The Ultimate Guide to Unlocking your SCOM data

How to get visibility over the data you need and unlock the power of SCOM

Contents:

SquaredUp

The challenge that is the SCOM console

SCOM is a powerhouse of a monitoring tool used by businesses of all shapes and sizes. Whether you have 100 servers or 5000, or work in education, health, finance, manufacturing, energy, or technology – SCOM is the tool of choice for monitoring your infrastructure.

One of the best things about SCOM is the sheer amount of data SCOM is capable of collecting from your servers in its Data Warehouse. Even with these strengths, the SCOM console leaves quite a bit to be desired. Its reporting and alert/performance views still have a long way to go, even with the HTML5 based web console. The fact that SCOM produces a lot of noise by default doesn't help.

Let's break down some of the key challenges of working with SCOM—and a range of solutions that will help you get the most out of your SCOM data.

SquaredUp

Top **3** blockers that prevent you from making full use of your SCOM data

1 Unable to surface and present the data you need in a way that you can use

Too much detail at once

SCOM dashboards have no concept of drill across, and "drill down" simply drops you straight into the console's very detailed monitored object view. It may be great for a SCOM admin wanting to manage a given object, but it's confusing for other stakeholders like the infrastructure, network and application teams who would like to zoom in on specific information.

Clunky graphs

Even with the improvements that came in SCOM 2019, the visualizations in SCOM leave a lot to be desired. SCOM gives you pre-built widgets, but it is difficult to make your own, and hard or impossible to mix and match. You need to be able to see everything at a glance so you can act fast when something changes, and the SCOM Console doesn't deliver on that.

SquaredUp

2 No context to your data

Siloed data not visible in SCOM

You have multiple tools. But the SCOM console only shows SCOM data. When your data lives in silos, it's impossible to keep on top of it all. And if you can't see your third-party application data in SCOM, you can only see part of the picture at any given time.

Application dependencies are unknown

SCOM doesn't let you map the dependencies of your many business applications—so when errors occur, you can't always see what was affected or determine the root cause.
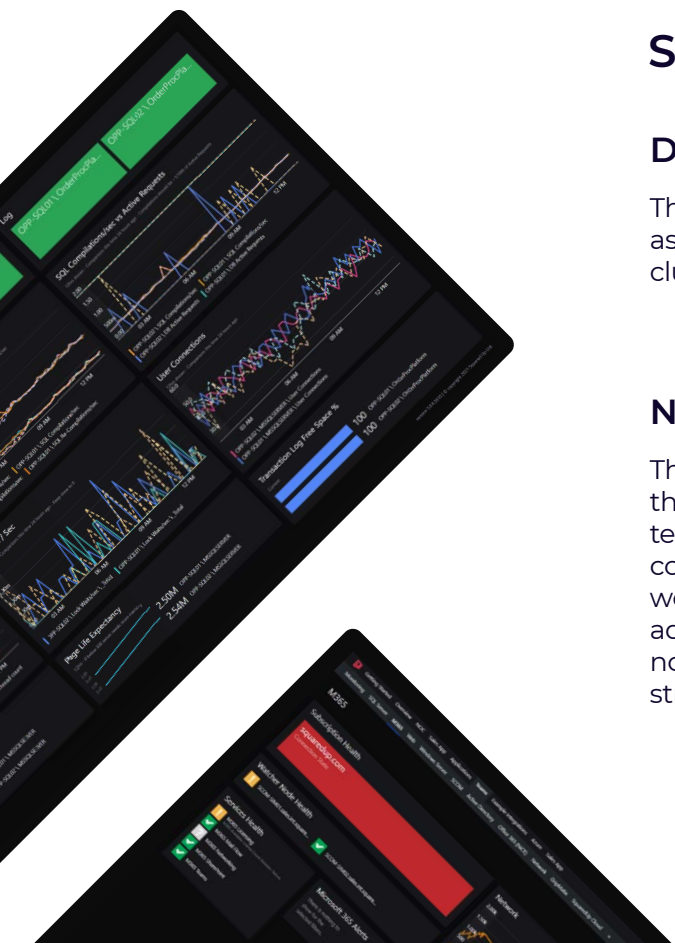
SCOM is dated and inaccessible 3

Dated

The retro MMC feel of SCOM can be off-putting as a user. The design isn't intuitive and feels clunky.

Nobody else cares

The value of SCOM insights extends far beyond the SCOM Admin into the domains of other teams in charge of various infrastructure components or applications. But the SCOM web console is not user-friendly for non-SCOM admins – it's still very much a console. So nobody else wants to dive into SCOM and you struggle to show its full potential to others.

