Everything You Think You Know About Mainframe Modernization Is Probably Wrong

Don't let fear and misinformation keep you from bringing your mainframe into the 21st century. Instead, let early planning and visible wins drive excitement and guarantee success!

Introduction

Don't Believe What You've Heard About Modernization

We're in an age of digital transformation—trying to deliver the innovation, speed, and usability the market demands. While some organizations have dived in headfirst, others are still trying to formulate their plans. In concept, it can seem overwhelming and costly: Will you have to abandon your existing investment and start from scratch? Is it too difficult and/or expensive? And, it doesn't help that many of the mainframe "experts" you turn to are elevating the fear factor.

As the digital economy evolves, modernization is the next logical step in your Digital Transformation—and it is not as difficult as you may have heard. Across the globe, businesses like yours have already jumped into this brave new world and are seeing numerous business benefits. In fact, many use methods that deliver the innovation the market demands while leveraging their existing technological investments. One of the most effective approaches is something we call 'Modularization', but Phased Modernization is easier to pronounce.

OpenLegacy's unique approach to Modernization is to use automation to enable phased iterations that let you to plan and schedule your 'Big Wins' when you need them. This way you can easily merge your business objectives with your IT plans, building your progress in stages, minimizing your risk, and maximizing your success.

We are here to take a close look at some common misconceptions and truths about mainframe modernization. You will see that you have so much to gain—and so little to fear.

You have already invested in lots of technology. But is it the right technology for today's (and tomorrow's) digital world?

It's A Digital World.
Is Your Business Living in It?

Today's digital economy puts a considerable amount of stress and challenges on the traditional enterprise. But this isn't a new story. Over the past few decades, enterprises have grown ever more dependent on technology. At the same time, their existing technology is not capable of supporting them in the modern digital economy. In some areas, it's even more delicate. For example, in the financial world, much of the technology used is so critical that unless the installed technology can support modern business demands, the business will not be competitive. Some banks are going completely online. Can you?

The combination of the technical and commercial aspects of enterprise technology creates an irresistible dynamic of digital change. While there are many

factors to consider, making the most of decades of existing technological investments can be managed. With good assessment, design, and committed implementation, this change can usher your enterprise along its digital journey.

Part of what is holding organizations back is fear and misinformation, often perpetuated by vendors who have the most to lose if you modernize—namely, the licenses on all the software and technology they sold you for years. Having built their business on keeping your mainframe as-is, they will keep recommending ever more complex middleware.

Let's break down what you've heard versus the truth.

Five Misconceptions About Modernization

1. Modernization is difficult, if not impossible, or will hurt current operations

Modernization seems overwhelming, but from a business standpoint, it makes a lot of sense. There's no doubt that modernization requires a shift in thinking, process and resources, especially when transitioning from legacy hardware and applications. With the right approach and partner, your modernization can be successful and effective.

The fear of hurting any part of your existing operations is enough to give anyone pause. But you must keep in mind that as with many other aspects of your business, often what is already hurting your operations is the inefficiency of your current system.

Modernization is not scary if you start with a plan. This plan should incorporate not only the technical outcomes, but the needs of the current operations and the strategic business direction of the enterprise.

2. The investment is out of proportion to the business value. So the potential hassle isn't worth it

While the benefits of transitioning away from your legacy systems can be significant, industry studies show that better customer experience actually improves technology's business value. So, it stands to reason that improving your dated technology will improve business value.

The latest technology is here to deliver flexibility, agility, scalability—and to drive business.

Delivering the digital services your customers want leads to happy customers. Happy customers ultimately mean more business. The math doesn't get simpler than that.

The impact cannot be ignored. Modernization is not a trend. It's here to

"OpenLegacy replaced the previous solution at half the cost, lowered total cost of ownership by 75% and reduced dependency on IBM."

Credit Card Company

International Credit Card Company

This company wanted to reduce their dependency on IBM, so they decided to migrate their CRM and IVR off their legacy systems in stages. The original timeframe of 2 years was reduced to 6 months because of new efficiencies in the migration process.

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stay: According to IDC, the forecast is that global DX spending will reach $1.18 trillion in 2019, an increase of 17.9% over 2018.

