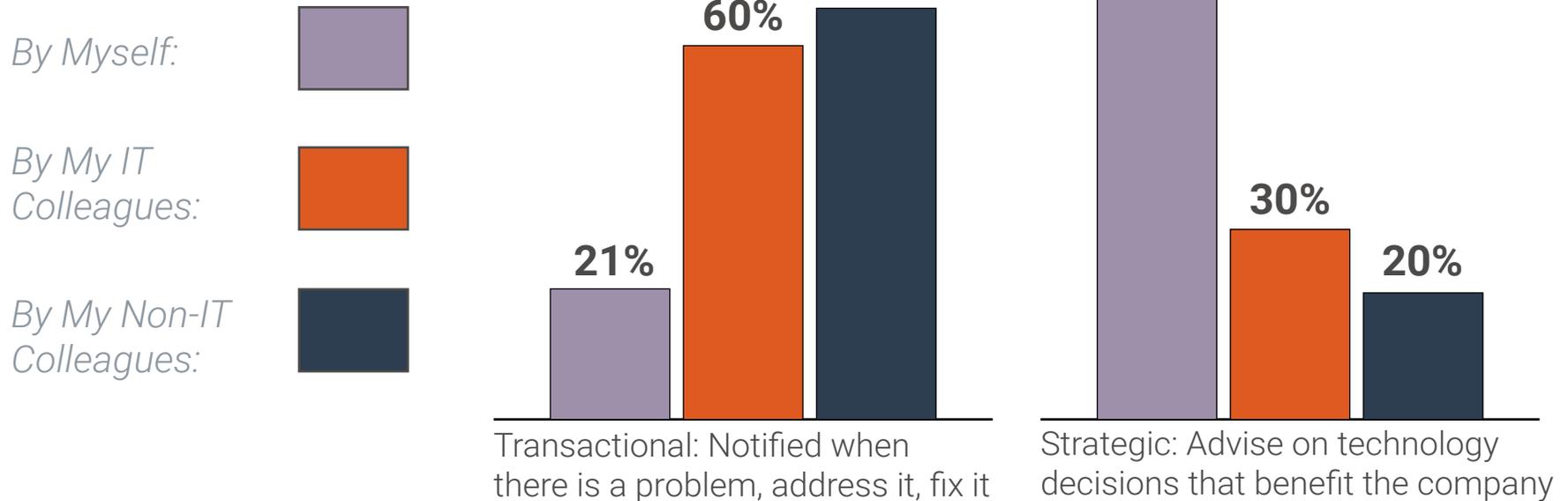
The Other Side of Perception



While many sysadmins say they view their role as strategic, how do they feel their role is viewed by colleagues? Most feel typecast as “Mr. Fix It” — only 20 percent of respondents said they think non-IT colleagues view the sysadmin role as a strategic part of the business. Interestingly, respondents feel that the perception problem also exists within the IT department. Only 30 percent of sysadmins say their fellow IT peers think their role is strategic.

So, is the problem with sysadmins or everyone else? Though they say they are constantly thinking beyond the scope of their own department, how can sysadmins better show their value to the rest of the company to change these perceptions?

How The Role of the Sysadmin is Perceived...



