

Interview with Michael Beare

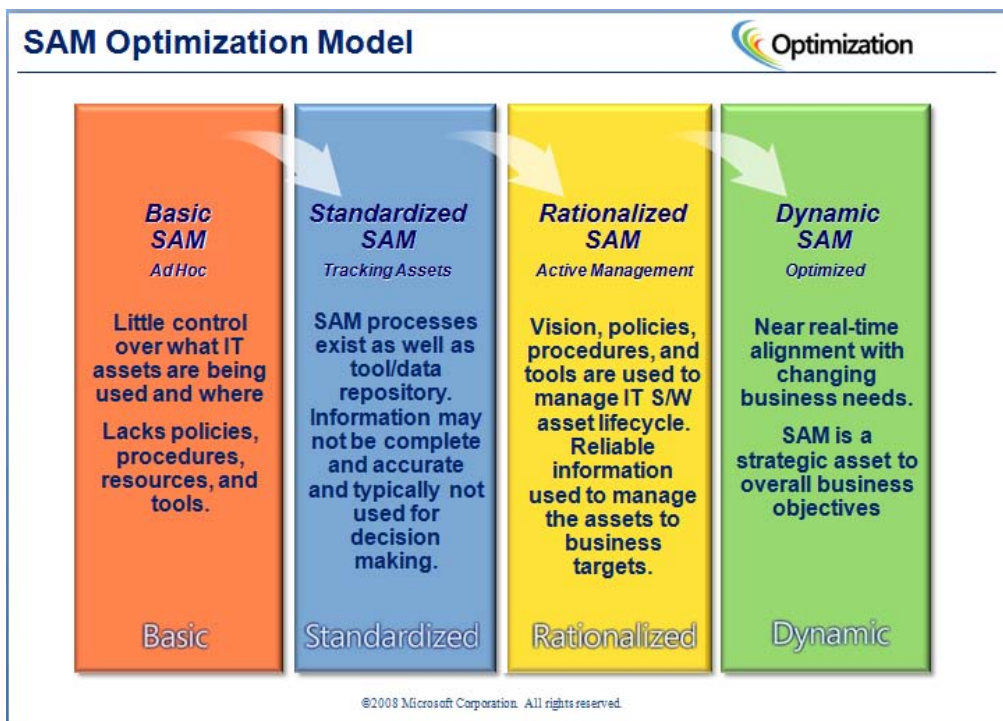
Microsoft's Michael Beare: A Believer in Software Asset Management

IAITAM writer Jenny Schuchert interviewed Michael Beare in preparation for the IAITAM 2009 Annual Conference, where Mr. Beare will be one of the keynote speakers. The article below is based on that interview.

Michael Beare is an advocate for Software Asset Management and feels strongly that a majority of under-licensed software use in corporate settings is unintentional. With a long career in software licensing and as current Director of Worldwide Software Asset Management (SAM) for Microsoft Corporation, he has the experience and the support base to help organizations implement SAM processes so they can gain better control and optimize their existing IT infrastructure. Working with Microsoft employees and SAM partners across the globe, Beare spearheads SAM advocacy through collaborative and proactive license reviews, free access to a Microsoft inventory analysis tool, a comprehensive SAM optimization kit with step by step instructions and education resources for partners and clients. "My goal is to be supportive and collaborative with our

clients so that each organization builds an effective SAM program," explained Beare. "SAM is about educating and empowering customers to be able to improve their business operations and ROI on technology. By offering educational materials such as evaluation tools, templates and examples, adoption of SAM becomes easier to understand and to implement in the client's environment."

With world-wide responsibilities, Beare has seen every type of SAM program, from chaotic, reactive software management to a strategic relationship between the client and Microsoft. He has been quoted as saying that only 10% of world-wide corporate clients have truly effective SAM programs. Clients struggle with baseline issues such as multiple licensing program choices, high rates of pirated software, lack of infrastructure and standards, or a compliance program that is limited to occasional tallies as part of audit preparations. During the evolution of the SAM optimization process, Beare and his team developed a maturity model to help organizations assess their SAM program and plan staged improvements.



This model as well as the SAM Optimization kit fits in well with industry best practices for IT asset management.

“The infrastructure and optimization model that we offer is directly aligned and compatible with ISO 19770-1 and helps to identify the smaller steps that are easier for struggling organizations to apply. Like IAITAM, our focus is on processes for accurate software management in addition to the policies that enable effective and sustainable SAM programs.”

License Reviews

Applicable Microsoft client organizations can take part in a SAM license review to assure compliance in a collaborative, educational engagement. In contrast to an audit, the license review service is a consultative review exercise and is a higher level analysis utilizing the client’s own reports and records in many cases. The license reviewer can run an inventory discovery if the client does not have one of their own. The end result of the exercise is an Effective License Position document, or ELP.

“One difference between a contractual audit and a license review is that a license review settles any under-licensing through the terms and conditions of the client’s existing contract with Microsoft,” Beare explained. “In contrast, an audit typically resolves under-licensing with list price purchases. There can also be a fee for the audit performance, when the findings exceed pre-defined amounts. The intent of the license review is to jump-start the client’s ongoing management of the licenses with an effective SAM program.”

In most cases, the license review is a free service, although there are cases where the client is more comfortable bringing in a SAM partner themselves to work confidentially and take a direct role in building the client’s SAM program. “We are highly supportive of this indirect approach” says Beare. Microsoft trains and certifies a large team of partners in the assessments, methodology and tools so that regional resources are available worldwide.

Many client organizations have used the license review service as a status check to their program, or to assist their struggling SAM programs. Depending on the situation, complexity and size of company, reviews can take from a few days to several months.

