

Benefits of Application Lifestyle Management

Application Lifestyle Management, or ALM, is a perpetual process of managing the development of a software application, including migration and testing, coding, tracking, as well as maintenance to ensure timely deliveries of a quality product. ALM integrates principals from both business management and software engineering thereby allowing for more effective utilization of IT to drive business forward and achieve stated goals. So what does all this jargon really mean? It means ALM is pretty great and can help your business exponentially.

Helps all areas of IT become more productive

By implementing application lifecycle management, IT departments are able to focus on current business requirements only (and isn't that the dream of all IT departments), thus delivering output faster than ever before. This increase in productivity is accomplished by authoring and dictating standards and best practices across all processes and communication channels, as well as defining the most accurate and precise distribution of human and technology resources.

Makes collaboration easier and more effective

Developing software that effectively aligns with business objectives has unique challenges and often requires involvement from numerous departments contributing different skill sets, possibly fostering conflicting goals and priorities. Kind of like when the celebrities on "Celebrity Apprentice" have to come together to open a lemonade stand.

Application lifecycle management solves this problem and gathers disparate teams from engineering, IT and QA into one cohesive group by promoting easy communication and information-sharing among all key stakeholders. This means the entire developmental organization has access to the same plans, requirements, changes, task status and other necessary information at all times.

Creates higher quality products

In order for an end result to satisfy business needs and goals, the process leading up to completion must exist within the appropriate conditions. ALM facilitates this by providing the components needed to succinctly outline all specifications and requirements, as well as by executing quality assurance guidelines. In essence ALM ensures that software design and development can and does result in complete sponsor satisfaction. If only everything had this guarantee.

Decreases time spent on maintenance

Application lifecycle management can dramatically decrease the amount of time an IT department spends on maintenance. It does this by fully synchronizing the process of design and development of the application and as a result, the cost, effort and time spent on administration and maintaining IT systems is kept to an absolute minimum.

Faster time-to-market

One of the greatest benefits of ALM is the ability to automate and streamline vital development processes such as resource planning, integration and project management. This automation allows for a faster time to market of software products and services by expediting the design, delivery and deployment applications.

Getting started with application lifecycle management

Implementing application lifecycle management is a process in and of itself and as such should be strategized with key business drivers in mind. In other words, it's not a strategy you just 'jump' into. Focus should be on practices and practice improvement, not solely on tools, and the goal of an organization should be to introduce ALM slowly, incorporating newer practices over time.

As with any new process introduction, an organization must first be able to define its own application development and IT delivery strengths and weaknesses. Only by knowing its weak points can an organization make the correct adjustments and determine the most beneficial ALM approach.

The goal of application lifecycle management is to transform IT function from a source of non-cohesive applications to a strategic asset adept at delivering service oriented applications that support business functions and drive growth that allows for adaptability and market competition.