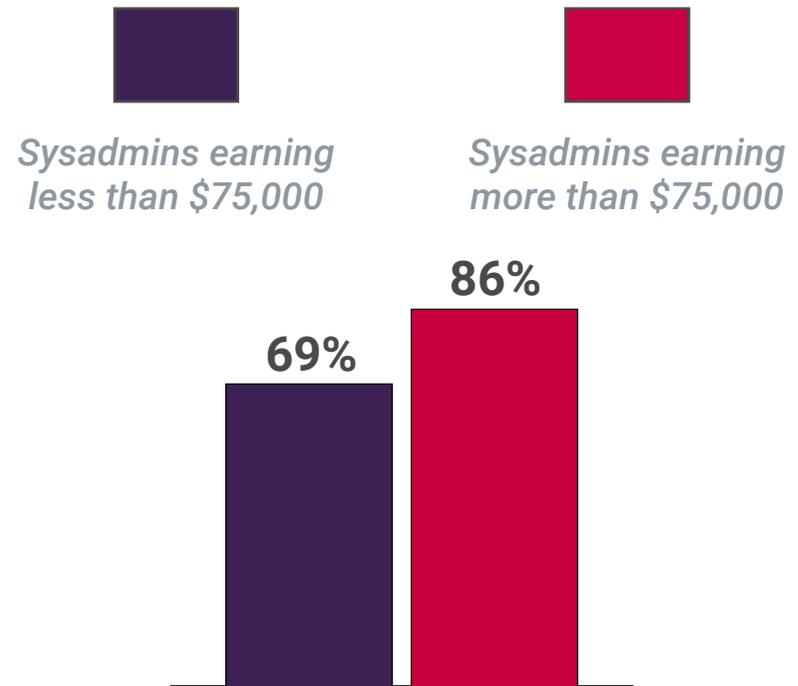
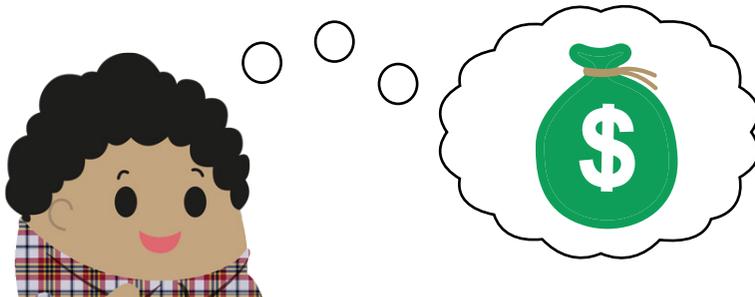
The Link Between IT Strategy and Your Paycheck

The survey found that the average salary of respondents increases with higher perceptions of value and involvement in strategic activities.

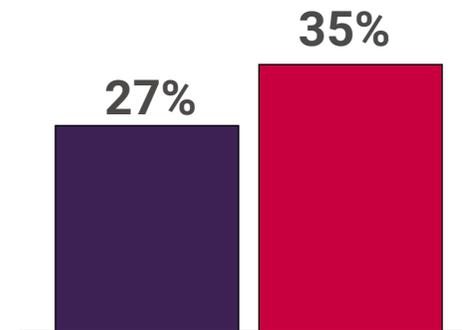
Among respondents who earned less than \$75,000, 65 percent said they viewed their own role as strategic. That figure grew to 86 percent among those who earned more than \$75,000. Similarly, 35 percent of “high-earning” sysadmins said they were viewed as strategic by their IT colleagues, compared to just 27 percent among those earning less than \$75,000 annually.

The study ultimately suggests a correlation between higher pay and strategic work: the more you do to increase your value to the organization, the more strategic you will be perceived and the better opportunity you may have to earn more.

Sysadmins who earned higher pay only felt slightly better about how their non-IT coworkers perceived them, suggesting that there still needs to be an overall shift in how sysadmins are viewed across organizations.



