

Modernization is a Must

A guide to successfully transforming
your systems and processes



Modern times call for modernized systems

Your legacy, your loss

“Gartner defines a legacy system as an information system that may be based on outdated technologies, but is critical to day-to-day operations.” *

As technology, culture, and businesses evolve at an increasing pace, companies that have been around for decades (some even centuries!) may be aware that their core systems are becoming unviable. But other, perhaps newer, companies may not consider how their systems are at risk, or may be too tied to them to consider a change. But as the needs of your business outpace your technology, IT modernization becomes more and more crucial—take it from us, we’ve seen this play out across industries. There are many reasons to modernize, but reason is not enough to start: You’ll need a solid grasp of the considerations, planning, and processes you’ll employ to get things done. Even getting the first thing right can catalyze complete business transformation and change the way you work to meet users’ needs into the future.

That’s why we wrote this guide, because we’ve been there through some of the biggest modernization pushes in history, and have celebrated significant successes with our partners: From getting the right medical treatments to reach the right patients faster, to empowering major manufacturers to compete in a mobile-first world. Seeing the real results of each IT modernization project makes us more excited about the next one.

Modernization can seem overwhelming, and we don’t deign to “make it easy,” but we can make the process more efficient and manageable—and ultimately more successful. This guide outlines catalysts, the considerations, and the strategy you need to get started—from identifying your starting point to organizing teams and delivering an MVP that drives value. So here’s to modernizing! (And not a moment too soon).

Let’s begin your modernization journey. ✨

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Reasons to modernize

External pressures

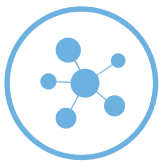
Technology is accelerating. Where will you fit within the future paradigm? These ongoing external shifts will have major implications for how businesses approach IT:



Consumerization of technology

The products we live with have made technology so accessible and integral to our daily lives that it's raised the bar on our experiences, both professional and personal. Users and customers both have exacting expectations of the technologies they interact with. Intuitive user experiences and seamless integration are now table stakes, especially as workforces become more global and more mobile.

Today, **businesses must look at their own IT people as customers** in order to maintain momentum and operate with efficiency.



The data revolution

The dramatic increase in the amount of data available to businesses has resulted in a push to add market/customer analysis and predictive capabilities that facilitate deeper customer understanding. Legacy platforms often experience large gaps in their data, and that data is scattered, or not universally accessible—leading to uninformed decision-making and missed opportunities. Creating the capabilities to **capture, interpret, and visualize the droves of data before you** will put you ahead of the game.



The growth imperative

The competitive landscape is growing, with pressure from disruptors inside and outside of your industry. Legacy companies need not only to ramp up their systems, but to evolve the way they operate. To stand out, you need a strong proposition, and you need to move more quickly: **Software can be your differentiator**. Transformation is necessary to get a competitive edge—and that evolution starts from within.

“IT organizations still devote anywhere from 60-80% of their time, energy, human resources, and budgets to supporting legacy systems rather than developing transformative solutions.”*

Internal catalysts

It can become easy to ignore outside pressure (until it's too late), but recognizing internal triggers reveals what your organization will gain when you commit to making a change.

Truths that trigger modernization...



Inevitability

Software doesn't get better with age. Mainframes written decades ago can be a drag on your development because they don't play well with new systems and block the addition of new features.



Cost

It's expensive to maintain legacy systems, and the cost becomes less justifiable as technology evolves. Public cloud and "pizza box" servers, for example, offer much cheaper options.



Attrition

When the people who wrote your legacy code move on, that tribal knowledge goes with them. A decades-old application written in COBOL may baffle modern developers, and **it's inefficient to teach new dogs old tricks.**

What you're missing now and stand to gain...



Speed

For any industry disruptor, six months to market is unreasonable. Don't let IT become your bottleneck! **Modernization speeds up product and feature releases** and improves efficiency for end-users via an updated UX and digitization.



Flexibility

Ever wonder why your plane was stuck on the tarmac for hours? It's because airlines run on tightly coupled monoliths they have to reboot when something goes wrong. Moral of the story: Modernization is necessary to **respond to change quickly.**



Opportunity

A system that is flexible and resilient **makes your entire business more attractive:** to users and customers; to clients, partners, and investors. While modernization is often part of the M&A process, it can also make you a more appealing target.

