Case Study
Automox

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Security Engineer at a retailer with 501-1,000 employees

✔ Review by a Real User

🛡 Verified by IT Central Station

What is our primary use case?

My primary use cases for Automox are for patching, configuration management, and support. Our help desk receives tickets and we use Automox to create solutions that the help desk can use in an automated fashion rather than having to manually do the work. We have created ways to help them work faster.

How has it helped my organization?

A big benefit is Automox's ability to automate repetitive tasks for our help desk. If the VPN breaks, we can just click a button and fix the VPN for that person. If the software is having a hard time, we can run solutions to remove and reinstall that software rapidly so that they can get back to supporting the next person in line.

Especially as our company is growing exponentially, Automox helps us scale rapidly because we can't just hire a bunch of help desk people and have them up and running quickly. Automox allows that particular effort to be a little bit more seamless. Almost every person that has the tool absolutely loves it.

It is very important to us that it is a cloud-native platform. Software as a Service means that I'm not maintaining internal architecture, servers, licensing, and the likes to keep it online or High Availability if I need it. I don't have to think about any of that because it's just there.

What is most valuable?

The most valuable feature is its ability to establish patching policies that continuously work with minimal effort. That's important to me

because I am a long-time configuration management person and have dealt with other tools that require me to build the schedule up manually each time to create the list of patches. The value-add is that I'm not doing those two steps. The former step of building out lists of patches is the most important to have to deploy. The third-party patches require a lot more effort and Automox has taken that work off of my plate. That is a lot of work that a practitioner would have to do every single month. I am able to be more focused on patching compliance rather than building up patching, which has more value.

I patch across Windows, Mac iOS, and Linux. If I split it, it would be 90% Windows, 8% Mac, and 2% Linux.

Coming from prior solutions that were a lot more effort, Automox's patch management abilities are transformational. When I took over patching at my company, they were using on-premise architecture to patch. As the workforce shifted from being in the office into home offices, I was able to lift and shift with no effort other than deploying the new agent out into the environment.

Automox's console for patch management is very successful. There are some challenges in regards to third parties that change how they deploy software. Examples would include how Adobe or Oracle approach some of their third-party tools. From an Operating System standpoint, they're well on their way. In the time that I've been with them, they have overcome

the challenges of feature updates in Windows and I think they'll also overcome the challenges of major updates across Mac and Linux in due time.

In terms of how much time Automox saves us, I've had a few examples in my environment where I can explicitly point out how much time savings there is. One example was replacing Office 32-bit with 64-bit. We wrote a worklist to do it and that saved each interaction roughly an hour. There were about 300 people that wanted to do it. We were able to multiply that effort, remove 30 minutes and turn it into two minutes of effort. Over time, we're saving at least 40 to 80 hours a month due to all the different features that Automox is helping us automate.

I use their Worklets to create and automate customized tasks across endpoints. I heavily rely on Worklets across many aspects of the company. I have created Worklets to manage drivers, security configurations, and software management. It's way faster than expected, coming from traditional tools that take forever for policy to download. Manually deploying a payload to it running on an endpoint is almost instantaneous. It's so fast.

In terms of Automox's ease of use, I have multiple help desk individuals operating within the tool and building Worklets who have less experience in the field. From being able to take people with fewer capabilities and helping them be highly successful, the tool is much easier than it was with prior configuration management tools that I've used in the past.

We use their API to review clients to check how to pull back some of the Worklets that we've used that are doing inventory-type or compliance-type checks to build out custom reports. The API is almost an extension to every script that we can run.

What needs improvement?

It is still a challenge but not impossible to patch solutions like Adobe via Automox. It just requires me to go back to some of my older techniques and older tool belt items. I still have to reach back out to some of my old ways of doing work and accomplish it that way, but it's not impossible. Where there are gaps in their automation, there are ways for me to fill those gaps. They haven't left me high and dry. They've still left me with a way to work around it. It might be a little effort, but I can get there.

There should be better inventory capabilities. Right now, they only allow you to have insight into software out-of-the-box. It would be nice to also extend that into custom inventory that can be modified and managed by the practitioner.

It would also be really great if every device that's in Automox is limited to a single group and you can only apply policy to that one group. It would be nice to put a computer in multiple groups and apply different policies to different systems. I might only have seven or eight systems that I want to do a very specific config on, and in order to be able to do that, I have to use the API to make that a reality in another automation.

Automox is short. I'm able to use the API or manual effort to get past it. They should improve the experience so that less technically skilled people can also be just as successful as a higher skilled person.

