Gartner Peer Insights ‘Lessons Learned’: Implementing Unified Endpoint Management Tools

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Initiatives: Digital Workplace Infrastructure and Operations

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UEM tools are key to addressing mobile and traditional endpoints, maintaining continuity of end-user computing, and delivering seamless IT administration in the era of expanded remote work. I&O leaders can learn from the implementation experience of their peers shared on Gartner Peer Insights.

Overview

Gartner Peer Insights is a free peer review and ratings platform designed for enterprise software and services decision makers. Reviews go through a strict validation and moderation process to ensure they are authentic.

We analyzed 268 Peer Insights reviews to identify lessons learned implementing unified endpoint management (UEM) tools. This report focuses on the responses to the questions: “If you could start over, what would your organization do differently?” and “What one piece of advice would you give other prospective customers?” To browse all reviews, see the full list of Unified Endpoint Management Tools reviews on Peer Insights.

Peer Lessons Learned

This edition of “Lessons Learned” summarizes clients’ firsthand experiences with implementing UEM tools. The peer advice results both from successful implementation projects and learnings based on what went wrong. This peer perspective, along with the individual detailed reviews, is complementary to expert research and provides a holistic view to the implementation process. Reviewers who submitted their lessons learned represent a cross-section of small- to midsize and large organizations. (See Figure 1).
Below are some key lessons learned and most cited recommendations by Peer Insights reviewers to help infrastructure and operations (I&O) leaders in their UEM tool implementation process.

Lesson 1: Engage With IT Support and Other Internal Stakeholders While Planning for the UEM Tool

According to peer members, the first step in UEM tool implementation is to discuss the business benefits of implementing the tool with relevant stakeholders such as IT support and security, and onboard them for the tool's usage. They also advise performing thorough market research and involving the leadership during the planning process.

Further, a peer suggests:

Ensure you have the backing of your upper-level management to go forward. We suffered in our rollout as we didn’t have the support that we did at the beginning. It took us a while to complete the project and people weren’t as excited about it as they once were.

— Application Professional, Retail Sector

Stressing on the importance of planning, another peer says:
We would have taken more time in the planning phase. There were considerations that we were not aware of when we started it, which caused us some rework.

— Business Professional, Education Sector

Peer recommendations include:

- Perform detailed research to better understand the latest UEM technology offerings.
- Document most important requirements, supported devices types and operating systems and use cases, and the intended outcomes of the UEM tool implementation.
- Conduct proper planning per the organizational needs and choose a UEM tool that can help your organization grow.
- Discuss the business benefits of UEM tool implementation with IT support, security, applications, shared services peers, and line of business (LOB) stakeholders to get their buy-in and help for the required funding.

Recommended reading:

Magic Quadrant for Unified Endpoint Management

Midmarket Context: Magic Quadrant for Unified Endpoint Management

Lesson 2: Compare Multiple Vendors Against Your UEM Needs; Test the Selected Tool Thoroughly Against Different Use Cases

Peers recommend I&O leaders to invest time in assessing different UEM vendors based on documented features and functionalities. Peers also emphasize gaining clarity on the number and types of endpoint technologies required to shortlist a tool that best aligns with the organizational requirements. After shortlisting vendors, it is vital for I&O leaders to gain a thorough understanding of the tool’s capabilities and features. As most UEM tools come with free trials, peers recommend I&O leaders to allocate adequate time to test the shortlisted tool in their environment.

A peer states:
Think through what you want to accomplish with your endpoint management platform and then thoroughly compare your options. It’s too easy to just check a box on an RFP based on marketing literature without testing the product in your environment.

— Infrastructure and Operations Professional, Education Sector

Further, a peer adds:

Define the most important use cases for your organization. They should be diverse and challenging. Then invite prospective vendors to demonstrate in a lab environment how they would solve those use cases. Evaluate whether each solution is able to fulfill each case, time to implement/complete, ease of implementation, ease of system administration and so on.

— Infrastructure and Operations Professional, Retail Sector

Test the tool, a peer opines:

Set up at least one test environment before you begin your production and development environments. There are many small items to learn during the setup. You can learn them by rapidly applying them in the production and/or development environments.

— Infrastructure and Operations Professional, Finance Sector

Peer recommendations include:

- Evaluate multiple vendors. Analyze their offerings against your organization’s needs and the number and types of endpoints required to be managed, before choosing a suitable UEM tool.

- Conduct proofs of concept (POCs) with the vendors to test your use cases. Determine how different departments will use the tool to ensure departmentwise requirements are also thoroughly tested.
Consider the future usability and scalability of the shortlisted tool. Check references to ensure a tool that is widely accepted and has proven reliability. Also, analyze the documentation and licensing model thoroughly before making a decision.

