



Solution Brief:

Vendor Efficiency as a Mainframe Modernization Strategy



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Executive introduction:

What leaders expect from vendor efficiency

For CIOs and senior IT leaders in highly regulated industries, mainframe modernization must balance **innovation with risk control**. The mainframe remains the system of record for mission-critical transactions, sensitive data, and regulatory compliance, but managing a fragmented ecosystem of vendors has become a barrier to agility, cost efficiency, and operational resilience.

Vendor efficiency represents a pragmatic path forward by **modernizing in place while simplifying the vendor landscape**. Rather than introducing disruption through wholesale platform change, organizations can reduce complexity, improve accountability, and align around fewer strategic partners that deliver integrated capabilities across the lifecycle.

In a successful, efficient environment, CIOs expect:

- A simplified, governed software ecosystem aligned to modernization outcomes.
- Reduced and more predictable cost structures.
- Stronger vendor accountability and partnership.
- Integrated tooling across development, operations, security, and data.
- Embedded intelligence and AI to augment teams and improve decision-making.

Rocket Software supports this vision with a broad portfolio spanning application modernization, operations, automation, security, and data — helping organizations improve agility, performance, and resilience while modernizing the mainframe in place.



Top challenges driving vendor efficiency

01 Rising and unpredictable costs

Many organizations carry years of accumulated mainframe tools, overlapping licenses, and vendor-specific commercial models. As budgets tighten, CIOs and procurement leaders are looking for ways to reduce spending, improve cost transparency, and align licensing to actual business value.

02 Fragmented support models

Multiple vendors create ambiguity in ownership, slower incident resolution, and operational inefficiencies.

03 Siloed tooling

Disconnected tools across DevOps, performance, security, and automation limit visibility and make it harder to modernize holistically.

04 Increasing regulatory security and compliance pressure

Mainframes hold a significant share of enterprise-critical data and must meet evolving regulatory requirements, increasing demand for integrated and scalable security approaches. Organizations face growing pressure from regulations such as DORA and PCI 4.0, requiring stronger security, vulnerability management, compliance assessments, and rapid recovery capabilities.

05 Skills gaps and productivity constraints

Legacy tooling slows onboarding and productivity. Organizations need modern, AI-augmented solutions, expected by newer teams and to support scarce experienced talent. Mainframe modernization requires DevEx, modern development environments, automation, AI-assisted insights, and productivity improvements to help teams work more efficiently across mission-critical systems.



CIO priorities for vendor efficiency

For CIOs and senior IT leaders, vendor efficiency is not simply a sourcing exercise. It is a modernization lever that should advance strategic priorities across the organization.

Key priorities include:

Reduce cost without increasing risk

Rationalize overlapping products, simplify contracts, and reduce operational overhead while protecting critical workloads.

Improve resilience and availability

Ensure mission-critical services remain highly available, observable, recoverable, and secure.

Strengthen security and compliance posture

Consolidate around solutions that support vulnerability management, compliance assessments, access control, data protection, and recovery readiness.

Accelerate application delivery

Enable mainframe teams to adopt modern DevOps practices, integrated development environments, and automated release processes.

Increase operational visibility

Improve end-to-end monitoring across IBM Z®, middleware, databases, networks, distributed systems, and hybrid environments.

Simplify vendor governance

Shift from managing many transactional vendor relationships to working with fewer strategic partners accountable for outcomes.

Support modernization in place

Preserve the value of existing mainframe investments while enabling integration with cloud, distributed systems, automation platforms, and AI initiatives.

Improve procurement leverage and predictability

Create clearer enterprise agreements, reduce renewal complexity, and align commercial terms to modernization outcomes.



ROI Analysis: Quantifying the value of vendor efficiency

Vendor efficiency delivers measurable ROI across cost, productivity, risk reduction, and strategic agility.

