

Your Guide to

Understanding Digital Transformation, Agile & Enterprise Productivity Platforms



Want help with Atlassian?

Design Industries (DI) are your Atlassian Platinum Enterprise Partners.

We're a high-performance team ready to set you up on the fast track to success, whether you're new to Atlassian or want a better ROI on your existing toolset.

For your Atlassian environment to be successful, **four pillars** need to be working effectively: operations, management, continual improvement and software licensing. We strengthen you in these, through our depth of experience and market-leading Atlassian Configuration Sets.

Our focus is improving your organisation's mission-critical team collaboration systems faster, with less disruption and amazing support, delivered entirely remotely.

Businesses know that for a competitive edge, you need to support people with the best productivity tools.

DI helps you get more out of your Atlassian software so you can:

- Deliver higher quality projects with effective budgeting, estimates and delivery
- Improve the daily interactions of your team, customers and suppliers
- Move more quickly from ideation to execution of new initiatives in your environment
- Reduce errors and associated re-work across internal and customer-facing processes
- Continually improve processes to free up your team through greater automation
- Be agile enough to change projects and focus mid-race

Once you decide the level of efficiency you need to reach and how quickly you'd like this to happen, we develop and cost a plan to optimize your Atlassian environment.

— Got 30 minutes?

We can help you define your Atlassian opportunities and guide you through the solutions we can offer.

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1

Introduction

Since digital transformation began to revolutionise the shape and operational ability of our organisations over 20 years ago, we've treated technology such as computers, the internet and rapid advances in software as the key to business success.

While these tools have become mainstream and have offered us incredible benefits, they haven't always been efficient in delivering on their promises of improved productivity and profits.

A good way to think about the way organisations operate is as a 'digital factory floor', where knowledge workers move information between functions through computer systems. For many organisations, the fast rate of adoption of new technology and a lack of internal coordination to govern the purchase and processes for these new systems has been ad-hoc. As a result, many companies now face a poorly sewn patchwork quilt of barely (or not at all) connected platforms and applications, negatively impacting productivity, whilst trapping teams and information in silos.

Today, new project management methodologies such as agile, together with attitudes towards productivity and new ways of working to deliver products and services, have highlighted the need to look at the process layer of our businesses, not just the technology.

Why focus on productivity in our processes? It's simple: if you can give your employees a process and tools that are more efficient than what they currently use then, in theory, they will be able to deliver more value into the business via cost savings, a higher capacity for delivery and increased opportunities for continual improvement.

The good news is that we now have productivity platforms that are designed to have all the tools we need in the one place, that give organisations the opportunity to refine their processes without the need for a technological patchwork quilt. Platforms such as Atlassian include applications like Jira and Confluence that streamline workflows, track productivity and facilitate collaboration for every team and every function in the business, including portfolio and project management, HR and Marketing.

— This guide will provide you with:

- an overview of the significant trends impacting productivity - digital transformation and agile ways of working - and how they've led us to enterprise-level productivity platforms
- an understanding of how enterprise productivity platforms like Atlassian can benefit your entire organisation
- a roadmap for why and how to get the most out of your existing Atlassian platform
- how Design Industries (DI) can help you do this

2 Digital Transformation

The term 'digital transformation' might be overused, but it's a term and a trend that has had, and will continue to have, a profound impact on our organisations.

The IDC estimates that in 2019, 40% of all technology spending (over \$2 trillion) was dedicated to digital transformations¹. While expensive, when done correctly digital transformation brings significant rewards: a 2017 Gartner survey revealed that 56% of CEOs believe digital improvements have led to increased profits². To reap these rewards, however, we need to understand what digital transformation means for an organisation on a practical and strategic level.

— What is digital transformation?

It began in the 1990s when the ideas of digitising products, services and information mediums became truly established. By the 2000s, the adoption of computers, digital networks and the internet as business tools had become mainstream, and the rise of smart devices and social media was leading to a drastic change in how customers expected to interact with organisations. Organisations took both internal and customer-facing manual and paper-based processes and reconfigured them for a digital world.

To understand digital transformation on a basic customer-facing level, consider applying for a credit card through a bank. Traditionally, customers needed to fill in a form (occasionally available as a download), complete and sign it and provide it to the bank either via post or in person. The bank received it, scanned it, filed it and sent it to the relevant department for processing. The bank would advise the customer in writing of their success or otherwise after they had made a lengthy manual assessment.