Key considerations

Readiness is the key to success—and to NOT wasting tons of time, money, and effort. Before embarking on your modernization journey, ask yourself these important questions, understand the answers, and adjust your expectations:



Are your business needs driving your IT needs?

Modernization is not just an IT effort, it involves your entire organization. The goals of your modernization effort must be connected to the goals of the business in order to ensure maximum ROI.



Are you ready to take a risk?

Modernization takes real investment of time and money, and there's always an element of risk. If you're not willing to fully invest in the process, your chances of success are less.



Are you avoiding internal biases?

Sometimes it's hard to see the forest through the trees. Every team has its own agenda. Bringing in a partner with an objective perspective can help you prioritize your efforts.



Is the organization prepared for change?

Modernization is much like building a new road: It doesn't happen overnight, so you need to have a plan to keep the business in motion while you make incremental updates.



Are you thinking about your future?

Even brand new code will become old code some day: Modernization must focus on building the agility into your systems and processes that will facilitate continuous evolution.

Setting your modernization strategy

Start with the **Why**

Answering “Why are we doing it?” should be the starting point of any modernization effort. Articulating the root reasons and clear project goals will align your efforts and create buy-in throughout the organization. Identifying the actual incentives for your business will help you to prioritize your efforts.

Identify the primary change-drivers

First, look at the drivers of change we’ve mentioned and assess their impact on your own business. What are the primary forces fueling your modernization effort? This will help you set your own goals and establish clearer KPIs. To discover where your main pain points lie, consider these three facets of your business:



Money

Are you paying too much in licensing and maintenance to support your legacy system? Could you free up valuable resources by considering modern options, or moving to the cloud? Consider how the long term cost-savings of investing in a more sustainable system could be parlayed into something that generates more value for your users and business.



Time

Do you spend more time troubleshooting than iterating and innovating? Is your time to release slowed down just by making sure things don’t break? Failing to deliver fast enough can be frustrating to the business and can cost you users and customers who drop off or move on to a competitor who’s better equipped to meet their needs.



People

Are the individuals most familiar with your technology phasing out or retiring? Are you having a hard time convincing new hires to learn an old system that won’t be useful to them in the future? The old guard will move on and the new workforce has an entirely different knowledge base, set of expectations, and ways of working. You need a forward-thinking proposition to onboard and keep them.

Establish and hone your goals

We don't modernize for modernization's sake: Every process should have tangible results. Establish achievable outcomes for your modernization efforts that tie back to your core reasons for changing. Broad goal-starters could include:

- ❖ Reducing or eliminating a backlog of work
- ❖ Replacing an old system with an updated one
- ❖ Speeding specific processes (e.g., business or development)
- ❖ Creating a more flexible system to fuel growth

Once you have a broad outcome in mind, articulate specific goals that tie back to your reasons for modernizing, and support your future growth.

Modernization is often an enterprise-wide project, in which case it may make sense to **break it down into small projects based on department or business needs**. That way your modernization goals can be more specific, more achievable, and ultimately generate more value.



EXAMPLE 1

REASON TO MODERNIZE

Developer attrition / loss of tribal knowledge

CLEAR MODERNIZATION GOAL

Develop a new system in a codebase that is supportable for the next 10-15 years



EXAMPLE 2

REASON TO MODERNIZE

Slow speed-to-market and inability to release new product/features

CLEAR MODERNIZATION GOAL

Identify and improve inefficiencies in the current business or development process, leveraging modern technologies

Get clear on the **What**

Goals are great, but how will you be sure you're reaching them? Clear KPIs give you benchmarks to track your progress. But before you go barrelling towards them, make sure that all levels and departments are aligned so that you don't run into roadblocks along the way.

