eBook

Five Signs You Need a Modern DevOps Solution

Rocket
LEGACY POWERS LEGENDARY

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Introduction

If you're developing applications on the IBM® i platform, there's a good chance you already have a development or change management process in place. But as the needs of your users grow more complex, so do the processes required to meet them. Web and mobile needs often entail multi-platform development, as well as different processes. Complex application development processes require greater oversight to ensure that all the necessary steps have been taken before code is promoted and released. Regulatory requirements mean that you must fully document processes and adherence to them. New IDEs, source control tools, and other open-source options add additional layers of complexity. Considering all these factors, the potential for delays, application failures, and productivity loss is much higher today than it has ever been in the past.

These increased requirements can only be met successfully with a modern DevOps approach that helps you automate workflows, reduce errors, increase productivity, and fulfill compliance requirements—all while meeting the needs of your specific environment. To be successful, you need assurance that your application lifecycle management (ALM) solution is keeping up with your modern business requirements. What are the warning signs that you need to watch for?

This eBook outlines the five areas to consider when sizing up your current solution, and what to look for when you've decided to switch to one that's more comprehensive.

Web and mobile development is out of sync with IBM i development

Most of the time, web and mobile developers follow an agile development process, often delivering new capabilities in cycles measured in weeks, not months. IBM i developers have traditionally used the waterfall approach, which focuses on completeness instead of availability—and typically takes much longer than agile. When two separate, asynchronous methodologies are involved in application development, how do you ensure that all modules are ready?

A comprehensive ALM solution takes asynchronous DevOps development schedules into account, ensuring that all parties know their responsibilities and deadlines before code is promoted. If your solution doesn't have this capacity you run the risk of having to back out changes (assuming that your solution can) and divert resources from other efforts in order to fix the problem.

Deployment is not fully automated

Deploying multi-platform applications can be complicated and prone to errors, involving multiple developers across disciplines who must all complete their process, as well as approvers who must all sign off the completed work. Without an automated approach, many organizations resort to writing and executing complex scripts, taking it on faith that all activities are accounted for. Others opt for manual deployments, with all the risk it entails. Either way, employees will lose sleep accomplishing their tasks or worrying about completing them on time.

Unless your ALM solution enables you to automate the complete deployment process—managing deliverables and automatically requesting approvals—you run the risk of introducing errors at multiple points during the process. That can affect your productivity, threaten service-level agreements (SLAs), and even compromise user productivity.

Your solution is too complicated and rigid

Every organization is different, and an ALM solution that forces your company to comply with predefined development and deployment processes may affect your team's productivity and effectiveness. Instead, your lifecycle management software should be flexible enough to adapt to the demands of any team, any application, and any DevOps process. It should enable you to manage simple solutions right out of the box, or handle complex requirements without having to create macros and scripts.

Time saved versus time spent is an important metric for any DevOps administrator. If your ALM solution requires a significant time investment to learn and use, the time it might save in application delivery may be offset by resources necessary to ensure implementation. A useful ALM solution should be easy to implement, easy to configure, and easy to use.

If your solution can't meet these requirements, it may not be the best fit for your organization.

It doesn't meet your compliance needs

Some development organizations spend as much as 30 percent of their time on compliance reporting and audit preparation. That means you may be devoting large amounts of time and resources to work that doesn't help drive revenue or improve user productivity. Most ALM solutions offer some level of compliance functionality, but if you're still writing your own reports, mining your own data, keeping months of email history, and archiving paper copies, your current system is costing you much more than you realize.

With modern ALM software solutions, DevOps best practices are enforced without requiring you to think about compliance. They can even help you ensure separation of duties at a granular level. Comprehensive ALM solutions also include special report templates designed specifically for auditors. Rather than scrambling to pull reports together at the last minute, your team can stay focused on building quality software. If you can't say that about your current solution, it's time to look elsewhere.
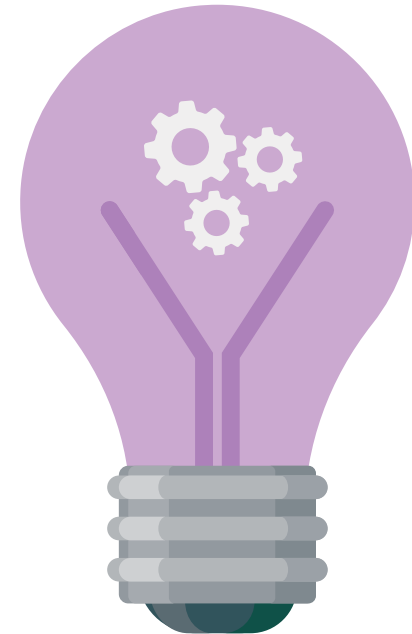
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Your solution isn't staying current

As technology and approaches evolve, your ALM solution needs to meet those changing needs. If your current vendor isn't investing in the future, it's a clear sign that they aren't committed to their product's future—or yours.

