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BizDevOps – a Bridge Between Business and Tech

BizDevOps, or DevOps 2.0, is a modern approach to product development that significantly improves final business results and provides a much better experience for end-users. And all you need is 5 minutes to understand it and assess if it's a path you need to take.

16 min read

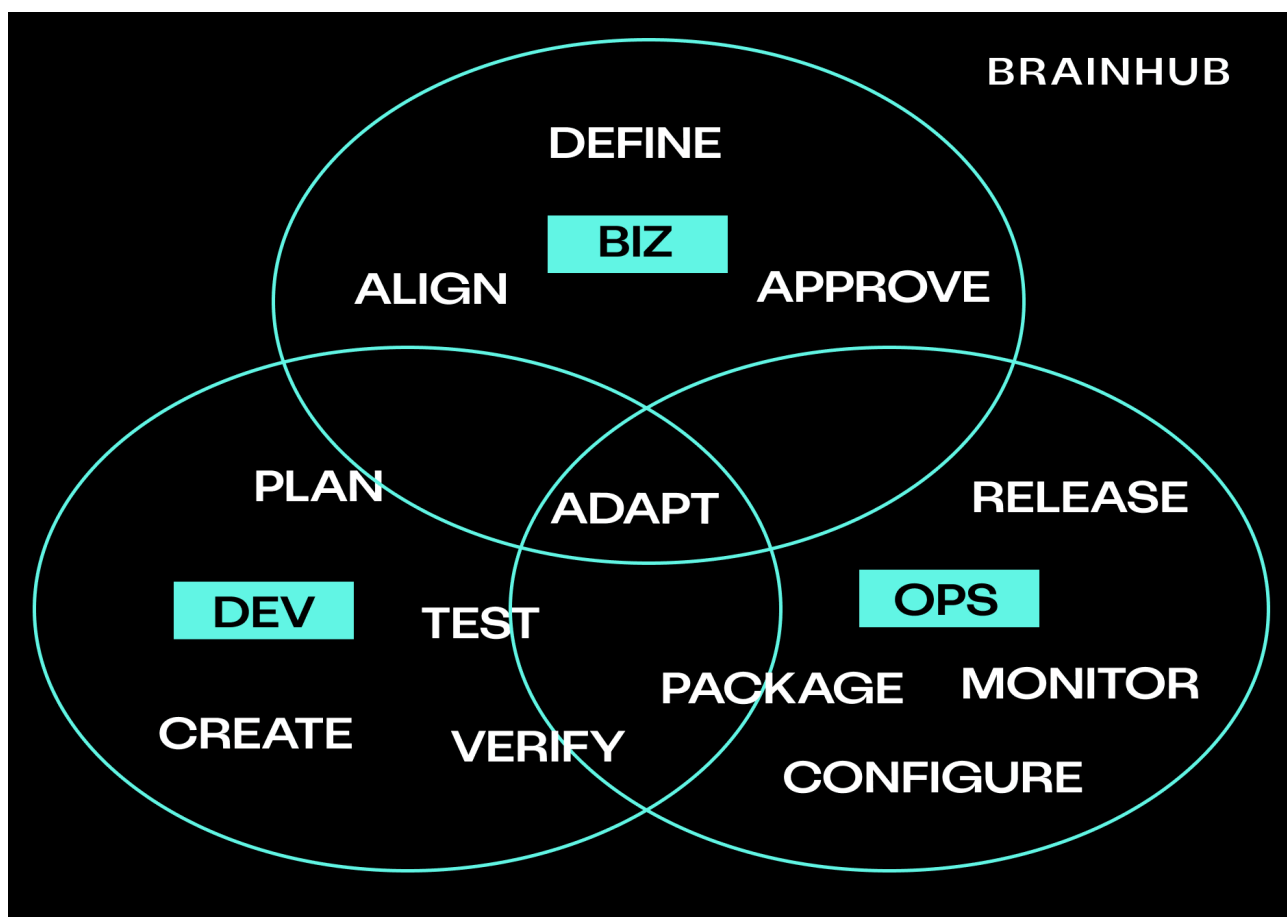
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BizDevOps definition

BizDevOps is an approach to product development that promotes **close collaboration and shared knowledge between the business team, developers, and operational team**. It ditches the division between those departments to get rid of unnecessary knowledge silos that only disrupt the information flow.