I view the sysadmin role as strategic



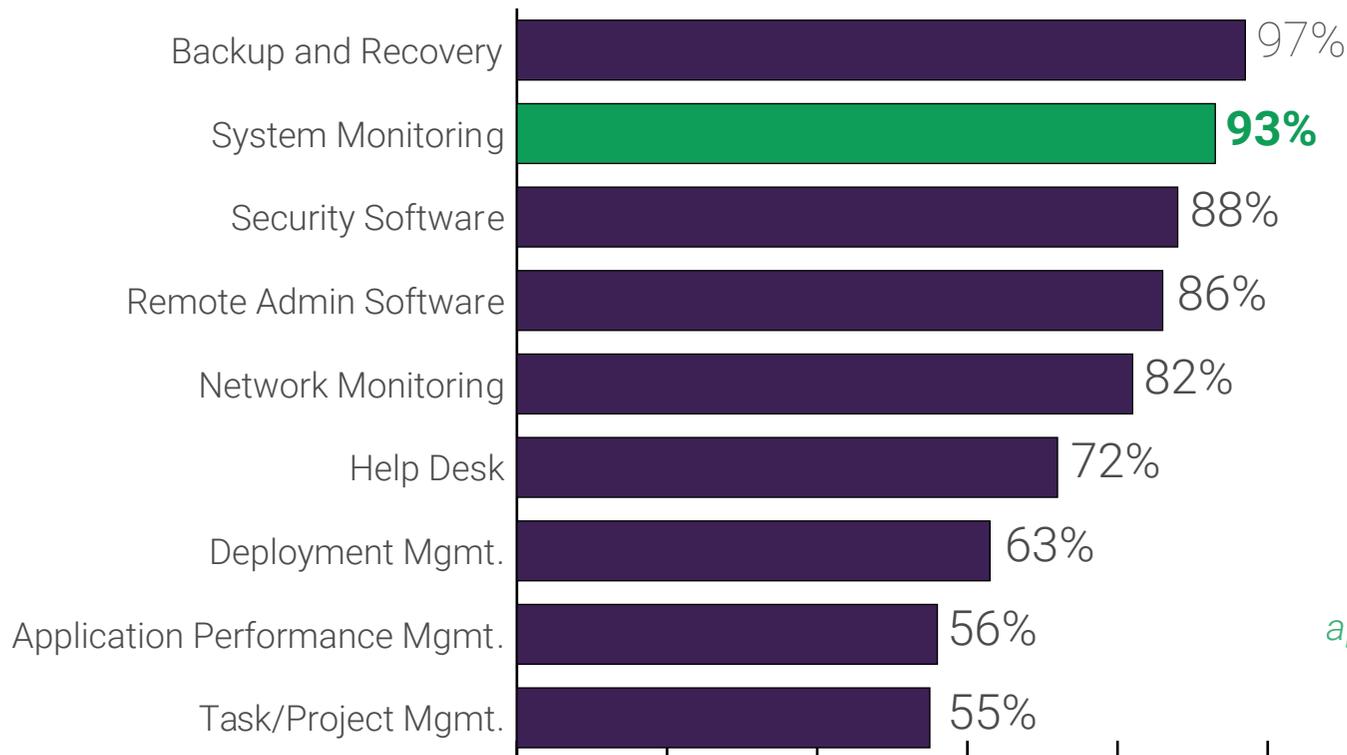
My IT colleagues view the sysadmin role as strategic

Ranking the Tools of the Trade

How do you start working strategically? Technology can help. According to the survey, 84 percent of sysadmins say they rely on IT software to manage tactical functions, so they can focus on strategic technical work.

Monitoring software was revealed to be particularly critical to a strategic IT approach. Asked to rank common IT tools by importance, 93 percent of respondents considered systems monitoring to be extremely important. Only backup and recovery software (97 percent) ranked higher.

In fact, 72 percent of respondents said their systems monitoring tool is the first application they use when arriving to work every morning.



72%

"Monitoring is the first application I use when I arrive to work in the morning"