Establish clear KPIs

KPIs should always tie back to the business priorities. If your problem is speed and your goal is improving the development process, then a KPI could be releasing X number of new features in X amount of time. Some goals will naturally be more measurable than others. From the examples above:



EXAMPLE 1

REASON TO MODERNIZE

Developer attrition / loss of tribal knowledge

CLEAR MODERNIZATION GOAL

Develop a new system in a codebase that is supportable for the next 10-15 years

WHAT TO MEASURE

Retirement dates of all developers and the codebases team members are familiar with

KPI (GOAL= MET)

A target percentage of the system is modernized in a codebase that new and that non-retiring developers are familiar with



EXAMPLE 2

REASON TO MODERNIZE

Slow speed-to-market and inability to release new product/features

CLEAR MODERNIZATION GOAL

Identify and improve inefficiencies in the current business or development process, leveraging modern technologies

WHAT TO MEASURE

Pace of the delivery pipeline. Past product/feature release timelines vs. new product/feature release timelines

KPI (GOAL= MET)

Added efficiencies (e.g., steps removed, faster file load, etc.). Time-to-release product/feature reduced from six months to a single quarter

Align your goals

Modernization touches all levels of the company—from top executives to functional teams and individual employees. You might think that your goals are clear, but does everyone know what they are? Does this cause clashes in departmental objectives or affect the way individuals reach their own day-to-day goals? Consider the three levels of alignment that are necessary to pave a straight and clear path to progress.

Top-Level goals

A modernization effort must always align with a business goal that matters and can be measured. These top-level goals drive support for the whole effort and should be SMART: Simple, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic, Time-Boxed. Company leadership is responsible for connecting elements of the modernization project to these SMART goals.

EXAMPLE: A modernization effort that enables products with fewer features to be released sooner and gain traction meets a high-level goal of reducing time-to-market for a certain product/feature to a single quarter.

Team goals

Departments all have their own metrics for measuring effectiveness. It's import to align departmental goals to those of the modernization effort. This involves making sure that every team is empowered to perform at their best and feels that the changes are a benefit and not a disruption to them.

EXAMPLE: A data modernization effort may help marketing draw data-driven leads, but may simultaneously undermine the sales process. Reconfiguring sales goals to reflect both intelligence-based and direct deals will build support across both teams.

Individuals' goals

A modernization effort will ultimately empower people, but it's important to understand those individuals' motivations. The end-user experience should be a front-end consideration* of any modernization effort.

EXAMPLE: If the top-level goal is to improve the quality and reliability of a manufacturing process, first consider how individual technicians reach their own goals. If you have a group of less-experienced technicians, building a feature-heavy product (without a robust UI to guide them) will impede productivity. In this case, upfront testing will benefit both users and the business.

When both individual goals and team-level goals are aligned to top-level SMART objectives, the path forward becomes much clearer.

Now let's talk about **How**

Before you start a major transformation, determine how you'll reach your goals. There's no one-size-fits-all approach, but there are best practices. We've guided businesses small and large through major modernization projects by leveraging a set of principles that applies to your people, your processes, and your technology.



PEOPLE

Creating a culture of change

Empathize

People resist change for many different reasons. Employees may worry that their skills will no longer be of value, their jobs will be in jeopardy, they'll be responsible for more work, or that their current successes will be disrupted. The roots of these fears range from past experience with improper change management to lack of awareness regarding the need for change. Whatever the cause, the first step to eliminating resistance is to understand it.

