



# THE JOB SCHEDULING JOURNEY

Finding the right scheduler  
for your organization



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# INTRODUCTION

**H**ow you manage the background processing in your data center says a lot about you as an IT professional. Reports, backups, and other maintenance—these jobs aren't glamorous, but they are critical and highly visible.

When the completion of IT processes directly impacts the bottom line of the organization or the satisfaction of clients, it is important to maintain an efficient workflow. Choosing the right job scheduling solution can mean the difference between an efficient workflow and one fraught with errors and delays that impact end users.

Unfortunately, sifting through the various schedulers available and selecting the proper one for your organization can be overwhelming and time-consuming. And, once you've found your job scheduling gem, you still have to convince decision makers to invest.

This eBook offers insight into the different types of job scheduling solutions available—rated OKAY, BETTER, or BEST—and how to implement the most effective solution for your business. We'll also offer advice that may be helpful in convincing your boss to sign that dotted line.



# AN OKAY SOLUTION

## Homegrown Schedulers and Free or Native Solutions

Plenty of IT departments still rely on native solutions like cron or Windows Task Scheduler to manually track everyday routines, while others have taken the time to create their own homegrown scheduler. The low up-front costs of these solutions are attractive, but are they truly an effective way to handle the complexities of your IT environment?

To be honest, it's very unlikely. Homegrown schedulers and native solutions can be effective for small organizations with limited processes running across their systems. However, as your organization and its processes grow and evolve, these solutions can quickly become obsolete, or at the very least underpowered.

You see, these solutions come with a lot of hidden costs, which can add up to eventually exceed the cost of a better solution. Just a few of these hidden costs include:

- **Development:** Paying highly trained and educated IT professionals to handle the creation and maintenance of a homegrown scheduler can cost your organization valuable resources and dollars.
- **Operation:** Homegrown schedulers are typically more manual to operate, requiring additional time and attention from staff, even after the initial programming and schedule creation processes are complete. Native solutions, on the other hand, require manual scripting, which ties up a staff member whose talents could be better used elsewhere.
- **Updates:** As platforms and software advance in complexity and capability, homegrown schedulers and defined native procedures may become ineffective. Updating the software to acceptable standards could lead to additional programming costs.
- **Errors:** Whether you are creating a homegrown scheduler or writing scripts for a native scheduler, the process is complex and prone to human error. Re-runs and downtime caused by errors will also lead to additional costs when staff members have to put in overtime hours to correct the issues. In truth, even the smallest overlooked detail or incorrectly written code can cost the organization dearly.

Hidden costs aren't the only drawback of homegrown schedulers. With the overwhelming pressures of operating an IT department, building a scheduler that offers the full functionality necessary to truly automate the enterprise may not be possible. Your internal developers may need to cut corners, leaving out vital features.

While cron or Windows Task Scheduler do not require the manual running of processes, if you rely on such native solutions, you will still be required to write manual scripts for job dependencies or resource checking to maintain a more complicated schedule. In turn, though open source tools typically do have a user community to rely on, it can take valuable time to troubleshoot issues to support your job schedule.

When so much relies on the performance of your workflow, do you really want to be forced to choose between which features to build and which are "expendable"?



# A BETTER SOLUTION

## Free or Integrated Schedulers

Rather than investing in the development of a homegrown scheduler or the maintenance of native scheduling solutions, your organization may turn to the scheduling tools within popular enterprise applications such as SAP,<sup>®</sup> Oracle,<sup>®</sup> or Informatica,<sup>®</sup> or Microsoft<sup>®</sup> SQL Server.

