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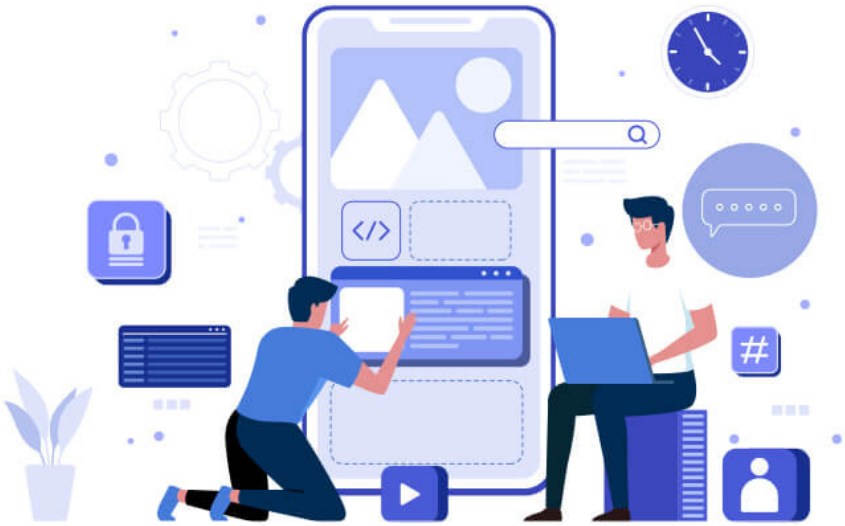
101 GUIDE TO LEGACY SYSTEM



101 Guide to Legacy System Modernization

We know about the outdated the telephones, pagers, or un-updated windows still being used by a lot of companies and individuals today. With the best updated technological advancements having cut-throat competitions in the market, you will always find a select few categories following the same old traditional approach to working on the older systems they are comfortable with. Why?

Individual usage is still fine but the problem arises when big giant companies or industries deliberately decide not to invest in an updated software version keeping their company data and processes at risk of malicious attacks and slowed system processes. So, if using outdated or legacy systems have so many repercussions then why do companies strategically decide not to discontinue them? Are there any hidden silver lines that we are overlooking?

This article is a comprehensive guide to legacy software and will walk you through all that you need to know about Legacy systems and their modernization. So keep reading…

What is Legacy system?

A legacy system can be defined as an outdated hardware or software still being used in crucial everyday operations within any organization. There are many such technologies that we use even today starting from pagers to important programming languages like Visual Basic, Pascal, and FoxPro that fall under this category. These are software generally belonging to the early 2000s, thought calling a software a 'legacy system' only because of its age can be a mistake.

So what makes a Software a Legacy Software?

It happens when the system loses its support community in the market. An outdated piece of technology generally do not have any kind of customer support and gradually all experts start to shift their expertise towards new and updated tools that are more in demand.

So, the important question is, why are they still being used?

Let's take Visual FoxPro as an example. Derived from FoxPro (originally known as FoxBASE), Visual FoxPro is a Microsoft data-centric procedural programming language whose final version 9.0 was the last that was released in December 2004. After a few minor updates, it was in March 2007, that Microsoft announced no further versions of VFP (abbreviation for Visual FoxPro) will be released anymore.

Now, though obsolete, data shared by Enlyft states that around 4,928 companies continue to use Microsoft Visual FoxPro even today.

Having existed in the market for twenty-three years, it became a language too hard to replace now. So today companies have come up with FoxPro development and migration services to support companies that are still using FoxPro technologies.

The same goes for almost every other legacy system still existing in the market. Once a system stops getting updated, they become prone to crashes, malware attacks, and data privacy becomes a major concern. They usually face problems like maintenance issues, lack of support, difficulty in integration, and poor user experience.

The most crucial task for any organization is to make a move towards replacing old legacy systems with new and updated technologies. This shift can be troublesome and bring business processes to a halt if not achieved with care and this is where legacy systems modernization come to the rescue.

So our next important question: What is Legacy System Modernization?

Simply put, legacy system modernization is a step taken by companies towards updating their IT stack to support their business goals effectively. Easy right? Easier said than done, this process involves strategizing, budgeting, prioritizing, and planning on which sections to update and which ones to postpone looking at the dependency of their workforce on that system. Therefore, this is usually done in stages. Companies may choose to update all or some parts of their IT stacks at a time. Maybe a single software or tool to start with and depending on this the number of money companies have to shell out also varies.

So is Legacy System Modernization that important?

The answer is 'yes' and 'no'. 'Yes' because modernizing, or updating in simple terms, gives your company the required speed to compete in the market. 'No' because you have to weigh it's coming at what cost to your company.

