

eBook

Start 2022 Right: How to Create a Winning Modernization Strategy



Introduction

Businesses are always in a state of flux. But the last two pandemic years have made changes brought on by more typical disruptors like recessions, geopolitical events, and security threats seem tranquil. Since March 2020, the three most popular words in the business lexicon have been disruption, transformation, and modernization.

The current situation is a wake-up call for organizations across industries that have placed too much focus on daily operational needs at the expense of investing in digital business and long-term resilience. Enterprises are increasingly asking their IT and operations team to help them respond more quickly to market needs—like speed up time to deliver APIs or find more effective ways to automate internal workflows.

As a result, IT leaders are pressed to enhance or integrate legacy core applications but cannot discern business-critical needs and key components from superficial improvements. In other words, these IT leaders are finding it difficult to address legacy applications' productivity challenges adequately.



A McKinsey study revealed that US banking CIOs are resetting their technology agenda. Patterns observed include channelling 50 percent of technology investments toward speeding up a digital led economy, and increased efforts to improve IT productivity to boost cost efficiency by 30 percent.

[Source: Modernizing Core Technology, without Breaking the Bank. McKinsey and Company.](#)

Taking the Right Step Forward

IBM i® and IBM zSystems® continue to be industry mainstays—from banking and finance to healthcare, manufacturing, distribution, and retail. Known for its stability and reliability, these industries run a high percentage of critical business applications on these systems.

However, when we speak of IBM i/Z, the picture that comes to mind is a green-screen interface that is archaic and unintuitive. If you've been working with IBM i/Z, you'd know that this is far from true. The system has continuously evolved and, with support from modern tools, it can recognize present-day languages and functionalities.

The solution appears simple enough: modernize the green screens or build APIs and robots to integrate systems and create automation. The real challenge lies in determining where to start and which project to prioritize.

Only 7% of business decision-makers on IBM i/Z said they are confident that they have the insights needed to build a smart modernization plan that drives bottom-line value for the business quickly.

Source: Organization Strategic Needs Around Modernization Efforts on IBM® i and IBM zSystems® Systems Executive Report. Rocket Software.

To ensure that your modernization effort quickly delivers a significant impact to the business, you need to build an intelligent modernization plan that includes end-to-end visibility into how the business engages with the applications.

In addition to the blueprint of your processes and workflows, you'll also need to understand:

- How a user navigates through an application
- What data users are calling, changing, etc.
- The frequency with which a particular workflow happens

These insights will help you identify and prioritize the best opportunities for modernization.

This eBook explores how you can start 2022 right by leveraging workflow visibility to build a winning modernization strategy.

Intelligent Legacy Automation and Modernization

Modernization—including automation—is not a “one and done” journey. It’s continuous. As businesses finalize their initial automation and modernization projects, they often find themselves making ongoing changes. Some examples include altering the application UI to align with the current UI trends, or RPA robots because of an update to a regulatory requirement, or an API repository to enable and support new technology or ERP tool.

When it comes to addressing legacy application challenges, the best practice is to have what we call Intelligent Legacy Automation and Modernization. It is a consistent, data-driven plan that includes these six crucial steps:



Process Discovery

Modernization and automation must begin with a detailed and accurate understanding of how your company uses the IBM i/Z applications. A thoughtful assessment of your workflows enables you to gauge the time and level of effort required for your project and to reduce the possibility of cost overruns.

Project Prioritization

With greater visibility of your workflow and processes, you can identify hot spots for automation and modernization improvements that will drive real value for the business. The ability to prioritize enables you to set the project up for success and gain approval with vital business stakeholders, because you can show a direct link between the work proposed and the impact to the business.

Automation Execution

Once your plan is clearly defined, the fastest way to a quick ROI is to start with RPA. Build robots to take on the mundane tasks within a workflow to improve productivity. This frees users to focus on more interesting work, thereby increasing user satisfaction.



STEP 04



STEP 05



STEP 06

Modern User Experience

Find workflows where the navigation across myriad green screens significantly slows down the user. But don't build a modern UI that is a 1:1 of the green screen. Build a UI that fits the user's workflow, including consolidating screens where practical moving fields so the flow is more intuitive, etc.

Process Integration

Improve business alignment by building APIs that integrate your IBM i/Z applications with the rest of your critical business applications. Process integration un-silos your legacy applications, creating an interactive and symbiotic system that untethers business operations and customer engagement from the constraints of IT infrastructure.


Automation Management

Now that you've built robots and APIs, centrally manage their development and deployment with a DevOps-lite tool. This further extends modernization and automation improvements into the developer environments. It automates process, enforces policy and controls, and improves developer productivity.

Now, start the process over again. What new processes, technologies, or trends within the business, or the larger market, warrant a review and update of the IBM i/Z application workflows?

Process Discovery is a Critical Step

Throughout the Intelligent Legacy Automation and Modernization process, the one step where corners are often cut to conserve time and resources is Process Discovery. Process Discovery is the key with which businesses unlock fast and significant bottom-line value from their modernization and automation projects. Below are the top 5 business drivers of modernization and automation plans where results can be magnified with Process Discovery.