01 Direct cost savings

- Elimination of overlapping tools and duplicate licensing.
- Reduced maintenance, support, and renewal costs.
- Lower infrastructure and integration overhead.

Typical outcome: 10–30% reduction in total mainframe software spend (depending on overlap).

02 Operational efficiency gains

- Reduced time spent managing vendors and resolving cross-vendor issues.
- Simplified architecture lowers integration and maintenance effort.
- Automation reduces manual workload and errors.

Rocket highlights that automation and productivity improvements can significantly reduce manual IT workload and accelerate operations.

Typical outcome: 15–25% reduction in operational overhead and faster incident resolution and change cycles.

03 Productivity improvements

- Modern DevEx tools improve developer efficiency and onboarding.
- AI-assisted capabilities accelerate analysis, troubleshooting, and decision-making.

Rocket innovations demonstrate that AI-driven tooling can reduce task time dramatically and speed developer ramp-up.

Typical outcome: Faster release cycles and improved developer productivity and retention.



04

Risk reduction & compliance value

- Consolidated security reduces gaps across tools and vendors.
- Improved visibility and governance strengthen compliance posture.
- Faster recovery capabilities reduce business impact.

Rocket emphasizes rapid recovery, vulnerability management precision, and compliance readiness as key benefits.

Typical outcome: Reduced audit findings and compliance risk.
Lower cost of incidents and downtime.

05

Strategic value & agility

- Faster adoption of modernization initiatives.
- Better alignment between IT and business priorities.
- Stronger vendor partnership model.

Overall ROI

Organizations typically realize payback within 12–24 months, with ongoing benefits scaling as consolidation enables broader modernization.



How Rocket Software can help

Rocket Software offers a broad set of mainframe modernization capabilities that can support a vendor efficiency strategy while helping organizations modernize in place, reduce complexity, and strengthen operational confidence.

01 | Application modernization & DevEx

Rocket can help organizations modernize mainframe application delivery by supporting modern development practices, improved developer experience, and stronger change governance.

- **Rocket® ChangeMan™ ZMF** – enterprise change and release management with governance and auditability.
- **Modern development environments** supporting DevOps workflows and developer productivity.
- **AI integration:** Rocket's AI-powered capabilities, including **Rocket® EVA™**, can assist developers and operators by accelerating code analysis, troubleshooting, and knowledge access — helping reduce reliance on scarce expertise.

Modernization value:

These solutions help CIOs reduce dependency on legacy development workflows, improve auditability, accelerate delivery, and make mainframe development more accessible to both experienced and newer developers.



02 | Operations & performance optimization

A successful consolidation strategy should improve operational control — not reduce it. Rocket provides performance and capacity management solutions that help organizations monitor, manage, and optimize mainframe environments.

- **Rocket® TMON® One** – integrated performance monitoring helps organizations monitor, manage, and optimize enterprise environments across IBM zSystems® and connected systems.
- **AI Integration:** TMON's Health AI capability provides deep analytics capabilities to enable proactive issue detection. Adding EVA provides natural language interaction for simpler and faster pinpointing of operation anomalies for faster root-cause analysis, and smarter capacity planning, minimizing downtime and improving system efficiency.

Modernization value:

These capabilities help IT leaders improve availability, optimize capacity, reduce performance-related risk, and provide stronger operational visibility across hybrid environments.

03 | Workload automation & orchestration

Vendor consolidation can also simplify automation by reducing the number of point tools used to manage batch, business workflows, and hybrid operations. Workload automation is a key solution area, focused on automating DevOps and business workflows, reducing errors, streamlining operations, and using predictive AI to optimize hybrid workloads.

- **Rocket Workload Automation / Zeke** – centralized scheduling and orchestration, including dependency handling and cross-platform workflow automation.

Modernization value:

These solutions can help organizations reduce manual effort, improve reliability, automate cross-platform processes, and support more consistent service delivery across mainframe, distributed, and cloud environments.



