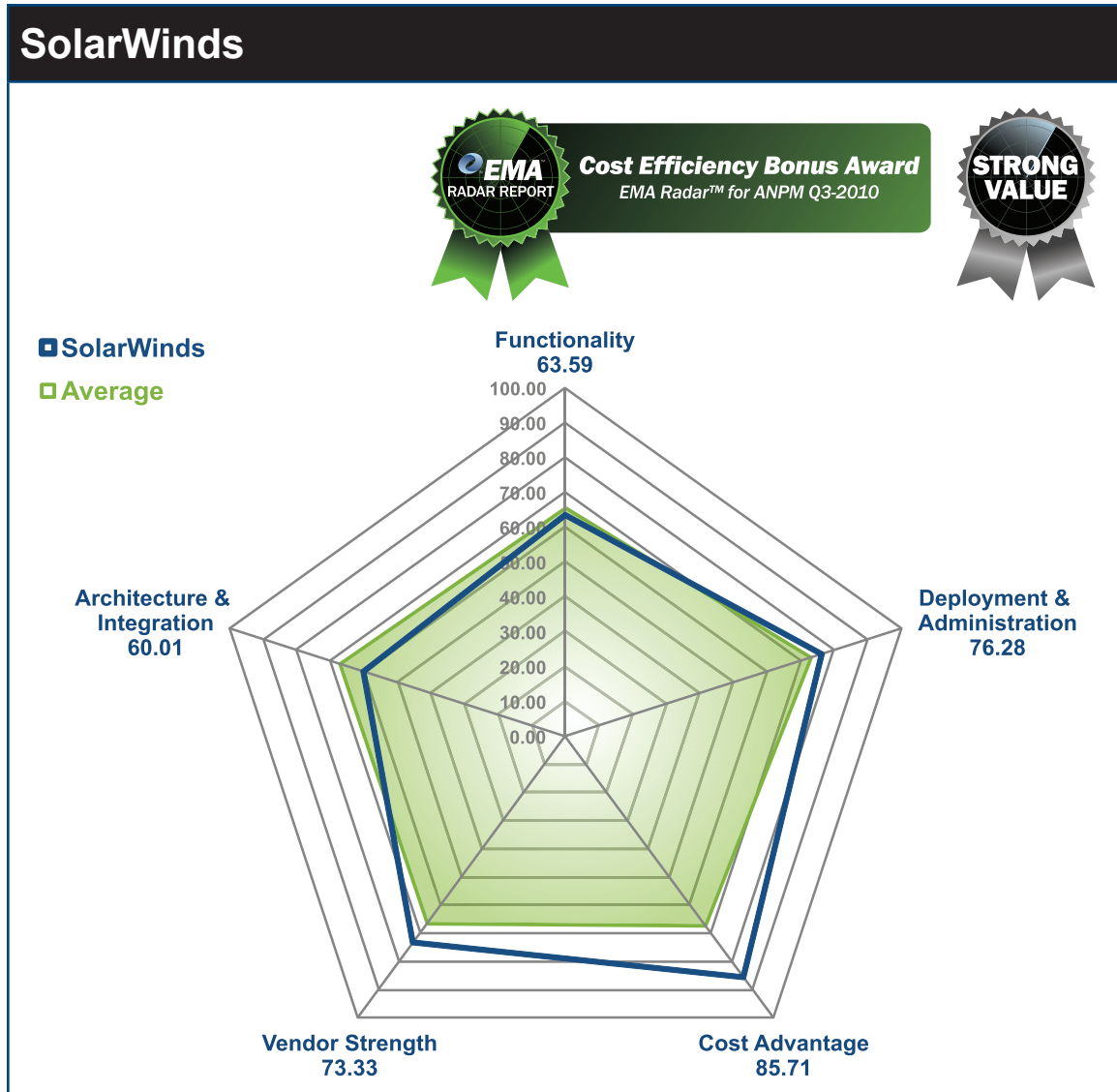


EMA Radar™ for Application-Aware Network Performance Management Q3 2010 – SolarWinds Vendor Profile

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Introduction

SolarWinds has been a remarkable success story, established just 10 years ago and aggressively evolving into one of the best-known brands in the network management sector, including a successful public stock offering during the middle of the Great Recession. The Orion product suite has become synonymous with solid capabilities that are easy to install, quick to produce results, and highly cost effective. For the purposes of this report, SolarWinds supplied information on the Orion Network Performance Monitor, Orion NetFlow Traffic Analyzer, Orion Application Performance Monitor, Orion IP SLA Manager, and Kiwi Syslog Server.

Architecture and Integration

The SolarWinds Orion solution ranks in the middle of the pack in terms of overall architecture and integration. The solution embraces three of the four primary ANPM data source types – NetFlow/xFlow, active agents, and log file analysis. Originally designed for the mid-tier, the Orion suite is finding increasing adoption within enterprise environments, and has been expanding in scalability and sophis-



tication to meet the needs and demands of the high end of the market. In terms of integration, the Orion solution has not been broadly integrated into well-known event management platforms; however, there are existing/supported integrations with HP and BMC service desk solutions. No integrations are claimed for CMDB/CMS systems; however, data export APIs, including direct SQL database integration, are available.

Functionality

Overall, the SolarWinds solution ranked above average in total ANPM functionality, with particular relative strengths showing up in metrics and measurements, capacity planning, and active controls support. Additional strengths come from being part of a broader solution that includes complementary functions such as Network Change and Configuration Management.

Deployment and Administration

The Orion solution compares very favorably to ANPM alternatives in terms of deployment and administration. With high rankings in training, disruption minimization, ease of admin, customer support, and update process, the overall indication reflects a solution that is quick to deploy and easy to use. Related to this area, and worthy of specific note, is thwack, the SolarWinds community forum, where customers can get supplemental support as well as develop and share product extensions.

Cost Advantage

By virtue of options for getting started at very low cost, combined with best-in-class maintenance rates, the SolarWinds ANPM solution tied for top ranking in terms of overall cost advantage.

Vendor Strength

SolarWinds stands today as one of the top three or four largest independent network management tools companies in terms of global revenues, and when combined with their strength in R&D investments and market credibility ranks well above average in this study in terms of overall vendor strength.

Strengths and Limitations

SolarWinds Application-Aware Network Performance Management strengths are:

- Cost efficiency – The SolarWinds Orion solution ranked as one of the most cost efficient options reviewed in this study, based on a combination of low entry cost, easy deployment, and strong support.
- Community support model – Through thwack, their hugely successful customer forum, SolarWinds has successfully leveraged their burgeoning installed base for filling gaps in field knowledge, acknowledging power users, and directly augmenting solution span through community-contributed product extensions.

SolarWinds Application-Aware Network Performance Management limitations are:

- Packet-based data and viewpoint – with three of the four ANPM sources covered, the only thing missing is packet-based monitoring and analysis, and the consequent deep and detailed troubleshooting support.



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