

Making App Dev Truly Agile

It wasn't long ago that serious business thinkers were asking the question, *Does IT Matter?*¹ The question raised the possibility that IT was becoming a commodity that offered no meaningful differentiation. Well, no one's asking that question anymore.

Success, as you've probably recognized, increasingly revolves around applications. Apps are now your levers of profitability, productivity, and innovation. As executive leaders in all industries have come to learn, you can't meet your primary business objectives without commitment to the mastery of business applications.

Whether your apps are designed to enhance the customer experience, strengthen partner and supply chain relationships, or drive operational excellence and efficiency, it's clear that applications have become critical to the creation of business value and the sustainability of competitive differentiation.

However, companies today are realizing they lack an agile platform to support their agile development objectives. Don't be one. Read on to learn how you can overcome this challenge and strategically capitalize on the promise of business applications.

Confronting Your Business Imperatives

According to research firm Gartner, business applications typically take on one of three major roles². There are:

- **Systems of record.** Systems designed to reduce costs such as ERP (e.g. cutting order to ship time, enabling just in time inventory management, enhancing staff shift efficiency).

- **Systems of differentiation.** Systems designed to enhance customer experiences such as E-Commerce (e.g. matching customers to products, highly interactive and intuitive design, customer order tracking).
- **Systems of innovation.** Systems designed to set you apart and drive up sales such as CRM (e.g. targeted email outreach, click to video chat, self-guided customer support tools).

As a business leader, you're challenged to ensure your applications offer a sustainable edge. Apps are the path to addressing business imperatives including innovation, the development of new business models, and that the delivery of superior customer experiences. But apps also enable you to address foundational imperatives: operational efficiency and effectiveness, supply chain agility, and human capital management.

You can't get there, however, without mastering the management and development of business applications. You have to produce better apps, more rapidly and productively without sacrificing the quality of your code.

Embracing the DevOps Phenomenon

This explains why companies are now intently focused on agile development. Unlike waterfall development strategies of the past, agile represents a path toward the rapid creation of applications. It enables development and operational groups to collaborate – producing the "DevOps" phenomenon.

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1 Carr, Nicholas, *Does IT Matter? Information Technology and the Corrosion of Competitive Advantage*, 2004.
2 Genovese, Yvonne, *Accelerating Innovation by Adopting a Pace-Layered Application Strategy*, 2012.



The DevOps approach streamlines and strengthens code production. It's the difference between an on-prem software release that comes once a year ... and Amazon.com deploying new code to its site every 11.6 seconds.³

And the returns for those who embrace this strategy just keep coming. As Scott Cook, founder of the tax software giant Intuit, puts it: "By installing a rampant innovation culture, we now do 165 experiments in the three months of tax season. Our business result? Conversion rate of the website is up 50 percent. Employee result? Everyone loves it, because now their ideas can make it to market."⁴

³ Kim, Gene, [Keynote: Why We Need DevOps](#), 2012.

⁴ Kim, Gene, [DevOps Patterns Distilled: Implementing the Needed Practices in Practical Steps](#), 2014.

When Agile is Anything But...

Agile is delivering business benefits for some. But not all – not at anywhere near the level it might. This is the problem: agile development can't be truly rolled out and made fully real in the absence of agile platforms.

Today, many organizations simply experience a "hot mess" of application management. With a variety of application types and a vast amount of unmanageable data, there is simply no end to the problems that ensue.

Application developers are burdened with organizational friction, project delays, communication breakdowns, and infrastructure complexity. That complexity naturally arises in an environment in which activities occur both on-premises and off-premises with a mix of legacy and modern IT.

So what happens when your platform is not agile? In brief, you can expect to experience a great deal of pain. Application development takes too much time. The parties involved have too little control over the process. And expenses are too great to bear when IT budgets are flat-lining or even declining.

Consider a typical cadence. It might take one to two weeks to make a change management request. Then it might take one more week for a server administrator to make necessary compute resources available. Next, it takes another week to provision necessary storage. And, finally, it might take a database administrator 20+ hours to create a test/dev database and mask the data that's being drawn upon.

Such barriers undermine the whole purpose and promise of an agile development initiative. They impede your progress and extinguish the enthusiasm of your people. They render you vulnerable to rivals who are prepared to move at an accelerated pace.

And these flaws in your AppDev environment have business consequences. Customer expectations go unmet and disappointments go unaddressed. It takes too long to roll out new applications or necessary revisions and updates. As the market accelerates and begins moving at an increasingly intense pace, you run the risk of being left behind.



Putting a Virtualized Data Process in Place

What if you could radically compress the time associated with application development and deployment? Given that the conventional process might take 2 to 4 weeks, it's now time to consider alternative approaches.

One alternative to consider is a Virtualized Data Process. Through this approach, you can compress application deployment to mere minutes with any size database and any number of copies to create. You can dramatically cut costs, centralize control, and reduce app deployment time.

With an Agile DevOps platform based on a Virtualized Data Process, you can provide an enhanced customer experience at a lower cost. You can make the interactions with your customers increasingly pleasing and compelling. You can also drive efficiencies in your operational processes, cutting expenses as a result.

Imagine you could produce eight releases of your business application every year when your competitor could only produce one or two. Imagine you could eliminate duplicate IT infrastructures. With an agile app development platform, you'll take your business applications to the next level and use them to build a true competitive advantage.

