



Top 5 Focus Areas to Succeed With DevOps

During our recent webinar, IT Operations for the Digital Economy, we sat down with Eveline Oehrlich, vice president and research director serving infrastructure and operations professionals at Forrester Research, to get her insight on how companies are successfully implementing and optimizing DevOps processes in today's modern IT environment.

Her advice was to focus on five key areas:

1 CULTURE

First and foremost, a successful DevOps culture hinges on two teams, development and operations, collaborating to deliver quality applications and services fast. This collaboration can be achieved through changes in the overall organizational structure – such as establishing an integrated team or a common tool chain and KPIs – focused on creating an atmosphere of cooperation and information sharing. There needs to be a formalized, continuous feedback loop between the two teams. The more information that is openly shared, the better.

2 PEOPLE

Take a hard look at the roles within your current organization. DevOps requires changes in key processes, such as testing or release management, that might require changes in the roles and responsibilities of team members or even entire teams. System administrators might become automation engineers or Developers. Database administrators may become data experts. Ultimately, it's about re-evaluating the skill sets of your team members and realigning them to tasks and roles that allow for quality, speed, velocity and the continuous delivery of business technology.

3 PROCESSES

You need to understand your design, delivery and ongoing operations processes as one holistic journey. Utilize traditional process maps and data flow diagrams to target and eliminate waste in those processes. Identify tasks, processes and decisions that can be automated. Where could machine learning and analytics provide faster insight? Where can bots be applied to static, repetitive tasks? This often takes some skill – to leverage the information that is in the current systems of record – but it can also lead to some of the fastest ROI for a DevOps initiative.

4 TECHNOLOGY

The end-to-end technology ecosystem continues to get more complex. Different cloud models have appeared, creating a hybrid cloud environment. Converged and hyper converged systems are blurring the lines between traditional server, storage and network technologies, and the networking infrastructure itself is evolving to deal with deluges of information from mobile and IoT usage. Because of all of this change, there are two functions that are the most critical in DevOps environments: monitoring and Analytics. Choose monitoring tools that can extend easily – allowing you to be proactive in your responses to changes in technology, and take advantage of the data you're collecting. This will help you improve your decision-making processes and focus on improving customer and employee experience.

5 AUTOMATION

When it comes to automation, consider three things:

1. What tasks can be automated?
2. What processes can be automated?
3. What decisions can be automated?

For example, a “task” may be a simple password reset, which can be easily automated. However, some passwords for things like sensitive data systems may require additional authentication or approval before being automatically reset. Understanding the requirements and process flows should help you lay out when the task makes sense to automate. Finally, your decision triggers should be dynamic. Set a baseline, but understand that process changes or new requirements might change when the decision triggers should be in effect. If a new service (or client, or regulation) requires additional stringency around password resets for security compliance, your decision triggers will need to be adjusted.

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