3. We'd have to take a "Big Bang" approach

The opposite is actually true. Executed properly, your modernization process should use your legacy system as a foundation for a phased approach. You should not replace everything at once—your data and core functionality can be extended and replaced gradually.

So, how does it work? By "starting small and planning big" you take an incremental approach that achieves visible results with each iteration. You can also set overriding objectives, such as simplification or transitioning to the cloud, and then determine the specific milestones.

OpenLegacy's phased integration approach leverages your legacy data and systems in developing modern, digital capabilities. We do this without any risk to your existing systems. The staged iterations accommodate in-process corrections, fine-tuning the new functionality, or even changing it completely, if necessary, without losing anything more than an iteration of a few weeks.

4. "It's no different than what we've been doing"

"If it isn't broken, don't fix it" is a legitimate adage. But it usually limits you to what you need, not what you want. This is the key to working strategically rather than tactically. Evaluate your business objectives with questions like 'What do I want to accomplish?" rather than "What technical functions do I need?".

With OpenLegacy, you can work both strategically and tactically. Our methodology and platform help you identify the limitations of your out-of-date technology with a specific plan and process for implementing modern functionality.

On the surface, modernization may seem like an expensive way to get the same output you always have had. But that's not the case. Your transformation should be guided by your business goals, not technical necessity.

Instead of just automating existing processes, you can ask, "How would we like to do this differently?" You'll start to see that business requirements may define which legacy applications can and should be decommissioned, or which newer applications (e.g., SaaS) can be adopted to support your planned digital business channels.

Keep in mind, you are eventually going to lose vendor support for old and discontinued apps and hardware. So, even at the most basic level, "going digital" gives you the flexibility to deliver today and scale for tomorrow.

This approach allows you to ask the questions that inform your strategy: What business problem are you trying to solve? What business priorities

Major International Logistics Company

This company decided to migrate its tracking system off the mainframe and onto a modern, cloud-based platform. Using phased iterations, they began with data transformation. Within a year, the entire tracking application was running on open source Linux systems and hosted on OpenShift.

Leading Stock Exchange

One of the world's top-10 exchanges future-proofed their IT systems by modernizing their mainframe system to a cost-effective system. They converted over 3.5 million lines of code, thousands of COBOL programs and over one hundred datasets within 15 months.

best achieve your overall strategy? This kind of thinking will help you prioritize your steps as you move forward. For example, if access is a priority, leveraging microservices and APIs delivers speedy access and improved efficiency.

5. "More tech won't solve my business problems"

However, the right technology, applied at the right time and designed to support your business goals, will have an almost immediate impact on your business problems.

There is no technological 'silver bullet.' Unfortunately, you can't just buy software to make your problems magically disappear. This is because every organization's legacy context is different, as are its business goals. As a result, there are many migration, modernization, and coexistence scenarios, each with its own pros and cons.

Putting business goals before technology changes the context of your transformation, helps you make better technological decisions, and sets you up for success.

So, What's the Solution?

There is no off-the-shelf or "buy it now" solution that will address your specific business/technology issues. Because they are just that—YOUR specific, unique issues. The key takeaway here is that your business goals are in the driver's seat. Technology is just a means to enable business transformation.

Throwing a bunch of technology at a problem without a plan or strategy is dangerous and expensive.

What do you need to start your transformation? You need a partner with expertise and experience achieving both technical AND business goals. You will recognize them because they will ask the right questions:

- Which processes are outdated (whether they are manual or digital)?

- Are we automating any "bad" processes?

- What is the end goal/back into automation and process goals?

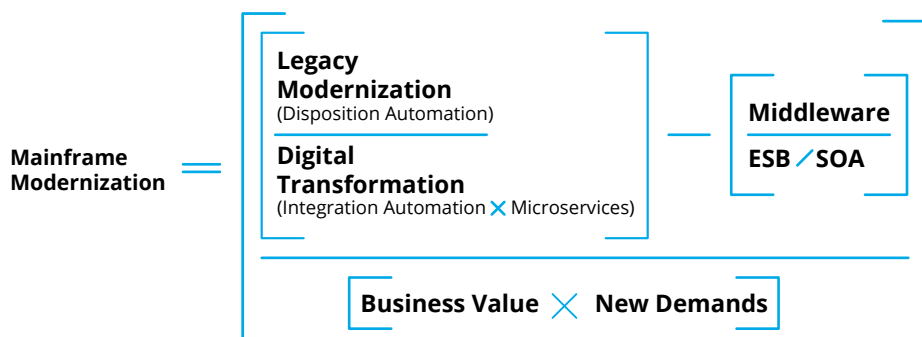- Is it enhancing or improving an experience?