Digital transformation has automated this process so that customers can use a self-service web form which can be completed and submitted to the right team in minutes. This automation also means that a decision can be made quickly based on the form field data that is provided, often without human intervention and an automated reply regarding the decision is sent to the customer.

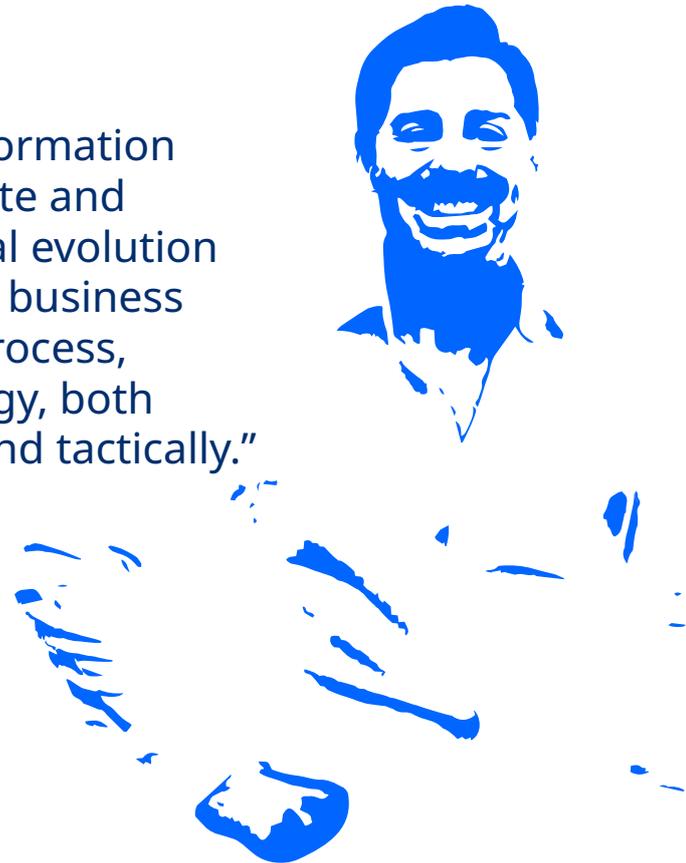
— Why is it necessary?

Digitisation vastly speeds up processes, reduces handling time and effort, improves the customer experience, and reduces the cost of the process - all factors that deliver value to the bottom line of an organisation. Critically, digital transformation allows organisations to innovate faster so they remain competitive in an environment where start-ups threaten their relevance. Crucially, digital transformation is helping companies become more productive without sacrificing quality.

Now, in 2020, most organisations have undertaken some level of digital transformation or have subjected their entire organisation to the process - known as a 'digital first' approach. However, as customer expectations increase, sometimes beyond their existing capability, enterprises are faced with further waves of digital transformation - moving to new platforms, re-tooling and consolidating their current technology. In essence:

“Digital transformation is the deliberate and ongoing digital evolution of a company, business model, idea process, or methodology, both strategically and tactically.”

Mazzone (2014)³



— Why is understanding this so important?

As per the definition above, digital transformation is a continual, ever-changing process, so your business strategy and operational strategy need to reflect this.

Harvard Business Review describes digital transformation as “inherently uncertain” given the vast amount of changes and adaptation, quick decision-making and stakeholders involved. This complexity requires a level of flexibility that traditional project management methodologies and organisational hierarchies often can't meet. The level of complexity, and subsequently the likelihood of failure, increases when different teams in the organisation take their work online in very different ways at different times. In fact, Forrester Research found that 50% of planned digital transformation efforts weren't delivered at all in 2018^{4,5}.

Fortunately, for organisations wishing to move forward with digital transformation – whether it's their first, second or tenth transformation – and do so quickly, coherently and successfully, an answer lies in using Agile methodology.

Tip

For any digital transformation project to work, you must consider the cultural changes that are required - particularly if a new way of working is needed. Get HR and line managers on board as soon as possible to understand the potential roadblocks and to make detailed plans for communication and training.