01 Innovate quickly and smartly

Total workflow visibility provides high-level information captured at scale within a short time. This offers in-depth insights into common workflows and the daily challenges employees face. It helps organizations make smart modernization decisions, highlighting the most time-consuming and frequently executed tasks.

02 Retain valuable talent

Working with unintuitive application interfaces with too many green screens that are difficult to navigate can be frustrating—leading to employee churn. Detecting and removing the bottlenecks can help alleviate productivity lags, improve workflow, and most importantly, eliminate a big chunk of employee dissatisfaction. You will also be putting your organization in a better position to recruit valuable talent who can drive business growth.

03 Boost productivity

Green screens and 1:1 modernized UIs are known to cause productivity issues, slowing down employees, causing frustration, and delaying their response time to customers. A bird's eye view of your IBM i/Z system can help you pinpoint the areas holding your employees back and make essential modernization decisions that give them more time and space to work more efficiently.

04 Improve customer experience

Improving customer experience is a key concern of every business. Still, when employees are forced to navigate so many obstacles, the quality of service they provide to customers suffers. To improve customer experience and do so quickly and well, businesses need to remove barriers that box in employees.

05 Achieve high ROI

Most business stakeholders will understand the need for modernization and automation, but whether those projects get continued support depends on the speed and impact. Modernization projects, automation projects specifically, can drive significant ROI for the business very quickly.

Setting up your modernization projects for success—to improve employee and customer experience, boost productivity, and maximize your ROI with the project—relies on your ability to build a plan that prioritizes high return tasks across each of these drivers. To do that you need workflow visibility.

The Three Levels of Workflow Visibility

There are three levels of workflow visibility:

01 Low-hanging fruit

This level references workflow matters that are typically prioritized first and concern a high volume of inefficient work hours, brought on by easily identifiable challenges. For example, if a customer service representative must navigate ten green screens to update one customer's housing information, the source of the inefficiency is obviously too many green screens.

02 Knowledge from expert workers

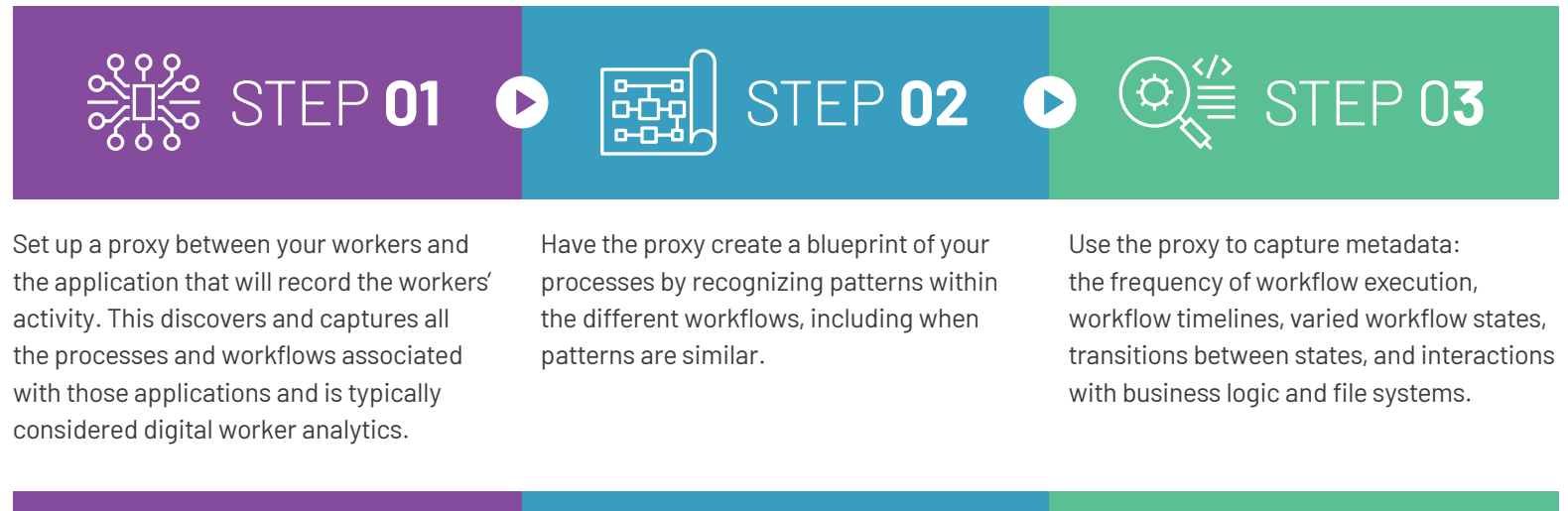
The second level goes deeper and involves the knowledge of faster workflow approaches, optimal workarounds to common issues, and exception handling. Often it is only the power user who truly understands the workflows at this level.

03 In the shadows

The third level of visibility is the most overlooked. These are the parts of the workflow that work through backend processes that even the power users don't know about. This deeper level of visibility requires an advanced tool to understand what is happening across the entire workflow.

What Does a Good Process Discovery Look Like?

