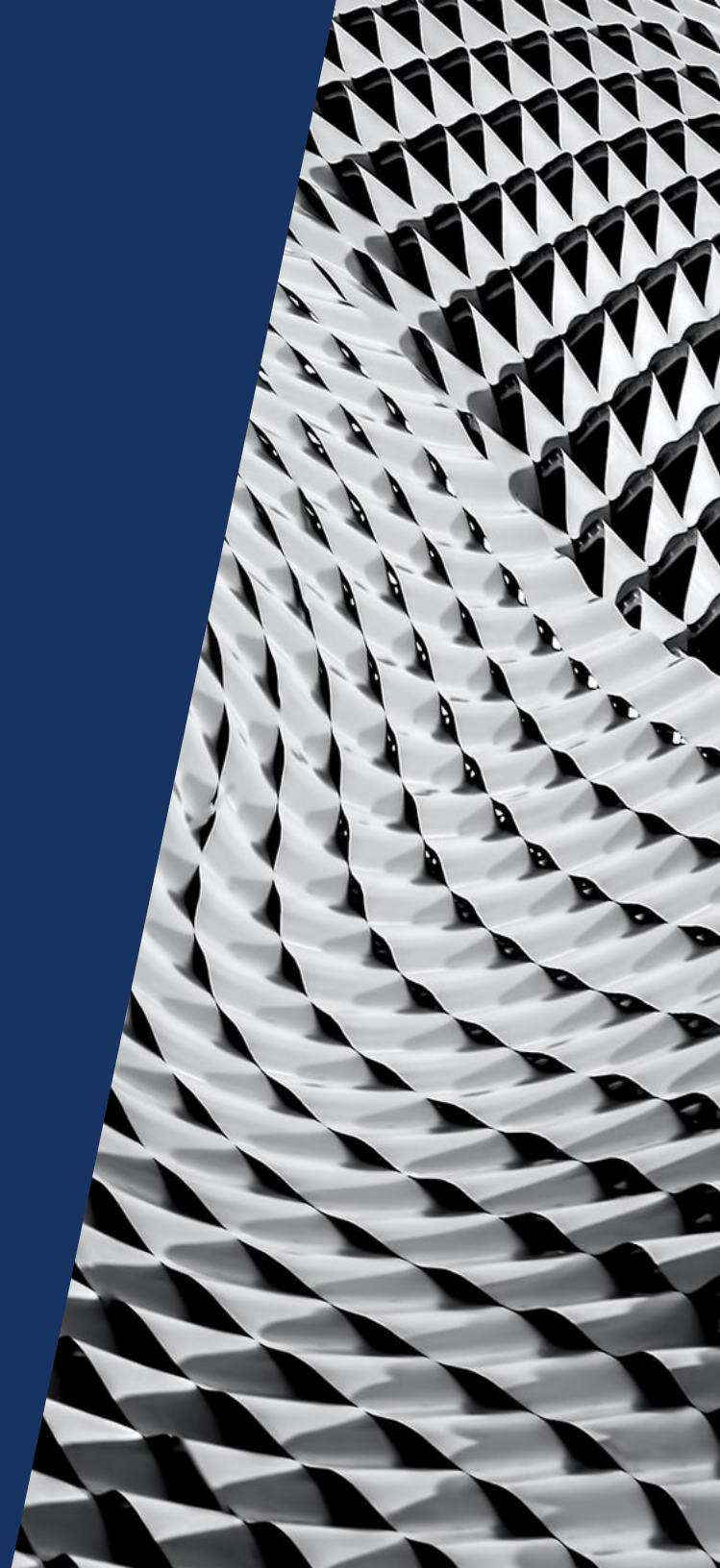# CONFLUENT

5 Steps to Event Streaming

The Pivot from Projects to a Platform

Plenty of businesses make an initial toe-dip into event streaming to solve for a particular task that requires moving large amounts of data around. This sort of bottom-up, or developer-led, entree is a typical start to the adoption journey of event streaming. But if the platform never reaches the sightline of company leadership, it may be blocked from reaching its full potential—and the organization may not truly capitalize on data, or event streaming, to transform.

There's profound strategic potential in an event streaming platform for enterprise businesses of many kinds. The types of business challenges event streaming is capable of addressing include driving better customer experience, reducing costs, mitigating risk, and providing a single source of truth across the business. It can be a game changer.

Here are the five crucial steps to turning event streaming into a business driver and digital transformer.