3 The Rise of Agile

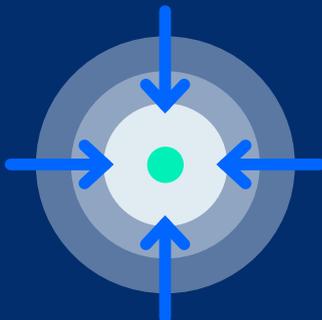
Many business leaders speak of it, and software developers have been using it for over a decade. Still, it's only recently that organisations are adopting Agile as a broader operational methodology. This adoption has come with a greater understanding of what Agile is, and the benefits it can deliver in terms of productivity and collaboration.

— What is Agile?

In the simplest terms, Agile is a project management methodology that uses an iterative approach to allow teams to deliver value to customers (internal and external) more quickly and more accurately⁶. Rather than using a waterfall-style of project management where teams develop intricate plans upfront, follow them precisely and aim for a strict launch date for the entire project, Agile allows teams to deliver the project in small, usable increments and release them to users for feedback. As such, requirements and specifications can be modified, changes can be responded to quickly, and consumers can start using a product or service much faster.

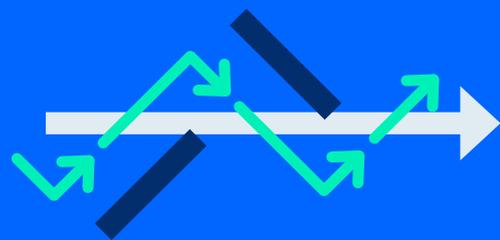
Traditional Project Management

- Define target
- Take aim
- Launch
- Hope (the target doesn't move)



Agile Project Management

- Vision
- Start in broad directions
- Learn/adapt to conditions
- Home in on target incrementally



— Where did Agile come from?

Agile was developed during the software engineering boom in the 2000s. High volumes of software products were being produced very quickly as a response to two factors: digital transformation, and; increasing demands on organisations to build an online presence and connect it to e-commerce platforms or internal computer systems to meet pressures from customers and competitors.

More traditional project methods like the waterfall method and their associated frameworks like PRINCE2 worked perfectly for constructing buildings and bridges but proved to be inadequate for the fast pace of delivery and continual innovation needed in software projects. When you're inventing something completely new, you (the leader) don't always know what it will look like, the customer doesn't quite know what they want, and the developers don't know what it will involve.

Coming up with a sophisticated plan at the start and rigidly adhering to it in an environment that moves so quickly meant that nine times out of ten, teams couldn't meet the requirements. Delivery was also slow - back then a team may deploy a new piece of software or an update every six months, in comparison to the daily deployments they can do now. Traditional approaches that focused on upfront planning and documentation failed to deliver on the one metric that really mattered - satisfying customers quicker than the competition.

Some software developers were already working in an agile way. Still, it wasn't until 2001 when a group of 17 developers came together and developed the [Agile Manifesto](#) was it cemented as a serious methodology⁷.

Agile Software Development

We are uncovering better ways of developing software by doing it and helping others do it.

Through this work, we have come to value:

- Individuals and interactions** over processes and tools
- Working software** over comprehensive documentation
- Customer collaboration** over contract negotiation
- Responding to change** over following a plan

That is, while there is value in the items on the right, we value the items on the left more.

* Credit: [Atlassian](#), 2020⁷

Manifesto

Agile took some time to be adopted and for software developers to fully embrace this new way of working, but we now see Agile frameworks such as Scrum⁶ or Kanban⁶ as the industry standard. This acceptance created a need for specific project management, tracking and collaboration software that allowed teams to work in an agile way using their preferred framework on multiple projects simultaneously, so platforms such as Atlassian were born.

— Enterprise-wide adoption

By 2015, many large corporate organisations began to see the benefits of using the Agile principles of collaboration, incremental releases, fast turnaround and responsiveness to change throughout their entire operation. A PwC whitepaper revealed that Agile projects are 28% more successful than those delivered using a traditional approach⁸. In addition to improved productivity and reduced time to market, Agile offers improved customer engagement, better information sharing, a break-down of information silos, greater control and visibility of processes and metrics.

Frameworks were soon developed to facilitate the extension of Agile across multiple teams in an organisation (Agile at Scale), all with meeting customer needs and delivering value in short time-frames at their core. These include:

Scaled Agile Framework® (SAFe®)

a set of workflow patterns for implementing Agile at an enterprise level. It comprises a large body of knowledge, including guidance on roles and responsibilities, how to plan and manage work and values to uphold.⁹

Lean

a philosophy that focuses on providing what is needed, when and with the minimum amount of resources to improve efficiency, lower costs and reduced lead-times¹⁰. Lean can also be used as a budgeting technique where instead of being given an annual budget, teams request funding for projects. The success of the project is evaluated and if it did not perform well or meet the anticipated ROI (even at early stages), the funding is re-allocated.