BizDevOps allows the team to increase both the speed and quality of implementing solutions. The common goal is to **improve solutions and experiences for customers**, and by that, achieve business goals and increase revenue.




BizDevOps in a nutshell:

- BizDevOps gathers all the people interested in building a product under a common goal - to **deliver the right solution for end-users**. It's possible because of the shared understanding, knowledge, responsibility, and goals, as well as close collaboration throughout the project.
- The business team not only specifies the requirements but also **collaborates closely** with operational and development teams. Developers are engaged in every phase of a project.
- Customer needs are put at the center. Everyone on the project understands them well, which allows tailoring technical solutions, along with frameworks and methodology.
- Hand-offs are minimized, feedback is regular and its loop is short which enables **faster decision-making**. Bugs are identified quicker. Changes are implemented quickly, and the results are assessed often to enable correcting the development course immediately when needed.


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Introduction

BizDevOps is not a trend.

The approach grew from the real need development teams had — the need for integration between business and tech that's key in avoiding costly development failures and building products people truly seek. And, by the way, it works.

Ready to smash the wall of confusion?
Let's dive in.



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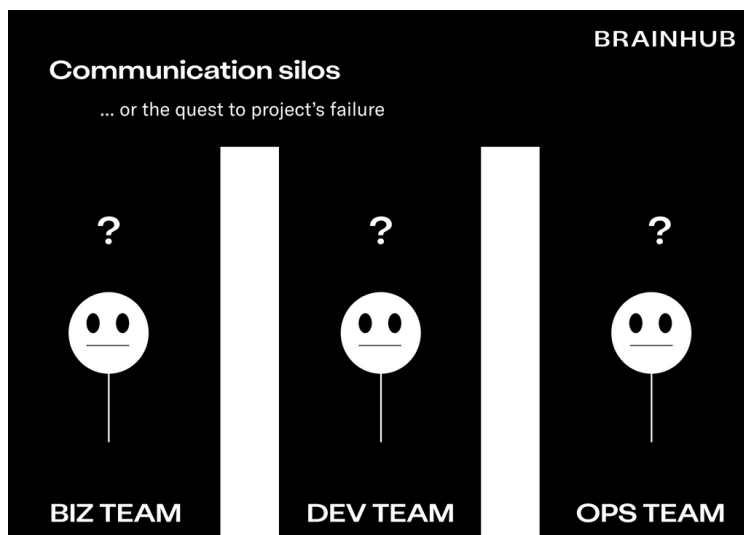
Ready to spend a little more than 5 minutes exploring BizDevOps approach?

Below you'll find more details and an explanation of how BizDevOps looks in practice (with comments and examples from a cross-functional development team).

But if you're already convinced that BizDevOps is exactly what your team needs, we can help you implement it. How about a quick chat?