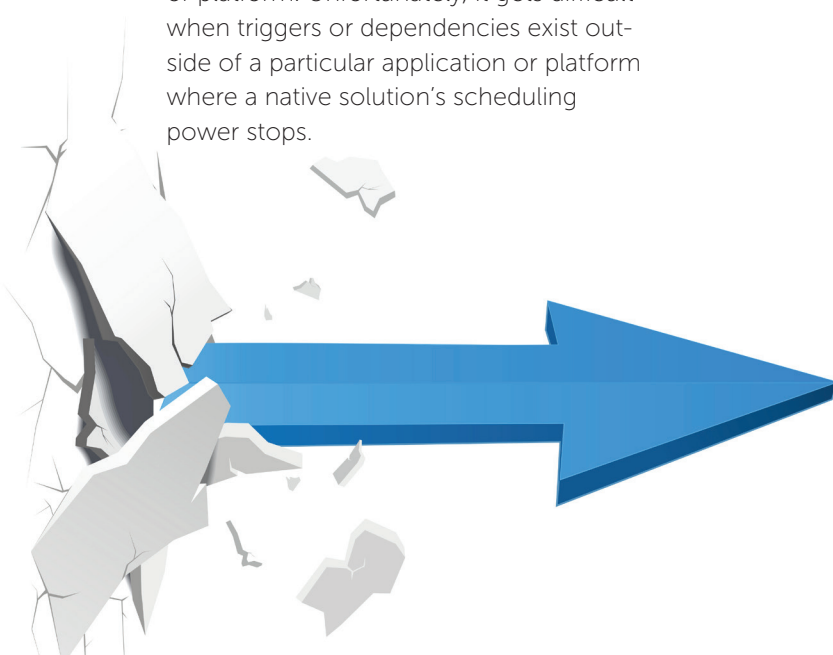
This option is preferable to a homegrown scheduler or a native solution for many reasons:

- **Simple implementation:** Integrated schedulers are preloaded into software you already use, making it relatively easy to put them to work. Time-based schedulers are also usually simple to install due to their relatively simplistic programming.
- **Increased scheduling power:** Integrated schedulers may provide greater control over your IT workflow than homegrown alternatives. These solutions allow you to create robust schedules that execute processes within their particular application or platform. Unfortunately, it gets difficult when triggers or dependencies exist outside of a particular application or platform where a native solution's scheduling power stops.

- **Support:** When using a scheduling solution offered by an application vendor, you'll likely be offered some level of technical support for both the operation of the application itself and the integrated scheduler. However, since scheduling is a secondary focus of the application, the support offered for scheduling issues may be limited, and dedicated support for the scheduling function may not exist.

Unfortunately, while they do offer enhanced control over the workflow, integrated and free schedulers are generally designed for specific platforms or applications. This makes it all but impossible to create a single, comprehensive schedule to manage your workflow. Without the ability to consolidate schedules, you may be left juggling multiple schedules, each regulating a specific platform or application. You will also be unable to access a detailed view of your entire workflow. For many of you, these drawbacks outweigh the benefits of using these scheduling solutions.

All things considered, can you really rely on an integrated scheduler to prevent potential workflow disasters across your entire network?



# THE BEST SOLUTION

## Enterprise Schedulers

The process automation market is full of quality enterprise job schedulers. As the BEST solution for your automation needs, these solutions come equipped with cross-platform support, making it possible to merge many schedules into one.

Enterprise schedulers also offer a good deal of scheduling flexibility, including event-based, time-based, and interdependency-based scheduling. Why just designate a time for your process to run when you can set the process to execute based on the completion of related events? Event-based scheduling streamlines your workflow by creating greater reactivity between processes and helps to address interdependencies to ensure that processes complete in the right order. Where processes used to sit idle until a set time, jobs begin immediately after another event, like a file transfer or completion of another process, has occurred.

In short, enterprise schedulers include all the functionality and control offered by integrated scheduling tools, but also provide you with the increased flexibility and reach you need to avoid complications with your IT workflow across your enterprise.



# CHOOSING THE RIGHT ENTERPRISE SCHEDULER

Enterprise schedulers offer the automation power you need to streamline your workflow, but choosing the right one for your organization can be challenging. With so many options available, understanding which one offers you the features you need at the price you can afford can be tricky.