However, this transformation has been piece-meal with organisations pushing out Agile practices to functions such as product development, marketing, website development, procurement, research and HR but with different levels of uptake, or functions choosing to use a combination of Agile and traditional waterfall methodologies.

The reality of Agile transformation is that it is rarely straightforward and can require a re-organisation of processes, significant training and software tooling changes. Ultimately, the success of adopting this new way of working is dependent on investing in and using an Agile-focused enterprise productivity platform to its greatest potential.

Is your organisation working towards becoming agile?

A 2019 survey on agility by KPMG revealed that 80% of respondents had started their transformation towards using the Agile methodology in the last three years, and 63% had made it a strategic priority to become an Agile organisation¹¹.

4 Understanding Enterprise-Level Productivity Platforms

— What are productivity platforms?

Agile-specific productivity platforms and tools (sometimes referred to as Agile project management tools) play a critical role in enabling digital transformation and as systems for better productivity in all teams across an organisation.

While initially designed for software development, their ability to facilitate Agile at Scale has now been recognised by thousands of enterprises worldwide.

Separate tools have been developed by various companies to manage each element of the Agile process (tracking, collaboration, delivery). However, transforming to an entirely Agile organisation is best achieved by bringing all teams and functions – HR, finance, marketing, procurement, operations – into the one environment (a platform) that contains all the digital tools (applications) they need to organise their work effectively - hence a 'productivity platform'. Each application (app) can then be connected in a way that facilitates information flow and collaboration within and between teams. By choosing to use one productivity platform, for the first time, everyone is together to support each other and work in a truly agile way.



— Atlassian

Atlassian is one such platform that hosts a variety of core apps such as Jira, Jira Service Desk, Confluence and Slack. It can be enhanced by a marketplace of over 5000 other apps. It can be hosted either on Amazon Web Services, a private server or on the cloud. Below, we've expanded on two of the core Atlassian tools, Jira and Confluence.

Jira

Atlassian's Jira app is a highly-customisable workflow engine that allows you to configure processes and track units (or projects) of work. It was created as a response to the surge in software development to handle bug tracking but has evolved into an Agile tool that is now suitable for enterprise-wide use. Not only does it streamline work, it can automate tasks via the use of scripts, validation checks and conditions i.e. when a workflow status changes it can trigger an activity for another team member, or even another team to execute. For example, HR may configure a workflow to ensure new hires are on-boarded correctly. When the status of an employee becomes 'hired' a script could send a trigger to a third-party system to produce an ID card or a ticket for the IT team to set up their laptop.

Furthermore, it supports the Kanban framework with boards to help teams visualise the progress of projects in terms of 'to do, doing, done' (Trello is a very simple version of this). These boards are fundamental to Agile working where it is imperative to understand how your work is broken up, minimise the work you have in progress and deliver value quickly. In other words, it helps you avoid having 10 tasks completed 90% of the way through.

Confluence

The Confluence app, on the other hand, combines the best of a document creation tool with a wiki page, knowledge management system and collaboration tool. Macros are used to connect Confluence with other Atlassian products like Jira, BitBucket or Portfolio to create contextually rich pages. In addition to being a place to design, create and store a knowledge base of information such as policies and processes, you can comment and edit in a live environment on project documents and meeting notes. You always work on the most recent version of the document, but can revert to previous versions at any time. These 'wiki pages' can then be linked to the relevant project or issue on Jira via a macro so you can track how your project is progressing, read meeting notes and review designs and documents together. Using this technology, staff waste less time switching between apps, all information is kept in the one place (no tracking through thousands of emails or files) and collaboration can occur much more quickly.

How do productivity platforms support different business functions?

