

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

A DevOps APPROACH TO DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SUCCESS

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THIS EXECUTIVE BRIEF IS A SUMMARY OF THE WHITE PAPER:

DevOps: Unlocking the Value from Digital Transformation - A CxO's Guide

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INTRODUCTION

- The white paper, aimed at CxOs of large enterprises and public sector organisations:
 1. Examines the drivers behind digital transformation
 2. Explores the problems in starting and scaling these initiatives
 3. Discusses how DevOps can help overcome these problems
 4. Includes case studies to illustrate the benefits of a DevOps approach
 5. Provides a roadmap for CxOs starting out on this journey
- Digital transformation strategies are helping established companies in all industries cope with disruption and remain competitive. This is particularly pertinent in an age where start-ups enter established markets with new business models that can redefine a whole market overnight.
- In this digital age, it has been estimated that 6 of the top 20 companies in every industry will face serious disruption. Now more than ever, organisations are measured by the speed at which they deliver new products and services. A failure to digitally transform the enterprise could be catastrophic.

DEFINITIONS

- DevOps means people, process and the right tools working together to make product delivery lifecycle faster and more predictable.
- Digital Transformation involves harnessing the four digital disruptors of Social, Mobile, Analytics and Cloud (together known as 'The Third Platform') to do something fundamentally different. The results of employing these technologies can result in significantly more efficient internal business processes, new business models or revenue streams or a completely new customer experience.



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BUSINESS BENEFITS

- DevOps addresses the missing element that many Agile projects suffer at the execution stage, (when code is released into production) - by including operational teams early enough in the development cycle - thereby avoiding deployment bottlenecks.
- Digital Transformation needs to be underpinned by a solid platform to deliver and support new applications, services and technologies. DevOps provides this, allowing organisations to release updates frequently, glean customer feedback, improve and iterate.
- One aspect of DevOps is it introduces the use of automated software to tackle monotonous and repetitive tasks. This has two key benefits; allowing staff to spend more time on the satisfying and creative elements of their job, and cutting instances of human error.

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IMPORTANT DATA

- High-performing IT organisations, according to the 'State of DevOps Report' 2016:
 1. Deploy code 200 times more frequently than low performing ones
 2. Have a 24x faster recovery time and spend 50% less time on security issues
 3. Spend 22% less time on unplanned work
- By the end of 2016, IDC predict 80% of large enterprises will have harnessed DevOps. Its rise up the corporate agenda is attributed to the inadequacies of Agile as a digital project delivery model.

KEY POINTS

- For CxO's with Digital Transformation at the top of their agenda, success will be a lot faster if traditional approaches to deliver change in software projects (Waterfall , PRINCE2) are replaced with DevOps and Continuous Delivery that enable Agile development.
- It is a common misconception of many CxOs that DevOps just means introducing automated services. But automation is just one component of DevOps. The culture and development process DevOps introduces is also crucial to delivering value from digital transformation projects.
- One of the key ways DevOps unlocks value within an organisation is it removes silos (the communication barriers between teams), which means no one person or team becomes an obstacle to progressing software delivery.
- CALMS is a model for DevOps that extends beyond the IT department:
 1. Culture - winning hearts and minds to embrace change
 2. Automation - using automation to reduce cost and improve efficiency
 3. Lean - focusing on value for end users
 4. Metrics - measuring everything so as to show improvement
 5. Sharing - share everything, cross-unit collaboration

KEY POINTS (cont.)

- The '3 Ways of DevOps', as defined by Gene Kim, co-author of the Phoenix Project:
 1. Systems Thinking – focus on the entire system and flow
 2. Amplified feedback loops – reduces waste and re-work
 3. Culture of Continual Experimentation and Learning - encourages risk-taking and learning from failure
- In DevOps, security professionals should be included at the outset as part of the software product team, not bolted-on as an afterthought. This contrasts with traditional thinking, where security teams would only get involved once the software had been deployed to computing infrastructure. The DevOps way will reduce issues arising afterwards.

CHALLENGES

- For DevOps initiatives to be successful, C-level and Board sponsorship is a prerequisite. Without this, it is easy for projects to fizzle out rather than successfully expand and transform the business.
- The end-to-end nature of DevOps challenges organisations. It requires teams to be 'product-centric' and look beyond the 'project model' of IT, taking responsibility for the complete software product lifecycle. No longer confined to developers or IT, DevOps involves other roles including business analysts, user experience designers, database administrators and security professionals.
- DevOps challenges the status quo that teams are used to. Fear of the new creates resistance to change, often stifling progress. But business leaders must embrace these changes in order to unlock innovation more efficiently.
- Hiring experienced people with DevOps skills in the UK is problematic. The skills shortage is a significant reason organisations are struggling to get DevOps initiatives off the ground.
- The internal knowledge gap in software skills that exists in companies with an over-reliance on outsourced IT is often problematic when implementing digital transformation initiatives. Outsourcers' internal processes, infrastructure and skills can't cope with sudden changes in direction or trying something new.
- Employees keen to use DevOps may be held back by hierarchies and budgetary constraints which concern older technologies. If their needs are not met, they may be headhunted by rivals, further weakening their old employers.

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CASE STUDY

- The value unlocked by Digital Transformation is demonstrated by leading companies across multiple industries. Not content with being mere 'digital players', companies like Airbus, Boeing, John Lewis, Barclays, Disney and Thomas Cook have evolved to become 'digital transformers' and 'disruptors' in their respective industries.

INDUSTRY IMPACT

- One reason 'FinTech' companies are disrupting financial services is their lack of 'technical debt'. In software terms, this is code that is substandard (in design, execution, or both), increasing the time, effort, and cost of development and release. This competitive advantage enables FinTech companies to quickly launch innovative ways to access money and credit.

TRENDS

- Trends observed in large organisations implementing DevOps:
 1. Shift from outsourcing - rebuilding internal development and ops teams as a central part of their Digital Transformation strategy
 2. Using contractors to build DevOps teams despite scarcity of skilled and experienced personnel
 3. Hybrid approach - retraining existing teams whilst drafting in external expertise

TAKEAWAYS

- Planning ahead is essential for successful DevOps initiatives. Involve all stakeholders early on; create a roadmap addressing practical elements to make required organisational changes. Keep sight of the business's goals, why DevOps is required and understand the skill sets required to make it work.
- Where is your business on IDC's Digital Transformation Maturityscape?
 1. Digital Resister - little infrastructure, automation, poor communication
 2. Digital Explorer - Aware of a need to improve but poor strategy
 3. Digital Player - Consistent development but limited innovation, no automation
 4. Digital Transformer - Market leader, using automation
 5. Digital Disruptor - Use innovation to reshape market
- A DevOps-based approach is more holistic than Agile because it treats software delivery as a single unified activity, it fosters collaboration between small teams across different business units, and it treats the ability to deploy, maintain, and scale as high-priority features from the outset

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TAKEAWAYS (cont.)

- What is preventing organisations from getting started with Digital Transformation or DevOps?
 1. Failure to appreciate the urgency
 2. Existing inflexible bureaucratic structures
 3. Misunderstanding the risks involved
 4. An over-dependence on external IT resources
 5. A lack of training
 6. Lacking appreciation of the improvements they can bring
- IT leaders can take a lead in aligning Digital Transformation and DevOps using the '3 Is'; Innovate (with the business to create a digital enterprise); Integrate (new digital capabilities with the existing enterprise platform); and Incorporate (new techniques and technologies into the IT organisation).
- Effective DevOps requires the right internal capabilities. Augmenting existing talent with external DevOps expertise is often the best way to transition to DevOps, whilst also enabling skills transfer.



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