

Realization of DevOps is equivalent to 'Speaking truth'

DevOps is ubiquitous now and the reason can be many:

1. Need of business to get the pulse of customer as quickly as possible before doing deep-dive
2. Need to respond to customer issue as soon as possible
3. Need to align with agile model - do reach the same goal but in incremental model instead of making something in silos and realizing later that it is now what customer want
4. Need to avoid damage to organization reputation by fixing security issues as quickly as possible before it spoil brand

It has many flavour of it: **DevSecOps**, **SecDevOps**, **NoOps**, **AppOps** etc. A simple search in Google is good enough to confuse anyone. Anyhow, the intent is very clear - that is to realize 3 simple steps:

Continuous Integration -> Continuous Delivery -> Continuous Deployment (or Release)

I am not going to deep dive into each of the above aspects which is very well crafted in many blogs. I am going to talk about why various companies are struggling to have a smoother realization of above 3 phases. I am going to focus on the following mysteries:

- Why are many companies struggling to apply above?
- Why does organization take longer than anticipated time to realize a true DevOps system?
- Why does it creates unrest among team though everyone accepts on the paper that it looks promising and beneficial to everyone?

Answer of all of the questions is simple:

Realization of DevOps is equivalent to 'Speaking truth'.

As truth is very simple to hear, accept and advice but the most difficult to walk through. Yes, telling blunt truth sometime can backfire and can harm someone significantly. So, there is saying that it is OK to have a lie equivalent to pinch of salt if it saves someone life. But, it is not acceptable to distort truth and portray false as truth. From our childhood, we have been educated to speak truth but have not been educated enough what truth is, how to use it when, why it is important to convey truth in amicable manner etc. Result is that we live a confused life, oscillating between what we should do and what we did and giving benefit of doubt to self.

You will be wondering why I am giving this analogy. Answer is simple. The organization is doing same thing while realizing DevOps.

- Organization fails to communicate what DevOps is to its community.

- Individual team distort DevOps as per convenience in the name of adaption that DevOps is no more DevOps and eventually team fails to gain all benefit of CI / CD / CD.
- Team decline to take accountability for failure as DevOps is meant to fail early, learn and move on.

The older organization is, the bigger challenge is. Like truth, the older people find more difficult to speak truth and live with a mask. You will not find this in child. The older team has worked in traditional model, the bigger resistance it is. Like truth, we define it as per our convenience.

So far so good! We talked enough about the problem. Let us move in positive direction to see what best we can do. To answer that let us understand what DevOps really mean.

DevOps is based on CALMS principle.

C : Culture. Communicate, accept and adopt the change.

A : Automation. Use automation to simplify CI -> CD -> CD.

L : Lean. Be thinner, meaner and faster. Do small-small things in multiple iteration. It is again a mindset shift especially for old organization.

M : Measurement. Measure things to be more accountable and use it as feedback (like closed loop control system) not only for doing statistical computation. IF you can measure, you can tell yourself what to improve and henceforth how to improve. Again it goes to mind set of taking accountabilities.

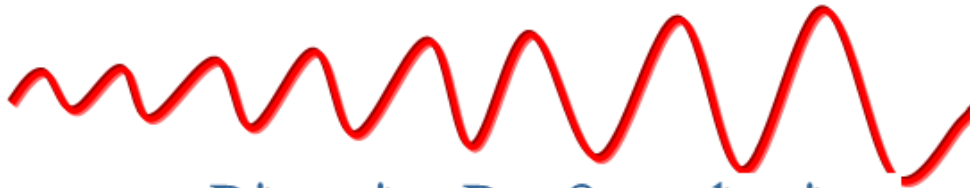
S : Sharing. Share the learning across team to speed up adoption - again a cultural traits.

Out of these five, only 2nd is to do with tool. Everything else is more about culture, taking feedback and being more accountable to make ourselves better every day as we move on. We fail to realize:

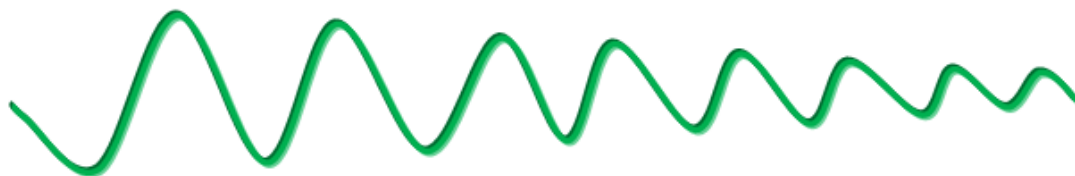
DevOps is a Journey and not the Goal. And the journey is not going to be straight line. It is going to spiral. You only can control the radius of each circle in spiral as depicted below. More agile you are, the smaller the radius. The smaller the radius, the lesser time you are going to realize DevOps. For that to happen, the organization and team will have to be truthful to accept failure and quickly fix it. After all the purpose of DevOps is to fail fast so that you become healthier every day by learning from the mistake.



Unsure about DevOps



Diverging DevOps adoption



A true adoption of DevOps

But most of the companies do fail because they do one or more of the following:

- Create a DevOps team build of so called DevOps engineers.
- Fail to communicate about it and bring change in mindset of participant.
- Hurry up to adopt some set of tools without planning how it is going to be adopted by team.
- Treat failure as mistake like is being done in traditional model. Eventually, it discourages accountability.
- Expect change in few months. Culture does not change in few weeks or few months. It takes time.
- Tweak process to morph it in same old engineering process in the name of customizing or tailoring to meet organization need.
- Fail to communicate value of automation to team (especially to developers who are always measured on the basis of feature they implement)

DevOps is about culture, culture and culture with a bit of assistance by tool I will not hesitate to say that the role of tool is only 10-15% in realization of DevOps. And, changing culture is about changing

mindset which is not a mean task. To achieve this, the organization should first accept it. Here are some tips which can help the organization to speed up realization of DevOps.

1. Get sponsorship from executives. The water flows effortlessly from high altitude to low altitude.
2. Create advocate for communicating about benefits of DevOps which can be set of Architects or Agile coach. I am not talking about DevOps team here at all.
3. Promote the culture of early failure. Reward for the one who takes accountability of it.
4. Do not create separate DevOps team. It is a common and big mistake made every now and then by organization filled with intellectuals.
5. Embed the culture of DevOps in each and every service team
6. Spend proportionate energy in automation even if it slows down the some of the feature. Hey, you are changing culture. Changing the culture is like seeding a bamboo tree which does not become visible for certain time. But once it becomes visible, it grows 1 ft every day (if my numbers are not correct). The same is going to happen here.

- Do not take short cut to tweak the DevOps culture to morph in same old culture. Otherwise, you will be doing same thing expecting different result.

Are you ready to speak truth (a lie equivalent to pinch of salt is allowed)?

Are you ready to change the culture?

Are you ready to realize DevOps?