

The HCLTech Trends and Insights podcast

Nick Ismail

Hello everyone and welcome to the HCLTech Trends and Insights podcast. Today, I'm joined by Kandasamy Ramanujan, Senior Vice President of Digital Business at HCLTech. Ahead of the rollout of HCLTech's new Application Management Services proposition, we'll be discussing the impact of GenAI and Agentic AI on application management. Before we get into the questions, Jam, please, can you introduce yourself and your role to our audience?

Kandasamy Ramanujan

Yeah, thank you, Nicholas, great to be with you today. So my name is Ramanujan and I've been with HCLTech for the last 20 plus years now and I lead the proposition for application management globally. So this involves defining what we take to the market in terms of application management. And I also lead a set of architects who work with large clients in defining the application management solution that we take

Nick Ismail

That's great. Well, you're in a good position to talk about this topic. Let's dive into the questions to start. Firstly, why does application management need to change? What factors are driving this change in application management?

Kandasamy Ramanujan

Yes, so Nicholas, the rate of change of technology has picked up really, really well in the last few years. And it all started with GenAI, a couple of years ago when OpenAI came out to ChatGPT and then now it is Agentic AI. So the pace at which GenAI and Agentic AI are getting adopted is also increasing and there is an expectation from the customers that we are able to bring that into their environments so that the benefits from this can be harvested really quickly. So this calls for a rethink on the operating model to maximize the benefits that are getting delivered. And what we have found out in our latest report on the blueprint to the operating model is that organizations which are spending on AI or 4x more likely to maximize their ROI if they are operating on the product-aligned operating model rather than the traditional operating model. So that's something which we are seeing from based on what we found from interacting with various customers, right? And in order to so, most of our customers are asking, how can we get the benefits in terms of improving the services that are being delivered, improving the experience that they deliver to their customers and while keeping the costs low right. So that's that has been the reason why it is important for us to rethink how application management as a service is being delivered.

Nick Ismail

And you mentioned experience there. What role does total experience play in application management and how can GenAI accelerate its integration?

Kandasamy Ramanujan

Yeah, see, by total experience, what we mean is the experience that is delivered to the final the end customer, right? The customers customer, the business leaders and the business users within our customers organization and IT IT users and the IT organization within the customer, these are the three categories of the customers that we see and we believe that application management is well positioned to improve the experience that is delivered, because traditionally, the application management teams have access to everything that happens around the applications, the incidents and requests that are happening around the underlying platforms and infrastructure, right? So traditionally, the application management teams have been looking at it as how do we identify technical issues at the root and fix it right now, imagine if you are able to look at it from an experience less lens. So if this entire application management team is equipped with the with information about the personas in the that are there, related to the various the business, related to the organization and the journeys, the key journeys of this personas and how these personas and journeys are connected to the application, right? If all this information is made available to them and when all of this is used, while observing what is going on in the application management space, these teams are able to identify the breaks that are there in the experience that is being delivered to the various stakeholders. Right. And as application management, if these, if these experience related issues are identified by the team, they get the ability to fix it, address it in a variety of ways, right, smaller issues can be, can be fixed as part of the overall backlogs. And anything that really needs a major change can go into the change backlog and anything that the needs a transformative change can be taken to the various stakeholders and implemented over a period of time. So that is something which we think that that's that's an idea, which we see that many of the customers are are finding that it resonates with what they are thinking and their approach in bringing this embedded into the application management practice helps many of the customers get started on what they are already considering to be taking to their organizations.

Nick Ismail

And moving on from that hurdle organizations are facing is scaling their GenAI solutions across the organization. So how can enterprises move from GenAI pilot to production in application management, including the integration of things like ITSM and AIOPS?

