Examples of agility outcomes

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In this article

As discussed in the business outcomes overview, there are several potential business outcomes that can serve as the foundation for any transformation journey conversation with the business. This article focuses on the timeliest business measures: business agility. Understanding the company's market position and competitive landscape helps articulate the business outcomes that are the target of a business's transformation journey.

Traditionally, CIOs and IT teams were considered a source of stability in core mission-critical processes. This is still true. Few businesses can function well when their IT platform is unstable. However, in today's business world much more is expected. IT can expand beyond a simple cost center by partnering with the business to provide market advantages. Many CIOs and executives assume that stability is simply a baseline for IT. For these leaders, business agility is the measure of IT's contribution to the business.

Why is agility so important?

Markets change at a faster pace than ever before. As of 2015, only 57 companies were still in the Fortune 500 61 years later—an 88.6% turnover rate. This represents market change at a previously unheard-of rate. IT agility or even business agilities are unlikely to affect an organization listing on the Fortune 500, but these figures help us understand the pace at which markets continue to change.

For incumbents and upstarts alike, business agility can be the difference between success or failure of a business initiative. Quickly adapting to market changes can help ring fence existing customers or claim market share from competitors. The following are agility-related outcomes that can help communicate the value of the cloud during a transformation.

Time-to-market outcome

During cloud-enabled innovation efforts, time-to-market is a key measure of IT's ability to address market change. In many cases, a business leader may have existing budget for the creation of an application or the launch of a new product. Clearly communicating a time-to-market benefit can motivate that leader to redirect budget to IT's transformation journey.

- **Example #1:** The European division of a US-based company needs to comply with GDPR regulations by protecting customer data in a database that supports UK operations. The existing version of SQL doesn't support the necessary row-level security. An in-place upgrade would be too disruptive. Using Azure SQL to replicate and upgrade the database, the customer adds the necessary compliance measure in a matter of weeks.
- **Example #2:** A logistics company has discovered an untapped segment of the market, but it needs a new version of their flagship application to capture this market share. Their larger competitor has made the same discovery. Through the execution of a cloud-enabled application innovation effort, the company embraces customer obsession and a DevOps-driven development approach to beat their slower, legacy competitor by *x* months. This jump on market entrance secured the customer base.

Aurora Health Care: Healthcare system transforms online services into a friendly digital experience. To transform its digital services, Aurora Health Care migrated its websites to the Microsoft Azure platform and adopted a strategy of

continuous innovation.

> "As a team, we're focused on high-quality solutions and speed. Choosing Azure was a very transformative decision for us." Jamey Shiels Vice President of Digital Experience Aurora Health Care

Provision time

When business demands new IT services or scale to existing services, acquisition and provision of new hardware or virtual resources can take weeks. After cloud migration, IT can more easily enable self-service provisioning, allowing the business to scale in hours.

- **Example:** A consumer packaged goods company requires the creation and tear-down of hundreds of database clusters per year to fulfill operational demands of the business. The on-premises virtual hosts can provision quickly, but the process of recovering virtual assets is slow and requires significant time from the team. As such, the legacy on-premises environment suffers from bloat and can seldom keep up with demand. After cloud migration, IT can more easily provide scripted self-provisioning of resources, with a chargeback approach to billing. Together, this allows the business to move as quickly as they need, but still be accountable for the cost of the resources they demand. Doing so in the cloud, limits deployments only to the business's budget.