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Legacy to IBM Sterling

5 Best Practices For a Successful Migration That Minimizes Downtime & Maximizes ROI

In today's uncertain times, it's important to stay agile and maintain the ability to adapt to shifts in the business landscape to stay ahead of your competition. One way to do that is by modernizing your current legacy system and migrating to a new IBM Sterling solution.

On paper, it seems like a no-brainer right? But once you dig a little deeper you'll likely find that this large scale effort isn't something you can go into blindly. It requires meticulous preparation and planning as well as careful management throughout the process. Concerns such as data integrity, project cost, regulatory issues, and getting buy-in from your entire organization are just some of the problems you'll be faced with right off the bat.

In your quest to bring your system into the 21st century, leveraging the right technology and tools will be critical for addressing those concerns and completing a successful modernization. They can help you gain insights, see the changes in your data from before and after, and know when an error is occurring in real-time.

If you're an organization with multiple systems spread throughout the world, the goal may be to consolidate into a single global solution. The challenge is that as you're undertaking this process, you don't have a centralized platform to track the progress and see your entire supply chain as it's happening in real-time.

So, where do you begin?

Here are five best practices to keep in mind when undertaking a legacy migration to an IBM Sterling solution:

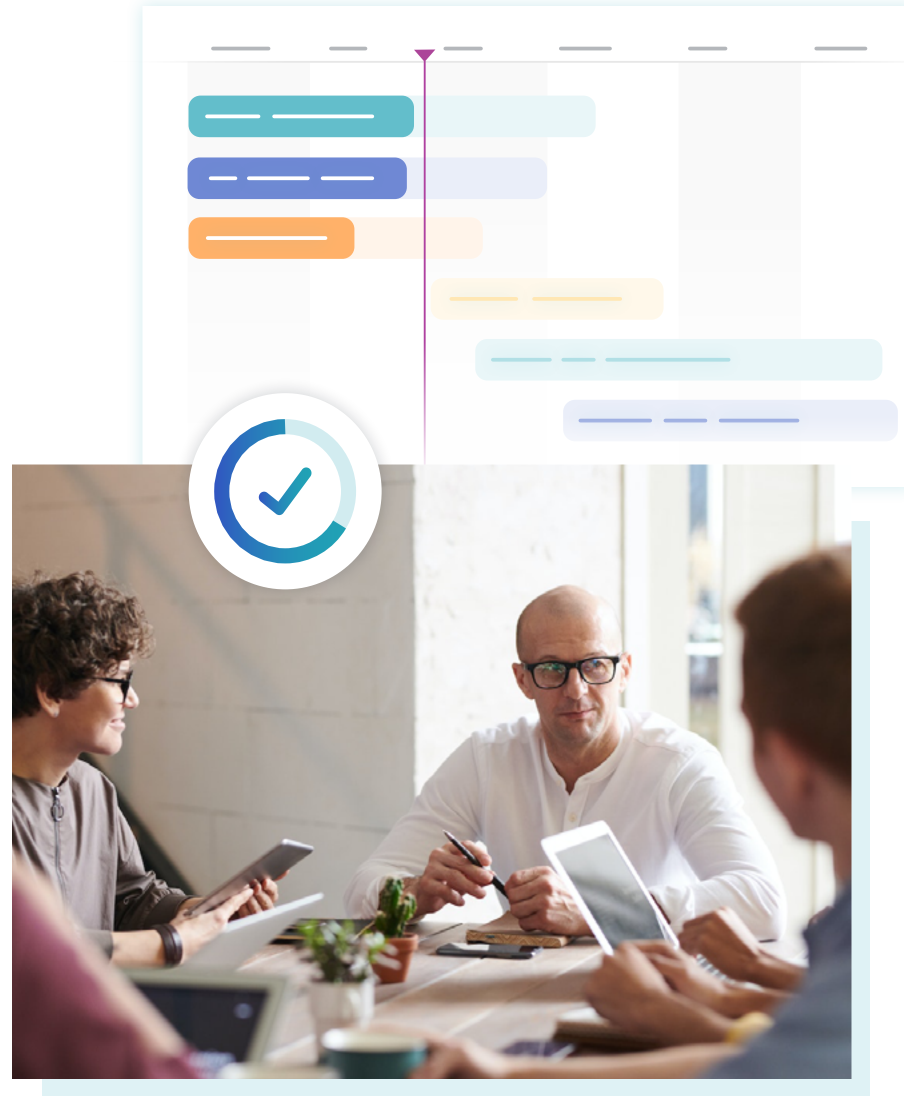
1. **Map Out and Define Your Specific Business Goals**
2. **Plan a Detailed Migration Strategy**
3. **Evaluate Your Data Quality**
4. **Leverage Technology and A Source of Truth**
5. **Move Forward By Measuring and Tracking Your Vendors/Suppliers**

1 Map Out and Define Your Specific Business Goals

This is a critical first step and one that should not be overlooked. Determine what KPIs you'll be measuring and plan to ensure the entire process aligns with your goals as an organization. For example, often times companies may choose a technology in hopes that it will tell them how to improve their business instead of choosing one that will help them get to where they want to go.

