



## CASE STUDY

# Lennox International Brings its CMDB in Line with its Business Strategy

## What Data Accuracy Means for Lennox International

“Data accuracy is very important because we’re trying to pull all of our processes using the CMDB. If the CMDB isn’t accurate, all of this work we’re putting into the other processes isn’t going to be worth our time.”

– Carolyn Hollingsworth, Senior Manager of Service Delivery

Since 1895, Lennox International has led the climate control industry by recognizing market changes and responding quickly. Whether it’s energy efficiency, alternative energy, or smart technology, the company prides itself on anticipating customer concerns and staying ahead of the curve.

But over time, even the most agile and innovative business can become stuck operationally because of its sheer size and the magnitude of the opportunities it is racing to meet. Up until recently, the Lennox information technology group faced major challenges because they didn’t have a true picture of all the hardware they needed to manage, which was spread out over hundreds of sites all over the world. The lack of accurate configuration management database (CMDB) data made it difficult just to maintain an operational status quo, and extremely challenging to deliver agile systems that could respond quickly to a dynamic market.

## CMDB Challenges: A Fact of Life for Lennox IT

The problems Lennox IT encountered are not unusual for an organization of its size. The company had deployed the ServiceNow CMDB, and was using its Discovery tool to identify configuration items (CIs). But Lennox remained plagued with data accuracy issues. While Discovery populated the CMDB with plenty of data, it offered team members no ability to reconcile conflicting and duplicate CIs, or to compare sources. As a result, Lennox faced challenges like these:

- 1. Siloed IT processes** Because their CMDB couldn’t be trusted, Lennox IT and operations personnel didn’t use it. Instead, they guarded their own data carefully, keeping spreadsheets containing the information they needed and trusted to do their particular job, and not sharing them for fear of that data becoming corrupted or changed. That lack of trust and collaboration had repercussions for team morale and productivity, as well.
- 2. Slow, labor-intensive incident resolution** When operational problems or questions arose, service personnel had no way to quickly pinpoint the source. Instead, they spent countless hours digging through data to troubleshoot issues. Often, those issues resulted in system down time and lost opportunities.
- 3. Security concerns** With no trust between various IT departments, the security team tended to guard passwords carefully – to the point of effectively denying Discovery access to servers, switches, routers, and other hardware. Ironically, this meant that machines were sometimes overlooked, going without adequate security software or updates, and opening up profound network weaknesses.
- 4. Unverifiable costs** Lennox leases much of its hardware from third-party providers. Without an accurate CMDB, cost center managers frequently received faulty reports. It wasn’t uncommon for a manager with five people on his staff to come to Hollingsworth asking why he was being billed for 20 laptops.

Worse still, the IT purchasing group had no way to validate the invoices they received from providers. The company was left to depend entirely on the honesty and accuracy of its leasing agencies.

### THE CHALLENGE 30,000 fields of missing or incorrect data out of 17,000 CMDB records

- A CMDB that no one used or trusted
- Siloed IT departments that didn’t share information
- Slow, labor-intensive incident resolution
- Inability to verify security updates and backup
- Inability to verify third-party invoices
- Inadequate hardware attribute information

### THE SOLUTION Blazent’s CMDB Accuracy Solution for ServiceNow

- Build CMDB confidence and unify IT departments
- Establish a CMDB that accurately reflects the current hardware environment
- Automatically populate the CMDB with the most recent CIs
- Reconcile data from multiple data sources to keep the CMDB valid and accurate
- Offer automated reports and verification mechanisms
- Fully populate missing attributes

### THE RESULTS 95% CMDB accuracy

- A more unified, agile IT
- Shorter incident resolution cycles
- Enhanced security
- Reduced operational costs
- Deep insight into hardware assets

**5. Inadequate attribute information** While Discovery populated the CMDB with an abundance of information, critical data points, such as machine location, memory, and OS version, were missing. “Location is one of the more important attributes,” says Quyen Tran, Lennox lead developer. It’s hard to manage a piece of hardware if you have no idea where it is, who is using it, or what you might be able to install on it.

## Hope for Data Accuracy

In 2013, Tran and Carolyn Hollingsworth, senior manager of service delivery at Lennox, attended ServiceNow’s Knowledge13 conference in Las Vegas. Tran noticed the Blazent display booth right away, proclaiming as it did, in big letters, “DATA ACCURACY.”

“That got my attention,” Tran says. “I asked them, ‘How are you going to help me make my data accurate?’”

The resulting conversation convinced the two to schedule a proof of concept (POC) with Blazent, to give their CMDB Data Accuracy Solution for ServiceNow a trial run. When the Blazent results confirmed 30,000 fields of missing or incorrect data out of about 17,000 records, they knew they were on the right track.