SquaredUp

Unlock the true potential of SCOM

We've gone over the shortcomings of the SCOM web console. But what does success look like?

To make full use of your treasure trove of SCOM data and achieve your monitoring and business goals, you need a replacement for the SCOM console that not only condenses a huge amount of information into actionable insights, but also achieves the following:

1. Easily surfaces and presents the data you need, in a way that works for you

2. Places and understands your data in the context of other tools

3. Engages the wider business

The best bit: If you manage to achieve the above with your SCOM data, you will more effectively be able to achieve the following business objectives:

1. More effective and efficient root-cause analysis

2. Proactive, not reactive, monitoring

3. Avoid outages

SquaredUp

Unlock the true potential of SCOM - 1:
Surface and present the data you need in a way that you can use

Powerful visualizations

• Choose a dashboarding tool that provides powerful visualizations but is easy to use. Build simple and clear dashboards that are tailored to the specific use cases you're targeting. These should work for any audience, technical or not.

• You want your dashboard designer to be easy to use for anyone on your team – not just SCOM admins – to encourage ownership over the data.

Drill down and across for fine tuning

• Keep the top level basic, but drill down and drill across (perspectives) to explore and investigate easily and find the underlying causes of any issues.
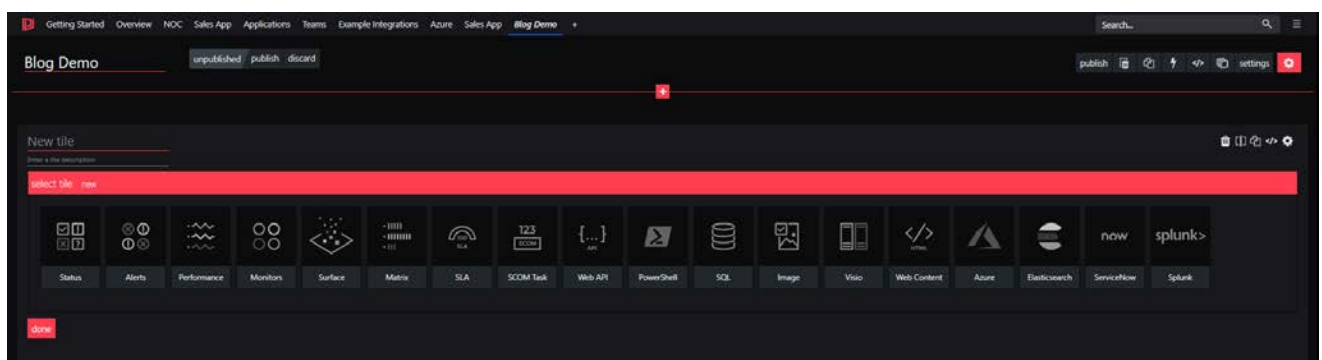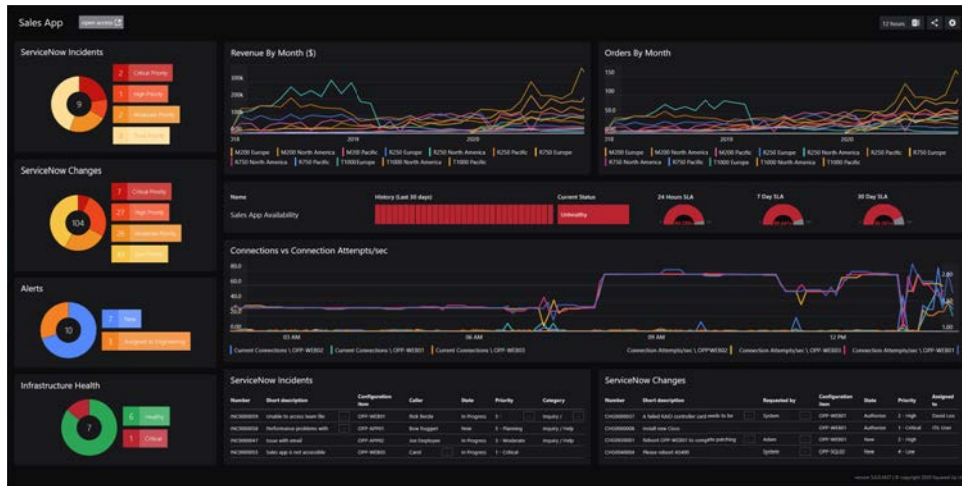

A plethora of visualization options available in SquaredUp.