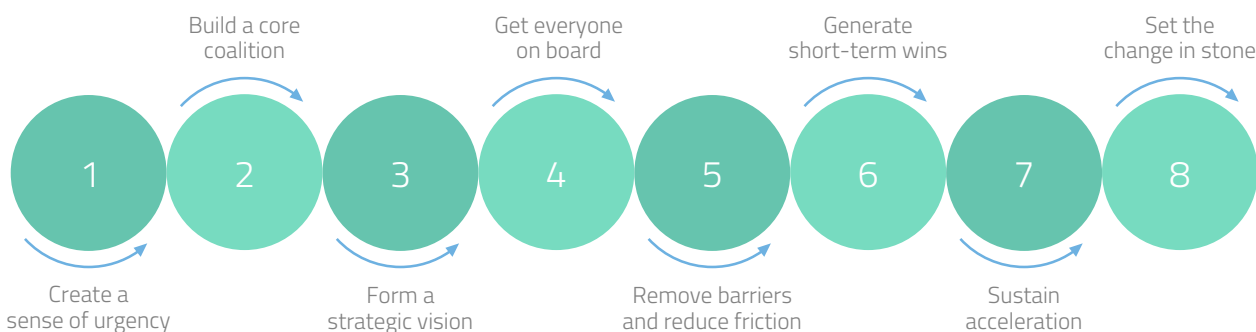
Communicate

Communication is a core tenant of anything that is destined to go well, really. Communication must flow openly both upstream and downstream to ensure a smooth and successful process. Articulate the goals to create alignment, state clear reasons for change to secure buy-in, and express empathy to mitigate resistance.

“Any organization that designs a system (defined broadly) will produce a design whose structure is a copy of the organization's communication structure.” *

Engage

Highlighting the pain points that people experience in their day-to-day work can create a sense of urgency for the change. Urgency unites people and helps you identify change-champions who will rally the whole organization.





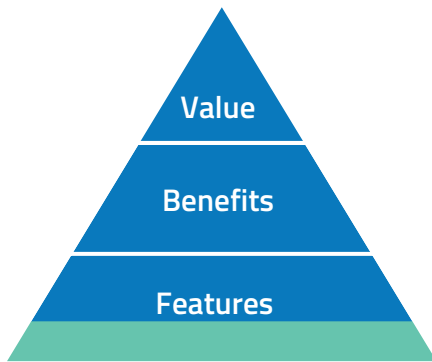
PROCESSES

Navigating the path to progress

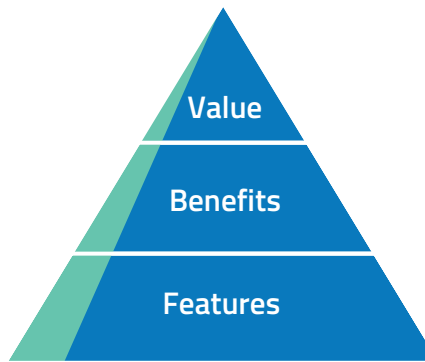
Rooting for the MVP

Major modernization projects can be daunting to the organization, and they'll lose steam if progress isn't apparent, or when a kink that got overlooked causes whole parts of the project to fail down the line. That's why an MVP approach is most suited to success.

A Minimal Viable Product is one with enough core functionality to deliver value to the end user. It balances a small amount of development effort with a high output of learnings about the project or product. It allows you to extract information that will shape future development, guide future investment, and determine whether you should be heading down a particular path in the first place.



A waterfall approach mandates that a product be nearly feature-complete before benefits or value can be realized.



A true MVP is the smallest thing you can build to validate assumptions and create the most value.

Incremental delivery and iterative development

Incremental delivery means repeatedly releasing a system into production or the market, expanding its capabilities each time. This naturally follows an MVP approach.

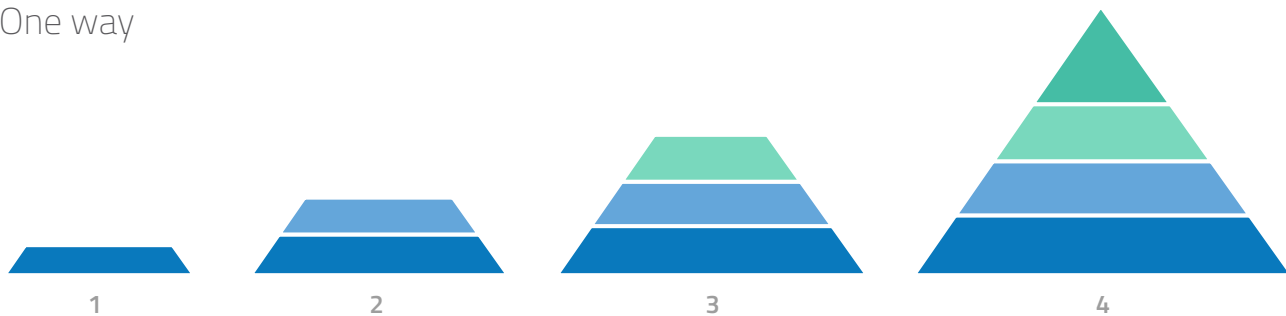
Within the delivery cycle, there can be a number of iterations that aren't released to production. Iterations allow you to test, deliver, gather internal feedback, and improve, keeping development teams moving forward.