Building bridges instead of walls – a brief history of disturbed communication

Isolated silos – formula for an unsuccessful project



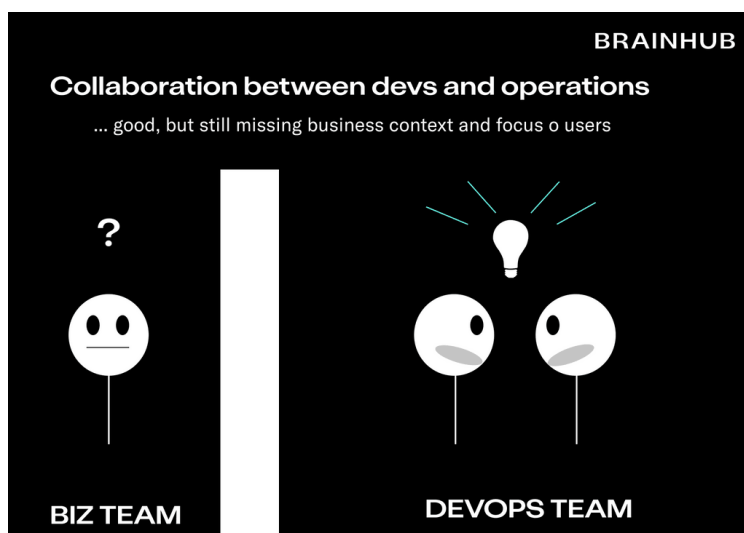
After several meetings, the business team documented their requirements in a doc file. The document was “thrown over the fence” to developers. Once the coding was done, the package was thrown forward to operations. And when a deployed feature landed in the hands of the business team, they were confused. It wasn’t exactly what

they required.

Delivering new features was taking a lot of time, similarly to fixing bugs. A feedback loop was very long, so all the teams were becoming frustrated and unmotivated. The final product was far from perfect, despite the development team's efforts.

Working in knowledge and competence silos initially seemed to facilitate work. But when the development started, **strict walls hindered communication and understanding between the teams**. They felt misunderstood, confused, and had separate goals.

DevOps – breaking the wall of confusion between operations and development teams



As a consequence, Dev and Ops teams started to collaborate.

Two teams began to work together, which improved their efficiency and communication flow. The number of deploys increased – new features were being released quickly. Quality monitoring improved, so their responses to errors were quicker. Fixing bugs was taking less time. The **software was more reliable, of higher quality, and delivered faster.**

But still, the business team was locked in their silo, so it was a **challenge to deliver business requirements** exactly as needed. Attentiveness to end-users was also leaving room for improvement.

DevOps needs a sequel. Doing 'just the DevOps trick' alone isn't going to cut it anymore. Business wants to be involved. BizDevOps is about organizing a short time-to-value, and it actually reduces risk as it allows things to fail early, and to fail fast—together with the business.

— Henk van der Schuur, Software Production Enthusiast & Customer Director at Schuberg Philis, during

devopsdays oNLine 2020

On the other hand, some believe the focus on business is already at the core of DevOps when effectively implemented. Jonathan Hall, a DevOps Coach and the creator of The Tiny DevOps Guy podcast, shares his views on the subject:

DevOps is already all about serving business needs. Adding "Biz" to the word doesn't change that. At most, it may offer an emphasis.

If we look more closely at the common three-nodule BizDevOps infinity flow chart, the pieces added for Biz: Adapt, Align, Define, and Approve, are pretty redundant. Adapt and Align are core to the definition of DevOps, as found in the common infinity sign, as well as the Three Ways of DevOps. Define and Approve are also implicit in DevOps, at least in the Plan and Verify steps, if not elsewhere.

— Jonathan Hall, DevOps Coach,

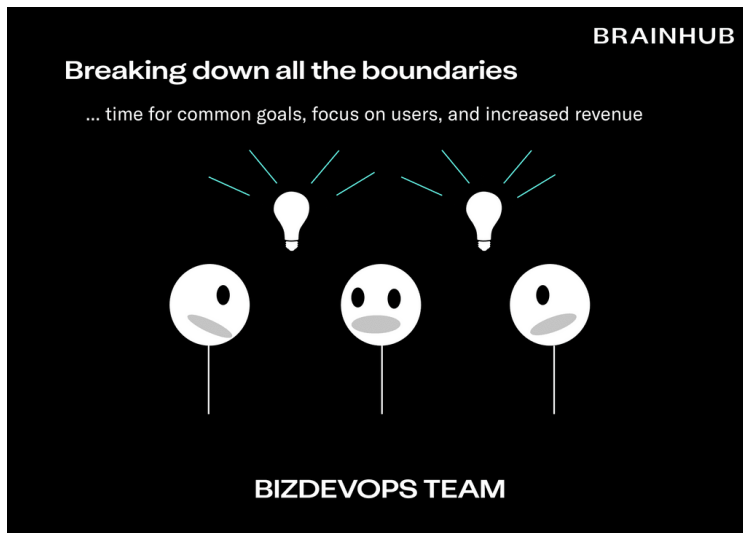
*creator of The Tiny DevOps Guy
podcast*