When you are ready to evaluate your options, make sure to consider these important things:

- **Cost:** Calculating ROI is important in every organization. In order to understand your true investment, you need to be aware of your costs. In addition to your initial license fees, make sure to factor in maintenance charges and consulting fees associated with implementation.
  - **Implementation:** When looking for an enterprise scheduler, you want a solution that is easy to install and implement. After all, you can't spend weeks or months trying to get the solution up and running; you've already got enough on your plate. Some options are light enough to have you up and running in days, while others can take months or longer.
  - **Usability:** The solution you choose should be powerful enough to meet your scheduling needs, but that doesn't mean it needs to be difficult to use. Make it easy for anyone on your team to catch on quickly and look for a solution that is intuitive and user-friendly. Anything less will leave you frustrated and struggling to maintain an efficient workflow.
- **Support:** You can expect some level of technical and customer support from any enterprise scheduling vendor, but it is important to know how much and what type of care you can expect to receive. It is also important to examine the costs of support and maintenance since some vendors charge extra for personalized assistance.
  - **Updates:** Enterprise schedulers are constantly evolving to meet the needs of modern organizations. This makes it important to consider the costs of future upgrades. Some vendors will offer free or low-cost updates, while others may charge significant sums. Make sure to ask about update and upgrade policies. You don't want to be one year into using a new solution only to find that an update will cost you nearly as much as your initial license purchase.



# THE ADVANTAGES OF SKYBOT SCHEDULER

The best enterprise scheduling solution is one that combines affordability with powerful features and functionality.

Skybot Scheduler™ does just that and more. Skybot is powerful, flexible, and easy to use, allowing you to automate complex, cross-system schedules at price you can afford.

## Cost

Skybot is robust and feature-rich, but you aren't expected to pay for features and functions that you won't use or that aren't essential to the enterprise automation process.

Other factors that help to reduce the upfront costs of implementing Skybot include:

- **Simple license structure:** Skybot limits the initial costs of implementation through a simple license structure. Rather than hiding fees behind a complex pricing structure, Skybot's simple licensing model offers a detailed explanation of all costs upfront. Skybot's annual maintenance license includes industry-leading technical support and upgrades from HelpSystems.

- **Module customization:** Skybot offers full customization of agents and features. You choose the agents you need and avoid paying for agents that you won't use. As your needs evolve, you can add agents as necessary.

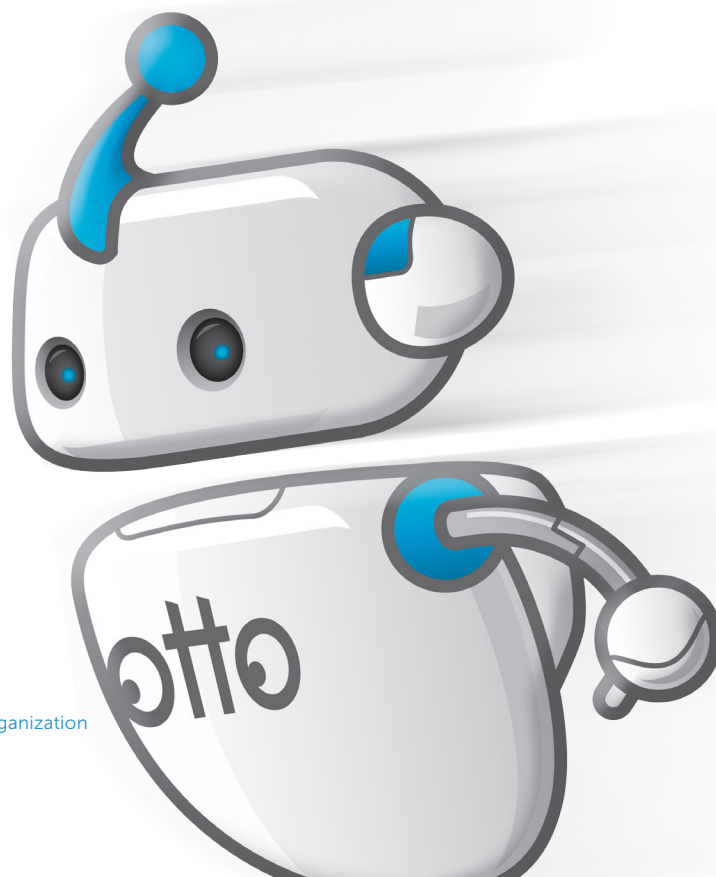


## Implementation

Skybot was designed to be simple to install. No on-site consultant is required during implementation, and most of our customers are up and running in days rather than weeks. This fast and easy installation cuts the cost of man hours and downtime exponentially.