As an illustrative example, think about starting with a tent, then building a hut, a trailer, a condo, and finally a house. The idea is that you have something to live in at the end of each cycle (rather than a useless, half-built house).

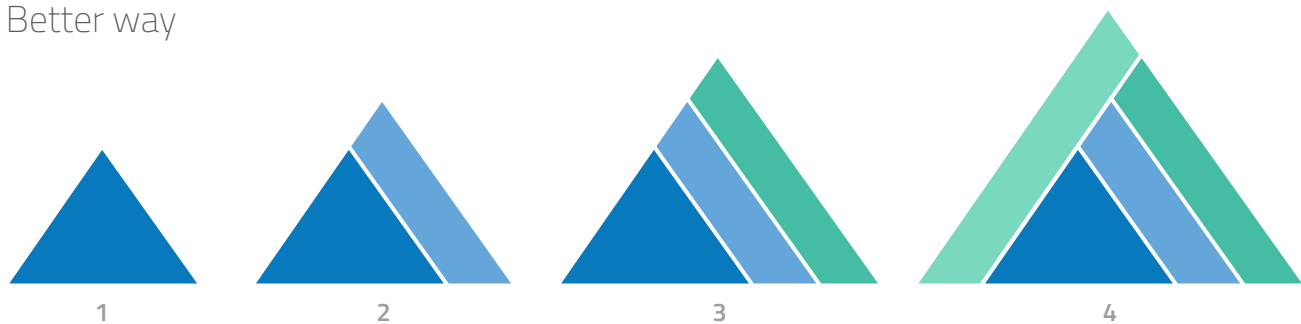
This captures the theory, but in most development projects, you want something fully formed that you can keep building on top of—as opposed to creating a whole new thing each time. John Mayo-Smith illustrates the ideal approach in his article [“Two Ways to Build a Pyramid”](#)*

Continual delivery of an end product demonstrates progress, increases buy-in, and creates opportunities to collect feedback and expand.

One way



Better way



Agile teams and processes

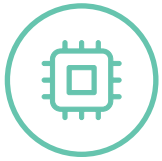
You won't get to a modern system with outmoded ways of working. Modern development takes new team structures and frameworks that enable you to roll with changes.

Empowering people for progress

Small development teams should be cross-functional, including a mix of designers, developers, subject-matter experts, and product owners. Roles and ownership should be clear and individuals should feel empowered to try—and perchance to fail. It's this freedom to learn and to optimize along the way that will land you with the best possible product.

Lean, kanban, scrum—which one?

All of these methodologies fall under the umbrella of Agile, and the goal is to choose the one that works best for you, or a combination. Develop a cadence that enables you to check in continuously and deliver quickly. These agile methodologies are designed to facilitate communication, delegation, decision-making, and, ultimately, acceleration.



TECHNOLOGY

Making sure yours stacks up

Modernization projects inherit a lot of “out with the old, in with the new”—but change must be done responsibly if you want new technologies to stick, and work well within the entire system. On the opposite side of the spectrum from resistance, you might find overwhelming enthusiasm for new technologies that are easier and better to work with. Choose wisely and develop a plan, or that initial enthusiasm may become a vehicle for fragmentation and frustration.

Modern, but not untenable

When replacing an old stack or introducing something new, people on your IT team may be more-than-on-board at first (because what technologist isn't excited by the next big advancement?). But remember that **your technology is your business**—it's something the whole organization has to grapple with. You certainly don't want to cap that initial excitement by opting for already-dated technologies, but introducing things that are completely unfamiliar can burst that bubble of enthusiasm, quick. Success requires a balance between introducing something new and minimizing the risks involved with adopting technologies that no one knows how to work with.

Central architectural strategy

It's important early on to establish a clear vision for the architecture, one which makes **room for continuous iteration**. Building automation into your development cycle is key to this, and can vastly improve speed and quality: Automating deployment activities will streamline the release process, while automated regression testing will up the accuracy and reusability of test cases.