Overall, the right partner will encourage you to use what you have for as long as you need to in order to be effective, and modernize and replace what you can and must. Not just technology, but also business processes, regulatory compliance, and methodologies.

Your transformation should be guided by your business goals, not technical necessity. Instead of just automating existing processes, you can be asking, "How would we like to do this differently?"

OpenLegacy Can Help

With years of experience in managing the modernization process from end-to-end, OpenLegacy has emerged as a trusted leader in this space. We recognize that the response to these challenges—much like the challenges themselves—is not "just" technical. We know that the response must be transformational in nature not only at the mainframe level, but enterprise-wide.

For us, tackling your challenges requires people + product. It's not about an application or a silver bullet, it's about expertise, experience, and advice. We understand the destination, and the routes the industry has taken. That has given us a truly unique perspective of the overall problem—understanding and delivering on the business needs but appreciating the complexity in the-digital transformation of the mainframe environment.

Benefits we enable

Reduction in IT risk and cost

Improved agility and productivity

Cross-platform integration

Cloud computing via modernization

Driving Business Value Through Effective Legacy Application Disposition Combined with Legacy Integration Infrastructure Reduction, All Supported by Automated Digital Transformation & Microservices Deployment

Mainframe Modernization =

Legacy Modernization (Disposition Automation)

Digital Transformation (Integration Automation ✕ Microservices)

Middleware ESB ╱ SOA

Business Value ✕ **New Demands**

So, How Do You Begin?

Using the Phased Integration and Migration approach, you can develop a strategic plan to achieve your business Modernization objectives, while minimizing risk to your on-going operations. You can transition your biggest technological investment, to reap the benefits of:

- higher security and cyber protection

- better performance

- proven Dev-Ops & CI/CD processes

- scalability and scaling economies

Equally as important, you will be able to upgrade and extend existing functionality by taking advantage of modern technologies.

"The only fear you should have about modernization is that you haven't started the journey yet."

Hans B. Otharsson

Conclusion

We are truly at a tipping point for the future of the mainframe environment within organizations. This is further escalated as IBM puts more focus on Watson and Cloud technologies than on the mainframe. As decades of ignoring the problem combines with the current shift in focus, most organizations find themselves shackled to systems that grow increasingly outdated by the day. Worse yet, companies face this no-win scenario while simultaneously feeling the pressure to keep pace with more flexible competitors in their industries.

There are multiple valid reasons to migrate from your mainframe system. Together, they represent a compelling business case to start.

- Not only do mainframes make the effective use of modern technologies expensive and complex, if you refuse to modernize, you also risk losing touch with your competitors.

- The price versus performance profile for legacy hardware mainframes has been eclipsed by Cloud and On-Premise server computing.

- Mainframe skills are in critically short supply and will be virtually non-existent in the very near future.

- Mainframe application architectures are stubbornly resistant to the agile, DevOps models of "born-on-the-web" companies. However, this pain point can be considerably mitigated with an automated legacy integration/wrapper to microservice technology, like OpenLegacy.

OpenLegacy is committed to your success in attaining your objectives. Our experience and proven methodology will support your Modernization journey every step of the way.

About OpenLegacy

OpenLegacy accelerates delivery of innovative digital services from legacy systems in days or weeks versus months. Our microservices-based API integration and management software reduces manual effort by automating API creation, simplifies the process by avoiding layers of complexity, and improves staff efficiency and API performance. Our software directly accesses and extends business logic to web, mobile our cloud innovations in the form of Java objects, REST APIs or SOAP. Most importantly, this process is not only fast, easy and secure, but also does not require special staff skills or changes to existing systems or architecture. Together, business and IT teams can quickly, easily and securely meet consumer, partner or employee demands for digital services without modernizing or replacing core systems. Learn why leading companies choose OpenLegacy at www.openlegacy.com.

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