Team	Project Type	Example
Software Development	New App Development (Project Management)	<p>The team scope out and collaborate around requirements in Confluence.</p> <p>The project (including anticipated timelines, hours of work needed and resources) and issues are created in Jira and work is assigned to each team member.</p> <p>Rapid boards are created in Jira to help them organise their work and plan the releases.</p> <p>Each team member completes their work - code is managed in BitBucket.</p> <p>Each piece of work can be tested and the deliverables can be linked back to the requirements as they are completed.</p> <p>Using Bamboo, the team can push the new code out via their CICD process into a production environment.</p>
Research	Cancer Research - Genetic Sample Testing (Project Management)	<p>The project requirements, objectives and planning can be conducted by the team together in Confluence.</p> <p>The project can be set up in Jira, with issues set up for each sample.</p> <p>Each stage of the testing process can be established via a Kanban board.</p> <p>Results can be recorded on the issue and project using comments.</p> <p>Full reports can be designed in Confluence and linked back to the Jira project.</p> <p>Time to complete each stage can be tracked and team members can communicate across the platforms to keep each other updated.</p>

Team	Project Type	Example
Marketing	Annual Report Publication	<p>A project is established in Jira, and issues set up for sub-projects such as a corresponding micro-site and live event.</p> <p>A workflow is established so the same process can be followed each year and approvals can be automated as each task is completed.</p> <p>Each team member (content writing, research, design, website development and events management) can be assigned an issue and can track their progress. The whole team can see what stage they are at.</p> <p>Content planning sheets and content drafts can all be created and stored in Confluence and linked back to the project and relevant issue.</p> <p>During team meetings, all members can comment on Confluence documents, and even designed PDFs and web pages linked to the project.</p> <p>* For an additional example of how Jira has been used to support a marketing project click here</p>
HR	Performance Management For Call Centres	<p>HR can use the UpRaise plugin to configure continual feedback into everyday processes and projects to give them a clear indication of performance at review time.</p> <p>If HR need to assess the performance of an IT help desk technician, a component can be placed on a Jira ticket that allows staff or managers to give feedback on work as it occurs. For example, a staff member may use the component to seek feedback from a colleague on a recent issue: "Hi, I think I did a good job with this solution. What do you think?" or a manager may critique a service call: "Great call but next time use simpler language for the client."</p> <p>When the scheduled performance review occurs, there is a record of what the person's objectives were, what the results were and actual feedback as evidence of their achievements or areas for improvement.</p> <p>The performance review document could even be created, edited and collaborated on by managers and staff in Confluence.</p>
IT Service Management (ITSM)	Managing IT Support Requests In-House	<p>Using Jira Service Desk and Jira Software, internal ITSM staff can collaborate on support requests to solve their customer's problems faster.</p> <p>Jira Service Desk can be linked to Confluence to provide a searchable knowledge base of past solutions and fixes for frequently raised issues without having to switch applications or work in separate databases.</p> <p>IT Asset Management can be done using a powerful Atlassian plugin such as Mindville.</p> <p>This reduces time on calls, resolution time thereby improving customer satisfaction.</p>

— How do they help you achieve your strategic objectives?

Setting strategic objectives is an essential part of driving an organisation – if you don't know what success looks like, how will you know if you achieved it? However, without the ability to see your progress towards these objectives on an organisation-wide level, and modify these objectives to meet changing market demands and economic turbulence, they can become unhelpful, or even meaningless.

Enterprise-level productivity platforms like Atlassian and its Jira product allow you to create workflows for every team and align the outcomes of those workflows with your strategic objectives. They afford you the ability to control and understand the delivery of strategic objectives across an organisation in these ways:

Visibility

- If you've adopted a productivity platform and the new way of working (Agile), it allows you to see how well your organisation is delivering on a very granular level. From the strategic plan down through your portfolio, your programs or projects, into your features and tasks and even down to lines of code, you can see the factors that are and aren't contributing to the achievement of your objectives.
- From a strategic point of view, productivity platforms give you visibility into what it is that you've decided to deliver against your strategic objectives. This information allows you to make decisions to adapt and change as required.

Control

- If you decide to change something at a high level, having workflows and information that tells you where projects are in those workflows means that it's easier to stop work immediately at the coalface and change direction when priorities change. You can re-organise more quickly when you know what's already in place.
- Having a visual way to track the progress of projects allow you to determine where time and effort are being wasted and change track quickly to realign those activities to your strategic objectives.
- Consolidating teams/silos into a standard way of working on the one platform mean you can scale it in the organisation and can get insight into what's happening.

