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DOES 2019: BMW Journey to 100% Agile and BizDevOps Product Portfolio

Leia em Português

BMW started their Agile and BizDevOps transformation in 2016. Ralf Waltram, head of R&D and Dr. Frank Ramsak, head of IT Governance, presented at DOES 2019 a state of their IT transformation journey to 100% agile, which represents their largest transformation to date that impacts their business model, as they are moving from being just car manufacturer to becoming mobility providers. Waltram and Ramsak shared how they led their transformation, and included lessons learned and takeaways to help anyone who embarks on a new large agile and DevOps transformation.

BMW IT used to deliver large projects using waterfall methodology, and had multiple applications with dependencies, which led to releasing during weekends. IT was delivering using a bimodal IT model. 20% of the development teams were leveraging agile

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cultures.

Teams on a two-week sprint were delayed and impeded by the waterfall teams still working towards annual releases. The project structure naturally led to silos between development and operations. Work delivery also struggled from a silo between business and development. In order to address these two key challenges, IT moved from projects to products and to 100% "BizDevOps" to ensure a complete collaboration and transparency between IT and the business. They targeted becoming 100% agile with the goal of being more flexible and developing a more customer-centric and value-driven culture of execution, including a user experience capability.

BMW designed a holistic transformation approach focused on four cornerstones: process, structure, technology and people and culture. According to Waltram and Ramsak, the most important aspect of the change was to set up the people and the organizational culture to support lean and BizDevOps. They started with rolling out trainings and educating the organization about agile values and practices. They also structured the teams to bring the developers and operations together to form true DevOps teams. They structured their IT portfolio around products and value streams, allowing at portfolio level for minimum governance and maximum synchronization and autonomy.

One of the most important changes they made is how they fund their work. In the past, they funded projects and operations separately. From 2019 they started funding products and teams to ensure that funding was tied to products and value. They also introduced new technologies to support microservice and cloud-based architectures to gradually replace their legacy monolithic applications. They developed an agile software development toolchain adopted today by 20,000 employees, allowing them to streamline and synchronize their end-to-end development.

The business recognized the accomplishments and the value of the transformation. They saw an increase in release frequency that went from 12 per year to two per month, and they saw a significant decrease in defects or in time to resolution.

Waltram and Ramsak recommended to have a bold transformation vision, but to start small with focused increments, and to scale up along the way. Working in small iterative increments allowed them to inspect and adjust the course very fast and learn along the way, which according to them is still a difficult thing to do in an organization driven by a culture of perfection and performance. They concluded the talk by encouraging organizations to share and learn from other organizations and communities on how they transform their IT and business and scale their DevOps platform.

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