

# Faster & More Consistent IT Drives Business Growth for Fulcrum Technologies

## Industry

Telecom infrastructure management software (SaaS)

## Challenge

Manual configuration & management impeded innovation to support business growth.

## Solution

Puppet Enterprise for automating & ensuring consistent IT state and deployments, providing a strong foundation for business growth.

## Results

- Recovery time is a fraction of what it was before Puppet.
- Adding infrastructure for new customers is quick & easy.
- Time available for innovation & growing team capabilities.

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<https://puppetlabs.com/sites/default/files/2014-01/Why%20Bill%20Wellington>

We couldn't do all we do right now, with so few people, without Puppet.

—Bill Wellington, network & system administrator, DevOps, at [Fulcrum Technologies](http://fulcrum.net/) (<http://fulcrum.net/>)

## About Fulcrum Technologies

[Fulcrum Technologies](http://fulcrum.net/) (<http://fulcrum.net/>) is a fast-growing company providing software-as-a-service (SaaS) that helps telecom companies — including mobile phone companies — manage their widespread, multi-site inventories of equipment, parts and site infrastructure.

## Top outcomes from Puppet Enterprise

- Significant time saved when getting new customers up and running with Fulcrum's services
- Significant time saved managing Fulcrum's infrastructure, with greater consistency
- Faster deployments
- Faster recovery when systems go down

## Starting environment

- Between 80 and 90 nodes
- IT team of three people
- Largely manual management; one-off configuration scripts

## Why Puppet Enterprise?

"What I really liked about Puppet was that I didn't have to define the steps: I just said, get from point A to point B," said Bill Wellington, network and system administrator, DevOps, at Fulcrum Technologies. "Defining the end result, instead of the steps to get there, just seemed simpler to me."

## Automated configuration management ensures consistency & frees time for more strategic work

When Bill Wellington came to work at Fulcrum Technologies in 2011, he found a company managing close to 100 servers with one-off manual configuration scripts. Fulcrum's infrastructure was split about evenly between the development environment and the production environment, which hosts Fulcrum's software delivered as a service. The SaaS environment was growing quickly, as for each new customer, Fulcrum needs to spin up at least two new nodes.

Once Fulcrum adopted Puppet Enterprise, Bill and his small team no longer needed to manually set up hardware, provision it with working software and configure backend networking. Now most of the work of deploying Fulcrum's application stack is accomplished by simply deploying a Puppet agent. "Automating the actual building of systems means I can concentrate on the other pieces, while Puppet manages building the systems for me," Bill said.

The time that Bill has saved because of Puppet is now available for other projects that improve operations and move the business forward. "I was able to concentrate on the problem of monitoring our complex infrastructure in the time I would have spent building machines by hand," Bill said. He's also been able to spend more time helping people on his team develop in their jobs — an investment in Fulcrum's future growth. And because nearly everyone on Fulcrum's IT team uses Puppet, others also have more time to focus on other challenges.

Fulcrum's team makes fewer errors with configurations and deployments. Developers write code in an environment that reflects Fulcrum's production environment, and QA is testing in a similarly real-world environment, so code delivered to production works as expected far more often.

When errors do occur, it's usually because someone made a mistake in writing Puppet code, Bill said. Even these errors are easier to remediate across the infrastructure. "In the past, we experienced issues because a patch or multi-step change was not applied uniformly," Bill said. "If I have a consistent state — even one that is broken — then coming up with a fix is a much easier undertaking."

Remediation is a much quicker, too. "I'd say it takes us an hour to get back up and running, versus several hours [before Puppet]," Bill said.

## Moving from open source Puppet to Puppet Enterprise

Fulcrum started with open source Puppet, adopting Puppet Enterprise for its production environment about a year ago. While it wasn't difficult for Bill and his staff to learn Puppet, they were glad to get the help of Puppet Labs professional services engineers for setting up dynamic environments and establishing best practices. "We wanted to make sure our code was supportable, and we were doing it the right way," Bill said. "Things have gone swimmingly since then."

## Choosing Puppet Enterprise

Bill talked with his peers in IT before making a final decision about whether to go with Puppet or Chef. It was really the ability to simply define state with Puppet — rather than describing the steps to get to a given state — that most impressed Bill. He felt Puppet would make it much easier for everyone on his team to collaborate. "I need to be able to hand off work to someone else," Bill said, so he can move on to the next thing IT needs to do to move Fulcrum's business forward.

*Bill Wellington lives in West Seattle with his wife Rebecca, daughters Maria and Tori, and his dog Orion. He enjoys solving cool problems in automation at Fulcrum Technologies Inc.*

**White paper: [How IT Automation Will Make Your Company More Successful \(and Your Job More Interesting\)](http://info.puppetlabs.com/the-value-of-IT-automation-whitepaper.html)** (<http://info.puppetlabs.com/the-value-of-IT-automation-whitepaper.html>).

## RESOURCES

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[Site Map \(/sitemap\)](#)

[RSS \(http://feeds.feedburner.com/PuppetLabs\)](http://feeds.feedburner.com/PuppetLabs)

## SUPPORT

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[Puppet Ask \(http://ask.puppetlabs.com\)](http://ask.puppetlabs.com)

[Puppet Users \(http://groups.google.com/group/puppet-users?pli=1\)](http://groups.google.com/group/puppet-users?pli=1)

[GitHub \(https://github.com/puppetlabs\)](https://github.com/puppetlabs)

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