Capacity

- A crucial part of project management is understanding budget, resources and time-frames.
- Often, we see businesses who don't have a good insight into their available capacity. While leaders may have a high-level understanding – for example, they know how many people are full or part-time - they don't have granular insight into what's happening on an individual or team-by-team basis at any one time.
- An Agile methodology and productivity platform designed to support that (used correctly), gives you 'story points' to help you manage capacity. These story points give you a measure of the combined school of effort and difficulty of a task which tells you how much time it will take to do something. You can do this anonymously on a project basis or use the information to predict billable hours for individuals.
- For those organisations not ready for story points, good old fashioned hours, days and weeks works just fine.

Reporting

- Productivity platforms allow you to track multiple projects and teams. This enables you to perform portfolio reporting across all groups without the need to pull reports from different sources. You can view what's happening across teams quickly, so meetings become about making choices and strategic decisions around what's happening rather than trying to figure out what's going on.

— How can they help achieve operational excellence?

Productivity platforms like Atlassian, and their workflow engines such as Jira, deliver operational excellence by improving your initial response time (IRT - how long it takes for you to respond to a request) and overall response time (ORT - how long it takes to complete the task). By designing robust processes or workflows that are easily repeatable, there's no need to 'reinvent the wheel' completely each time you start a project.

Furthermore, using productivity software to track IRT and ORT and comparing these statistics between projects allows you to make incremental changes to workflows that optimise these measures and will enable you to gain a competitive edge by rapidly delivering value and responding to market demands.

Imagine you have an idea that will improve sales by 10%. Making this happen using traditional project management methods is generally quite slow. However, if you have a repeatable Agile process that focuses on incremental delivery with the shortest IRT and ORT, you can achieve that 10% sales growth much more quickly, giving you a significant competitive advantage. For example, Formula 1 (F1) teams usually design a car, build it, race it, take feedback and then immediately improve it to make it faster, even by just a bit, in time for the next race. Those tiny 'bits' of improvements, delivered quickly are what gives them a competitive advantage.

Formula 1 Project Pitlane

Understanding IRT and ORT, having repeatable processes that optimise these, and being able to go from idea to delivery quickly is best explained by F1's 'Project Pitlane'.^{12, 13}

Seven F1 teams (Haas, McLaren, Mercedes, Racing Point, Red Bull, Renault and Williams) came together to answer the **United Kingdom's request for help to design and deliver respiratory devices** to assist in treatment for **COVID-19**. F1's reputation for rapidly delivering new technology has helped them reverse engineer existing medical devices and re-tool their current manufacturing facilities to produce current designs to support the UK's estimated need for 20,000 ventilators.

By the end of March 2020, The National Health Service had already approved production for a breathing device designed by the Mercedes F1 team and the University College of London (UCL). They had repeatable workflows for

delivering innovative ideas, understood IRT and ORT for these workflows and knew what their capacity was. It took Mercedes F1 engineers, UCL specialists and clinicians at UCL hospital only 100 hours to design and produce the first device. Two weeks after the prototype was built, Mercedes AMG High Performance Powertrains Technology Centre in Brixworth began producing 1000 devices a day.

Project Pitlane demonstrated beyond doubt that productivity platforms and Agile methodology are not just for software development teams. F1 has shown that they are the epitome of an organisation who successfully uses new ways of working and the right productivity platforms to deliver value quickly, regardless of the task at hand.

Case Study

— How do they translate into value?

The level of detail and information about projects that productivity platforms offer allow you to evaluate ideas on the basis of business value versus effort.

Effort can include cost, time to deliver, human resources, additional equipment or software required and time taken away from other critical tasks. Business value can mean something obvious and tangible such as the money you will make or save as a result shortening a process or cycle, or less tangible such as a reduction in staff stress which translates into fewer sick days and higher productivity and retention. What is more difficult to calculate are the changes to your bottom line, revenue and customer perception if you can deliver a new product or service to your customers more quickly than a competitor, or in reaction to a competitor.

While calculating value can be tricky, productivity platforms give you the data you need to complete these calculations and choose the ideas or projects that are likely to deliver the greatest business value for the lowest effort based on previous results.



5 Making the most of productivity platforms

Purchasing and installing a new platform and choosing the correct apps will only take you some of the way towards the productivity improvements and a competitive advantage you are seeking.

Having an understanding of your current IT environment and needs and knowing how to establish and run an environment that makes it easy and effective to adopt a new, Agile way of working offers the most significant opportunity for success.



“In racing, there are always things you can learn, every single day. There is always space for improvement, and I think that applies to everything in life.”