However, in his opinion there's a group of organizations which could benefit from putting a stronger emphasis on the business side. He adds:

Any company which is suffering from slow or unreliable software delivery brought on by silos or fragmentation and a lack of alignment with business goals ought to consider (Biz)DevOps.

*— Jonathan Hall, DevOps Coach,
creator of The Tiny DevOps Guy
podcast*

**BizDevOps – enabling
communication between
the business team and
tech**



BizDevOps brought business closer to the development team. Feedback stopped getting lost, the business team was validating delivered solutions quickly, and the development team was able to make necessary changes. The whole team, as one, was **focused on achieving business goals by delivering what end-users exactly wanted.**

Key takeaway:

Enabling direct communication helps teams achieve business goals and deliver what end-users need.

The world of developers is far different

from the business world. They even speak different languages. Smashing the boundary between these teams and allowing them to talk and collaborate is the first step to understanding.

We couldn't come up with a better summary of that story:

*Once it was called collaboration.
But then people isolated
themselves, put labels on one
another, and started to exchange
documentation instead of talking.
After some time, they finally
noticed the need to talk, solve
problems together, and cooperate
closely again. And then someone
named it 'BizDevOps'.*

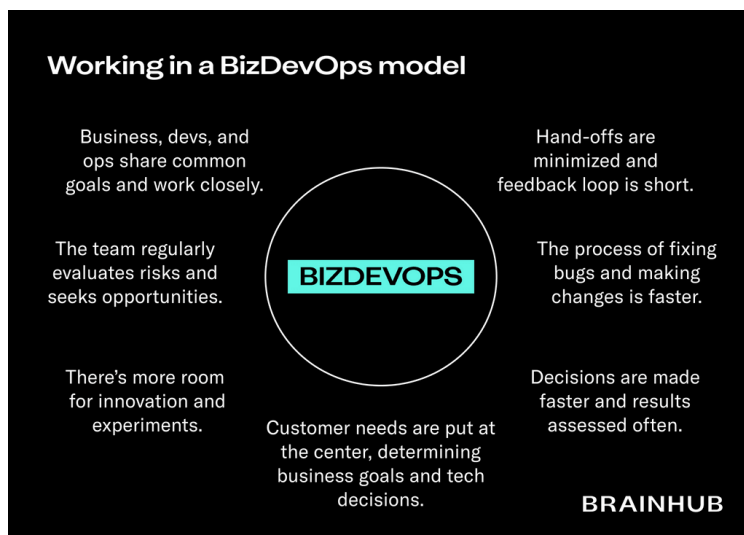
*— Marcin Dryka, Technical Advisor
& CTO at Brainhub*

BizDevOps in practice – how to put users in the center of your attention

It's when we, as a software development company, grasp the business side of the project with its goals and, in the meantime, understand how these goals need to be delivered through technical solutions.

— Matt Warcholiński, CRO & Co-founder at Brainhub

Work in the BizDevOps model – how does it look?



BizDevOps methodology removes the barriers, encourages collaboration, and increases overall efficiency by blurring the lines between departments.

