

How Enterprise Release Management Enables Digital Business Transformation

Change is Inevitable

Software is eating the world. As companies move forward, they must adjust their business practices by automating manual processes with intelligent software solutions. Classic companies such as book stores, taxi services, and hotel bookings are now led by software technology companies. For example, one healthcare provider has an IT team of 11,000 people rivaling the top software companies found in Silicon Valley.

Enterprises need to change their business model, transforming into technology powerhouses to survive the digital revolution. They must do it in the right way to stay competitive. Their focus must be to deliver value through software applications to their customers faster and more reliably than ever before.

This whitepaper will explore how proper enterprise release management allows for controlled and beneficial digital business transformation.

Executive Summary

The new reality in the business world is that software is the driving force behind day-to-day operations and innovation. Companies who aren't transforming themselves to adapt to the market of increasingly digital competitors risk falling behind the curve and losing market share that took years to achieve.

However, increasing the speed of innovation introduces business challenges – most notably, a gap between delivery and operations teams and the speed to software delivery.

In this white paper, we dive into the challenges that digital business transformation presents to release managers and discuss why now is the time to implement a true enterprise release management solution to bridge the delivery/operations gap and improve the speed of software delivery.



Innovate or Risk Losing Everything

As agile start-up companies continue to disrupt the status quo of long-standing markets and industries, large enterprises are left with a troubling dilemma – innovate or die.

This might seem like an extreme statement, but a look at Uber's emergence as the perennial digital transformation example indicates just how real this problem is for large enterprises. The taxi business seemed like an immovable mainstay in metropolitan areas, but Uber introduced innovation that has seriously diminished (or, in some cases, entirely crushed) traditional taxi companies.

The new reality is that every company is a digital, software-powered company. IT projects and software functionality have permeated every aspect of every business – from backend processes all the way to customer-facing innovation. Staying competitive requires swift digital transformation capable of keeping pace with the ever-increasing demand for faster releases and updates. While small businesses and start-ups can thrive on this demand, large enterprises face many obstacles to speeding up software delivery.

While Facebook's "move fast and break things" motto became the rally cry for so many innovative companies, even the Web giant has had to shift its focus. The "move fast and break things" motto inherently means knowingly tolerate bugs in their releases, but as user expectations for quality increase, this is no longer acceptable. In 2014, Mark Zuckerberg changed Facebook's motto to "move fast with stable infrastructure," which highlights the key problem that every large enterprise is facing.

There are drivers behind the need to innovate and release software faster, but the question VPs are left with is, "how do we actually increase speed and be more responsive without losing control?" To answer this question, don't look for small changes to project management or operations that could increase productivity – look to enterprise release management as a means of bridging the gap between engineering speed and project management visibility.

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Three Core Delivery Drivers Originating from the Business

For VPs with more on their plate than the idea of changing software delivery processes, the question “why implement enterprise release management right now?” may be looming large. There are three core delivery drivers originating from the business that are sparking a need for immediate change:



The Need for Acceleration

There has been plenty written about the advantages of adopting agile DevOps at the engineering level to help automate and streamline technical processes.

However, less is mentioned of the need for project management teams to handle all of the different automation solutions the engineering teams deploy. With manual processes, there's no way to accelerate support for the engineering side.



Risk Perspective

Every software release is accompanied by a certain level of risk for the business. Whether it's a bug in a customer-facing system that leads to revenue loss or an internal IT system that crashes and diminishes productivity, software release risk must be managed. As delivery demand increases, project management teams must have visibility into the total risk landscape – something manual processes can't provide.



Multiple Delivery Pipelines

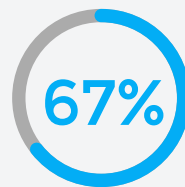
When release schedules were based on a 12-month or bi-annual pace, it was much easier for project managers to track delivery pipelines. However, semi-daily or weekly cycles are creating major overlap between delivery pipelines – and the sheer volume of delivery pipelines increases on a near-daily basis. Managing these pipelines with spreadsheets won't work, driving the need for delivery management change.

To think that the manual spreadsheet management strategies that most project management teams use to keep track of software releases can keep up with the rate of delivery demand is misguided. Even if project management teams are retaining some semblance of success in the beginning stages of digital transformation, there's simply no way to manage increasingly automated releases at the necessary rate to remain competitive in the new digital reality.