Lewis Hamilton

— The software patchwork quilt

To understand why organisations are often unable to reap the full spectrum of benefits that the Atlassian productivity platform can offer, it can be helpful to look at a general history of IT purchasing behaviours in large businesses.

In the 1990s, having a PC on every desk was fast becoming a reality. Software options were limited, so senior IT executives focused on purchasing and maintaining hardware, networks, databases and providing access to staff. During the 2000s when the internet became mainstream and new software was released every week (or so it seemed), these senior IT executives – now known as Chief Information Officers and Chief Technology Officers – kept their focus on the broader IT picture. Meanwhile, Managers were given the responsibility for getting their teams the software tools they needed for individual tasks or projects.

While this approach was efficient for individual teams, this decentralisation led to organisations owning dozens of apps with unnecessary duplication of licenses, and having little to no connectivity between their teams. If large projects were required to make changes to products, processes or websites, they became costly to execute as new software had to be purchased to replace existing technology that no longer connected or served its purpose. Soon, people were frustrated with their work environment and, on learning more about Agile working and Agile project management software, purchased inexpensive instances of the Atlassian platform and apps. Alongside this, IT teams purchased their own instances of Atlassian apps as they needed them, resulting in further duplication.

Large organisations ended up with a patchwork quilt of apps and a large, unnecessarily expensive and inefficient software footprint. Efforts to be more productive and agile backfired as there was no central coordination or connectivity, and workflows had been configured in diverse ways without regard for best practice or enterprise-wide use. While CIOs and CTOs are now more aware of their IT environments, even those who have consolidated their Atlassian footprint aren't using the platform or its applications to their full potential.

How consolidated are you?

Before embarking on a project to consolidate your technology footprint and enhance your Atlassian environment, we suggest taking an audit of:

- how many platforms and apps you have, and how many licences of each
- how many you use
- how many connect with each other
- how much you're paying for everything, from your hosting, to hardware and software costs

TIP

— The four pillars of success

At DI, we use four 'pillars' to guide our approach to establishing and improving Atlassian as an enterprise wide productivity platform; software licencing, management, operations and continual improvement.

These pillars address specific functions, and how well they are built and fulfilled, determines how successful an organisation will be in using the platform, and the level of productivity that will result.

License

Also known as Software Licence Asset Management (SLAM), this function ensures that your software licences remain current, apps are accessible, and the level of licences is appropriate for your user count.

The return on investment (ROI) for Atlassian's platform and corresponding apps is very high; however, the financial footprint of purchasing instances and apps in an ad-hoc way can be significant.

To ensure the footprint, and therefore ROI is controlled, it is imperative that a single person is responsible for arranging trial or permanent access for team members quickly and ensuring licences don't expire.

The strength of this pillar also depends on co-terming – ensuring licences begin and end on a single date – to streamline billing.

Manage

This function involves maintaining two components: hardware and software.

The hardware component refers to maintaining the managed Amazon Web Services (AWS) solution used to host the Atlassian platform (for businesses who don't wish to host themselves) or using the Atlassian cloud option.

The software component refers to performing regular upgrades and applying ad-hoc security patches, maintaining and refreshing the staging environment with production data, reviewing and optimising the performance of the platform and apps, and fixing issues identified by users to ensure they don't face unnecessary downtime.

Operate

Administrative tasks such as monthly auditing of users, configurations and plugins are key to ensuring your Atlassian machine operates efficiently.

Adding or archiving projects and unused artefacts, and reducing unnecessary application overhead costs are part of it.

In many organisations these tasks fall to someone who has worked with Atlassian before and has some level of aptitude for administrative tasks, but doesn't have formal training or the time to dedicate to it.

We find that it can be useful to have an outside agency like DI do this correctly to reduce your internal resource overhead and provide peace of mind that your platform is being handled by a reputable resource.

Improve

Continual Improvement is what it's all about, and the most exciting pillar. We are frequently presented with opportunities to make teams more efficient by improving the configuration or set-up of the tools. These improvements come in many different shapes and sizes. For example:

- **Enhancing** existing workflows
- **Automating** aspects of workflows
- **Expanding** reporting
- **Automating** data manipulation
- **Modifying** scripting
- **Using apps** to automate user effort

When we work on this pillar, we provide a platform for all Atlassian users to give input and be part of the journey to shape the organisation's new ways of working. Users are encouraged to submit ideas and we can facilitate an Atlassian community to engage with the team on best-practice.