Here are some tell-tale signs that your software change management vendor simply isn't keeping up their end of the bargain:

- New releases are few and far between, and releases focus on bug fixes and compatibility rather than functional enhancements.
- They seem unable (or unwilling) to embrace new industry trends in a timely fashion.
- They exhibit little to no desire to respond to customer demands.

No one has a crystal ball that can predict what the future holds for their business or for the technology landscape. That's why it's critical to choose a software partner who responds and adapts to changing markets and the associated requirements.

Questions to consider when building a business case

Do these warnings sound familiar? If so, it's time to switch to an up-to-date lifecycle management solution developed by a partner invested in your success. Recognizing that you need to move away from your current solution may be the easy part. Justifying the time and the expense to make the change could be a bigger challenge. It's crucial to understand the costs of poor DevOps support:

- What is the cost of errors directly attributed to mistakes, flaws, or shortcomings of your current solution?

- What are the costs to your business, to your customers, and to your reputation from an improperly compiled change, an incomplete deployment, or an untested, unapproved change?

- How much of your own development effort is devoted to making your current solution fit your needs? How much time is it taking your team to customize and extend your current solution with macros, scripts, and additional software? Once your team has created scripts, how much time does it take to maintain and support them?

- What is the efficiency of your team worth? How much extra time is your team spending to ensure that compiles, promotions, deployments, and installations are done correctly, on time, and are fully documented?

- How much money are you paying for yearly maintenance, and what are you getting in return?

- How much longer can you afford to write (and maintain) a home-grown solution that doesn't fully meet your needs today, and probably won't tomorrow?

- How much is it costing you to manually comply with stringent internal or external auditing requirements? How much time and money could you save if some (or all) of those steps were automated?

- Are you being held back by your existing DevOps software? Is it preventing you from moving to the latest operating system or taking advantage of new features such as iASP, SQL, ILE, database conversion, or stored procedures?

Rocket Software: Switch to a future-proof change management solution

Organizations that don't adapt to the changing business and IT landscape simply won't survive. That's why Rocket Software is committed to helping customers adapt their IBM i software development lifecycle to a best-practices DevOps approach. Since our acquisition of Aldon in 2011, we have continued their tradition of providing industry-leading ALM solutions for IBM i and mixed-platform environments.

Companies that rely on the IBM i platform have been depending on Rocket® ALM solutions to optimize their change and configuration management for more than 30 years. Our customers recognize that we have the experience and knowledge to become their trusted advisor in software change management best practices. We understand and offer software that helps them solve their problems because we've seen them before, and helped thousands of customers around the world solve the same kinds of problems.

While other vendors have cut back on development, documentation, and testing specialists, we've expanded and invested heavily in research and product development. With Rocket, you get assurance that your ALM solution will keep pace with new industry trends and operating system enhancements.

We put customers first

We're committed to providing the best customer experience, from implementation and configuration to ongoing support. We're here for enhancements, upgrade help, continuous training, and more. We think of our customers as partners, and we're in it for the long run.

We're committed to R&D

Our investments in product development increase every year, and we're laser-focused on giving our customers the best change management product on the market today:

- We support the latest IBM i operating systems as they are announced.
- We release new industry-mandated and customer-requested functionality in each new version.

Our partnership with IBM

Rocket is a trusted, strategic IBM partner, with a relationship that began more than 25 years ago. Our partnership spans multiple IBM brands, solutions, and platforms, including IBM Z and Power® Systems. We develop products and deliver services that drive even more successful outcomes for IBM customers around the globe.

Key features you need

Here are some of the reasons you should take a look at IBM i change management solutions from Rocket.

Rocket Aldon® Lifecycle Management Software

- Works out of the box, with no macros to write and maintain

- Provides support for both IBM i and mixed-platform computing environments

- Enables synchronization between both enterprise and mobile application development

- Provides role-based security, separation of duties, and automatic logging to comply with the most stringent auditing requirements

- Delivers comprehensive, web-based insight and reporting to fulfill compliance requirements

- Helps you easily manage concurrent development, multiple releases, and conflict resolution

- Offers strong support for advanced SQL and ILE

- Supports most popular IDS, tools, and applications such as Git, Jenkins, Subversion, Rational, CA 2E, Databorough X/Analysis, Zend, Microsoft Visual Studio, and more

- Supports application modernization through conversion to ILE

- Supports database modernization through conversion to SQL

- Enables workstation and mobile-based management and tracking of DevOps processes

- Doesn't require you to deploy source code to the production machine; in fact, it's not recommended

- Helps increase developer productivity with a powerful user interface that's easy to learn and use

- Offers powerful cross-referencing capabilities to ensure speedy and accurate analysis, helping eliminate downtime from level checks

About Rocket Software

Rocket Software empowers organizations to create legendary impact in the world through innovation in legacy technology. With deep expertise in IBM Z, IBM Power, and embedded database systems and application servers, Rocket solutions power tens of thousands of global businesses, solving real problems and making real-world impact. Rocket is a privately held U.S. corporation headquartered in the Boston area with centers of excellence strategically located in Europe, Asia, and Australia.

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