04 | Security, compliance, & resilience

For regulated industries, vendor consolidation must strengthen — not dilute — security and compliance controls. Rocket provides mainframe security capabilities and services designed to help organizations identify vulnerabilities, support compliance, improve access security, and recover more quickly from disruptive events.

- Vulnerability management, compliance assessments, and penetration testing.
- Rapid data recovery and ransomware response.
- Security conversion and advisory services.
- **AI integration** can enhance security teams by surfacing risk insights, accelerating threat investigation, and providing guided remediation actions — improving response time and audit readiness.

Modernization value:

These capabilities help CIOs and CISOs reduce risk, demonstrate compliance readiness, protect sensitive data, and build resilience into modernization programs.

05 | Data modernization & enterprise integration

Many modernization programs depend on better access to mainframe data without creating compliance exposure, unnecessary duplication, or operational disruption. A broader hybrid cloud and data modernization approach emphasizes helping organizations discover, access, replicate, synchronize, and store mainframe data without locking into a specific platform or cloud provider.

- Consistent data access, integration, and virtualization across mainframe and hybrid environments.
- Content services for unified governance and automation.
- Support for AI-ready data and analytics use cases for faster insights and drive data-driven decisions.

Modernization value:

These solutions help organizations make mainframe data more usable across the enterprise while maintaining consistent governance, privacy, and compliance controls.



Considerations & requirements for consolidation

- Align consolidation goals to business outcomes (cost, risk, agility).
- Inventory vendors, tools, contracts, and dependencies.
- Identify overlaps and modernization gaps.
- Assess regulatory, security, and operational risk impacts.
- Define future-state architecture and capability requirements.
- Evaluate vendor roadmap alignment and long-term viability.
- Ensure strong IT–procurement alignment on evaluation criteria.
- Plan phased transitions with minimal disruption.

Vendor efficiency readiness checklist

✓ Strategy & alignment

- Clear business case and success metrics defined.
- Executive sponsorship secured.
- Cross-functional alignment (IT, procurement, security, finance).

✓ Technical fit

- Future-state capabilities defined.
- Integration with hybrid and enterprise environments validated.
- AI and automation requirements considered.

✓ Current state

- Complete inventory of vendors and tools.
- Documented usage, dependencies, and criticality.
- Identified overlap and inefficiencies.

✓ Commercial evaluation

- Total cost of ownership assessed.
- Support and service models evaluated.
- Vendor roadmap and partnership fit validated.

✓ Risk & compliance

- Regulatory and audit dependencies mapped.
- Security and resilience implications assessed.
- Business continuity plans validated.

✓ Transition planning

- Phased roadmap created.
- Testing and validation approach defined.
- Change management and communication plan in place.



Closing perspective

Vendor consolidation is one of the most effective levers CIOs can use to modernize the mainframe without disruption. It simplifies the environment, strengthens accountability, reduces cost, and creates a foundation for innovation. The opportunity is not just to negotiate fewer contracts, it is to create a more integrated, secure, and future-ready mainframe ecosystem.

With Rocket Software, organizations can consolidate around a strategic partner that delivers **integrated capabilities across applications, operations, security, automation, and data enhanced by AI and EVA-driven intelligence**. The result is a simpler, more resilient, and more agile mainframe environment that is positioned to support the next generation of enterprise innovation without unnecessary disruption.



About Rocket Software

Rocket Software is a global technology leader in modernization and a partner of choice that empowers the world's leading businesses on their modernization journeys, spanning core systems to the cloud. Trusted by over 12,500 customers and 750 partners, and with more than 3,200 global employees, Rocket Software enables customers to maximize their data, applications, and infrastructure to deliver critical services that power our modern world.

Rocket Software is a privately held U.S. corporation headquartered in the Boston area with centers of excellence strategically located throughout North America, Europe, Asia and Australia. Rocket Software is a portfolio company of Bain Capital Private Equity.



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