SquaredUp
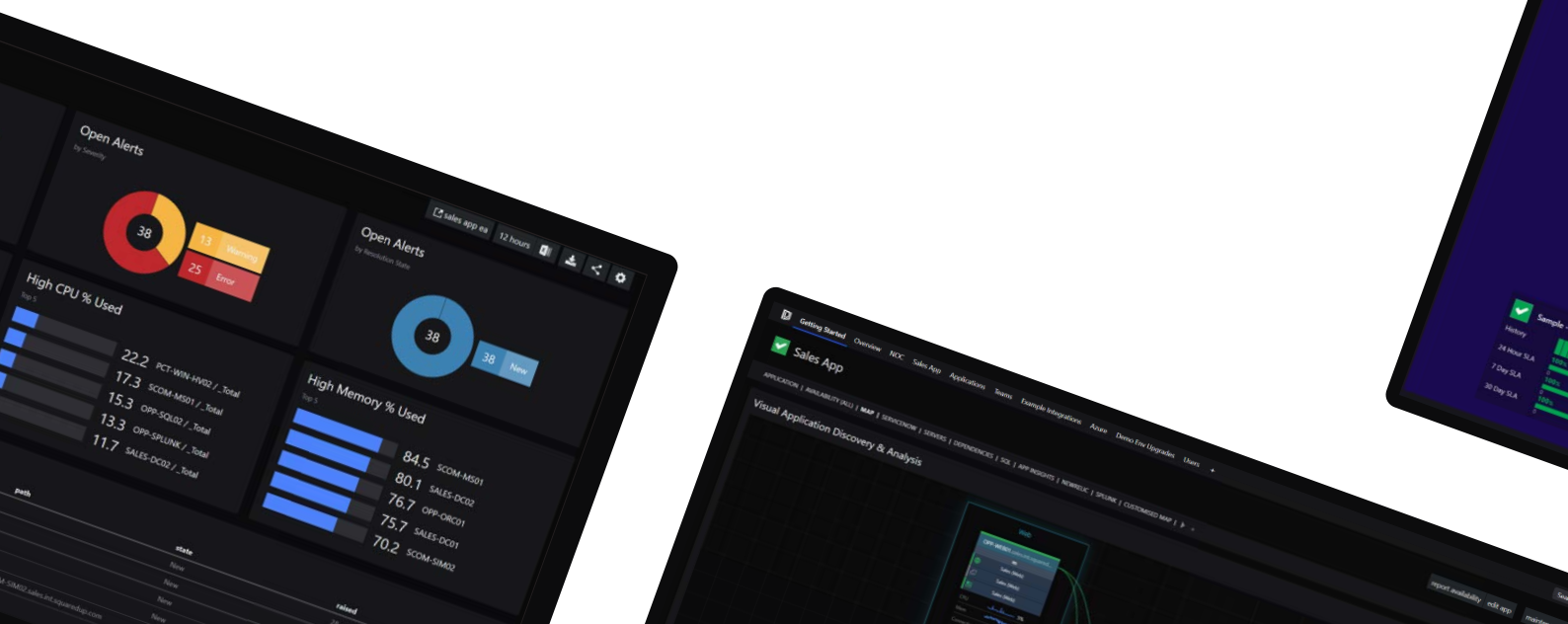
Unlock the true potential of SCOM - 2: Add context to your data

Data all in one place

• Avoid data siloes as much as you can. Pull all your contextual data into one dashboard – from both SCOM and other tools, such as Splunk, ServiceNow, Dynatrace, Pingdom, and more.

• With SquaredUp, you can achieve this for basically any other tool that has an API. It's super easy and fast. And if your data can't be accessed via API, there are also PowerShell and Elasticsearch integrations you can use.

Map your application dependencies

• Step beyond monitoring infrastructure and monitor your applications. Map your application dependencies to get that big picture overview.