But face it, if you think your company does not require a legacy system modernization right now, while your every possible competitor has already made the shift, you are going to miss out on a lot of your business. Your firm needs to stay technologically relevant in the market especially if you are a software solutions-based company. Legacy solutions lack flexibility and carry a significant technology debt due to dated languages, databases, architectures, and a limited supply of aging baby-boomer programmers.

let's look at the reasons to make this shift in a better manner.

Why should you opt for legacy system modernization?

The below-mentioned reasons can be considered while deciding to shift:

1. Money Matters:

Though initially updating your existing systems and software may seem like a costly affair, it's always a wise decision to opt for it in the long run. It saves your company on crucial peak seasons when you require your employees to work efficiently. With older systems and software, your company may spend less on technology but much more on other overhead expenses incurred in maintaining those systems.

2. Security:

It can be noted that legacy systems that companies continue to use in their processes are more prone to cyber-attacks. With new malware being created by hackers every other day, updated software lack protection from them making your data vulnerable in the market ultimately resulting in lost business, negative goodwill, and a lot of time being wasted on the recovery of the data lost.

3. Agility in Business

With the current age of quick digital businesses, timing is the most crucial step towards gaining market competitiveness. If your organization is taking ages in the deployment stage, then you're sure to lose business. Legacy systems lack the necessary support required to give the necessary push and hinder the smooth functioning of processes because of outdated technologies.

It may seem a time-consuming job to put the effort in updating your old, outdated legacy software to the new age, fast, and updated systems but the amount of efforts saved in the time-to-market is a result worth working for.

4. Focus on Growth

Constantly modernizing software ensure that you are updated with the upcoming trends in the market. You are always investing in better IT stack development for your company's growth that eventually helps in better customer experience, improved backend maintenance, and shorter deployment time.

If not this, you'll end up investing in the maintenance and support required to keep your legacy systems and software operational at all times.

Digitizing and Modernising are some important transformations every company should opt for. Read our blog on Pave your Path to success by shifting to a digital future to know how digitizing can help you grow your business in multi-folds.

How to Modernise?

Once you have decided you have to make the necessary shift towards legacy systems, there are various methods of approaching this challenge. Changes may range from minor line codes updating to complete reimplementation of your systems. Two of them are the revolutionary (big-bang) and the evolutionary(band-aid) method explained below:

The Revolutionary Method:

This method majorly focuses on a legacy system replacement strategy. Though extreme, it requires companies to shut down the earlier systems entirely build up from scratch. Some may consider this extreme but at times when systems are too un-updated and require changes at the roots, the revolutionary method is the necessary step required to save your systems from crashing in the middle and having data loses.

The Evolutionary Method:

The evolutionary method on the other hand takes baby steps towards the software modernization process. It's less stressful for companies as the shift is smooth enough for companies to incorporate it within their systems without having to disrupt their functions in the middle. The focus here is mostly to solve a specific problem from the surface instead of eliminating the entire problem from the root.

Having said that, most companies even today prefer to modernize their platform instead of replacing them entirely. It saves cost and less pressure on their company workflows. But even then, a lot of issues are faced by companies during these synchronizing processes with their legacy systems. Companies can face compatibility issues, communication issues and employees may not be willing to change or adapt to newer systems. So there are a lot of important factors your company needs to consider before modernizing its legacy systems. To know whether you are ready to make this shift or not is an important managerial decision that has to be taken care of.
Consider asking these questions before modernizing your legacy systems:

Are there certain parts of your legacy systems that are working well for you?

Do you want a piece-by-piece shift or a complete transformation to change the entire IT stacks in your company? which approach to pursue?

Which technologies do you wish to upgrade first?

Why is it important to make that shift? What results can be derived out of it? Are your modernizing initiatives aligning with the goal of your organization?

Where are your competitors? Have they modernized their systems?

Are your employees ready to cooperate with these changes?

And most importantly, do you have the necessary budget to take these modernization initiatives?

Concluding

Asking these questions can give you clarity over how to approach these modernizing initiatives for your company and where to start. Like any other major change, modernizing legacy systems can also prove to be a challenge for your organization and bring your system to a standstill. It is important to approach this move with care.

Legacy systems modernization is a necessary move for almost every company existing in the competitive market. Sooner or later you will be forced to update your outdated systems or else stop receiving the required customer or technical support to keep your system functioning. Over a period of time, getting technical experts to work for your organization also becomes an issue and the only alternative available for you is to change.

Outsourcing these changes is another alternative available for your organization. A lot many software solutions providers offer development and migration services to companies struggling with legacy software. Apptread is one such company you can approach for these services. Apptread has earned a reputation of being an adept Visual FoxPro (VFP) Development Service and can help you manage FoxPro technologies for all your projects.

If you need help with your projects then schedule a call now!

Reference Link: https://apptread.com/blog/101-guide-to-legacy-system-modernization/