Faster release cycles that would support digital transformation – weekly or bi-weekly at least – are successful just 45% of the time, which is unacceptable for today's large enterprises.

The top-down approach of automated enterprise release management gives project management teams the ability to plug into a litany of different technologies to create a level of coordination across projects, operations, and engineering functions that simply isn't possible with current strategies. This coordination of the IT delivery process can dramatically increase project success even as the rate of delivery increases.

Research Shows:



IT professionals currently believe that projects delivered in 12-month cycles are largely the most successful at meeting business demands.

Bridging the Gap Between Project Delivery and Operations

One of the main challenges businesses face when trying to speed up the IT delivery process is the widening gap between the management portions of IT – delivery and operations teams.

Project teams are largely focused on the development and delivery functions. These are the teams that generally accept and facilitate improvements to increase the speed of delivery. With a deep concern for making delivery faster, better, and cheaper, the delivery teams are usually very responsive to the acceleration necessary for digital transformation.

The operations side, on the other hand, is concerned with securing and protecting the integrity of production environments. While this governance and quality assurance is vital to the delivery process, manual approaches to operations are a hindrance to the modern rate of releases. When engineering teams followed relatively slow and methodical release cycles, the gap between project management and operations was manageable. Business demand for greater agility necessitates a more streamlined and automated approach to quality and risk.

Deeper down the value stream, engineering teams will use numerous tools and platforms to build new software and release it. For example, there could be hundreds of projects going on at once, each one supported by tools such as Puppet, Jenkins, JIRA, Rally, and more. With so many tools, individual engineering teams have plenty of resources to speed up their processes – but only in isolated pockets. To break down the silos, both development and operations need a way to coordinate across multiple tools to gather the necessary information to manage delivery processes holistically.

Enterprise release management is the bridge between project delivery and operations. It connects the two management components to the underlying engineering level. Enterprise release management sits between project management and operations and builds a comprehensive view of all information related to IT delivery throughout the organization.

This comprehensive view is rolled into a graph that supports a big data approach to DevOps that enables rapid releases – without sacrificing control and quality.

Unifying release processes throughout the organization allows management teams to absorb more information about changes while controlling IT service quality even under heavy speed demands.

The Benefits of Implementing Enterprise Release Management Now

⊕ Accelerated Time to Value

Streamlining the release management, test environment management, and deployment processes enables changes to be made more quickly. By keeping up with release demand, companies can deliver a differentiated customer experience necessary for survival in increasingly competitive digital markets.

⊕ Higher Release Throughput

Unifying release processes throughout the organization allows management teams to absorb more information about changes while controlling IT service quality even under heavy speed demands.

⊕ Enhanced Agility & Flexibility

All parties involved in the IT delivery process operate with consistent information under enterprise release management. This enables swift understanding of business needs and competitive challenges, allowing schedules to adjust to new demands at all stages of the process.

⊕ Eliminate Constant Rework

Manual spreadsheet strategies often lead to rework for IT delivery teams – especially when demands increase to meet digital transformation needs. Enterprise release management eliminates the need to reconcile inconsistent information on a day- to-day basis.

⊕ Increased Employee Productivity

Creating and enforcing standards for release process helps employees deliver smoother transitions of releases from development activities to production environments.

⊕ Increased Collaboration

By bridging the gap between IT delivery teams, all stakeholders gain complete and timely insights into schedules, changes, priority, and status of projects.

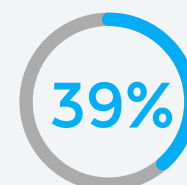
⊕ Mitigate Release Failure

In the end, implementing enterprise release management is all about improving the 45% success rate for IT projects with one-week release cycles.

With 39% of IT professionals claiming lag time between different pieces of the IT delivery process as the roadblock to faster release cycles, it's becoming increasingly clear that there is a fundamental problem with the way these processes are currently managed. VPs don't have to understand the technical aspects of enterprise release management to understand its value for meeting digital transformation demands.

Implementing orchestration and management around the software delivery process now means the business can move faster and be more responsive to market changes by addressing the risk management element of IT delivery. When quality management and governance are built into the enterprise release management solution, digital transformation becomes a much less risky venture.

