

Benefits of Legacy System Transitioning with Liferay

Table of Contents

Introduction: Embracing Digital Transformation with Liferay	1
Ignite Digital Transformation Through Legacy Systems	2
Three Benefits of System Transitioning	3
Moving Past Integration into Complete Transitioning with Liferay.....	5
Step One: Fulfill a Specific Need Through Integration	5
Step Two: Leverage Legacy System Data Through Transitioning	6
How Liferay DXP Enables Transitioning	7
Summary	9
Moving Forward.....	9

Introduction: Embracing Digital Transformation with Liferay

Outdated business software solutions, frequently known as legacy systems, often come with a high maintenance cost and can prevent new solutions. However, many have helped shape businesses into what they are today. These pre-existing systems are created out of a heavy amount of investment and are a cornerstone of how countless companies do business. But legacy systems are often the source of increasing complications, which can prevent brands from embracing new technology for future needs. While they have benefited companies for many years, legacy systems are true barriers for digital strategists, CMOs and more employees who are attempting to digitally transform their companies.

Today's audiences expect great customer experiences, with digital leaders like Amazon often setting new precedents for brands across all industries, but many companies are hesitant to move away from the old systems that they have used to build their digital presence. Nimbus Ninety studies have shown that 50% of senior stakeholders see legacy systems as a barrier to digital transformation¹. Legacy system transitioning not only allows companies to move past the obstacles they have consistently faced in years past, such as being able to truly understand the behaviors and interests of customers, but to embrace digital transformation and its unique role in their organization. With proper strategies and technology in place, effective transitioning can occur that not only utilizes pre-existing legacy systems, but opens up new possibilities for companies in the modern age of digital transformation.

Liferay software is designed to build intranets, websites, portals and more on a single, flexible platform, helping businesses not only create new solutions for their needs, but transition away from old systems and onto modern, integrated technology. Through a better understanding of the benefits of legacy system transitioning, how to undergo the transitioning process and the unique ways in which Liferay technology can help make the most of the process, companies can be better equipped for this crucial step in the evolution of their business.

¹ <https://www.information-age.com/legacy-barrier-digital-transformation-123465151>

Ignite Digital Transformation Through Legacy Systems

When approached correctly, legacy systems can be used as enablers for digital transformation, rather than barriers. While the goal of digital transformation is to transition away from old systems that both limit capabilities and create high maintenance costs, legacy systems can be leveraged to make the most of transformation. A frequently effective modern strategy for the process of transformation includes building new software systems that run parallel with legacy systems, which means that a business can wait to switch over their processes to the new system until they are completely ready. In doing so, companies can avoid complications that delay everyday business processes in order to make the transition as smooth as possible.

As the process takes place, legacy systems can slowly shift into being systems of record, allowing businesses to leverage the vast amounts of data stored within them and taking actions that were not previously possible on old software. With proper planning, legacy IT and modern cloud-based solutions can co-exist and ignite digital transformation.

In addition, businesses have the ability to deliver better customer experiences through back-end integration that was not possible on legacy systems. While companies may view their legacy systems as dependable for their needs, the rigid and often overly-complicated nature of many older systems prevents companies from embracing new expectations and implementing strategies to keep up with competitors.

Three Benefits of System Transitioning

Some companies may be hesitant to embrace a legacy system transitioning strategy due to the time and effort that may be required. However, when comparing the benefits of transitioning against remaining on legacy systems, the reasons for change become clear. The major advantages of transitioning from legacy systems include:



1. Efficient Systems That Leverage Customer Data

Many legacy systems contain various pieces of software that have been adopted and stitched together over time by companies as they are needed. Legacy systems may have components that reach back to the early days of a company and, as such, may be rooted in long-outdated technology.

As new technologies emerge and the state of online business continues to shift, many companies may be inclined to simply add on new features, pieces of technology, and styles of platforms to quickly incorporate solutions to sudden demands. In addition, specific business processes and financial investments may cause companies to hold on to certain enterprise software prices. Long term service and support contracts, previous lack of budget impairing the ability to enact changes and more can all be reasonable causes of legacy system fragmentation.

However, the result is often a pieced together system that cannot integrate the data found by and used in various platforms, causing data siloing and an inability to use such data to the most effective degree possible. In addition, this may cause mobile, desktop and intranets to be built on separate platforms, resulting in further disconnection that prevents omnichannel experiences. Through effective transitioning, the data sitting in legacy systems can be accessed and used in new ways via integrated back-end systems. This includes seeing how a customer moves across devices, interacts with websites and apps, explores potential services and more in order to improve marketing efforts and strengthen any areas that may lose the audience.