1

Understand the strategic potential of an event streaming platform

Before getting started on wholesale implementation, you must have a solid understanding of the type of business use cases event streaming technology is capable of delivering. Event streaming is a revolution in data infrastructure and application architectures. It enables radical initiatives across an organization. Here are just five common examples.

Customer 360° and website clickstream analysis

Understand what your customers are clicking on so you can serve personalized, targeted, contextual content, while building 360° profiles

Legacy IT modernization

Update your core infrastructure and applications for better real-time data management, at scale, and better address modern regulatory requirements

A single view of the business

Integrate events from across the business into a single enterprise-wide platform, supporting better customer experience

Next-gen apps

Use events in real time, at scale, to create innovative applications and services

Real-time analytics

Achieve new levels of data capture and real-time processing, at massive scale, in order to capture business events, including Cyber Security Incidents and Event Management (SIEM)
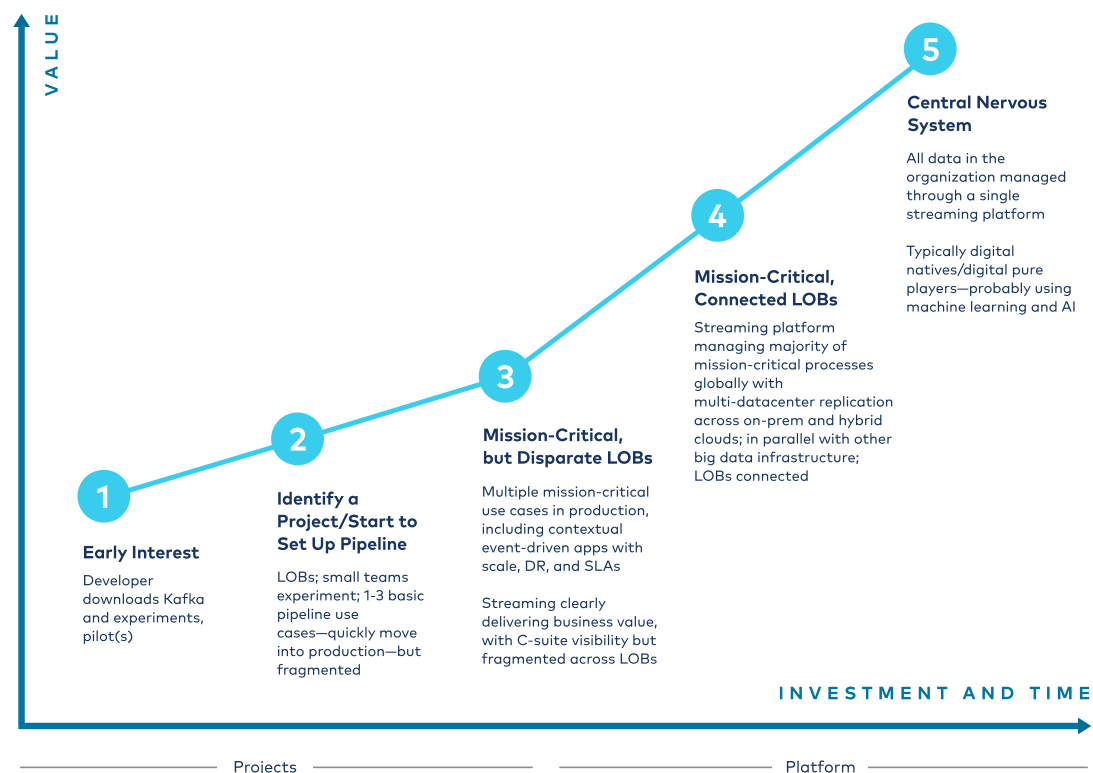
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Look for instances of Kafka implementation you already have

Chances are, if your organization works with large amounts of data at scale in any capacity, you already have an implementation of Apache Kafka®. We would suggest first investigating whether, and where, event streaming is already deployed. Dig around and find out where event streaming might serve a particular use case and understand the different teams involved. Since most event streaming is developer-led in the first few stages, you'll want to talk to the app builders and platform owners within each line of business.

The 5 stages of event streaming adoption

For a little perspective on why this matters, here are the 5 typical stages of event streaming adoption. Most organizations get stuck at stage 2 or 3—they might have a project identified or a mission-critical deployment in production, but they haven't yet reached the stage of connecting lines of business. Without an understanding of the value of a platform business model and the necessity to connect Kafka throughout your business, you can't reach level 5.