- Developers are engaged in every phase of a project – from participating in establishing requirements and workshops to talking with a client during reviews and sprint plannings.
- The **vision for the product is established together** by developers and a business team.
- Everyone working on the project cooperates closely with others. Everyone understands customers' needs. It allows adjusting technical solutions to those needs.
- The business team not only specifies the requirements. From the beginning, they also collaborate closely with operational and development teams.
- Processes are automated. Scalable technologies and automated tests allow for regular deployments.
- BizDevOps means **regular feedback, quick identification of bugs, and being ready for a change**. Hand-offs are minimized and the feedback loop is short.
- The development team's responsibility is increased and they are actively involved in the process.
- The delivery manager supports the team and streamlines the work, but the tasks are prioritized and distributed by

the whole team.

- Team members need to have particular soft skills – the ability to work in a team, ability to work transparently, willingness to take ownership, openness to giving and receiving feedback. Their ability to self-organize is also important.

*Programmers working in a BizDevOps model often develop competencies like active listening, communicability, patience, openness in interpersonal contacts. These are the **qualities that facilitate contact with a client**, allow to advise the most optimal solution, and adjust the final shape of a product to its business needs in a better way.*

— Michał Baćkowski, Delivery Manager at Brainhub

Value BizDevOps approach brings to developers

*BizDevOps approach speeds up the process of identifying and fixing bugs, leaving more **room for innovation and experiments.***

— Mateusz Konieczny, Fullstack Developer & Technical Advisor at Brainhub

BizDevOps brings value not only to business but also to developers. The rework is minimized and teams have more room for experiments. Developers are also taking part in the strategic planning of a product, and have more **decisive power and ownership** over the project.

Benefits of BizDevOps – focus on business objectives and users

By following the BizDevOps approach, people from the business department can constantly share their concerns with IT teams, monitor, and

analyse the whole process from a business point of view, and even become programmers to a certain extent and within certain boundaries.

— Gruhn & Schäfer, 2015

BizDevOps approach comes with great benefits, including:

- Improved collaboration and information sharing between the development team and stakeholders. The business goals are clearly defined and the whole team is on the same page.
- Business objectives aligned with the development teams' work.
- Teams choose and implement the **most accurate technological solutions** due to the common understanding of users' problems and needs.
- The team **puts humans at the center**. Product is being built around the user, whose needs and behaviors are validated. The whole team understands the end-user.
- The team regularly evaluates risks and seeks opportunities with the ultimate goal to modify the product's vision and

adapt it to users' needs even more accurately.

- Close collaboration allows for more flexibility in implementing necessary improvements, which impacts the speed of implementation.
- Minimized hand-offs enable **faster decision-making**.
- The feedback loop is close and necessary changes are implemented quickly.
- The process of identifying and fixing bugs is faster, so more room is left for **innovation and experiments**.
- Automation removes bottlenecks resulting in fewer waiting times.

That's the theory. But what does the practice say?

We invited Arjan Geertsema, a BizDevOps coach, to share what positive results he observed while working with organizations in the tech sector. He adds:

Thanks to BizDevOps:

- *Business and IT are aligned: they speak the same language resulting in an efficient and effective production process.*

- *The team has focus on delivering business value resulting in a backlog with only business features rather than IT features.*
- *The team's discussions are business domain related and infrastructure is an implementation detail.*
- *When IT want's to change a business interface they need approval from the business, resulting in critical discussions with all stakeholders which often have a different outcome.*
- *Documentation is always up to date.*

KPIs can act as a bridge between DevOps and business

BizDevOps bridges DevOps performance data with business performance data to give a better understanding of how the DevOps

team is supporting the business.

— *Mark Sutton, CloudBees, during DevOps Enterprise Summit*

A DevOps team often uses DORA metrics to measure performance. The four DORA metrics are:

- deployment frequency (DF),
- lead time for changes (LT),
- mean time to recovery (MTTR),
- and change failure rate (CFR).

On the other side, we have business stakeholders measuring business performance, growth, and earnings.

