ARE YOU READY FOR AIOPS?
A GUIDE TO IT OPERATIONS SELF ASSESSMENT

This self-assessment guide is designed to help you with the key initial stage of your buying process: *Problem Identification and Solution Justification*. One of the biggest mistakes IT solution champions and sponsors make is not properly identifying the problem they are trying to solve, determining if the problem is worth solving, and understanding if the organization is positioned to solve it.

This guide provides a simple framework for making these assessments. The framework consists of four components:

1. **Problem Identification.** Problem identification is about having clarity regarding what problem you are solving and its underlying cause.

2. **Strategy Alignment.** This is the exercise of connecting problem symptoms and root causes with key business priorities, initiatives, or metrics.

3. **Business Case Viability.** This focuses simply on determining whether a business case can be made (i.e. can the business value be quantified?). This is not the exercise of making the business case itself.

4. **Ability to Execute.** This refers to the probability that an initiative will succeed, based on factors like technology-adoption culture at the executive and end-user level, commitment and skillset of initiative champions, and technical concerns.

This guide assumes that you are familiar with AIOps in general and more specifically with (a) various pain points that may be negatively impacting IT operations and (b) some approaches or best practices that can be deployed to address these challenges using AIOps. These may include managing alert fatigue, making sense of your data, eliminating trial & error remediation, and managing the growing cost of support and operations.

Now you may be ready to act, but you don't want to invest too much time and effort in the process without getting a good early read on the likelihood of achieving success. Your goal at the end of this self-assessment is to be ready to move with confidence to the next step in your buying process: Making the Business Case for AIOps.

Framework for Assessing AIOps Readiness

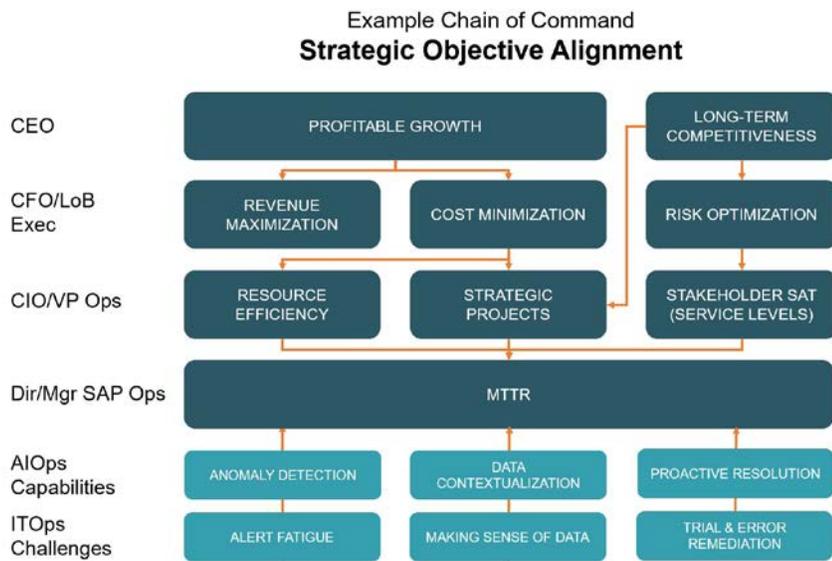| PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION	STRATEGY ALIGNMENT
BUSINESS CASE VIABILITY	ABILITY TO EXECUTE

FogLogic

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

How often does someone in a spirited meeting regarding a business or IT challenge say "*Wait a minute, what problem are we trying to solve?*" Often, in depth discussions about solutions become disconnected with problems. This is a major reason why technology initiatives often get shot down during executive review. To demonstrate to yourself and potential stakeholders that you have clarity regarding what problems an AIOps initiative will address, you should be able to answer *Yes* to the following questions.