SAM Optimization Kit

As an added incentive for clients to take advantage of SAM, Microsoft launched a kit in 2008 that describes the benefits, the initial steps to managing software, and how to build a plan for a more comprehensive program. Available for download at www.microsoft.com/sam, the kit helps Software Asset Managers gain the buy-in of management as well as procurement, legal and IT.

The kit is directed at the entry-level person or entry-level organization and begins by laying out a basic Getting Started section with the following steps:

1. Perform a Software Inventory

Begin by taking a software inventory survey of all installed software on your organization's computers, workstations, servers, and other devices, and collect the information in a report.

2. Match Software with Licenses
Match your software license documentation to your software. See if you are over-licensed or under-licensed from your report.
3. Review Policies and Procedures
Review and/or write policies and procedures that employees can use to ensure proper software asset management.
4. Develop a SAM Plan
Stay the course and establish an ongoing plan, construct a library for your software media, and keep your organization's data up-to-date.

The kit offers examples and templates. For electronic inventory, the kit provides a reference list by country of commercially available products and also offers a free Microsoft Software Analyzer (MSIA) for small organizations. MSIA reports are confidential to the client and only report on Microsoft software.

The kit is a starting place or educational tool, outlining the benefits of control, increased efficiency and reduced risk. The SAM plan acknowledges the need to push beyond the initial effort in order to achieve ongoing results and to optimize SAM.

“Optimization is the goal clients strive for as they mature their SAM programs and the only way to address the CEO’s real question,” Beare stated. “CEOs want to know what licensed software is being used. Usage evaluations are another source of tangible benefits and require a more mature SAM program.”

Advocacy within Microsoft

Applying what he has learned from customers is a natural extension of Michael Beare’s SAM advocacy role. As an example, Beare is currently chairing an internal team that is studying the difficulties clients experience tracking CALs in use. He is also involved in clarifying the impact of virtualization on software asset management and licensing. “Each client must read their terms and conditions to confirm how a particular product is licensed, but in general, we are trying to eliminate roadblocks to successful SAM in a virtualized world. For instance, we’re going to need a disciplined, ‘uber’ level of tracking to handle virtualization.”

One other example of the work that he has led for improving SAM is the availability to customers of the Microsoft License Statement (or MLS). This is like a bank statement, available securely online, which provides customers with a comprehensive report of all the current versions of Microsoft products which they are entitled to deploy. Reviewing these statements on a quarterly or annual basis can provide valuable insights about the corporation software assets and investments and avoid the purchasing of unnecessary duplicates.



When concerns about the existence of software “kill switches” come up, Beare reminds us that Microsoft uses a trust model for volume licensing and that there currently is no standard technology answer to license enforcement. “We focus heavily on ensuring that customers enjoy the benefits of our software products when licensed properly and don’t experience deployment challenges due to technology barriers”.

“However, trust means that we may have a notification switch built into some products to inform clients if their software copy might be counterfeit. Microsoft’s overall approach to unlicensed use is covered by an umbrella initiative known as the Genuine Software Initiative (or GSI) which uses the 3 strategies of Engineering, making software harder to pirate, Education, informing customers and partners about the risks of piracy, and enforcement, which is done mainly through supporting local law enforcement authorities.”

“As part of our education strategy, Microsoft also supports the efforts of organizations such as IAITAM to enhance the skills and capabilities of IT Asset Managers worldwide. We are delighted to have joined IAITAM recently as a formal member. Our customers ask us for help with resources and training in dealing with their license management and the training resources available from IAITAM are some of the best in the industry.”

“As the investments that organizations make in their software assets grow year after year, surpassing the hardware

components in some cases, it is essential that proper administration policies, processes, tools and people are in place. Also, we find that optimizing the level of performance of a management practice leads to direct benefits, such as cost reductions, proper risk management and improved IT performance overall.”

As a representative of a major (or number one) vendor for many organizations, Michael Beare’s advocacy of SAM is an important influence that benefits the Software Asset Manager through increased awareness of the benefits of going beyond license reconciliation to a full-fledged SAM program. His belief that most compliance issues are unintentional helps to create a cooperative environment that is good for the client, as well as for Microsoft.

Jenny Schuchert
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control. optimize. grow.

Download your free SAM Optimization Kit today

The Software Asset Management Optimization Kit is a comprehensive collection of information and resources that detail the purpose and benefits of software asset management, and describe how to implement a SAM practice in any organization. It includes downloadable tools that can be used “as is” or customized to suit the requirements of any organization.

What’s in the SAM Optimization Kit?

This easy-to-navigate resource takes you through the implementation process sequentially from start to finish.

WHAT IS SAM provides an overview of SAM concepts and benefits, and contains information about industry standards, how SAM works across departments or divisions, the financial benefits (ROI) of implementing SAM.

GETTING STARTED helps you choose whether your organization needs basic or advanced SAM, describes implementation tools, and outlines the basic SAM steps. It will also help you decide whether to complete the process using in-house personnel or through an experienced partner.

IMPLEMENTING SAM guides you through each of the four steps in the SAM implementation process, including how to perform a software inventory, match existing software with licenses, review internal policies and procedures, and develop the organization’s own ongoing SAM plan.

RESOURCES include everything necessary to understand, create, and implement a successful SAM practice across an organization. The kit contains downloadable tools, reports, and templates that can easily be customized to suit any business environment, as well as access to more detailed information.

This extensive resource collection provides step-by-step guidance to make SAM implementation as smooth and successful as possible. Visit www.microsoft.com/sam to download your free kit today.

