

EMA Radar™ for Application Discovery and Dependency Mapping (ADDM): Q4 2013

AppEnsure Profile

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AppEnsure Profile

AppEnsure

Introduction

Santa Clara based AppEnsure is a newcomer to the ADDM market and to this Radar Report. Its ADDM product, also called “AppEnsure,” is primarily targeted at performance and to a lesser degree, change and asset management. AppEnsure achieved a *Value Leader* in service impact and performance management, and was one of the very top vendors in ease of administration and resource efficiencies. AppEnsure’s auto discovery design provides excellent application coverage; among the best in this EMA Radar.

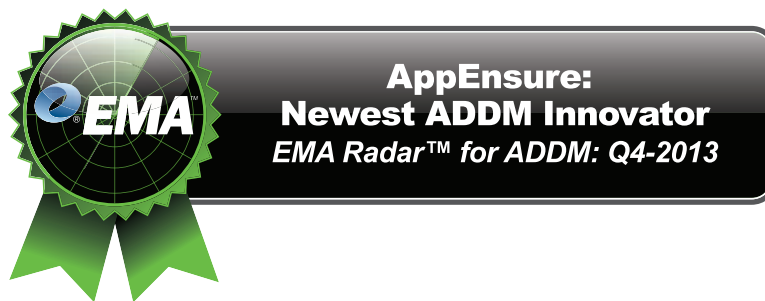
AppEnsure uses an auto discovery design, discovering application flows and mapping topology and user response times from these flows to create the application topology and update that topology in near real time as changes occur—all without user configuration steps. This allows for excellent “out-of-the-box” support for a large number of applications including custom apps. These capabilities significantly reduce the resources required to configure service models and operate the product.

AppEnsure is available both on-premise as a virtual appliance and as a SaaS offering hosted by the company.

The AppEnsure solution is very reasonably priced at \$50 per month per embedded agent, which is basically per server, regardless of the number of virtual machines on the physical server. The pricing and the low resource requirements create a strong value entry particularly for customers who are looking for straightforward application topology mapping, application monitoring and user response time or user experience. AppEnsure is a new entrant and we look for a continued broadening of capabilities over time.

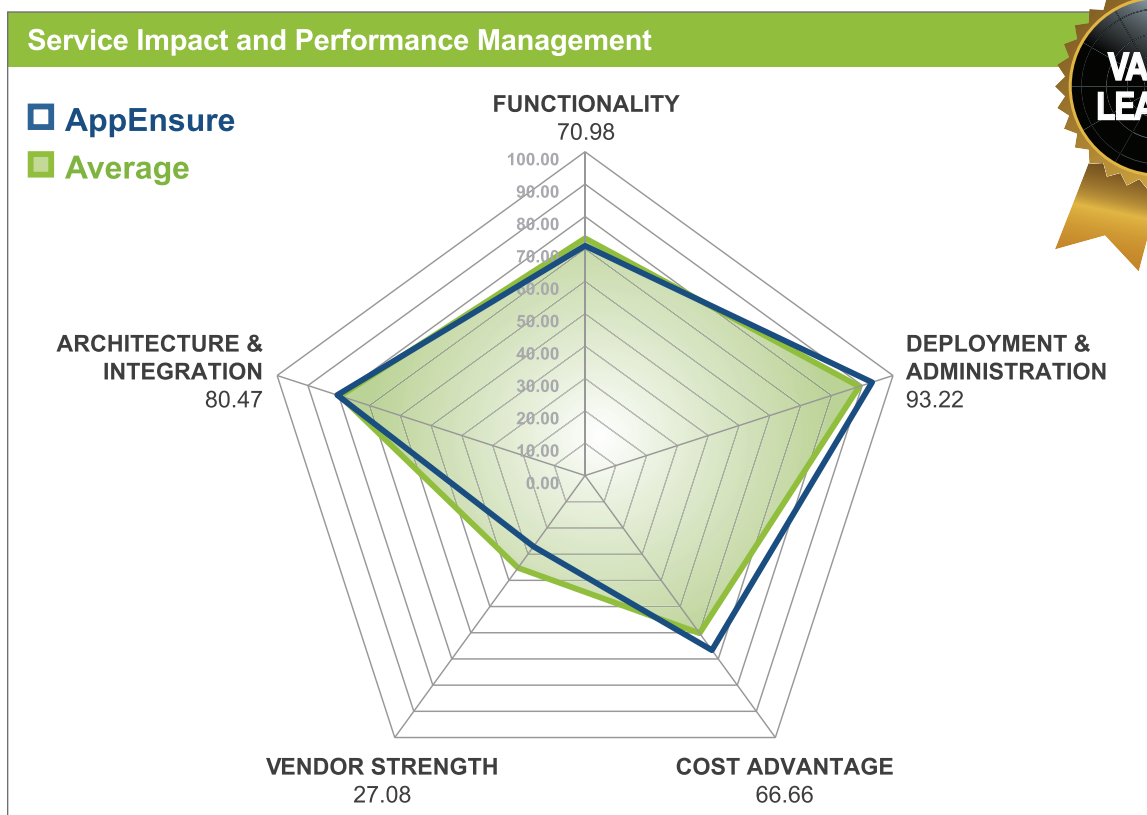
EMA Recognition Award: Newest ADDM Innovator

