

## REPORT REPRINT

# Bell Techlogix continues to differentiate with BEAM

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The company is redeveloping itself as a software-defined MSP to better support the digital aspirations of its customer base.

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Bell Techlogix is a midsized US managed service provider (MSP) that is ahead of the curve in providing offerings with an innovative business model for the cloud era. Its approach blends traditional service provisioning with IT management as a service, all based on the Bell Techlogix Enterprise Architecture Management (BEAM) platform. It has annual revenue of \$120m and a thousand employees.

The company currently has several innovation initiatives in play as part of a strategy to provide overall digital transformation service delivery from front-to-back office both internally for itself as well as externally for clients. To execute this strategy, all internal IT within Bell Techlogix is now being run as part of its Innovation Office led by new hire Agostino Pintus. This structure makes sense because of the requirement to shift to DevOps and a product lifecycle management approach for BEAM.

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## THE 451 TAKE

Bell Techlogix continues to impress with its commitment to innovate around both its business model and service capabilities by taking advantage of cloud technologies. Having established its BEAM platform as both a managed service and an as-a-service proposition among its US midmarket customer base, it is now re-architecting the platform using Microsoft technologies to create BEAM.NET. This is providing the company with a more scalable platform, which it intends to form the basis of its planned Digital Enterprise Platform to support both its own development as a digital business as well as its customers' transformation projects.

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## CONTEXT

BEAM is a service-delivery management platform made available as a number of functional modules. These span helpdesk operations, knowledge management, network and system management, mobility management, analytics, and reporting. The platform includes automated call management based on VoIP and IP services management, the monitoring and management of incidents using ITIL and ITSM, and IT asset management using a CMDB. Knowledge management and a self-service portal are also provided. The BEAM services run on a private cloud, and while the commercial packaging is new, the company has taken its proven system/service management implementation and made it client facing, providing complete support for the environment, including the management of third-party vendors and the licensing. On top of this, Bell Techlogix can add customized services for each customer.

When BEAM was launched nearly four years ago, the proposition used to be that it was an ITSM automation production engine; now, the positioning is more about offering a platform and strategy for digital transformation to help maintain best practices from core ITSM through to business functions. This is all managed from Bell Techlogix's service catalog from which customers can access processes and third-party tools. BEAM continues to leverage a BMC Remedy and ARS core and runs on a single architecture whether provided as a traditional managed service or as BEAM as a service (BaaS) via software subscriptions.

After a slightly slower start than initially expected, BaaS is now growing strongly on the back of traditional managed service contracts to account for about 25% of overall BEAM revenue. It is being used to extend the BEAM capability to resolver groups or to back office functions. All of Bell Techlogix's major managed service clients are now subscribing to BEAM as well via multi-year recurring revenue deals.

Bell Techlogix continues to provide a professional services wrapper around BaaS so that it is not a black-box approach to a vanilla code set. Rather, Bell Techlogix implements the environment for the customer, adapting it and integrating it with other systems via project services. An array of services come along with the subscription – the customer gets a portal, implementation and support services including license management. In particular, Bell Techlogix is differentiated around its support capability that is provided as part of the subscription to the catalog.

## BEAM CLOUD MANAGER

As hybrid cloud management becomes more important to customers, Bell Techlogix has developed a service, with a platform and application packages, around BEAM based on the BMC Lifecycle Manager product to create BEAM Cloud Manager. This hybrid cloud management service with ITSM standards includes the management of internal client clouds, private and public cloud, and general virtualized infrastructure. Bell Techlogix will assist in the streamlining of the provisioning process to instantiate a system with the right compliance, security model and chargeback mechanisms to better service the business. In this way, Bell Techlogix can define different protocols for different cloud configurations and cloud-enabled business processes, as well as offering chargeback and billing. It can integrate to any cloud back end such as Amazon Web Services or Microsoft Azure, as well as internal private clouds where it has partnerships in place with AT&T and CenturyLink.

As it continues to develop BEAM, Bell Techlogix is building an information management capability around Azure and Dynamics offering change management, optimization and globalization. Company president Anthony D'Ambrosi explains that this is part of what moves the company from making a pure technology operations proposal to more of a business proposition for customers, with BEAM Cloud Manager supporting live deployment of Dynamics in the cloud. From this entry point, end-user computing and service desk are typical follow-on engagements.

Bell Techlogix has been working with a major restaurant chain in the US that has a suite of applications, including customer-facing websites, e-commerce and guest relations apps that are standardized on the Microsoft Azure and Hyper-V solution stack. This restaurant chain was having many issues with both its Azure environment and its corporate VMware infrastructure. It needed to get a handle on the environment and this is what Bell Techlogix has been able to provide by offering application management services across both cloud and virtualized private environments. Bell Techlogix is providing real-time monitoring of mission-critical apps, with BaaS providing the single IT environment of record. BEAM is now being introduced more broadly as the restaurant chain continues to transform its existing IT systems and management processes.