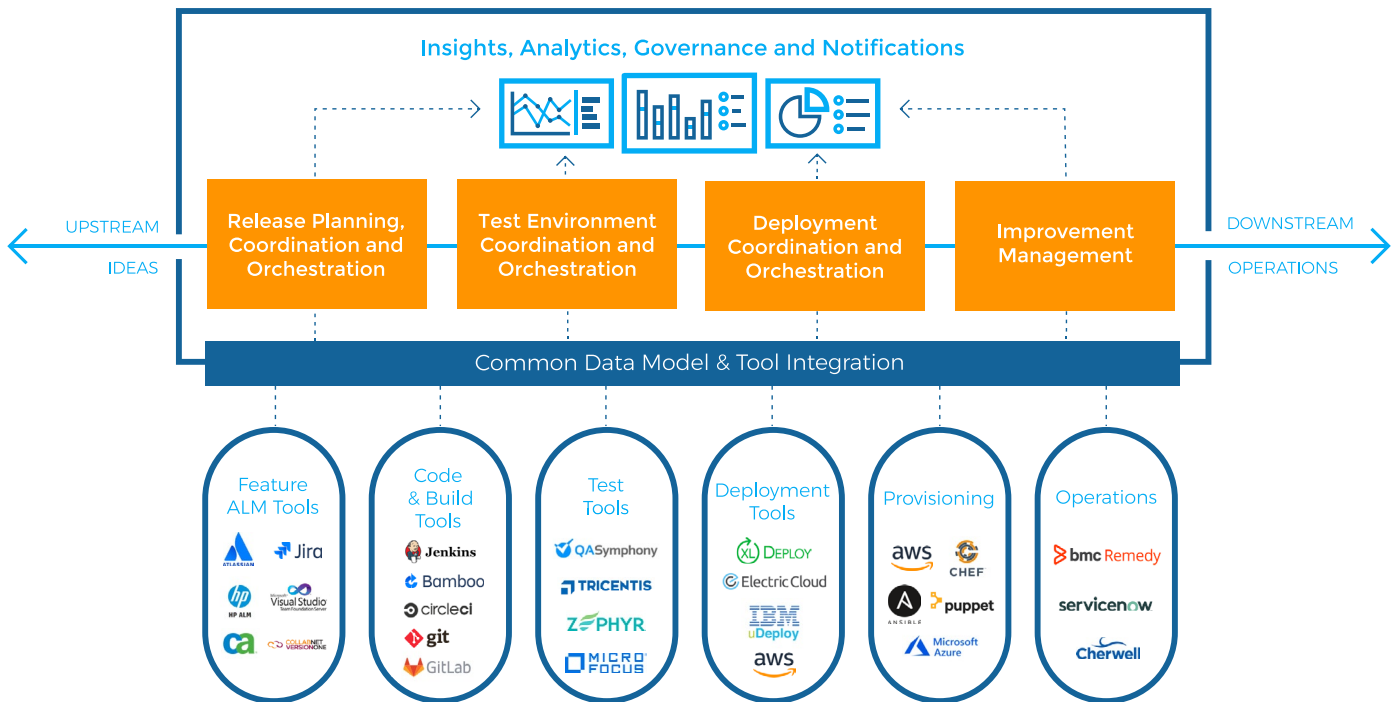
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Plutora Helps Support Digital Transformation Efforts

The Plutora platform bridges the gaps in the enterprise software delivery. It enables predictable, high quality, automated enterprise software delivery through a consolidated common repository across the entire release portfolio. Plutora cuts down software delivery delays and glitches through a single streamlined approach that bridges gaps and negates blockages.



The platform enables you to manage, orchestrate and improve releases and test environments across the entire enterprise portfolio independent of methodology, technology or level of automation.

Plutora provides several key benefits for organizations that need to start supporting digital transformation efforts immediately.

Visibility

Plutora clears your line of sight by consolidating release schedules and activities, environment allocations and configurations, and the myriad of test activities. This single source of truth gives you visibility from idea to production as well as across the complete enterprise portfolio.