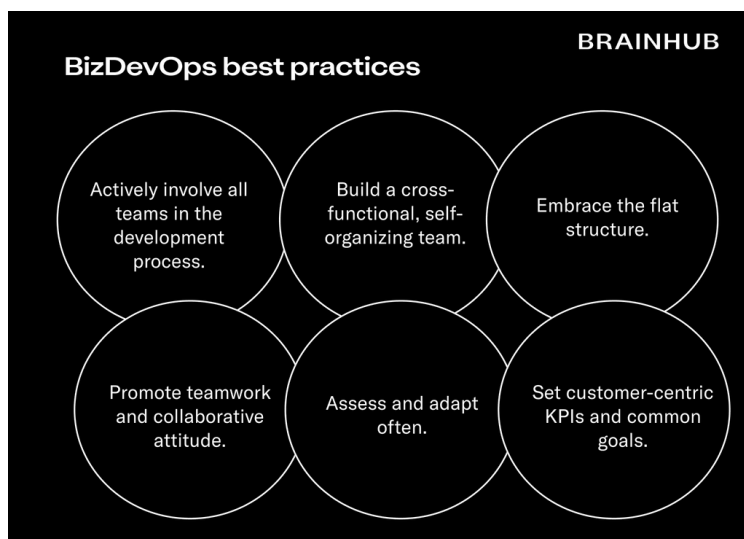
What we're missing is a common ground in between. The metric that would allow the DevOps team to measure the **real-life effects of their work** and business stakeholders to realize how the work of an IT team actually influences business.

Real customers using a product and particular features meeting their needs are an indication of a product's success. And product's success drives business results.

Therefore, **customer-centric metrics** like the applicability and utility of the app

could serve as goals that bridge DevOps and business teams. They seem to be a good direction for joint KPIs.

BizDevOps best practices – connecting business, development, and operations teams again



The BizDevOps view of work culture requires that you continually review past results, are ready for change, and agree on whether collaboration and product creation are moving in the right direction.

— *Michał Baćkowski, Delivery
Manager at Brainhub*

When implementing the BizDevOps approach remember about the best practices:

- **All teams should be actively involved in the software development process.**

It allows developers to regularly gather feedback and business owners to adapt the project's backlog respectively. That also makes room for actively looking for and testing new solutions.

- **Build a cross-functional, self-organizing team.** A team that works in the BizDevOps model should be cross-functional in terms of expertise and soft skills. They need self-organizing skills since the BizDevOps model works most effectively when tasks are distributed together by the team members.

- **Embrace the flat structure.** The hierarchy should be descended into the background. What's crucial is close cooperation and freedom to organize activities given to each member of the team.

- **Promote a collaborative attitude.** The

partnership between team members leads to better results since the teams need to collaborate closely and be open to one another's feedback.

- **Assess and adapt often.** The whole team should often review past results, experiment, and look for improvements. Use real-time analytics and diagnostic tools to assess the development direction.
- **Set customer-centric KPIs and common goals.** BizDevOps stands on common goals between business, operations team, and developers. While setting your key metrics, focus on delivering a product your users need.

*Using real-time analytics and diagnostic tools for application performance monitoring allows the team to quickly obtain data about the app's efficiency and end-users' behavior. By that, we can **establish if we are meeting business objectives** and plan the best development direction.*

— Grzegorz Lachowski, Business Analyst at Brainhub

Time to smash the wall of confusion and focus on end-users

DevOps teams that have business stakeholders participating in the process from the start possibly may call themselves BizDevOps already. But there's work to do in terms of organizing the process, setting mutual KPIs, and, in some cases, also starting to work in accordance with Agile methodology.

Here's how Ton Hagens, a Managing Director Expertise Center at de Volksbank who implemented Agile principles in the organization, summarizes the concept of multi-disciplinary teams and BizDevOps.

In a company that wants to work from the power of (multi-disciplinary) teams, the best way to organize is through complete teams covering all skills that are needed to create customer value. (...) If one would want to describe the scope of a team, the word BizDevOps is the best fitting. This concept has been implemented in many companies.

ING Nederland was the first bank

to do so (~2017), de Volksbank made this step last year (2021).