• With SquaredUp, application mapping is automatic.
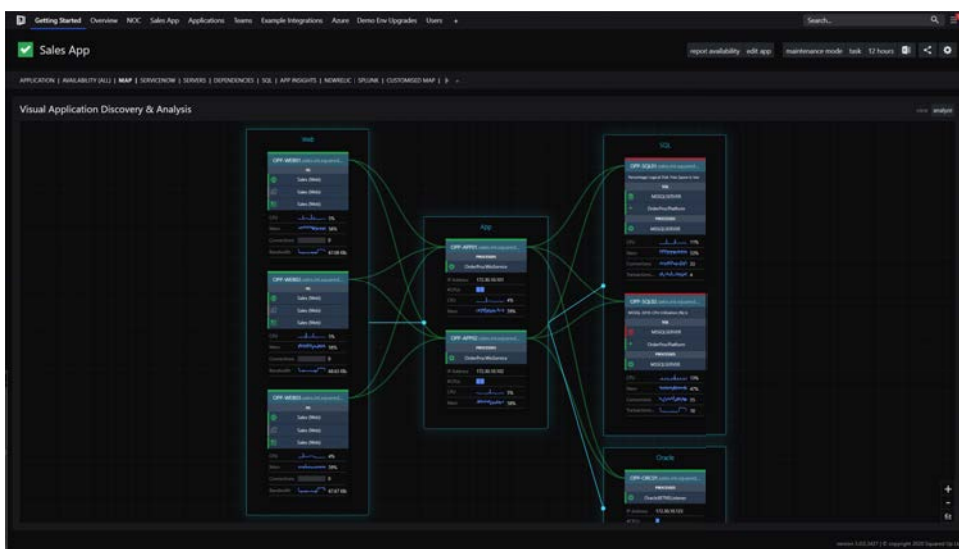
Unlock the true potential of SCOM - 3:
Engage the wider team/business

Unlock SCOM for everyone

• Navigating SCOM requires a high level of skill. With this replacement SCOM console, non-Admins can now browse SCOM data too. It's easy to share interactive SquaredUp dashboards with non-monitoring professionals – including support teams, app teams, SQL teams, etc—and their managers. Conversely, the SCOM web console is not user-friendly for non-SCOM admins – it's still very much a console…

• For the SCOM team, this not only shows the value of SCOM data, but also takes the load off your team when it comes to answering basic queries on availability and health status, freeing you up to perform more valuable work.

Share dashboards with everyone

• With SquaredUp's Open Access feature, it is effortless to share and publish non-interactive, real-time dashboards on the intranet, on wall monitors, or via a link – even for people without SquaredUp access. No added licenses required—it is that easy to get others engaged!

SquaredUp

How other Enterprises are dashboarding SCOM successfully

Now that you're up to speed on how to get the most out of SCOM, you might be curious about what it looks like in practice. Let's take a look at how Tom and Jason of UMB Bank and South Staffordshire College have done it.

Tom Riddle
Systems Architect
UMB Bank

UMB
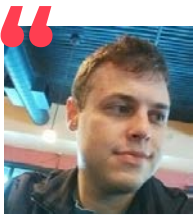
Single pane of glass for all your integrations

"We needed to get all our operational data into one place – SCOM – and surface and display this info intuitively. This is where SquaredUp hugely benefited us as a single-pane-of-glass."

With 10-15 different operational data sources including Splunk, ServiceNow, Zena and Puppet, Tom and his team needed an easy way to view all the data in one place.

Splunk	ServiceNow	Puppet	IBM APM	Office 365	VMware

"Once we got all our operational data into SCOM, SquaredUp facilitated the telemetry of all the different parts of monitoring into one place. It was so much easier to diagram using VADA. And way easier for end users to consume than the HTML 5 SCOM web portal."

Tom Riddle, Systems Architect, UMB Bank

VADA: Application
mapping in SquaredUp

Jason Whitaker
Director of IT
South Staffordshire College

South Staffordshire College

Uncover root cause quickly

*"SquaredUp's drilldowns were like a wow
moment for the team – when you click
through and finally uncover the root of the
problem. It gives us an end-to-end solution.
I don't know how I'd live without it now."*

On top of providing a big
picture overview, SquaredUp
makes it easy to get detailed
health and performance
metrics, dig into difficult
problems and quickly locate
root causes.

SquaredUp

Use case #1: Campus Wi-fi

Within a month of getting started with SquaredUp, Jason's team was able to fix a major Wi-Fi issue that had been ongoing for 4 months. They were seeing delays when users tried to connect their devices to their new £200,000 Wi-Fi solution.