Modern technology takes modern tools

Modernization shouldn't just deliver a new application, it should result in an **updated delivery approach** to support your shiny new tech. The tools your team needs to deliver and deploy may be old, or non-existent. So be prepared to take on new ones. For instance, during a recent modernization project we moved the team to Azure DevOps for source control, user stories, bug monitoring, etc., while introducing Azure Pipeline for continuous delivery—all which empowered the team to move at greater speed.

Keeping it all together

An agile approach to modernization is necessary: It fosters the autonomy you need to tackle such a lofty project. But like anything, too much autonomy can be dangerous. When different development teams get to choose the technologies they want to work with, that's great. But when you end up with five apps built on different platforms, that leads to widespread fragmentation. The goal should be to create an environment that promotes the **cross-pollination of ideas and learnings among teams**, so that they can work in sync, and the system is stronger for it.

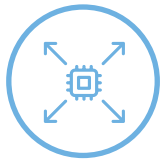
Your roadmap to modernization

Our three-phased approach to major IT projects will get you to the finish line and beyond. Modernization projects often get sidetracked or abandoned as scope creep sidles in, business priorities take over, or miscommunication between teams shores up immovable road blocks. This roadmap creates the structure, culture, and accountability you need to maintain momentum and ties the project goals to those of the business.



Phase 1: Plan

Assess the business
Set the boundaries
Choose your starting point



Phase 2: Expand

Launch your pilot
Measure and manage



Phase 3: Scale

Ongoing considerations
Preparing for the next phase

Let's start on your path to progress >



Phase 1: Plan

Your Roadmap to Modernization

PLAN | EXPAND | SCALE

The Plan phase is where you do a deep dive into your organization to identify priorities, survey the landscape, choose the best methodology for the company, and prepare a pilot team to test new tools and practices.

Assess the business

You wouldn't renovate a house without first surveying the structure. A thorough and thoughtful assessment mitigates the risks often associated with business-critical IT efforts. It involves not just surveying the system itself, but examining the business capabilities of the organization and the skills, work habits, and attitudes of the people who make up various functions. The process is focused on generating maximum value through discovery, delivery, and improvement:



Value Discovery

Involve all stakeholders in reviewing and identifying goals and strategies. Interview actual users to capture system pain points and requirements. Analyze the application, documentation, and source code. Assess the existing development team across people, practices, and tools.



Value Delivery

Consolidate and analyze initial discovery findings and then develop future-state recommendations. Review these recommendations with main stakeholders and create a plan for further assessment, focusing on high-value deliverables, and refine the goals going forward.



Value Improvement

Present recommendations for the future state and propose a cost/schedule to implement the vision. Create an executive summary of the assessment and move forward confidently based on those findings.



Phase 1: Plan

Your Roadmap to Modernization

PLAN | EXPAND | SCALE

Set the boundaries

Isolating your efforts creates focus. Some parts of the business matter more than others. By goal-setting, you'll be able to identify the thing you want to change, then draw actual and ideological lines around what your effort will impact. Here are some questions to ask:



What is the most important element to modernize?

Identify the elements of the business that are most essential to modernize—they'll usually be the ones that generate the most business value, and which will create momentum once results are realized. For example, updating your e-commerce application may generate the most value in the form of user satisfaction and retention. Articulate the value of the thing you want to change, and make sure you understand the complexity of the effort involved.



What external factors could impact that decision?

There may be elements outside of the business or function that you want to change that could impact your decision to change it. For example, say that updating an auditing system is the thing that will create the most value for the business, but there's a software upgrade coming that might impact your modernization process. Don't touch that yet—instead move on to the next most valuable element.



Are you suffering from analysis paralysis?

As you continue to consider both the technology and business drivers, the boundaries of the thing you want to change will start to form—and then shift, and likely shift again. The truth is, there is no ideal, and you have to put a stake in the ground to start. Look to the person in charge of the modernization project to decide where exactly to begin.



