



Modernizing for Developer Productivity and Talent Attraction

Making the mainframe a place people want to build

Executive intro

Your IBM Z® environment runs the applications your business depends on. Yet the teams who keep it running face long backlogs, manual processes, and a shrinking pool of experienced talent. At the same time, the business keeps asking for more, faster.

CIOs tell us they want their core platform to feel modern, not legacy. They want developers to ship quickly, spend less time on repetitive tasks, and work with the tools and practices they already know. And they want modernization to help attract and keep talent rather than risk it through a disruptive rip-and-replace. This brief lays out how senior IT leaders are thinking about developer productivity and talent attraction, and how Rocket® Software helps you modernize without disruption.

Who it's for

This brief is written for CIOs and senior IT leaders at highly regulated mainframe organizations. If you're balancing delivery speed, modernization pressure, skills shortages, and the need to make your core platform attractive to current and future talent, this is for you.

The top challenges CIOs Face

Backlog and manual work.

Development teams move slower than the business needs because processes aren't standardized or automated, and developers get pulled into non-development tasks that keep the backlog growing.

DevOps complexity.

Monitoring and reporting across end-to-end processes gets harder with every new tool, changing process, and customer demand.

Integration friction.

Traditional IBM Z[®] environments are tough to connect with modern tools like Git, Jenkins, and Jira, slowing the move toward CI/CD.

Retiring expertise. Nearly half of organizations report mainframe experts retiring, often without documentation of the business logic running on core systems.

Competition for talent. Some 89% of large-enterprise CIOs report more competition for qualified IT talent, and the stigma that the mainframe is "too legacy" discourages new people from entering the field.

Top priorities CIOs are setting

- Improve the developer experience so teams can respond to the business with speed and confidence.
- Standardize and automate workflows to shrink backlog and reduce manual effort.
- Enable modern DevOps and CI/CD practices across IBM Z[®], not just on distributed platforms.
- Lower training friction so next-gen and non-mainframe staff can contribute quickly.
- Reposition the mainframe as a modern, AI-ready platform that attracts and retains talent.
- Treat modernization as a strategic investment in skills and agility, not a risky overhaul.

How Rocket Software helps: the solution

Rocket Software partners with you to modernize in place, meeting your teams wherever they are. The philosophy is simple: do less to do more. We help you unlock talent and resources, automate to accelerate, and build agility across your systems.

01 Standardize and automate workflows. Rocket® DevOps standardizes and automates each step of your pipeline, including JCL transformation across environments, so developers spend less time on repetitive tasks and more time delivering value. With solutions like Rocket® ChangeMan, teams gain controlled, auditable release management that reduces errors and accelerates development cycles.

02 Bring modern DevOps and CI/CD to IBM Z®. Rocket solutions integrate with the tools your teams already use — such as Git, Jenkins, and Jira — while enabling open-source and third-party tools that don't work natively with Z. A common pipeline lets you place workloads where they make the most sense, improving collaboration across distributed and mainframe teams.

03 Orchestrate work across hybrid environments. Rocket® Enterprise Orchestrator unifies workload automation across mainframe and distributed systems, giving developers a single view of dependencies and execution. With Rocket® AI Predictive Pulse, teams can anticipate issues before they impact delivery — reducing firefighting, improving SLA performance, and allowing developers to stay focused on innovation.

04 Reduce training friction. Rocket® Modern Experience transforms green screens into intuitive web, mobile, and cloud interfaces, while advanced terminal emulation simplifies daily operations. These modern, user-friendly experiences shorten onboarding time and enable new developers to contribute faster.

05 Open systems with APIs. Rocket® API breaks up monolithic applications and service-enables core business logic, making it easier to integrate with modern applications. Developers can more easily experiment with new technologies — including AI — without needing deep legacy expertise.

06 Increase visibility and developer insight. Rocket performance and observability solutions provide real-time insight into application behavior and system performance, helping developers quickly identify and resolve issues. This reduces time spent diagnosing problems and improves overall development velocity.

Why this approach works

Rip-and-replace projects carry real risk; more than half of organizations report attempting six or more mainframe rewrite projects because of repeated failures. Modernizing in place protects the business logic and reliability you already trust while giving teams modern tools, automation, and interfaces. The payoff shows up in delivery and morale alike: one life-insurance company saw a 30% boost in development productivity and stronger DevOps readiness after modernizing.

Decision-maker takeaway:

This approach reduces delivery risk, accelerates time to market, and makes your platform a place developers want to work, directly supporting the productivity and talent goals you're measured against.

Requirements and considerations

- Map your current development workflow and identify where manual effort and backlog build up.
- Document the business logic on core applications before experienced staff retire.
- Plan for integration with your existing modern toolchain and DevOps practices.
- Favor tools that next-gen staff can use without deep mainframe expertise, and pair new hires with seasoned experts to transfer knowledge.

Next step

See how Rocket Software can help your teams do less to do more, without disrupting the systems your business depends on. Schedule a working session with our team to map your developer productivity and talent priorities to a practical, low-risk plan.

[Talk to an expert](#)

Productivity and talent checklist

Use this as a quick readiness check for productivity-focused modernization:

- We've mapped our development workflow and located backlog bottlenecks.
- DevOps steps are standardized and automated, including JCL transformation.
- Our IBM Z® pipeline integrates with modern tools like Git, Jenkins, and Jira.
- DevOps monitoring and reporting are unified and easy to act on.
- Green screens can be modernized into web, mobile, or cloud experiences.
- Core functions are API-enabled for integration and experimentation.
- Onboarding and training friction for next-gen staff is low.
- Business logic on core applications is documented before experts retire.
- Knowledge transfer pairs new hires with seasoned mainframe staff.
- Modernization is positioned as a path to attract, retain, and upskill talent.



Modernization. **Without Disruption.**™

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