Summary of Week-5 Readings

Matthew R. Howard

Bellevue University

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# Chapter 5: Selecting Which Value Stream to Start With

Chapter 5 focuses on using the proper value stream for your organization and discusses a few examples organization and their DevOps transformation. In one example they spoke of Nordstrom’s DevOps journey and how they studied and learned from failed attempts by Blockbuster Video, Borders, and Barnes & Nobels. Nordstrom’s mobile app got off to a rough start. They developed their process to release software updates just twice a year. So, even with consistently negative review, their app had no plans or fixes to make it better ahead of those updates. To fix these issues, they wanted to enable faster or on-demand releases and the ability to respond to customer feedback. The did this by creating a product team that was dedicated to supporting the mobile application, with the goal of being able to independently test, implement, and deliver value to the customer. With the success of their changes, they were able to identify problematic areas, reduce code deployment lead times by 60%, and reduce the number of production incidents from 60% to 90%. Chapter 5 also spoke about systems of record and systems of engagement. Bimodal IT, as the Gartner research firm calls it, describes both the system of record and the system of engagement. The systems of record is where the correctness of transactions and data are of the utmost importance. The system of engagement, are customer or employee facing items like e-commerce and productivity applications. They state that the system of record has what Gartner calls “Type 1” systems. These are systems with a slower pace of change and regulatory and compliance requirements. This is where the organization must focus on doing things right. “Type 2” systems are areas with higher pace of change to support rapid feedback to enable experimentation in order to meet the customer’s needs. It’s an area where the organization will focus on doing things fast. Finally, Chapter 5 wraps up with “Expanding DevOps Across Our Organization”. This is where you identify the three types of supporters: 1.) Innovators & Early Adopters, 2.) Build Critical Mass and Silent Majority, 3.) Identify the Holdouts. The innovators and early adopters are the ones who truly want to help. They usually have a high degree of influence over the rest of the organization and give the initiative credibility. Building critical mass and silent majority means working with those who aren’t the most visible or influential groups, but are onboard with the initiative and create a sort of bandwagon effect. Finally, with identifying the holdouts. This group is only achieved after getting the support of the silent majority.

# Chapter 6: Understand the Work in Our Value Stream, Making it Visible, and Explaining it Across the Organization

Chapter 6 builds on chapter 5 and describes how to apply and deliver it to the customer. The first area is to identify the teams supporting the value stream. They noted the example of Nordstrom and how no one person was able to know all the work that had to be created to bring value to the customer. This was especially true because the work had to be done by different teams with different areas of focus. Once the value stream members have been identified, a value stream map is created. This gives us a concrete understanding of how the work is to be performed and documented. Understanding that DevOps transformations will conflict with on-going business and learning how to evolve in spite of it is key to becoming a successful business. This is done by creating a dedicated transformation team. When creating a dedicated transformation team, they must be held accountable for achieving a clearly defined, measurable , system-level result. Finally, chapter 6 wraps up with “Use Tools to Reinforce Desired Behavior”. This section discusses how tooling reinforces DevOps not only to have shared goals but common backlogs of work, stored in a common system, and using common language so work can be shared and prioritized globally. It also talks about different technologies that can help with productivity like: HipChat, Slack, Campfire, OpenFire, and Flowdock.

# Chapter 7: How to Design Our Organization and Architecture with Conway’s Law in Mind

This chapter discusses the three primary organizational archetypes: functional, matrix, and market. Functional organizations are optimized for expertise, division of labor, or reducing costs while are best for responding quickly to customer needs and are often made of multiple, cross-functional disciplines while matrix organizations combine function and market orientations. Optimizing for cost enables functional orientation. Here, teams are often grouped specialty which can often lead to long lead times. This often cause issues to be escalated to higher ups who then have to stop their tasks to prioritize the work against global organizational goals. Then there’s optimizing for speed which enables market orientation. When optimizing for speed, smaller team work safely and independently and are able to quickly deliver value to the customer. The teams are designed to be cross-functional. This means they are responsible for developing features, testing, securing, deploying, and supporting their own service in production from cradle to grave. This prevents tickets from being opened up with outside groups and allow value to be delivered to the customer in a timely manner. To make functional orientation work, everyone in the value stream must view the customer and organizational outcomes as a shared goal, regardless of where they are in the organization. Finally, chapter 7 ends with discussing loosely-coupled architectures to enable developer productivity and safety. Here, the two-pizza team rule is discussed. It talks about keeping team sizes small which enables the team has clear, shared understanding of the system they are working on, it limits the growth rate of the product or service being worked on, decentralized power and enable autonomy, and allow for employees to gain leadership experience.

# Chapter 8: How to Get Great Outcomes by Integrating Operations into the Daily Work of Development

Chapter 8 starts off with creating shared services to increase developer productivity. This is done by creating centralized platforms and tooling services that can be used by and development team. These centralized platforms can allow developers to get production-like environments, deployment pipelines, automated testing tools, and more. This keeps developers spending more time on building functionality. Seeing that operations is an important part of the value stream, Kanban board are helpful to bring visibility to tasks. This is key to properly including operations into the value stream to allow operations engineers to integrate with the development team through the inclusion of daily work.

References

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