Following this success, Bell Techlogix is developing packages for the retail/restaurant sector that, for example, provide extended support for PoS systems based on partnerships with leading PoS and retail technology vendors. D'Ambrosi, Bell Techlogix president, sees this sector as a good market opportunity because its companies typically have very challenging internal IT environments, combining corporate IT and field (store or restaurant) operations into one comprehensive managed service. Bell Techlogix currently has over 15 retail/restaurant clients and expects this to double by year-end.

## BEAM.NET

Bell Techlogix is working hard to position itself as a digital enterprise delivering all its internal user apps via a single portal, which also offers integration with the Bell Techlogix back office. The initiative began as a rewrite of the Ticket/Incident Management agent application front end, so that core ticketing is available on one screen. This means that there is a shorter training requirement because an agent is never lost among screens and can close tickets very quickly. Building out from this unified automation architecture, this will provide Bell Techlogix with a simpler, more productive system that is defined by profile and by user and is easier to customize, maintain and scale. The result is BEAM.NET, a mix of proprietary (an upgrade of the BMC ARS engine is included) and open source components with the apps all built on Microsoft technology.

Business intelligence is provided today via the company's DataCube, which was launched several years ago. This creates the IT intelligence from the operations side, generating analytics around continual service improvement, problem management and root cause analysis. In this way, Bell Techlogix can provide generic operative KPI information around service improvement and total ticket management to drive optimized operations and enhanced user experiences. In other words, BaaS can offer a living repository of best practices. This is an interesting development for midmarket customers because they typically have not had access to this kind of data before – these pooled metrics and KPIs add real, ongoing value to the BEAM proposition. Using DataCube users can extract data and export into Excel to create pivot tables. This capability is provided from the BEAM service catalog via the Beam BI Manager, which looks across key data points in the enterprise to improve the user experience. Taking these data views, Bell Techlogix can add other data sets to create scorecards for customers. In this way, they can run the P&L of IT using comingled data and business process and can benchmark using anonymized data from Bell Techlogix.

The future roadmap is to use this BEAM.NET architecture to develop a Digital Enterprise Management (DEM) platform using a RESTful API library so that it can provide better multi-channel support integration via mobile software development as well. It expects to deliver a whole suite of apps over an API library for customers as its strategic future direction. This is part of Bell Techlogix's vision to enable its clients in the changing digital business landscape by helping developers use APIs to extend their existing applications and support systems to better service the user community.

## COMPETITION

The MSP space is currently undergoing a lot of disruption, including the potential disintermediation from the customer that cloud delivery threatens, as well as the requirement to develop 'as a service' skills to assist a customer base that requires the MSP to move up the value chain and become more of a business adviser. In the high-end US midmarket, competitors at this level include AT&T, CenturyLink, (both of which are also Bell Techlogix partners) CompuCom, Dimension Data (which recently acquired Ceryx to strengthen its Microsoft Cloud Services), Logicalis and Rackspace.

In terms of the BEAM BI Manager, other competitors would include Dell, which rolled out its IntelliDesk packaged ITSM analytics service at the beginning of the year. This provides infrastructure and cloud computing management for the IT support function, the applications division and level three support engineers. Another competitor would be Unisys, which also provides data product libraries for ITSM and has a cloud management platform, Choreographer, closely aligned with Azure.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### STRENGTHS

Bell Techlogix continues to come to market with a clearly differentiated approach to delivering services as an MSP in the cloud era. It is offering its target market capabilities that they do not currently have easy access to in a way that makes sense to the way they operate. BEAM.NET also offers opportunities for the company to add value via apps and big-data analytics.

### WEAKNESSES

The main challenge Bell Techlogix faces is to not diversify too quickly, taking on too many different risks at once. The real test will be whether the company's existing customer base will move with it as it explores new opportunities with its BEAM.NET investment but the take-up of BaaS suggests they will.

### OPPORTUNITIES

The growth opportunities look good once the company has some anchor client references ready for market consumption for BEAM Cloud Manager. In particular, the BEAM.NET approach opens up the opportunity for Bell Techlogix to develop more segmented app offerings for customers based on the knowledge it is accumulating via DataCube.

### THREATS

Ultimately, the business model that Bell Techlogix is developing will become mainstream for many MSPs, so it needs to stay one step ahead and continue to innovate. In the short term, the main threat will be from buyers seeking to go directly to a subscription model with the technology vendors themselves.