IT organizations looking to invest in AppEnsure are likely to get a powerful, well thought out solution that profits from a fresh look at market requirements and a willingness to embrace new technologies—such as integrated analytics for change. Moreover, AppEnsure’s ADDM positioning will likely improve significantly as the solution becomes more pervasively deployed and more of its integration and analytics capabilities can become validated in real-world deployments.



Service Impact and Performance Management – Value Leader

AppEnsure’s highly automated approach to discovery and application mapping led to their solid position in this category. Their auto discovery goes a bit deeper than some others to include the entire application ecosystem including user experience, threads and processes and shared memory. This approach offers outstanding application coverage out-of-the-box. AppEnsure has added a number of automated features to keep the application topology up to date in near real time and to reduce resource requirements low. These include automated discovery triggered by events, or workflow, or process automation processes. Two examples of the usefulness of these capabilities are—faster debugging of problems, and insights into application impacts when additional servers or storage are brought on board.



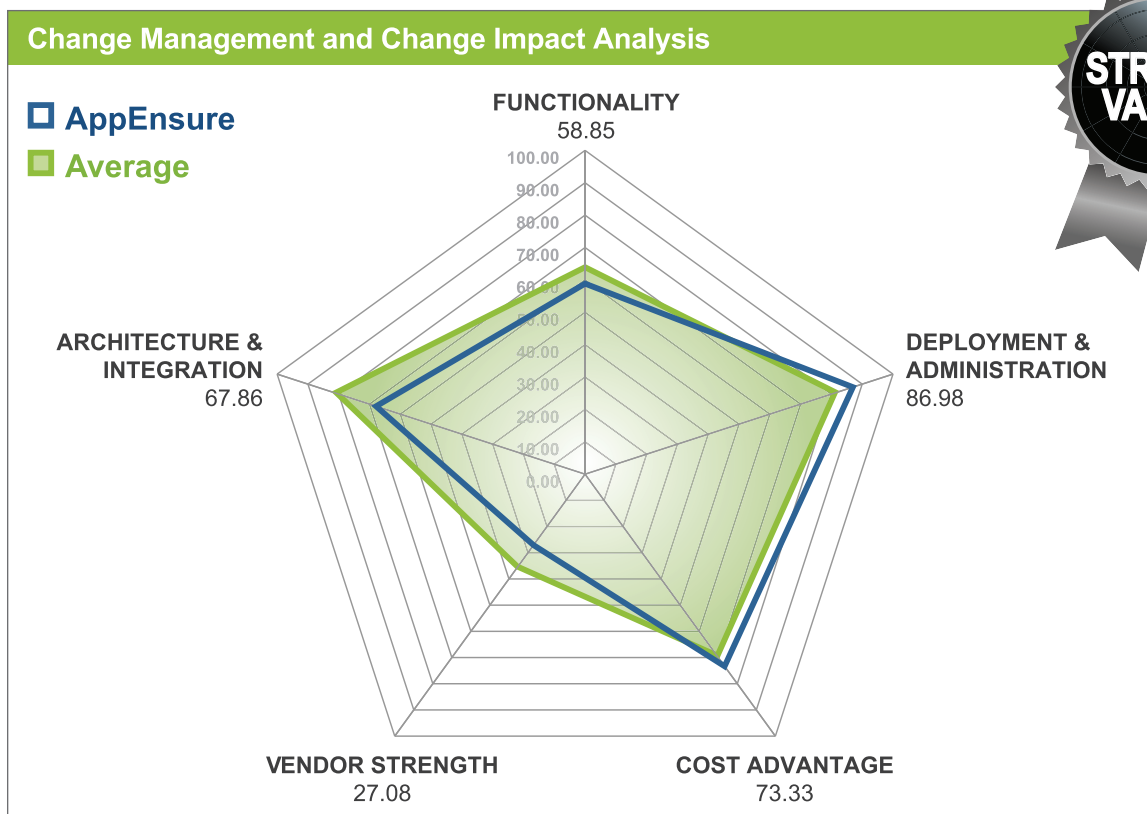
EMA Radar™ for ADDM: Q4 2013

AppEnsure Profile

Change Management and Change Impact Analysis – Strong Value

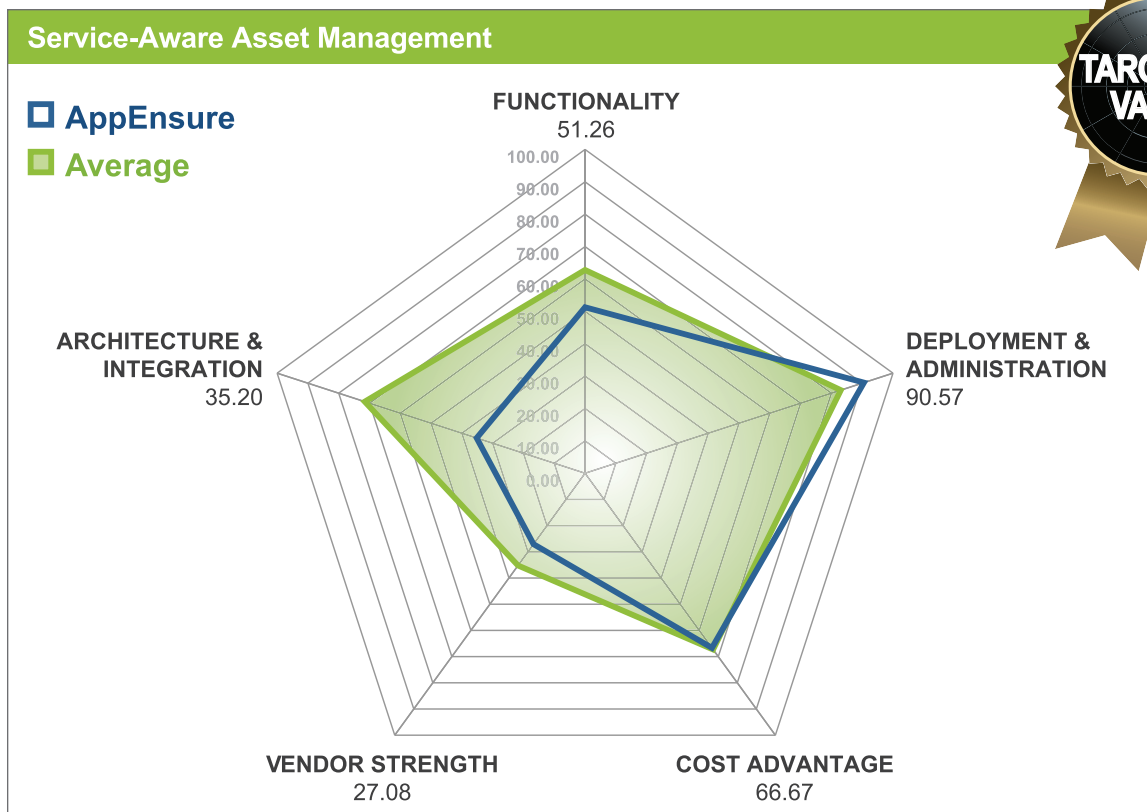
AppEnsure’s current change management capability is strong for a relatively new product and achieved a Strong Value rating. AppEnsure has a full range of analytics and reporting for change impact including overall service availability, DevOps requirements, and impacts to almost all infrastructure components. The product does support some functions through 3rd party integrations (e.g. Splunk) such as if/then analysis and trending for performance and capacity planning. This is driven largely through its architected support for automated CMDB updates for proactive alerts for performance or capacity issues, configuration changes and scheduled updates. It also supports CMDB-related query-based reports, visual comparison, and automated alerts when discovered CIs or CI values are different from those in the CMDB system. However, at the time of writing this radar, no AppEnsure-CMDB integrations had yet been fully realized in the field.