Kandasamy Ramanujan

So the way we look at it is through the end to end value stream of application management, right? So it starts from before ticket or a request is created and then when a ticket gets created in the in the system. Then it gets assigned to the relevant point of of resolution. It could either be an automated resolution or human-involved resolution. And then it gets, it gets into a feedback loop. So this is broadly the flow, the end to end flow. And what we look at it is that, like at each step of the flow, we try and identify opportunities that exist for AI, GenAI and agentic, for example, before a ticket is created, right? Like there are various ways in which tickets could be prevented from happening at all. Right. So this is about how full stack observability can enable, enable, in reducing the tickets, and how GenAI can add on top of full stack observability in producing a human readable description of a situation that is emerging and how agentic, agentic approach can help in identifying a root cause around what's happening, right and and from then on. So at each point in the value stream, there are opportunities. Another place where you can see is in the feedback loop. So as a problem manager, as a service lead, the service lead is expected to is expected to conduct a problem management exercise, looking at what kind of problems are there, what are the opportunities for automation and also looking at it from the point of view of an experience just we talked about, right? And even in this area, GenAI and agentic can accelerate the way the pace at which these activities can be done. So though, so the like this at each point in the entire end to end, AMS, values, value stream, there are opportunities and then there are, there are ways in which AI agents, AI and agency can be infused.

Nick Ismail

And you mentioned that a few use cases there. Can you go into a bit more detail about what application management tasks are ready for agentic automation now and how can organizations set autonomy levels, leading privilege access and auditable guardrails?

Kandasamy Ramanujan

So the way we are looking at this is that, like we are looking at it from the point of view of personas involved in application management, right? So there are various personas that we see, there are service engineers. There are service managers as examples, right? So a service engineer persona, the process that a service engineer goes through is that, like a ticket is assigned to that person and and then they are expected to identify what the ticket is about identify the most possible reason why this has happened and then identify the solution. And once they have confidence on what needs to be done, actually execute the solution, in turn to fix the ticket that has been raised. Right? So this is the process now the way agentic can help is that so the agentic approach can help in identifying the ticket using natural language processing and then also identifying the intent behind it and and then identify what is the root cause, what is the best solution that is available to resolve it and

based on certain autonomy, a certain threshold levels, based on the confidence of the solution, the solution can be actually executed and the ticket could be the ticket could be resolved and this could be done either full at a full autonomous day, based on the confidence on which the solution is identified at each point in time, right? So the thresholds that are there to identify the confidence is the one which drives the level of autonomy that is possible in each of this and whenever the threshold is not met. There are ways in which the agentic the agent can get the human in the loop, so that there is an approval to go ahead, or the human who is looking at it can decide against the solution based on broader experience and then override what is being recommended. So we see this as as an interaction, as something with the connectedness between the persona, the process and the level of confidence about the solution that is being proposed by the agent and the ability to bring in the human being at the right point of time in the execution, that's what typically drives how this is done.

Nick Ismail

And a big topic at the moment is how we as humans work with these digital colleagues. In your view, how should agents collaborate with people so that innovation, trust, compliance and security are all preserved?

Kandasamy Ramanujan

So again, this goes for the personas that we talked about. For example, let us consider a monitoring team, right? So the typical monitoring team is expected to keep a watch on a large number of parameters that are available to them across a variety of applications in various means, right? Like it could be through various dashboards that are available to them, or there could be alerts that are coming in, right? So here for this persona, the agents can help in processing some of this and then presenting it and prioritizing what is happening, right. So here we see the agent as a companion uh, to the team as as a teammate who is doing some of the activities, right? And there are also, so this is one type, type of agent and then the and when a situation is presented and the engineer needs to analyze a set of logs. Here, again, a Log Analyzer agent can act on behalf of this engineer to look at, to really identify the different types of logs that need to be accessed to, to analyze on the issue at hand and then go to the different system and summarize that and present it to the agent, presented to the engineer. So that's that's the way it is. So like this for each role involved in the entire application management services area, there are ways in which agents can work along with the with the team members.

Nick Ismail

That's great. And looking forward top level, what will the overall impact of GenAI and Agentic AI be on application management services?

Kandasamy Ramanujan

Yeah, so in terms of this, so see, we are looking at this to be beneficial in two major areas. One is in improving productivity and the second one is in terms of increasing the quality of the solution that is being offered. Right? So these are the two major areas in which the benefits then accrue. We are beginning to see significant improve, significant benefits in both areas. And I'm this is, this is going to be something which will continuously improve and we expect to see significant results in this core period of time.

Nick Ismail

Jam, thank you so much for your time and insights.

Kandasamy Ramanujan

Thank you, Nicholas. It was great talking to you.