The team originally assumed that the problem lay with the new Wi-Fi and multiple third-party consultancy companies that were brought in. They replaced devices and access points, upgraded the switches network, and changed the DNS pointers for servers. But after four months and a chunk of budget spent, they still couldn't get to the bottom of the issue.
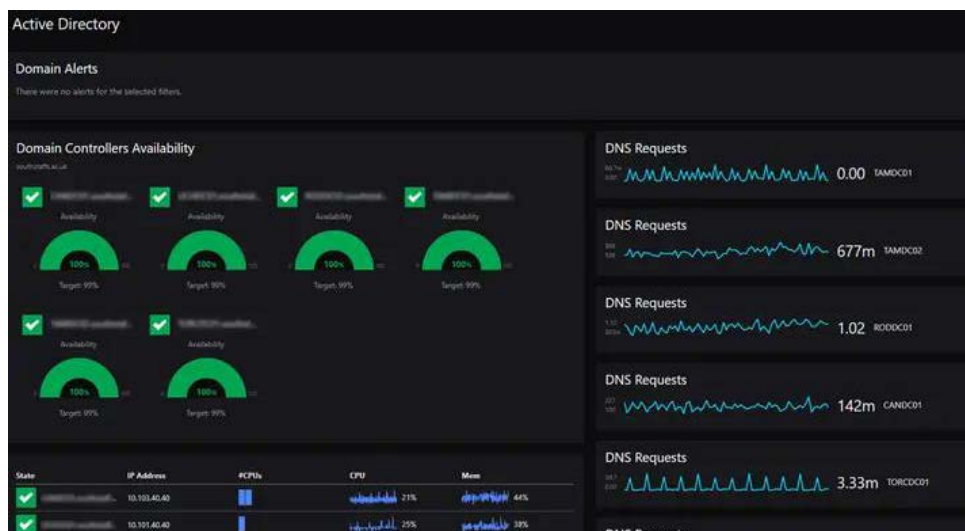
Implementing SquaredUp was a game changer. With new visibility, the team identified the issue – their domain controllers were getting too many requests from one of the access points. "There was no way we could have seen that before. Thanks to SquaredUp, all we had to do was fix the access point," said Jason.

66

Visibility across the business

"The Open Access feature helps us prove to the business that we're making a difference. And it displays exactly the info we need with such simplicity."

SquaredUp

Use case #2: Sharing VPN availability publicly

Using SquaredUp, Jason's team has instant visibility over how many users are connected to the VPN, the CPU utilization of their VPN solution, and how many DNS requests hit their domain controllers.
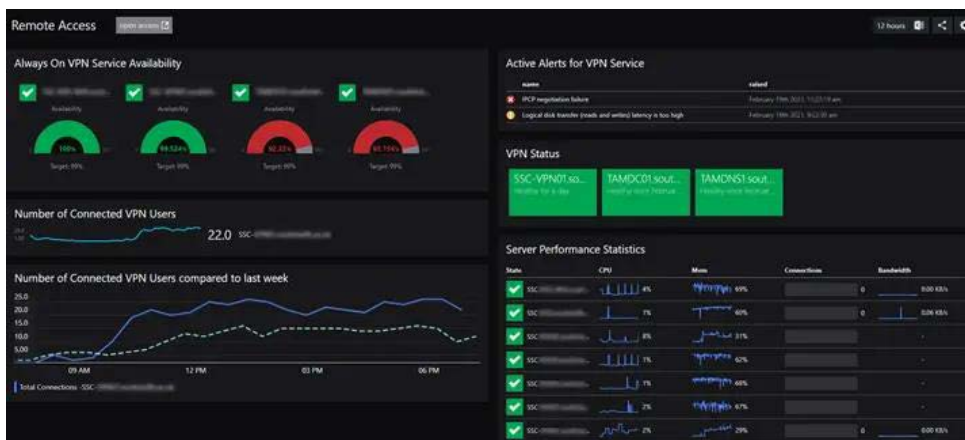
They have SLA/SLOs set up for the VPNs and have taken visibility to the next level by disseminating this information across the business using SquaredUp's shared dashboard feature – Open Access.

> **"**
>
> *"With people working from home, it was important to give them visibility of the VPN availability. It also makes our lives easier. Instead of ringing us or logging a ticket straight away, anyone who has connectivity to Office 365 within our tenant can check our VPN availability published publicly on our intranet first."*

No onslaught of emails, no call center ringing admins in the middle of the night!

Do it with SquaredUp

Would you like to see other examples of how SquaredUp can help you get the most out of your SCOM data? Check out our guides on:

[Getting insight, not just data](#)

[Reducing monitoring silos](#)

[Sharing application status with the business](#)

SquaredUp

Getting started with dashboarding SCOM

If you'd like to try your hand at SquaredUp and see what you can whip up for your SCOM data, take out a free trial here, or book a demo with one of our solutions engineers. Alternatively, you may drop us a line at hello@squaredup.com. We look forward to chatting!

"

"SCOM has all the data, and using SquaredUp was like a light bulb moment for the team. Now we can access every piece of information in a few clicks!"

Jason Whitaker, Director of IT, South Staffordshire College

SquaredUp