To get real end-to-end visibility, your process discovery should have the following steps:

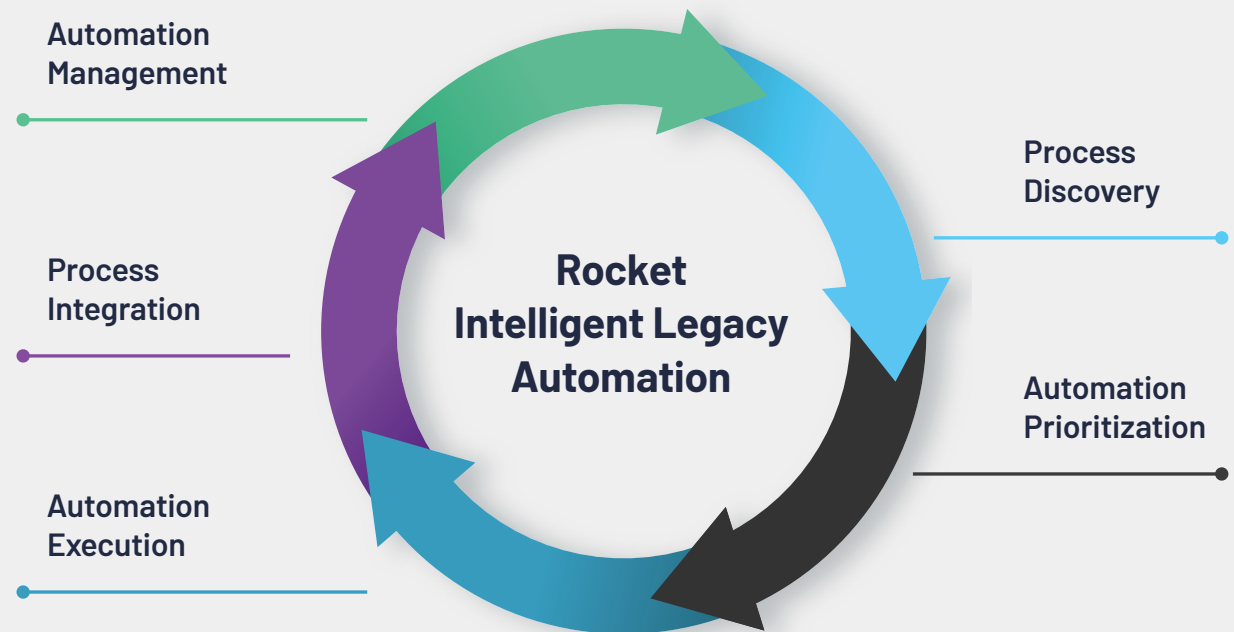


With Process Discovery complete, you will have an end-to-end visual of what your workflows look like. From there, you can very easily build out your prioritized Intelligent Legacy Automation and Modernization plan to drive bottom-line results.

Bringing it All Together to Drive Bottom-Line Results

Armed with an Intelligent Legacy Modernization and Automation plan, built with the knowledge of how your business truly engages its IBM i/Z applications, you are ready for action. As you look for tools to execute your plan, evaluate your choices based on which tools and vendors can help you best execute each step in the Intelligent Legacy Modernization and Automation Plan.

For over 30 years Rocket Software has helped customers like you execute and deliver bottom-line value from their modernization and automation plans.



Rocket modernization solutions

Rocket® Process Insights for IBM i

End-to-end visibility on your IBM i application workflows

Rocket® Process Insights is a visual tool that enables you to see your workflows in totality, giving you the information you need to build a smart IBM i modernization plan. Rocket Process Insights tracks how your organization engages with the data and business logic of your IBM i applications and delivers a heat map of the engagement. From that insight, you can create a data-driven plan that eliminates redundancy and wasted time within your workflows. Then, leverage Rocket modernization solutions to build modern user experiences and workflows that provide real results to the business.

Rocket® Process Integration

Connect your IBM i/Z applications to the rest of the business

Rocket® Process Integration enables businesses running IBM i and IBM zSystems applications to build workflows and innovative experiences that align with how customers and employees engage with your business and not with how IT is built.

Rocket® Process Automation

Drive real ROI with IBM i/Z RPA

Rocket® Process Automation is the only RPA solution that will deliver quick and significant ROI from automating your IBM i/Z processes. Remove tedious, manual work that causes bottlenecks, introduces errors, and limits innovation, without the need for legacy development expertise in-house.

Rocket® Modern Experience

Deliver transformative user experiences

Rocket® Modern Experience empowers businesses to easily build modern front ends for their IBM i/Z applications, without the need for RPG development expertise in-house. Build the web, mobile, and cloud experiences that employees and customers are looking for and solidify your leadership position in the market.

Talk to an Intelligent Legacy Modernization and Automation expert today.

About Rocket Software

Rocket Software empowers organizations to create legendary impact in the world through innovation in legacy technologies. With deep expertise in IBM zSystems, IBM Power, and database and connectivity solutions, Rocket solutions power tens of thousands of global businesses, solving real problems and making real-world impact.

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