The Blazent POC produced straightforward data that compared all the sources coming through the system, reconciling duplicate information, initiating data fixes, and populating the CMDB with information that could be trusted. Hollingsworth and Tran were ecstatic, and immediately made the case for implementing the Blazent CMDB Data Accuracy solution throughout their sites in North America – for starters.

“We walked into our director’s office with a stack of useless pre-Blazent data and put it on his desk,” says Tran, “and then showed him the Blazent report. ‘Which do you want,’ we asked – ‘this, or this?’” Needless to say, he signed off on the Blazent solution.

## The Blazent Solution Goes Live

Implementing Blazent CMDB Data Accuracy throughout Lennox North America was the first step. The hardest part was lining up the inputs – all the information sources Lennox needed to gather to populate the CMDB accurately. It took time, but with the help and advice of the Blazent team, Hollingsworth and Tran managed to convince each IT department to share the data they’d been holding onto, for the good of the company.

Eventually the evidence won out. People began to recognize the benefits to themselves and their teams of having a unified, accurate CMDB. To date, the team has incorporated eight data inputs, including LanDesk, McAfee, B Manager, and Networker.

## The results, for Lennox, are far reaching:

- 1. A more unified, agile company** When people talk about technology bringing people together, they don’t usually mean anything as obscure as a CMDB. But for the Lennox IT and operations teams, the ability to trust CMDB data has transformed their ability to work together, solve problems, and respond to market fluctuations.
- 2. Shorter incident resolution cycles** Today, Tran gets fewer requests for help resolving data issues and conflicts because members of the various groups can go to the CMDB on their own and find what they need. Network outages get resolved faster because, rather than everyone retreating to their own “window on the world” to try to figure out the problem, all those manual lists have been replaced by up-to-date, accurate CMDB data.
- 3. Enhanced security** Last year, after the Lennox security team deployed new anti-virus software, Hollingsworth ran a CMDB report to verify the team’s assertion that every device on their list had the new software. Her report showed that up to 15 devices had been overlooked, and after double-checking their work, the security team found she was right – they had missed a few machines.

“Now,” Hollingsworth says, “they ask for the reports.” The CMDB provides an important verification mechanism, sending automated reports that give security personnel insight into the machines they are responsible for, including whether or not they are backing up data on a regular basis.

“People understand now what a CMDB can do for a company. It helps everybody do their jobs. Now, instead of manually keeping their little lists, they can go into the system and see the information they’re looking for.”

- Carolyn Hollingsworth

**4. Reduced operational costs** Today, when a third-party provider bills Lennox for hardware, the purchasing group goes to the CMDB to verify the accuracy of each invoice and to charge the correct cost center for the equipment.

The money saved as a result this new step in the process is only the beginning. Lennox leasing managers have better relationships with their providers because they're built on mutual trust and respect. Cost center managers, in turn, have increased insight into budgeting factors and aren't forced to question every chargeback invoice they receive.

**5. Deep insight into every asset** The Blazent solution does more than just collect information fed into it – it actually helps teams fill in the missing information they need to do their jobs. For example, the Blazent tool uses IP addresses to identify the location where an asset sits physically. That insight helps the purchasing group keep up with machines that move from location to location, to decide what lease schedule it's on and which business group should be charged for it.

## Quantifying the Results

Trustworthy CMDB data is at the heart of any large IT organization, with across-the-board effects and an ability to transform entire companies from the inside out. The Lennox team couldn't be happier with the results of the Blazent project, estimating that their North America hardware data has gone from basically unusable to a projected 95% accuracy, once they complete receiving processes on the Lennox side.

That accuracy wouldn't have been possible without the Blazent solution, in Hollingsworth's estimation. "To do what Blazent is doing, I'd have to hire a person full-time just staring at a screen, trying to keep the data accurate," she says, "and even then, I'm not sure it would be worth it. You almost have to automate, if you want good data."

The next step is to roll the Blazent solution out to Lennox IT processing points in Europe, Brazil, and Australia. For now, the team is thrilled to be well on their way to meeting their goal: One place where Lennox team members can go to see everything they need to see about any device on the network – and an IT department that stands ready to embrace the next breakthrough in climate control technology.

"To do what Blazent is doing, I'd have to hire a person full-time just staring at a screen, trying to keep the data accurate. And even then, I'm not sure it would be worth it. You almost have to automate, if you want good data."

- Carolyn Hollingsworth



Blazent provides the world's most widely-used IT Data Accuracy Engine. For over a decade, service-oriented IT organizations around the world have relied on Blazent to automate their data verification processes and guarantee their IT Data is as current, complete & correct as possible. As the gold standard for Accurate IT Data, Blazent empowers IT. Blazent is headquartered in Silicon Valley, Calif., and has an office in Detroit, Michigan. For more information, visit [www.Blazent.com](http://www.Blazent.com) or follow us on Twitter @Blazent.



855.282.8571

[www.blazent.com](http://www.blazent.com)