A View into Systems Monitoring

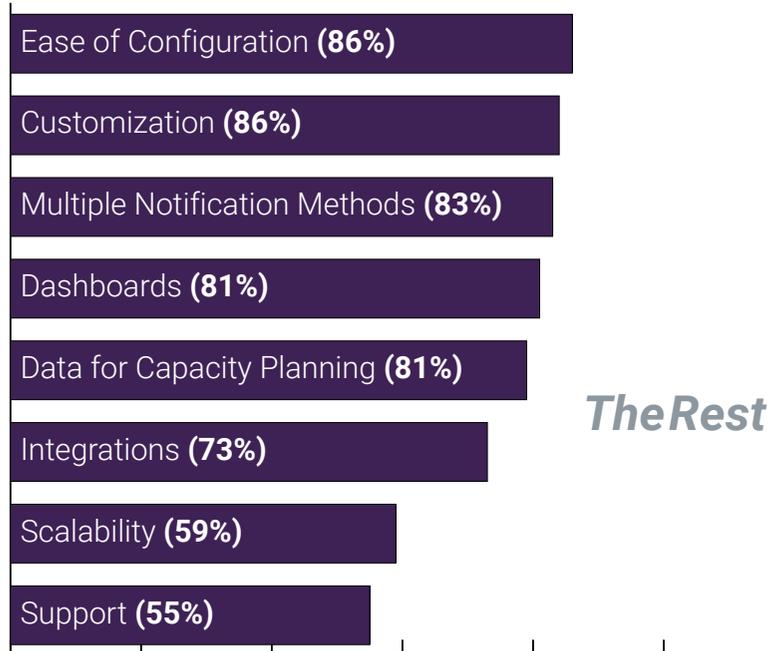
We also asked sysadmins to rank the top capabilities they want from a systems monitoring platform. Though features like scalability, notifications, customization and integrations made the cut, the four features that ranked highest speak to sysadmins' desire to think strategically: fast performance (92 percent), central management (91 percent), security (90 percent) and an intuitive user interface (UI) (88 percent).

These features all suit a strategic IT approach, because they eliminate much of the time-consuming transactional work that traditionally bogs down sysadmins. For example, centralized management within an intuitive UI offers better usability, which enables faster response time, easier configuration and proactive support. Fast performance can also help sysadmins go beyond transactional and reactionary tasks, so they can instead support the business with proactive and strategic IT management.

Interestingly, 25 percent of respondents disagreed with the idea that monitoring software "just needs to work." Instead, these respondents agreed that to help strategic sysadmins respond to the greater needs of the business, monitoring software should offer more than the bare minimum. It should instead empower sysadmins with robust capabilities.

The 4 Most Important Monitoring Features:

- 1. Fast Performance (92%)**
- 2. Central Management (91%)**
- 3. Security (90%)**
- 4. Intuitive User Interface (88%)**



The Verdict: Start Showing Your Strategic Value

So, where do sysadmins go from here?

You know your job is important to the day-to-day functioning of your company. In fact, without someone in IT to fix problems as they occur and to recommend new IT solutions to common business problems, your co-workers wouldn't be able to get much done. On top of that, the organization as a whole would be far less efficient.

How do you become more strategic, increase your value, and change perceptions across the company?

As the survey shows, the answer is already in sight: sysadmins know that they need to stop working in the basement, so to speak. In fact, many are already spending less time configuring software and messing around with source code, and more time helping IT and non-IT colleagues be more productive.

Sysadmins also recognize that technology can take repetitive grunt work off their plate and empower them to focus on the high-value strategic work they prefer. It's just a matter of finding the right tools.

Systems monitoring remains a cornerstone to successful IT administration, and it needs to perform well, be easy to use and offer a central console from which IT pros can manage everything. Strategic sysadmins know that monitoring can make a company more productive and efficient, which in turn can lead to greater financial success. And these sysadmins also happen to be the ones who are perceived to be the most valuable to their company and who earn the most money.

If you can find more time to do this kind of strategic work, you can increase your own value and paycheck. Systems monitoring can help if it eliminates time-consuming transactional tasks and empowers you to support your business.