Big mistake. Answering the question, "What do you hope to achieve by modernizing?" is a great starting point that can shape the rest of your project going forward.

It's also important to take a survey of your organizational culture. A legacy migration is a cultural shift in addition to technological and it's critical to have everyone on board to ensure a smooth and seamless transition.



2 Plan a Detailed Migration Strategy

It's important to remember a legacy migration doesn't and can't happen overnight. It's a process that will require detailed planning and, in some cases, tackling the project in phases.

Think about prioritizing phases of migration within your systems across regions based on the criticality of your business. This will help minimize errors and ensure you don't lose critical information throughout the process.

That may seem like a given, but you'd be surprised by how many companies just decide to "wing it." According to **Information Age**, "Planning cannot start too early. We start talking to customers about migration up to 12-15 months before the process begins. It's a complex operation, requiring a robust methodology. It should be viewed as a strategic transformative endeavor, looking at the process through a holistic lens across the entire business."

Some questions you should be asking are:

- What do you want to migrate?
- How will the migration affect your IT team and business as a whole?
- What will be your method of migration?
- How will you manage security concerns?
- When do you want to start the project and what is your target completion date?

Having well-thought out answers to these questions will save you time in the long run and allow you to power through the process—not be slowed down by concerns you failed to address in the beginning.

3 Evaluate Your Data Quality

Your data is really the heartbeat of your migration project and it's your chance to ensure it's on point. However, ignoring data quality can set your project back immensely. Go through a complete data quality check to ensure your data is clean before starting the migration process; many projects typically fail due to "dirty" or corrupt data.

According to **Tech Target** you should be "focusing on the basics before undertaking a data migration effort. That means establishing consistent data definitions and formats and ensuring consistent data practices across systems and organizational boundaries. You should also work with a master data management provider that offers comprehensive tools and methodologies."

This is your opportunity to ensure your data management processes are refined and everyone in your organization is on the same page. It will go a long way in helping you address potential issues in the future while ensuring the data you keep is integral and clean.

Three things you should consider doing before undertaking any data migration efforts...

Establish consistent data definitions and formats

Ensure consistent data practices across systems & organizational boundries

Consult a master data management proivder

4 Leverage Technology and A Source of Truth

Why is the right technology so important for your legacy migration project? Quite simply, it's the key to empowering your entire organization to view a single "source of the truth"—a critical factor for minimizing error and solving problems collaboratively with your teams. One problem we've seen over the years are various members of an organization tracking the migration with their own spreadsheets—a sure recipe for disaster! A legacy migration is too complex to leave anything to chance.

Having technology that allows you to leverage dashboarding and reporting to visualize how your migration is performing in real-time (as well as before and after) is also critical. They can help you see a snapshot of your migration as it's happening, where potential issues may lie, and how you can improve and streamline the process. They can also be useful when comparing different phases of your migration and proactively identifying potential bottlenecks.

It's important to leverage the power of your own data and a single source of truth. This allows you to be confident, during a complicated and complex process, that your business will continue to run smoothly without missing a beat.

5 Move Forward By Measuring and Tracking Your Vendors/Suppliers

Once you're nearing the end of your migration, you're going to want to evaluate post-migration document metrics against pre-migration baselines—as well as track the number of exceptions created after the migration is complete. You'll also need to ensure your system is acknowledging orders from customers and they're correlating into accurate orders and shipments.

But the value doesn't stop when the migration is over. You should still continue to leverage technology and that single source of truth to measure the success of your internal order to cash and procure to pay processes and the performance of your vendors to ensure they are meeting expectations

Essentially, having this new process in place will allow you to move upstream faster as it becomes a fabric of the analytics of your entire business.

TIP:

Encourage your trading partners to join in on the process. If you have a centralized platform, make sure you invite them to help with testing after the migration.

For instance, you may want to send data from your new system to your partners to get approval on the data being translated before the migration is finalized.

Conclusion

We realize a legacy migration can be an overwhelming task, but it doesn't have to be. By following the best practices we outlined above your migration to IBM can be an ideal opportunity to drive innovation and efficiency across your organization.

As an IBM Platinum Business Partner and IBM Sterling application expert, we have extensive experience in large scale migrations and can help you tackle your projects head-on without engaging internal resources. From application modernization and migrations to high volume onboarding, to accommodating the complex needs of large mergers and acquisitions—we've got you covered.

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Schedule a Consultation

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