Problem Identification Assessment	Yes	No
1 Is there a key metric or KPI (e.g. MTTR, service level, cost to achieve service level) that AIOps can directly impact positively?		
2 Is there a current or anticipated event (e.g. landscape expansion, skills/resource shortage, new initiatives like Cloud and HANA migrations) that could present a challenge to consistently achieving key metric or KPI targets?		
3 Do you have clarity on the key risks and root causes of risks to achieving key metrics or KPIs (e.g. inability to manage alerts, make sense of data, or efficiently resolve problems)?		
4 Are you confident that your current technology or process can not be easily leveraged to achieve key metrics or KPI targets?		
5 Is there a clear line of sight between identified IT Operations problems and their root causes and AIOps capabilities and benefits? **See Appendix** for a more detailed problem/root cause mapping template.		

STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

Without a clear line of sight between technology solution investments and chain-of-command objectives and priorities, it is unlikely that your initiative will gain executive traction. Here is a sample graphic showing the link between typical chain-of-command objectives, a key IT Operations management key performance indicator (KPI), and AIOps solution capabilities. It is important to tightly link AIOps with key CIO/VP of Operations priorities like resource utilization efficiency, service-level improvements or strategic projects like Cloud and HANA migrations or M&A integrations.

Example Chain of Command
Strategic Objective Alignment

CEO	PROFITABLE GROWTH		LONG-TERM COMPETITIVENESS
CFO/LoB Exec	REVENUE MAXIMIZATION	COST MINIMIZATION	RISK OPTIMIZATION
CIO/VP Ops	RESOURCE EFFICIENCY	STRATEGIC PROJECTS	STAKEHOLDER SAT (SERVICE LEVELS)
Dir/Mgr SAP Ops	MTTR		
AIOps Capabilities	ANOMALY DETECTION	DATA CONTEXTUALIZATION	PROACTIVE RESOLUTION
ITOps Challenges	ALERT FATIGUE	MAKING SENSE OF DATA	TRIAL & ERROR REMEDIATION

Strategy Alignment Assessment	Yes	No
1 Have you clearly identified IT Operations processes challenges, pain points or use cases that map to AIOps solution capabilities?		
2 Can you directly link IT Operations process challenges to IT Operations metric performance or KPI outcomes like MTTR?		
3 Is there a line of sight between improved IT Operations metric performance and key executive-level priorities, strategic objectives or key business initiatives?		

BUSINESS CASE VIABILITY

The next question you need to answer is whether a reasonable business case can be made. Specifically, is business value quantifiable? Remember, at this point in your buying journey, you just need to know that making a business case will be relatively straightforward; not what the results of that business case will be (e.g. ROI estimate).

In the case of AIOps, this translates into validating that process improvements can be measured and quantified into financial benefits. Fortunately, there are at least three major process areas where this can be reliably estimated:

- Cost savings from automation
- Downtime reduction (business loss avoidance)
- MTTR reduction savings

Cost savings from automation consist of effort saved due to automatic ticket creation, notification of actionable alerts, and reduction in the number of false alerts. Downtime reduction savings can be derived from estimates of average duration per occurrence, number of incidents per year, yearly downtime cost and percentage reduction in outages. MTTR reduction savings can be estimated directly.

! NOTE

Some technology initiatives are justified based on soft/qualitative benefits alone. The assumption here, however, is that executive approval for a transformative program like AIOps will require a solid financial justification.

Business Case Viability Assessment	Yes	No
1 Have you defined what success looks like and how to measure it (e.g. by strategically aligning and rolling up measurable benefits such as cost savings, downtime reduction, MTTR savings, etc.)?		
2 Can you reliably baseline current process performance and metrics such as team utilization and effort taken to complete specific tasks (e.g. average time to isolate a problem per person)?		
3 Can you confidently project process performance and metric improvement (e.g. estimate effort saved due to automation and downtime reduction based on a Proof of Concept or other evidence-based approaches)?		

FogLogic

ABILITY TO EXECUTE

Even if an IT problem is well understood, its solution is strategically aligned, and a business case can be made, your organization still may not be able to move forward. For example, if your organization is typically a technology laggard, AIOps may not be right for you.

The following questions can help you assess your ability to execute an advanced technology initiative.