VALUE

5

Central Nervous System

All data in the organization managed through a single streaming platform

Typically digital natives/digital pure players—probably using machine learning and AI

4

Mission-Critical, Connected LOBs

Streaming platform managing majority of mission-critical processes globally with multi-datacenter replication across on-prem and hybrid clouds; in parallel with other big data infrastructure; LOBs connected

3

Mission-Critical, but Disparate LOBs

Multiple mission-critical use cases in production, including contextual event-driven apps with scale, DR, and SLAs

Streaming clearly delivering business value, with C-suite visibility but fragmented across LOBs

2

Identify a Project/Start to Set Up Pipeline

LOBs; small teams experiment; 1-3 basic pipeline use cases—quickly move into production—but fragmented

1

Early Interest

Developer downloads Kafka and experiments, pilot(s)

INVESTMENT AND TIME

Projects ─────────── Platform ───────────

See Five Stages to Streaming Platform Adoption White Paper ▸

3

Consider strategic initiatives

You know why an enterprise-level event streaming platform is valuable. You have a sense of where Kafka is already being used within your organization. Now it's time to connect the dots. To devise a strategic plan for event streaming, think about your most critical pain points. For instance, some common ones include:

→ A struggle to keep up with customer expectations as paradigm shifts occur within your industry at a macro level

→ The burden of outdated technology infrastructure that doesn't support new digital business processes, holding you back from acting on a strategic vision

→ Regulatory pressures that require faster ways of working with data, at scale, while also making sure it's secure and meets compliance requirements—and critically, that staying compliant doesn't slow you down

Think about your top strategic initiatives for the year and how they fit with your data and application initiatives and how event streaming could help you along your journey of transformation. Then identify the project where you're ready to try something different.
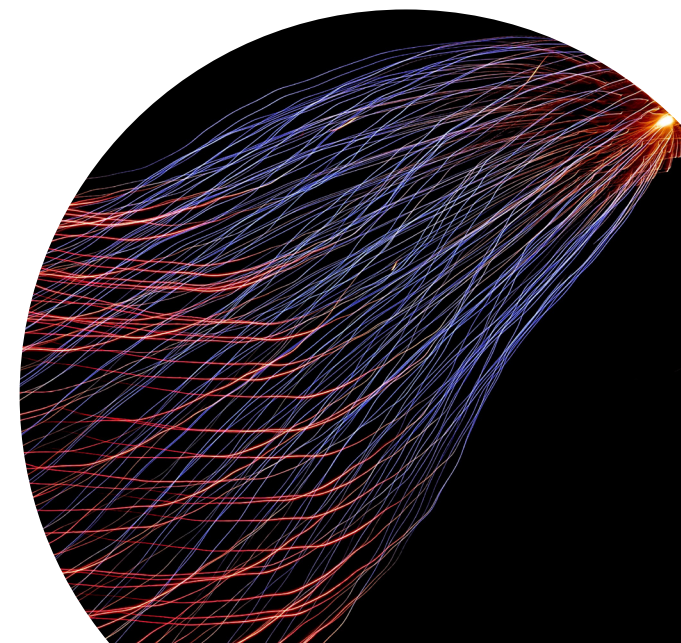
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Shift your event streaming from tactical to strategic

If you've already found examples of event streaming being used within your organization, chances are, those were for one-off, developer-led use cases. Up until this point, your use of Kafka was probably driven by specific business problems and remained largely tactical. Now, it's time to start thinking about business transformation. As you begin to envision a strategic, centralized application of event streaming that will make a real business difference, you need buy-in from top-level stakeholders. Business transformation is like pushing a large, heavy boulder up a hill. It gets steeper and harder as you climb. But the payoff can be enormous.

Embed transformation into core technology strategy

Organizations with successful event streaming initiatives have embedded streaming capabilities into their core business. More and more, the same can be said for successful businesses in general.

Attract appropriate investment

Executives have the power to greenlight the paradigm shift, but they need to understand the true business value the platform could deliver.