Collaboration

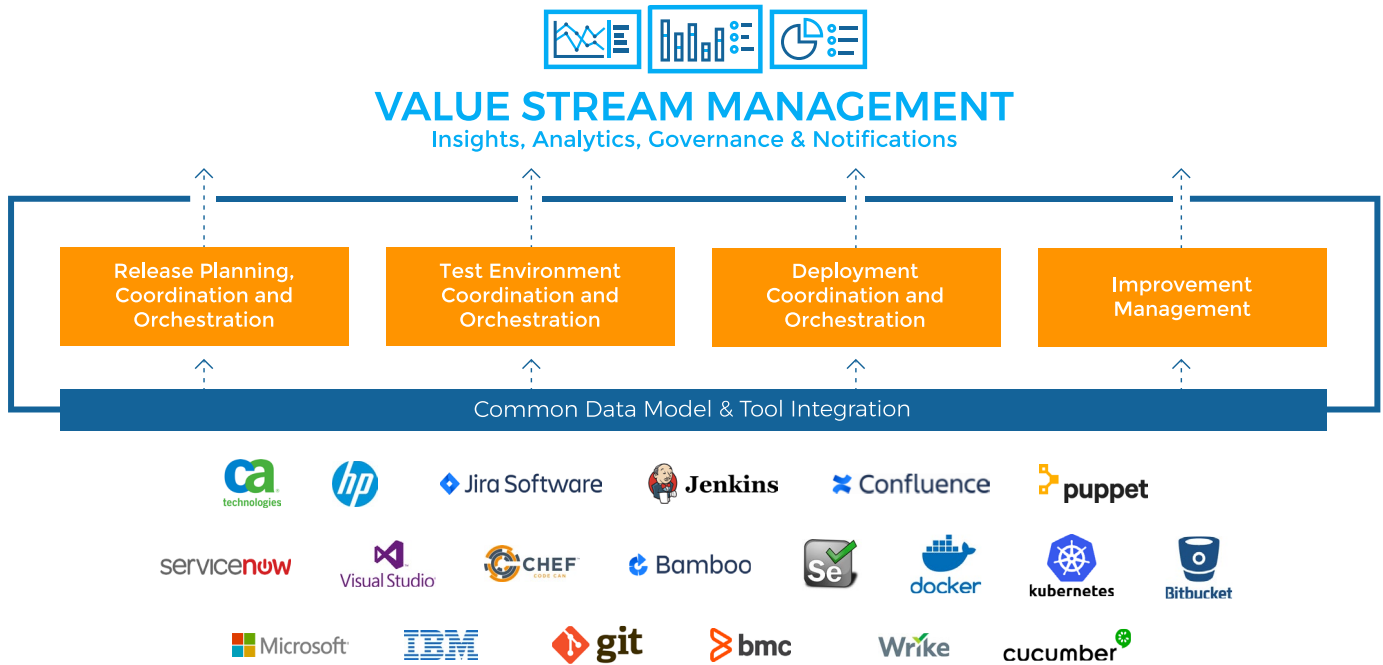
Plutora drives enhanced collaboration and coordination for all the key elements of a successful release – the timing, composition, status, and notifications to stakeholders – eliminating the need to piece together the shape of a release from multiple, unreliable sources.

Efficiency

Improved visibility and collaboration eliminate resource contentions and drastically reduce coordination efforts to orchestrate release and deployment processes, coordinate environment availability, and manage testing activities.

Predictability

Plutora arms stakeholders with governance and control so they can reduce risk by mitigating the root causes of potential failures before they impact the delivery schedule. Plutora customers have experienced a dramatic reduction in failures and outages.



Plutora integrates with the tools and development processes you already have. By integrating into existing tools, value is achieved immediately. As organizations evolve to Continuous Delivery and enterprise DevOps, Plutora adapts as well aligning teams using any methodology and any toolset.

The “innovate or die” mentality is harsh, but it’s becoming increasingly necessary as large enterprises continue to lose revenue to a host of hungry, smaller players. Just look at the way the Tier 1 telecom service providers are falling victim to the innovations of OTT players – without a focus on digital innovation, these Tier 1 service providers will see their revenue streams diminish until OTTs have completely depleted them.

About Plutora

Plutora, the market leader of value stream management solutions for enterprise IT, improves the speed and quality of software creation by capturing, visualizing and analyzing critical indicators of every aspect of the delivery process. Plutora orchestrates release pipelines across a diverse ecosystem of development methodologies, manages hybrid test environments, correlates data from existing toolchains, and incorporates test metrics gathered at every step. The Plutora Platform ensures organizational alignment of software development with business strategy and provides visibility, analytics and a system of insights into the entire value stream, guiding continuous improvement through the measured outcomes of each effort.

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Learn more: www.plutora.com

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