For how long have I used the solution?

I have been using Automox for 11 to 13 months.

What do I think about the stability of the solution?

In terms of stability, Automox is equal to other tools I've used. I tend to run into problems with systems on every network. It's to be expected. It's always difficult to be 100%. Automox is very comparative to keeping the stability across the board as far as clients staying healthy and online and continue working without intervention. It's very similar to other tools in the industry. From an entire solution perspective, it's almost always online. When there is an incident, they give me updates every 20 minutes as to what the status is. They have really good incident responses when it does go down. Overall, my impression has been very positive. It hasn't caused me any significant constraints on my company's ability to perform.

What do I think about the scalability of the solution?

It scales with my environment quite well. I don't have to think about it. I started out with 1,000 devices and quickly went above that. I found a surprise bill and then was able to come up with a solution and put a guardrail up so that I wouldn't go over my licensing. Today I'm using it for 1,500 points. Within the next year, I'll probably be using it for 2,500 endpoints.

Four to five people work on Automox on a regular basis. We have security, systems engineering, and help desk workers.

How are customer service and technical support?

Support is very quick to respond. The support personnel are knowledgeable and they tend to be very positive in their interactions. They have a genuine "I want to help you solve the problem" feel. I've used them multiple times and they've taught me a thing or two, and hopefully, I've taught them a thing or two along the way. It's more of a partnership to me.

Which solution did I use previously and why did I switch?

Prior to Automox, I've used WSS, SCCM, PsExec, and PDQ Deploy to manage the infrastructures for these particular outcomes.

I switched to Automox because we can go from zero to hero with all of our complex needs really fast. We don't have to have the infrastructure. We don't have to have highly skilled individuals. We simply just need to turn it on and start doing what we need to do and the rest takes care of itself.

How was the initial setup?

The initial setup was straightforward. I set up my environment in the course of three hours across about 600 endpoints.

I used my existing tools to push the product and then I used other tools to find the gaps and made an effort to close them manually very quickly. There was no plan. We just stumbled through the implementation. That's a testament to how easy the deployment is. You can come in without a plan and tackle it with no problem at all.

It was very easy to set up policies. They're rather straightforward. The user interface is very pointed. It keeps you aware of what you're doing. My only critique is that they should explicitly call out and make a policy event. Building the policies is rather intuitive. You can go in without any prior knowledge and build a policy without messing it up on the first try.

What was our ROI?

There has certainly been a return on the time spent accomplishing the tasks and

accomplishing tasks that we didn't even think would save us time, but it ultimately did. We have also seen a return in our ability to patch everything and keep it compliant. Our vulnerability management program measures this and so far has been a success.

What's my experience with pricing, setup cost, and licensing?

There are no additional costs in addition to the extended licensing fees with Automox. You get support and per endpoint license with what you purchased.

Which other solutions did I evaluate?

I looked at ConnectWise, BigFix, and considered Cisco Meraki System Manager. I considered going towards SCCM for that. Out of all of them, I couldn't see any other product besides Automox that would get me where I needed to go as fast as I needed to go.

It is much cheaper to go with the cloud-native solution than it was for on-prem. There's a trade-off there. There's a lot of functionality and features that you don't have with Automox that you would have with some of these on-prem solutions that just don't exist yet.

For example, the ability to push policy control, Bit-Locker control, remote access, or having a

self-service software portal for any employee to log into a portal and say, "Hey, I need Adobe reader." They click a button and they now have Adobe reader. We still have to rely on our help desk to call in and ask for said software and then we can use Automox to push it. It would be really great to have that ability.

What other advice do I have?

If I've installed the solution, I do not have complete visibility, but I definitely know the endpoint is there or if it's missing patches or any configurations that I custom make.

The free trial of Automox was really important in our decision to go with it so that we could know how it really works. It's one thing to read a review or have them tell you how great their product is. It's another to see it working in real-time and especially working in one environment with all the different pieces they might have that could potentially make it harder to work. The trial is important for that consideration.

My advice to anybody considering Automox would be to think about potentially investing in the API ahead of time because if I was to do it all over again, I think I would put source control around anything getting pushed into Automox, and I would probably set it up to where I would use the API to create policy. I'd use the API to push the code that sits in that policy. I think everything would be pushed through source control that way versus using the web console to log in and push all that.

Every time you go in and make a change, there's really no history there. The only thing I would change about the implementation is to focus a little bit more on how to manage it over time and make some modifications to it.

I would rate Automox a ten out of ten.

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