— Ton Hagens, Managing Director Expertise Center at de Volksbank

Based on his experience, the BizDevOps transformation requires a much broader approach. He adds:

Implementation of BizDev(ops) teams can only be part of a major switch in the company's operating model: from leadership redefinition/selection to redefined financial processes, from renewed HR policies up to rethink of the governance/steering set-up.

— Ton Hagens, Managing Director Expertise Center at de Volksbank

Start building a BizDevOps culture today

Don't waste any more time on delayed bug identification and unintentionally neglecting your users' needs. Let us support you in choosing your quickest path to biz-tech alignment. Drop us a message and we'll set up a quick chat.

FAQ for the extra inquisitive ones

This part is only for geeks.

Why BizDevOps?

This model empowers the team to work faster and build high-quality products. The company becomes more agile. Close collaboration makes it easier and faster to make necessary improvements, adapting the product to its users' needs in a better way. The way of collaborating in separate teams puts focus on separate goals, not

delivering what's best for a customer. In comparison with BizDevOps, it's also costly and slow.

Why do software development companies implement the BizDevOps approach?

BizDevOps approach is implemented by top software development companies and top JavaScript development companies that put attention to understanding their clients' businesses and strive to deliver the best possible products. When choosing a software development company for your project, pay attention to their attitude towards understanding your business strategy, delivering a great experience for your users, and solving their problems.

What are the BizDevOps goals?

- align business strategy with development goals,
- minimize hand-offs and shorten the feedback loop,
- minimize rework and improve efficiency,

- focus on end-users, their needs, and goals – delivering a product that responds to users' requirements is a common goal for a BizDevOps team,
- set priorities together,
- make more room for innovation and improvements.

What is BizOps?

BizOps is based on the principle that long-term success can be achieved only by close connection and collaboration between a business team and operations team. Sometimes it's also used alternately with BizDevOps. In some organizations, BizOps is a cross-functional team of consultants that support their colleagues when a cross-organizational scope is required.

What is BizDevSecOps?

BizDevSecOps puts extra attention on security. A security team is included in the close collaboration between business, operations, and tech. The goal is often to support more deployments while avoiding risk factors.

What is DevSecOps?

DevSecOps stands for development,

security, and operations. The approach is used when security is the focus of the DevOps team. The DevSecOps approach incorporates security in all steps of the development and deployment lifecycle. Security becomes a shared responsibility of the whole IT team.

BizDevOps vs DevOps – what's the difference?

DevOps is a model of working that combines development and operations teams together, in order to deploy more frequently as well as detect and fix bugs more effectively. It smooths out the process, but the business context needed for the product's success is missing. It's included in BizDevOps, when a business team joins forces with developers and operations, to focus on common goals – delivering what users need and meeting the business target of a company.

What is business development in a company?

Business development can be summed up as all the activities and initiatives undertaken to increase revenue, growth in terms of expansion, or profitability by

starting strategic partnerships. It's also choosing innovative ways to drive better business results.

What are typical BizDevOps tools?

BizDevOps teams use various tools to gain insights into the application's speed, loading time, and response time, as well as for error tracking. Common application performance management tools used by BizDevOps teams are:

- Traceview
- Foglight
- AppDynamics
- Dynatrace

Another type of popular BizDevOps tools are the low code platforms. They are handy for business people who are integrated into the development lifecycle. A few examples of popular low-code application development platforms are:

- KiSSFLOW
- Mendix
- Microsoft PowerApps
- Appian
- Caspio
- VisionX

How to implement BizDevOps?

The process of implementing BizDevOps should start with inviting business stakeholders to take part in the development process and talk about vision, goals, and priorities together. What you need to start is a common goal, a clear process, and mutual KPIs.

Tip:

BizDevOps can be implemented quickly with the right support. And we provide that. Take advantage of a free consultation.

Sources:

- <https://geek.justjoin.it/bizdevops-w-pigulce-czyli-jak-budowac-mosty-miedzy-biznesem-i-it>

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