Support for change-related automation includes import of information from other discovery tools, LDAP directory services and support for data mining and OLAP.



Service-Aware Asset Management – Targeted Value

Asset management is an area that AppEnsure aims to improve through third-party integrations and partnerships, leveraging its integration-friendly architecture. Currently, the company supports a full range of domains for asset management such as servers, physical and virtual, network devices, storage applications and desktops. The functionality currently provided covers basic inventory and software components, both COTS and custom applications. Some areas currently not covered are license management and compliance reporting which are the kinds of elements needed to be a more complete asset management system. The takeaway is that there is a solid base for asset inventory discovery that currently supports the performance management functionality, and which may be extended to support broader asset management values through integrations as well as future development.



EMA Radar™ for ADDM: Q4 2013

AppEnsure Profile

Deployment and Administrative Efficiencies

AppEnsure is among the very best ADDM vendors in resources required for initial discovery, updating for application topology changes and ongoing operation. Its essentially automatic application discovery and mapping capabilities with inherent auto updating means there should be very little manual intervention for these critical performance based processes. AppEnsure also includes a solid set of automated capabilities for configuration, scheduled updates and alerting for performance/capacity issues. All of these capabilities should lead to low operating expense and make it a very good fit for customers seeking an easy-to-use, performance-centric ADDM tool.

Cost Advantage

AppEnsure is among the more price-competitive vendors in this radar. Its SaaS offering, which includes maintenance changes, has a list price of \$50 per physical server or per virtual machine per month. There is also a Freemium version available—targeting up to five servers for a 24-hour period—in order to become familiar with the solution before buying. As mentioned earlier the product has very low resource requirements making it a very affordable product for ADDM customers.

Architecture and Integration

AppEnsure shows well in architecture and near-real-time updates for performance uses. The product only offers agent-based support which reduces deployment flexibility to some degree. That said, AppEnsure does discover a full range of IT infrastructure elements, including desktops and virtual environments, in addition to standard servers, storage and network devices. AppEnsure has excellent coverage for out-of-the-box and custom applications, and broad support for both public and private cloud. Public cloud discovery is supported similarly to private cloud through the monitoring of application flows.

Functionality

Most of AppEnsure's functionality has been addressed in the use-case contexts described earlier but there are some interesting additional capabilities. The product integrates with Splunk for Big Data analytics which can be used for several purposes including capacity planning, or mapping response times across a number of users. There is also integration to LogInsight—a log management tool from VMware. These integrations demonstrate a deeper understanding of user needs beyond standard application dependency and topology mapping. AppEnsure also provides a number of reports covering a broad range of use cases and stakeholders.

Vendor Strength

AppEnsure is relative newcomer when compared with other vendors, and has not yet built up as much field experience as some other vendors in the radar. EMA is optimistic about the path the company is pursuing and the company is rapidly adding new capabilities; strengthening its customer value proposition. AppEnsure has a strong offering in performance and a solid base to build on for asset management and change impact which should make it increasingly relevant to large organizations with more complex needs in these areas.

EMA Radar™ for ADDM: Q4 2013

AppEnsure Profile

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths:

- AppEnsure strengths in architecture and integration should place them in the exceptional category for performance management function. AppEnsure's various capabilities of automation, auto mapping of application flows, automated alerting and others should place them among the very top leaders in limiting resources required. When coupled with their competitive SaaS pricing the product offers very good customer value.
- The almost automatic application mapping approach gives AppEnsure excellent out of the box application coverage; among the best in this Radar Report.

Limitations

- The relative newness of the product means that there is currently less field experience with it so there may be some latent issues that have not been flushed out yet through extensive usage.
- AppEnsure is in the early stages in enabling higher level features in its asset management and change impact capabilities. The product has a good base of function in these areas but needs to continue its investment to become increasingly relevant to customers seeking more complete change impact and service-aware asset management solutions.

Customer Comments

- *"We really needed to get a handle on full end to end response time with real transactions to create real SLAs and AppEnsure gave us that in spades."*
- *"Our application topology changes a lot as we have a lot of virtualized servers so we had to have updates in real time."*
- *"With AppEnsure we found an intermittent performance problem very quickly that we had not been able to find for 6 months using the other tools we had."*

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