Address the "people problem"

Making a strategic shift in your event streaming requires teams that were previously siloed to work together. That means you need a cross-working platform with a center of excellence or shared business model.
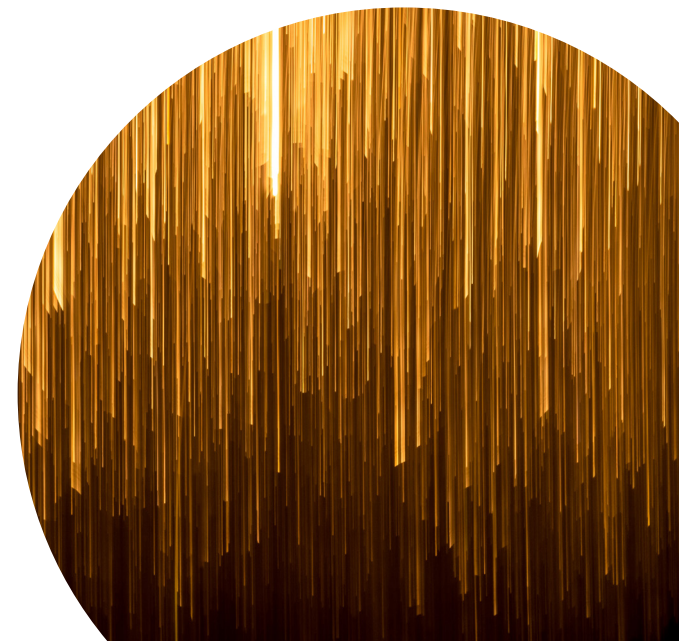
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Work with a best-in-class partner

Most event streaming initiatives begin as developer led, but to make the shift to an event streaming platform that acts as the central nervous system for your entire enterprise, you need a best-in-class partner with the experience to help you create vision and structure around the mission. In addition to helping you get set up with technology, a partner like Confluent can help you to:

→ Digitize and migrate your data and content online and to the cloud

→ And perhaps most importantly, strategically envision how your business will use its data

→ Create a single source of truth for all your data (or events) so that you can use it across initiatives

→ Create deep cost savings across lines of business

The cloud: Buy instead of build

With the cloud now a critical component of delivering an enterprise-wide event streaming platform, we built Confluent Cloud to help address resource limitations within the enterprise. Confluent Cloud is a fully managed service which includes a certain level of advice based on your broad experience. Our Business Value Consulting (BVC) team can help you think through your operating model and how it will support your journey to a fully integrated event streaming model. It also enables you to start small and scale accordingly, no matter where you find yourself on your current adoption of event streaming.
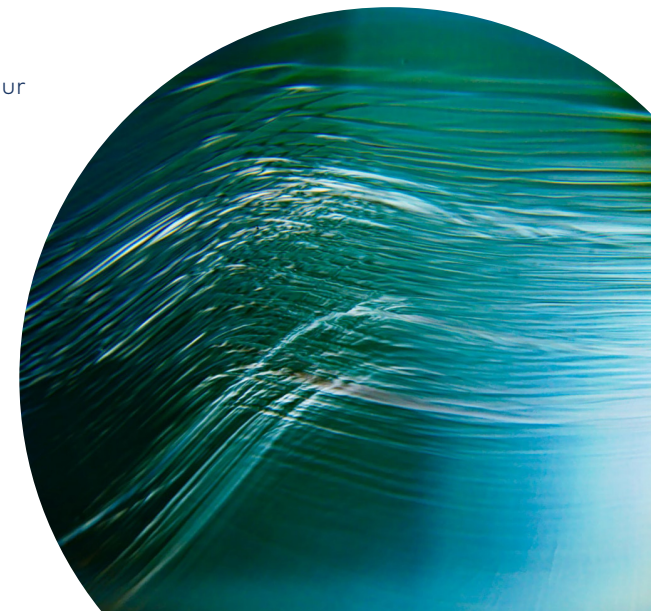
A fully centralized event streaming reality

Where is your organization in the maturity curve of event streaming? Has your event streaming platform become fundamental to how your business operates, or is event streaming still happening in an ad hoc way in pockets of your organization? Have you considered the strategic initiatives that can propel your event streaming efforts to a level that will truly transform your business?

The five-step process in this ebook is a good outline for how to advance the maturity of event streaming and drive business value. But it's also great to get support from a best-in-class partner with the experience to guide your journey.

If you'd like to talk to a Business Value Consultant, **contact us** today.

✦ CONFLUENT

ABOUT CONFLUENT

Confluent, founded by the original creators of Apache Kafka®, pioneered the enterprise-ready event streaming platform. With Confluent, organizations benefit from the first event streaming platform built for the enterprise with the ease of use, scalability, security, and flexibility required by the most discerning global companies to run their business in real time. Companies leading their respective industries have realized success with this new platform paradigm to transform their architectures to streaming from batch processing, spanning on-premises and multi-cloud environments. Confluent is headquartered in Mountain View and London, with offices globally.

To learn more, please visit
www.confluent.io

Download Confluent Platform and Confluent Cloud at:
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