Ability to Execute Assessment	Yes	No
1 Is your corporate and IT culture supportive of innovative initiatives that leverage advanced or transformative technologies (i.e. your organization is viewed as a technology visionary or early adopter)?		
2 Do you have strong IT champions and sponsors who can inspire confidence, secure executive commitment, and navigate roadblocks and stakeholder concerns with an AIOps initiative?		
3 Does your IT Operations user community (admins, analysts) have the skillset and flexibility to adapt to and accept process changes (i.e. have change management exercises been successful)?		
4 Do you have any legacy technical considerations that can create major hurdles in migrating to a new process (e.g. ability to extract data from your current IT tool set)?		
5 Are there any potential organizational or communications barriers or challenges (e.g. determining data ownership or system of record; the distribution of IT Operations responsibility and budget)?		
6 Could your outsourcing partners block your AIOps initiative (e.g. contracts that make you dependent on their resources or that give them control over the choice of process improvement technologies)?		

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

So, are you ready for AIOps? You are if you can clearly define what problems you are solving (i.e. pain point and process challenges addressed), whether the problems are worth solving, and whether your organization is positioned to solve them.

> Your **Problem Identification** assessment ensures you have clearly articulated the problems and linked them to AIOps solution capabilities.

> Your **Strategy Alignment** exercise gives you an early indicator of whether the problem is worth solving. A full-blown business case and financial/ROI analysis – the subject of the next phase of your buying journey – will be required to complete this analysis.

> Confirmation that a **Business Case** can be made and that there are no blockers to your **Ability to Execute** indicate that key prerequisites for a successful buying and implementation process are in place.

If you have answered most assessment questions positively, you are ready to move on to the next phase of your journey:

Making the Business Case for AIOps. >

CONTACT
info@foglogic.com
FOR HELP
GETTING STARTED

If not, address any gaps this assessment has exposed or consider delaying or abandoning this initiative until you have more confidence in the AIOps fit and your organizational readiness.

APPENDIX: IT OPERATIONS PROBLEM AND CAUSAL ANALYSIS

Here are the symptoms and causes of the key pain points associated with key IT Operations use cases. Use this as a qualitative diagnostic to test your understanding of the problem you are solving and its root cause.

Assessment Questions	
Problem Symptoms	**Cause**
System Monitoring and Alert Management	
☐ Too many meaningless alerts (false alarms)	☐ Static thresholds (i.e. not dynamic based on known expected fluctuations in performance behavior)
☐ Data is not centralized and partial (i.e. not full stack)	☐ Multiple heterogenous tools
☐ Problems not known until reported by users	☐ Lack of efficient anomaly scoring, prioritization, triage process results in consequential alerts being ignored
☐ Frequent manual adjustments of alert thresholds	☐ No ability of system to learn and adjust notification policy automatically
Data Contextualization	
☐ Inconsistent process for escalating alerts for further investigation	☐ No formal and continuously learning policy in place and enforced systematically
☐ Isolating root cause of an incident is time-consuming and more difficult than finding the solution.	☐ Manual process is insufficient to make sense of volume, variety and frequency of data inputs
☐ Can't answer questions like *when this happened what else happened?*	☐ Inability to make associations between sources and types of data due to a lack of data centralization and consolidation
☐ Difficulty in understanding where to start and who to involve	☐ Dependency on tribal knowledge and no process for institutionalizing knowledge, best practices and lessons learned.
☐ Inability access relevant historical system behavior	☐ General data integration and contextualization issues.
☐ Incident investigations outcomes don't reliably point to a manageable set of potential remediations	☐ No automated and proactive way to link incidents to a short list of remediations leveraging system knowledge bases
Incident Remediation	
☐ Inconsistencies in remediation workflow (driven by individuals working on a case by case basis)	☐ Lack of automation in triggering and tracking workflows
☐ Repeat issues and trial and error approach to incident remediation	☐ No formal process for capturing and institutionalizing learning
☐ Siloed troubleshooting	☐ No standardized cross-department team collaboration and communication process and tool.