Phase 1: Plan

Your Roadmap to Modernization

PLAN | EXPAND | SCALE

Choose your starting point

Where to start can be one of the most contentious decisions because there are so many considerations in play. What will create the most value or demonstrate the most impact? What's easiest to fulfill first? Who has a say? There isn't always one right or best place to begin, but there are some methods for navigating this decision wisely in order to get your modernization project off the ground.



Head or tail

Look at your system as a continuum of business functions and understand how each step of the process is handled—are they all part of the same monolith? It's often best to start at the head or tail of the process to minimize integration issues. Example: if you're modernizing an e-commerce application, starting with initial customer touchpoints like search and catalog would be better than starting in the middle with something like checkout or order fulfillment. There is less data to push upstream or downstream than with a process that's in the middle. However, if starting at the head or tail doesn't make the MOST sense, then don't do it. Find out where the bulk of the inefficiencies lie and target that area first.



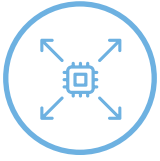
High value, low risk

In the sweet spot between high risk and high value and low risk but low value exists the holy grail of modernization targets: The thing that creates the most value, but at very low risk to the business or your teams. This could be connected to an area of the business that is not expected to change, or a process that's been well-defined within the organization or the industry, where users clearly understand what they need.



Objective + subjective

You can narrow down your options by starting objectively and then layering subjective criteria on top. Forget about everything else and look at things that make the most sense for the business. Then you can start considering team goals, individual motivations, external factors, and possible roadblocks. There may be a few clear options that emerge, and it will be up to the person with the business vision to make the call on what makes the most sense for the organization. Remember: priorities change. When setting your goals and picking your starting point, it helps to do a little bit of projecting to determine what issues may emerge down the line.



Phase 2: Expand

Your Roadmap to Modernization

PLAN | **EXPAND** | SCALE

The Expand phase is where you put a pilot program into action. Begin iterating to refine the approach, make it applicable across teams, and establish a set of standards and metrics to chart progress.

Launch your pilot

A pilot is different from a prototype in that it's intended to put an entire effort into production that covers the whole development process, from concept to deployment and testing. You'll create a small part of the big picture, putting modernized processes into play, and end up with some fully formed piece of the puzzle.



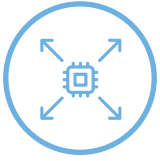
Write, test, release

Your pilot team will get to assimilate new ways of writing user stories, testing, and deployment. The pilot must involve retraining both development and operations to collaborate (i.e., DevOps), so you can build, test, and release more efficiently. Along the way, you'll find the gaps and resolve issues that will enhance the next phase of your modernization project.



Constrain pilot goals

Balance shipping out the pilot with solving all of the problems that occur along the way. You should have your eye on the future, but the patience to deal with the problems at hand. Taking a somewhat zen approach to modernization will enhance your effort throughout.



Phase 2: Expand

Your Roadmap to Modernization

PLAN | **EXPAND** | SCALE

Measure and manage

There's a lot of investigation and "invisible work" done upfront during a modernization effort—the foundation has to be laid and the studs in place before the house begins to form. This can make measurement difficult at first, but once you have something in production, you can gather quantitative and qualitative info about both the product and the process. What you measure will vary, but there are some best practices for making your measurements more actionable:



Get quantitative info based on your KPIs

Speed to delivery, quality upon delivery, and cost of delivery are common metrics that you can use as a baseline to track improvement over time. Walk through both the business and development processes to get numbers. Observe the actual work and evaluate the design: Is this actually solving the business problem?



Don't forget about the experience

It's never just about software—it's about how people use the new system. How satisfied are users with the product? How easy is it for them to navigate? What's the learning curve and where are the points of resistance? There are qualitative metrics built into people's practices. You can measure if better processes have improved team morale. How do people feel about the changes? Have skills improved?

QUANTITATIVE

- › Velocity
- › Epic and release burndown
- › Automated test coverage percentage
- › Defect density
- › Team turnover
- › Estimation variance

QUALITATIVE

- › Team morale
- › Sentiment analysis
- › Business value delivered
- › Improvement in skills
- › Customer satisfaction
- › Prioritized backlog



Stop scope creep

This is the point in the process to manage expectations going forward. What people think they want tends to change once they see what the product looks like: Maybe your users want a blue screen instead of a white background—strictly for emotional effect, or perhaps a stakeholder wants to add on a new feature. If changes don't include adjustments to both your schedule and your budget, then you're setting yourself up to fail. Clear communication and a system of checks should be enforced so you can scale your effort smoothly.