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Engaging Stakeholders, Overcoming Obstacles

To get there, you have to overcome the obstacles now facing your people. Here are the types of concerns and objectives they may be voicing now:

- **Your development manager:** "I have to wait 45 days internally to get access to a server. Public cloud isn't an option due to security and data concerns. Why can't I use the DR site for Development?"
- **Your operations manager:** "We finally can keep up with ticketing and provision requests but I still need to wait for production data for UAT."
- **Your CIO:** "I need to find innovative ways to save costs while meeting our app request backlog."
- **Your application owner:** "We never had a disaster, so it's harder to justify our dedicated colocation spend."
- **Your DR manager:** "We still need to run 2 tests a year to prove our resiliency. Too bad I can't use the Dev site for Disaster Recovery."

So what needs to happen to accelerate application deployment in this dramatic new fashion? Well, consider the investments you may have already made in disaster recovery. Oftentimes those investments merely serve today as an insurance policy should something terrible happen.

As important as such investments are, they are only serving one purpose: the protection of your assets and infrastructure. But they need not serve only one purpose.

Extending DR Investments to Drive App Development

Now, you can leverage your disaster recovery assets to make new compute scenarios available and accelerate application development. Instead of duplicating your spend on data copies using duplicate infrastructure, you can utilize your existing DR infrastructure available for the purposes of application development.

Rather than investing in a public cloud for test/dev and application analytics for various purposes, now you can use cloud-based DR resources that you are already financing. Leveraging this secondary cloud, you'll have shared and continuous workload management that spans disaster recovery, data protection, and application development roles.

In the same way individuals generate income with an investment property or a vacation home through hassle-free, rental arrangements, you can utilize your cloud-based disaster recovery infrastructure to support all sorts of workloads as you need them. With an advanced solution that provides application agility, you can realize multiple benefits:

- **Speed.** Accelerate time-to-market for new apps and enhancements by instantly provisioning production data needed to emulate real-world situations.
- **Scale.** Capture TB-sized data sets across different database types.
- **Control.** Gain confidence with security built-in across data, infrastructure and compute.
- **Savings.** Eliminate multiple physical data copies and drastically reduce costs by automating dev/test infrastructure.

You'll have an always-on, secure infrastructure that enables you to create on-demand copies of production data. You'll reduce service level agreements to less than two hours and eliminate capital expenditures through the deployment of a utility cloud model.



Leading Energy Firm Leverages DR to Strengthen Test/Dev

A leading energy supplier was confronted with its own vulnerabilities when a natural disaster paralyzed both its primary and secondary data centers, bringing them down for days. Relying on Sungard Availability Services® (Sungard AS) and its partner, Actifio, the company not only met new demands for recovery and resilience; it drove out needless costs and implemented an agile platform that could support the needs of its test/dev team.

This company was unprepared for the devastation. Not only was the company unable to get its primary data center back online in a timely fashion, its co-location partner, which had limited data recovery capabilities, was also non-functional.

Drawing on an advanced disaster recovery solution from Sungard AS, and its partner, Actifio, a new solution was in place within months. The energy firm instituted an advanced disaster recovery methodology and could confidently back up critical data and virtual machines.

The solution also paid for itself by trimming labor requirements, reducing the data storage footprint by 60%, eliminating the need for expensive backups, and bringing down total cost of ownership by 70%.

Furthermore, it enabled the company to leverage its data recovery infrastructure to support its test/dev environment — a critical factor supporting the agility and efficiency of the firm's burgeoning application development efforts.

The move reduced operational costs around test/dev by freeing up production storage and reducing the database administrator time that otherwise would be committed to change management requests, server admin, storage provisioning, and creation of a test/dev database. This compresses the database provisioning process from weeks to minutes for application development purposes — a huge boost for developers under pressure to produce new releases at a faster pace.

“We can’t afford to go dark ever again,” said the CIO. “This new arrangement gives me full confidence that our data assets are fully protected and recoverable. We’ve also capitalized on these necessary investments in availability and resilience to support our commitments to innovation.”



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Rethinking Possibilities and Making Your Apps Matter

According to Gartner, 70% of digital business initiatives have failed to deliver business growth due to lack of business model innovation, effective big change techniques, organizational liquidity and process adaptability.⁵

But this need not include your company. Through App Agility, you can reinvent business models, accelerate change, reduce expenses, and revise your processes.

Relying on a cloud recovery center, you can make app dev truly agile. You can expedite test development, minimize storage costs, increase application release cycles, and provide value beyond traditional data protection.

By rethinking the possibilities associated with existing investments in disaster recovery and data protection, you can embrace a new reality as it pertains to your applications. You'll have ERP apps you can scale on demand, E-commerce apps that lend themselves to more frequent release dates, and CRM apps that match the needs and expectations of line of business owners. You'll make agile development a reality in your enterprise – making applications truly central to your growth and differentiation.

For more information visit our website:
www.sungardas.com/app-agility

Additional reading



[Accelerate application development with an agile infrastructure from Sungard AS](#)

5 Da Rold, Claudio, *Three-Step Roadmap to Bimodal Adaptive Sourcing: Leverage Digital Urgency to Be and IT Broker*; Gartner, May 20, 2015.

About Sungard Availability Services

Sungard Availability Services is a leading provider of critical production and recovery services to global enterprise companies. Sungard AS partners with customers across the globe to understand their business needs and provide production and recovery services tailored to help them achieve their desired business outcomes. To learn more, visit www.sungardas.com or call 1-888-270-3657.

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