2. Embrace Omnichannel for Better Experiences

Omnichannel experiences are becoming increasingly expected by audiences across all industries. Companies who create such experiences can provide their target audiences with positive, memorable interactions. In order to create a true omnichannel experience, a brand will need to have all of their channels completely interconnected. This includes desktop websites, mobile sites, applications and in-person interactions. However, being able to completely and smoothly transfer data across these channels is quite difficult when each of these is built on a different platform.

A true omnichannel experience means that no matter how a person is interacting with a company, he or she will have their past actions reflected in their current communications. However, data siloing that often comes from disparate systems means that it may not be possible to have all channels completely access the same information. By transitioning off of limited legacy systems and onto a fully connected platform, a company will be better equipped to share needed information for omnichannel experiences, as all channels will be built on the same platform.



3. Modular Architecture Efficiently Launches New Services

Customer needs and expectations are changing faster than ever today. Moore's Law of accelerating returns can show that when systems evolve, returns accelerate, producing exponential behaviors and causing tech advancement and customer expectations to frequently outpace business transformation. However, these increasingly fast changes could exceed a company's ability to react quickly when legacy systems are being used.

Many legacy systems will eventually become unsupported by software companies and be unable to access helpful updates or connect with newer devices over time. In addition, they may be more vulnerable due to a lack of recent security patches. Legacy systems are often marked by the amount of time needed to program and update systems in order to meet new company and customer goals. The transition to more agile modern platforms means that faster, less complex processes can be used to meet customer expectations, leading to lower cost and faster time to launch a service or product.

In addition, the modular architecture seen in many modern platforms helps to minimize downtime and the total length of the development cycle so businesses can release new apps and functionalities quickly. These capabilities are in service to strategies designed to match today's quickly changing customer expectations and demands for a digital experience that matches the modern audience.

Moving Past Integration into Complete Transitioning with Liferay

As a platform that features numerous solutions built on a single platform, businesses frequently integrate their legacy systems with Liferay technology in order to supplement and enhance their current digital capabilities. However, enhancing business systems and truly embracing the modern world of technology is a two-step process.

Step One: Fulfill a Specific Need Through Integration

Integration is the first step in moving to Liferay, with many companies moving simpler systems to the new software or building entirely new processes, rather than changing the most complex features to a new software. Often, companies are compelled to solve a specific problem that is limiting their business by replacing an outdated system with one built through Liferay or by creating a brand new application to meet a need that had not been previously addressed.

In either of these instances, Liferay software allows companies to create a new asset on a system they had not previously used while still being able to integrate it with their current technology ecosystem. In addition, having a specific need addressed through Liferay can help businesses better understand the software and determine if it will meet additional needs.

However, the world of digital business is constantly moving forward, which can highlight the outdated nature of legacy systems that have not transitioned to a modern platform.

Step Two: Leverage Legacy System Data Through Transitioning

The second step comes in truly transitioning away from legacy systems, which uses integration as a springboard to successful digital transformation. Liferay can be used as an integration platform that extends the lifespan of legacy systems, turning old solutions into systems of record so that valuable data is not lost. In doing so, the value and usefulness of legacy systems can shift in order to support modern digital experiences without being completely removed from a company's software strategy.

Liferay Marketplace is home to dozens of integration apps that provide out-of-the-box integration capabilities for a wide variety of systems. In doing so, companies that adopt Liferay can begin implementing integration strategies quickly and efficiently to avoid the amount of time needed for custom development of integration coding. However, developers are still able to create custom coding if desired.

In order to ensure successful legacy system transitioning, consider creating parallel systems to allow for shifting over processes when a company is completely ready. Liferay DXP will prepare you for the modern web through its ability to fully integrate all experiences on a single platform. This includes mobile-friendly websites and smartphone apps, which play a larger role than ever in digital experiences, the ways in which audiences interact with businesses and the increasing use of the Internet of Things.

Companies who embrace the Internet of Things can leverage its ability to collect valuable data from users, create new uses for interconnected devices and develop a more efficient workspace or home environment to better connect with and empower both employees and customers. Forward-thinking companies can be ready for digital transformation by fully embracing Liferay DXP and transitioning away from the often piecemeal nature of legacy systems. In particular, Liferay Screens provides developers with the ability to rapidly develop mobile applications so as to quickly meet customer demands within a larger integration strategy.