Phase 3: Scale

Your Roadmap to Modernization

PLAN | EXPAND | **SCALE**

Scale comes down to sticking to a plan, but being flexible enough to pivot along the way. Priorities change, people change, unforeseen elements emerge. Here are the things to consider and recommendations for ensuring maximum growth.

Ongoing considerations

You've planned, you've piloted...and you still have a whole system to modernize. Don't fret, the hardest part is behind you. And now you have a wealth of new learnings to guide you as you go forward. These are processes you want to work into the initial phase of your modernization project so that each subsequent phase goes more smoothly.



Assessing the user group

The user groups you targeted in the first phase may change throughout the process. Maybe you started with a subset of users, like sales reps who only deal with large enterprise clients, and the next phase will include those who deal with small businesses too. Consider what priorities may change going forward.



Continual training

Your pilot team got a taste of the new process and technology, but you need a plan in place for continuing to roll out new systems and processes throughout the organization. Factor this into your time and resourcing as you continue to modernize. Develop a culture of continuous improvement: You're not building it right, you're building it better.



Diligent documentation

This is crucial: Document your transformation so there is a reference being built along with the new system. Everything you do should be codified and made accessible to existing and future teams. Make sure there are clear owners of this process, and accountability.



Phase 3: Scale

Your Roadmap to Modernization

PLAN | EXPAND | **SCALE**

Preparing for the next phase

Once you make it through the first leg of your modernization project, do you have to go back to the drawing board and decide on the next piece to tackle and how? Again, there are things that will come to light during the initial phase that will help you identify the next best steps to take. These are the things you should keep on your radar, and the questions you need to ask in order to scale your modernization efforts efficiently.



Turning “nice-to-haves” into the next thing

While working through the initial modernization effort, items may be identified that are considered out of scope because of time, budget, or interdependency issues. These items should be set aside but not forgotten, as they can become the building blocks of your next phase.



Progress by proximity

In many cases, the first phase of modernization is focused on a particular department or business process. Does that business process touch other processes in need of modernization? Does the department work with other departments in need of the same types of improvements? Consider how initial changes impact other aspects of the business, and how you can iterate in those areas as well.



Seeding plans from the start

Project leads and analysts should continually be identifying these types of practical touchpoints within the organization to prepare teams for future modernization phases. By progressing to a focus area that was identified in the first phase, modernization efforts will flow more naturally, and provide the most value to the business. This also makes communication and training go more smoothly.



Reassess before you progress

Periodically check in to reassess business value, risks, and priorities. Businesses change often—so your effort may need to shift. Develop an appropriate cadence for looking at project versus business goals, and moving forward with ample buy-in and approval.

Conclusion

Modernization is a long haul. It's a lot of change, and change is challenging—but also an imperative. Remember that technology is NOT like a fine wine, and choosing simpler, short-term solutions causes technical debt to accrue over time. Instead of being overwhelmed, be prepared to tackle challenges on both an organizational and technical front.

Our step-by-step process serves as a blueprint for making modernization manageable, successful, and scalable. Each organization is different, and each legacy system has its own unique makeup, so every approach should be tailored accordingly. Remember that the greater the gap between your business needs and your technology, the greater the effort and cost to remedy it. Modernization is not a maybe, so maybe now is the best time to assess where you are and develop a plan to not just “keep up,” but to keep growing.

Modernization is not a maybe.

Our agile technology teams and project managers can be trusted partners in paving your path to progress.

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We're a custom software development company with Austin, TX roots and partnerships across the nation. From [application development](#) and [enterprise architecture](#) to [full-on IT modernization](#), our solutions and services enable you to move faster, work better, and stand out in a shifting market.

As partners, we get to know your business, your people, your customers, and, most importantly, your mission. We build systems designed to meet your exact needs—even the ones you haven't discovered yet. Our teams are made up of proven leaders and collaborators who offer full stack expertise and guidance at every step.

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