Skybot's user interface is highly intuitive, meaning that users require minimal training. Generally, users will be ready to create and maintain schedules through Skybot after a short orientation and training session.

In no time, you can be automating to your heart's content.





# THE ADVANTAGES OF SKYBOT SCHEDULER

## Usability

Skybot was created with the end user in mind. It was designed to be a solution that was easy to install, easy to learn, and easy to use. Skybot has impressed many users thanks to key features, including:



- **Cross-system scheduling:** Skybot's cross-system functionality makes it easy to create schedules, even those involving processes or servers on different platforms. Skybot offers the power to manage schedules for Windows®, UNIX®, Linux®, and IBM i® servers.



- **Enterprise application integration:** Skybot's integration with several popular enterprise applications, such as Informatica, SAP, and Oracle, makes it easy to include application processes in your enterprise schedule. For example, merge your Oracle schedule with the rest of your workflow with just a few clicks.



- **Web-based access:** Skybot's intuitive interface can be accessed from any web browser, anywhere in the world. Access and monitor your systems without having to make a trip to your network's physical location. If you can navigate a website, you'll have no problems using Skybot's interface.



- **High availability:** Skybot's high availability setup protects your processes from unplanned system downtime. Through real-time replication to a standby server and automatic agent switchover, Skybot keeps your workflow moving, even in unforeseen circumstances.



- **Security:** Skybot provides role-based interfaces with Active Directory/LDAP security. This means that many users may access your scheduling system with varying degrees of authorization based on their role in the company. Customizable access levels are easy to assign to every Skybot user.



- **Comprehensive auditing:** Skybot features robust reporting functions, giving you the information you need to make knowledgeable decisions on updates or changes to your job flow.



- **Dashboard reporting:** Maintaining up-to-date knowledge of your workflow is important for ensuring that all processes are executed properly and on time. Skybot's dashboard reporting makes it easy to review a wide range of information regarding the execution of specific jobs, as well as the overall performance of your workflow.

## Support

Skybot offers a superior level of customer and technical support to every user. Whether you have questions, need automation advice, or require guidance addressing an issue, you get the support and information you need quickly and easily.

Support is available by phone, email, online support ticketing, and live chat. You can also access useful self-support documentation, videos, and how-to guides online.

In short, whenever you need us, the Skybot team is here to help.

# MAKE THE LEAP TO ENTERPRISE AUTOMATION

Whether your current scheduling solution is ineffective or you're taking the initial steps toward enterprise scheduling, choosing a robust solution, such as Skybot Scheduler, will give you comprehensive control over workflow.

## See the Power of Skybot Scheduler for Yourself

There are many ways to begin exploring Skybot Scheduler:

- View Skybot's online demo:** Our online demo offers you the chance to explore the software on your own time. We've created sample job schedules and dependencies, letting you play with Skybot as if it were installed on your servers. [Take a test drive now](#). We also offer live, personalized product [demos by request](#).
- Give Skybot a trial run:** We believe that once you use Skybot, you'll see the positive impact it can have on your organization's job flow. With that in mind, we are pleased to offer a 30-day trial of Skybot at no cost or obligation to your organization. Simply visit [our free trial page](#) and complete the request form. We'll email you information on how to begin your free trial.
- Contact a Skybot specialist:** Our sales and support teams love talking about Skybot and are happy to offer more information on how Skybot can help your organization. To discuss Skybot in more detail, or to find answers to your enterprise scheduling questions, contact us today. We can be reached at **877-506-4786** or [by email](#).

We look forward to helping you achieve your automation goals.