How Liferay DXP Enables Transitioning

Liferay's open source nature provides an advantage for companies that are looking to transition from their legacy systems without the many possible complications that come from stack-focused platforms. These advantages, and how they can be applied to your legacy system transition strategy, include:



Lower Long-Term Cost: Legacy systems can quickly rack up costs, with IDC research showing that the average government agency spends 77.7% of its IT budget on legacy system support.

However, departments often receive very little competitive advantage in return for their investment. One educational group built a new platform with Liferay and created new tools in a short enough span of time that the technology paid for itself in only two years, which helped them to reach their cost saving goals. By decreasing the cost of transitioning, your company can make the most of your budget.



No Vendor Lock-In: Because Liferay is an open source platform, companies will not be burdened by vendor lock-in. By not being constrained by specific database technology, brands not only have the freedom to customize their programs as they please, but do not need to be worried about unexpected costs that may come from shifting their technology in the future. This means that your transitioning strategy can be tailored to your company's unique goals and systems.



Transition Support from Experts: Companies will not be alone in their system transition efforts as Liferay is committed to helping businesses be as successful as possible. The Liferay Services, Support and Account teams work to provide clients with programming assistance and answers to frequently asked questions they need to achieve the goals that motivated their system transition efforts. System transition projects of all sizes can find help in all stages of the process, ensuring that companies avoid unnecessary complications.



Ability to Keep Your Team: Companies who transition to Liferay are able to keep their IT staff and may not need massive retraining due to Liferay's flexible nature and ability to work with existing technological investments through integration capabilities. Businesses are also able to retain their database management system in order to make their platform shift as smooth and effective as possible. The result is a greater return on investment for businesses thanks to less time and training required to use Liferay.



Organically Created as a Complete Package: Liferay's systems are organically developed together as part of a larger whole. As such, these aspects naturally fit together when developing software systems, unlike many other major softwares, which are often formed from various companies that have been acquired in order to create a comprehensive package. An organically developed technology system can provide a wide array of business benefits, including easier integration between various applications and less complexity when systems must be scaled or altered. The result is a faster iteration process and improved data management that can create a more agile team and a greater return on investment.



Rapidly Develop Apps for the Modern Web: People interface with companies online through applications more than ever. As Internet traffic continues to shift more and more to mobile platforms, and people end up spending the majority of their mobile device time on applications, useful app development begins to play an increasingly important role in customer experience. According to Smart Insights, 89% of mobile media time is spent on apps, meaning that not providing an app may cause you to lose out on a large percentage of potential interactions. If your legacy systems prevented your company from creating the apps your customers demanded, Liferay's app creation capabilities can open up new possibilities. Today's continued advancements in technological integration and modern experiences mean that companies now have a far great ability to integrate or replace their legacy technologies with new options.

Summary

Some brands may feel wary about moving away from legacy systems, however, there are many advantages to moving off old platforms and away from how digital businesses were previously run. Transitioning to modern software can help your company keep up with customer expectations and competition from others in your industry. There will be more challenges to come in future years and only by equipping your organization with the software necessary to effectively address change can you be prepared for the often unexpected shifts in your industry.

Legacy systems will only cause your response time and the potential for change to become more and more limited as time goes by. Transitioning today means being ready for many years to come and becoming the empowered organization that you want to be as soon as possible. Through a transition strategy that makes the most of your legacy systems, rather than simply abandoning them in favor of new technology, your brand can continue to leverage the data you have amassed over time to make the most of your new capabilities for years to come.

Moving Forward

Learn more about the best practices, pitfalls and timeline for system migration in the whitepaper “[Migrating to Liferay DXP](#).”

See how Liferay Digital Experience Platform can create a smooth and successful legacy system transition and provide you with the tools you need to embrace digital transformation and its advantages. Visit liferay.com/products.

Speak with a Liferay expert and schedule a demo of our software by visiting liferay.com/request-a-demo.



Liferay makes software that helps companies create digital experiences on web, mobile and connected devices. Our platform is open source, which makes it more reliable, innovative and secure. We try to leave a positive mark on the world through business and technology. Hundreds of organizations in financial services, healthcare, government, insurance, retail, manufacturing and multiple other industries use Liferay. Visit us at liferay.com.

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