During the Improvement phase we bring together our Configuration Sets that encompass best practices, with ideas for process improvement from within the client's organisation. We then determine which improvements will deliver the highest value and the most significant impacts on productivity and quality with the least amount of effort and risk. These activities are implemented first. We then work to improve the operating environment for your team on an ongoing basis.

The 4 Pillars

License

Maintaining ROI: ensuring your software licences are current, the number is correct for your user count, and they are consolidated for easier billing.

Operate

Administrative tasks: projects need to be stood up or archived; users need to be on and off-boarded; artifacts need to be created and archived.

Manage

Hardware and software tasks: environments need to be maintained, software needs to be patched and upgraded and logs monitored.

Improve

Continual improvements: seeking out opportunities to improve your configuration and processes to increase your rate of delivering value.

— Productivity platforms and data integrity

Techopedia defines data integrity as "...the overall completeness, accuracy and consistency of data."¹⁴ This usually means that there are no discrepancies between two records of data or instances of data. Data integrity is essential in being able to operate effectively within your platform. Fortunately, enterprise-wide platforms can be used in several ways to ensure this from the outset.

Firstly, much time can be lost to reconciling data between disconnected instances of the same application. Shifting to a single enterprise-wide environment creates a single source of truth for information.

Secondly, a lack of data integrity can lead to process failure and unintended consequences, including poor compliance, lost productivity and increased project risk. One of the biggest opportunities with Atlassian is the ability to use the tooling to encourage process compliance and data integrity by using workflows. These workflows can be easily communicated to, and understood by, employees and can be configured so that it becomes difficult to make a mistake.

Finally, the adage "Rubbish in, rubbish out" applies not just to databases, but to productivity platforms, too. Atlassian helps you capture the data accurately and present it in the format that is most useful to help you make a decision.

6

How Design Industries Can Help

Effective information management and team collaboration are the life blood of successful organisations. There are always opportunities to improve these critical functions, so DI shows organisations where they are and how to take advantage of them.

It is our years of experience, accredited staff and processes that focus on quality and productivity that give us what it takes to help businesses run Atlassian to the best of its potential. We do this in several ways.

— Consultation

We engaged as strategic partners on an executive level to help businesses develop their Atlassian platform alongside their business objectives. We also work alongside HR to facilitate the transformation to Agile working and can help bring relevant stakeholders together to gain input on how best to set up the platform so it works for the business. Our team can also help run regular user-group meetings to obtain feedback on the performance of the platform and suggest improvements.

— Configuration

Jira's most significant benefit, and its biggest curse, is that it is highly configurable. Many organisations don't know how to configure their Atlassian platform and their Jira application correctly for the best efficiency and productivity outcomes on an enterprise-wide level.

Our team has an in-depth knowledge of how Atlassian tools expect workflows to behave. That led us to create best-practice Configuration Sets based on current Agile principles and frameworks that work for all teams and functions throughout an organisation. We perform a gap analysis for each client by looking at their existing processes and how these are currently mapped to their tools and comparing them with best practice. We can then fill those gaps with our Configuration

Sets and customise where needed. Often clients implement our best practice Configuration Sets and then continually improve and adapt them to fit their organisation.

— Atlassian support

DI understands that businesses don't always have the expertise or time in-house to set up and manage their Atlassian platform correctly. Our team provides businesses with a 'turn-key' solution for the Atlassian stack with all four pillars of success established successfully. We can then run the platform so that staff can enjoy the increases in productivity and efficiency without the operational and administrative burden.

— Training

Without thorough training, it's almost impossible to realise the full benefits of the Atlassian platform. We offer training to ensure staff can use the applications relevant to them and understand how to collaborate in their new environment.

In the end, working with DI ensures that work is smooth, processes are clean, reports offer the right information, and there is consistency between teams: everything you need for organisational success.

A high-contrast, black and white portrait of W. Edwards Deming, a man with glasses, a mustache, and a suit, set against a solid black background. The image is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the page.

“Improve quality,
you automatically
improve productivity.”

W. Edwards Deming



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Enterprise Productivity Platforms are what we do.

We've shifted companies from **six monthly** to **weekly code releases** and **scaled multinationals** from **500** to **several thousand users**.

One client reported that for teams who took on the software, at a minimum, it **doubled their efficiency**.

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