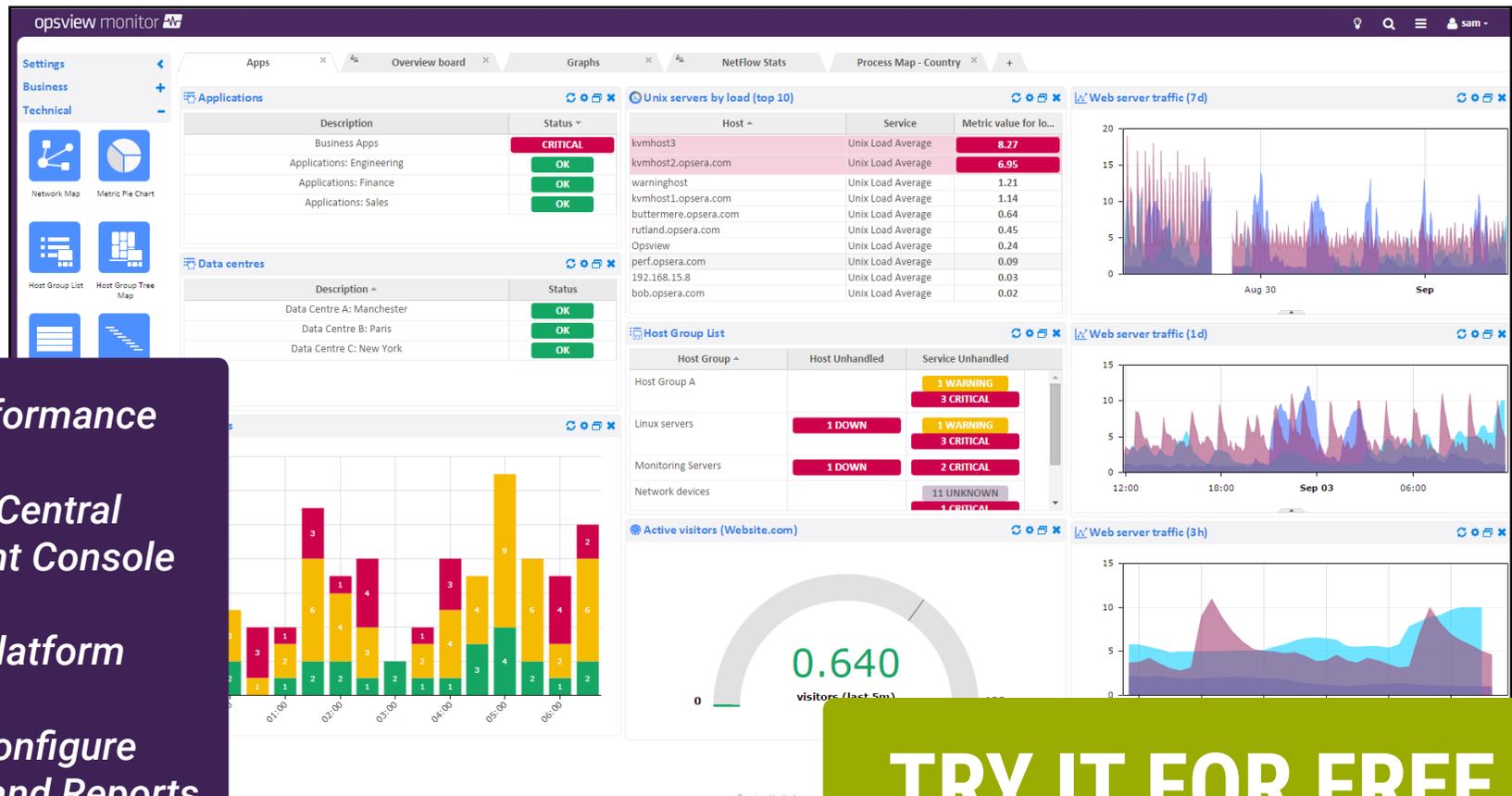
The Next Step

opsview monitor

ENTERPRISE EDITION

To be more strategic, you need the right IT tools.

The latest version of **Opsview Monitor Enterprise Edition** takes transactional work off your plate so you can be strategic, add more value, and earn more.



Faster Performance

Intuitive Central Management Console

Secure Platform

Easy to Configure Dashboards and Reports

TRY IT FOR FREE



We help the world's IT run non-stop.

Opsview makes it easier for sysadmins to do their jobs by offering comprehensive and customizable systems monitoring.

The 2015 Opsview System Administrator Sentiment Survey surveyed 257 respondents who identified themselves as system administrators. The survey was administered by the independent third-party research firm ResearchNow, ran from June 19 to August 4, 2015 and included respondents from North America and Europe. Visit www.opsview.com.