Perform multiple test installations before going live to identify potential issues before implementation.

Examine your network design and test all connectivity scenarios. The network configuration is vital to the success of the tool.

Test deployment and management of critical business applications and production devices in your environment.

Recommended reading:

- Critical Capabilities for Unified Endpoint Management Tools
- Solution Comparison for Unified Endpoint Management Systems
- Solution Criteria for Unified Endpoint Management Systems

Lesson 3: Organize Preimplementation Training to Educate Your Internal Team on the UEM Tool’s Capabilities

Once you’ve tested the tool thoroughly, peers propose providing relevant training to familiarize IT admins and end users with the UEM tool’s functionalities before implementing it. This will help IT support and end users build a thorough understanding of the tool and prepare them for any issues that may arise during implementation.

A peer suggests:

Training is a must for UEM tool implementation. Do not try and tackle everything at once. Get the agents installed or devices enrolled first and then roll out the rest of the features like USB blocking, patching, drive mapping and so on. It takes time and training to master the tool.

— Infrastructure and Operations Professional, Service Sector

Another peer opines:
Offer tutorials that make it possible for IT admins to securely and swiftly implement and end users to utilize the tool. For a person having limited experience with the UEM tool, it could be a bit complicated to handle.

— Technical Professional, Manufacturing Sector

Peer recommendations include:

- Train IT admins upfront rather than adopting the learn-as-they-go approach. Organize extensive training covering all aspects of the tool before architecting and deploying it.

- Avail free training offered by the vendor and encourage team members to join and participate in IT admin communities and user groups created by the peers and supported by vendors. These are helpful resources for educating IT admins.

Recommended reading:

Embrace Windows 10 Modern Management to Enable a Highly Distributed Digital Workplace

Lesson 4: Employ Vendor Support for Seamless Implementation

Peers recommend I&O leaders to avail vendor assistance for the initial setup and understanding the tool’s reference architecture. They also suggest using professional services or purchasing enterprise support options to ensure smooth UEM implementation.

A peer highlights the importance of vendor support:

Vendor support helped a lot during the implementation process. In our case, our doubts were clarified naturally and at the right time. As a result, we were able to maximize the tools capabilities without hindrance.

— Technical Professional, Manufacturing Sector

One peer recommends:
Diligently review the implementation partner. Products often receive bad reviews not because of capabilities, but due to poor or underskilled implementation partners.

— Infrastructure and Operations Professional, Service Sector

Another peer states:

Engage with the teams, who regularly implement and support the UEM tool. You’ll be working with them to implement, maintain and support the tool and ensure return on your investment.

— Infrastructure and Operations Professional, Healthcare Sector

Peer recommendations include:

■ Leverage the vendor’s expertise during the initial deployment and follow their best practices and reference architecture to ensure hassle-free deployment. Do not try to learn on the fly or depend on documentation.

■ Work with the vendor to identify best practices for network connectivity, especially for smartphones and devices used by remote employees that may use VPN; gain knowledge on available alternative options to manage, update and patch these devices.

Methodology

Of the Peer Insights survey data considered for this market, only those responses meeting the following criteria were included in this synthesis:

■ Reviews less than 12 months old.

■ Responses that pertain to the project experience and are not tied to the capabilities of a vendor.

■ Reviews were clustered into the top-four most-referenced categories (lessons learned) and then listed in order of relevant phases in the project life cycle.
The results of this synthesis are representative of the respondent base and not necessarily the market as a whole.

“The data used in this report is drawn from reviews on Peer Insights, a crowdsourced enterprise review platform that relies on dynamic data. Key to maintaining the integrity of the site is our ongoing moderation and validation of those reviews. Reviews are examined before publishing to the site and periodically, post-publishing. Due to the dynamic nature of the data, the external Peer Insights site will always have the most updated view of the data in this report.”

Document Revision History

Gartner Peer Insights ‘Lessons Learned’: Implementing Unified Endpoint Management Tools - 12 May 2020

Peer Lessons Learned: Implementing Unified Endpoint Management Tools - 10 April 2019

Recommended by the Author

Magic Quadrant for Unified Endpoint Management
Critical Capabilities for Unified Endpoint Management Tools
Essential Considerations When Choosing Separate PC and Mobile Management Tools
Prepare for Unified Endpoint Management to Displace MDM and CMT
Solution Comparison for Unified Endpoint Management (UEM) Systems
Adopt Continuous Endpoint Engineering and Modern Management to Ensure Digital Workplace Success

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