CONTEGIX®

Accelerating Public Sector Digital Transformation with Atlassian

ATLASSIAN

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US GOVERNMENT

Introduction

Public sector digital transformation ranges drastically when it comes to deployment, operationality and compatibilities. No matter where in the digital transformation journey an agency is, one central challenge remains: scaling their collaboration tools to meet demand—especially in times of crisis.

> From procurement to deployment to scalability, federal, state and local agencies in the public sector are poised to benefit from thoughtful IT planning and solutions integration.

The public sector has the potential to advance digital transformation efforts and fortify infrastructure by working with external partners. Specifically, companies like Contegix that can deliver managed services and IT support along with trustworthy digital tools, platforms and solutions, like the Atlassian suite.

With the right partner and the right tools, public sector agencies have an opportunity to deliver seamless digital experiences for staff and constituents, alike.

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Outsourcing Implementation to Experts with Institutional Knowledge

As a U.S. Government Accountability Office report illustrates, outsourcing IT services has been a public sector challenge for years. While policies and procurement procedures differ between government agencies, the introduction of new IT solutions and digital tools can create issues with legacy systems or non-compatible networks. And for many agency IT teams, it is nearly impossible to dedicate enough time and resources to integrating new web, cloud and digital productivity solutions at all. Let alone to consistently deliver the desired outcomes.

Even if deployment and implementation goes smoothly, most solutions require constant monitoring and regular updates that help avoid efficiency, performance, latency and system failure issues. Consequently, agency IT leaders need to invest in lasting relationships with selected consultants that offer vetted professional services and implementation expertise for an extended period of time. Selecting an industry partner, like Contegix, with beyond-deployment expertise in disaster recovery, as well as the customization and scaling of solutions, like Atlassian's suite, can deliver enduring value to public sector IT operations.

In general, government IT leaders can improve outsourcing IT services by selecting external partners with IT solutions that: 1) deliver efficient workflows and operations; 2) map to agency priorities and citizen demands for service; and 3) continue past deployment to implementation and maintenance. Public sector IT leaders surveying potential partners should investigate how their offering promises to deliver initial deployment success and help with responses to system disruptions or upgrades that could impact IT operations in the future.

Achieving Public Sector Efficiency with Atlassian

Contegix Atlassian Solutions offer managed and professional services that alleviate administrative, digital workflow, and data sharing burdens for public sector clients. A snapshot of specific applications for the public sector include:

Jira: Originally designed as a tool for software developers to track product timelines. Jira offers public sector leaders the visibility to dictate and monitor timelines for specific digital and web-oriented tasks. Leaders can also set clear deadlines for agency IT system upgrades or solution implementations; and customize templates for agency workflows across teams. Agency IT administrators benefit from Jira's straightforward, comprehensive task management dashboards. This powerful feature is built to deliver efficiency to internal workflows and ownership clarity to complex projects that involve interagency collaboration.

Jira Service Desk: Jira Service Desk offers an IT support ticketing and task management system that can be accessed through a one-touch customer portal on an agency's website, or through a central email address. Service Desk is meant to complement the efforts of existing IT service professionals working to address technical, productivity, or procedural issues impacting agency staff and citizens interacting with digital assets.

Achieving Public Sector Efficiency with Atlassian

Confluence: Confluence is a web-based wiki that can be hosted in a Contegix cloud environment. It allows agencies to create, share, and collaborate on web pages, documentation, and media assets that can be customized to fit the needs of a specific agency. For government clients, Contegix also offers a secure cloud option for Confluence that adheres to major compliance standards including FedRAMP and HIPAA.

FedRAMP

Crowd: Crowd delivers centralized identity management and log-in security for public and private sector Atlassian customers. For the public sector, in particular, Crowd offers an integrated approach to modernizing and streamlining digital government workflows with the help of the Atlassian tools, like Confluence or Jira, through a single sign-on experience. Once deployed, users can be managed by agency admins from multiple directories, including: Active Directory, LDAP, OpenLDAP or Microsoft Azure AD. Crowd allows agency IT teams to control authentication permissions from a single location; adding an extra layer of security and visibility.

Selecting the Right Plug-Ins and Maintenance Solutions

Atlassian tool integrations and plug-ins for government clients should be defined by use case. These can include asset management, code management, highly automated workflows (Jira), or portfolio management tools which can be customized based on deployment goals and desired outcomes. Solution providers should look for opportunities during the procurement and purchasing process to showcase capabilities that highlight potential agency benefits and minimize hurdles to selection, deployment, and integration. A few key areas of potential value to consider highlighting:
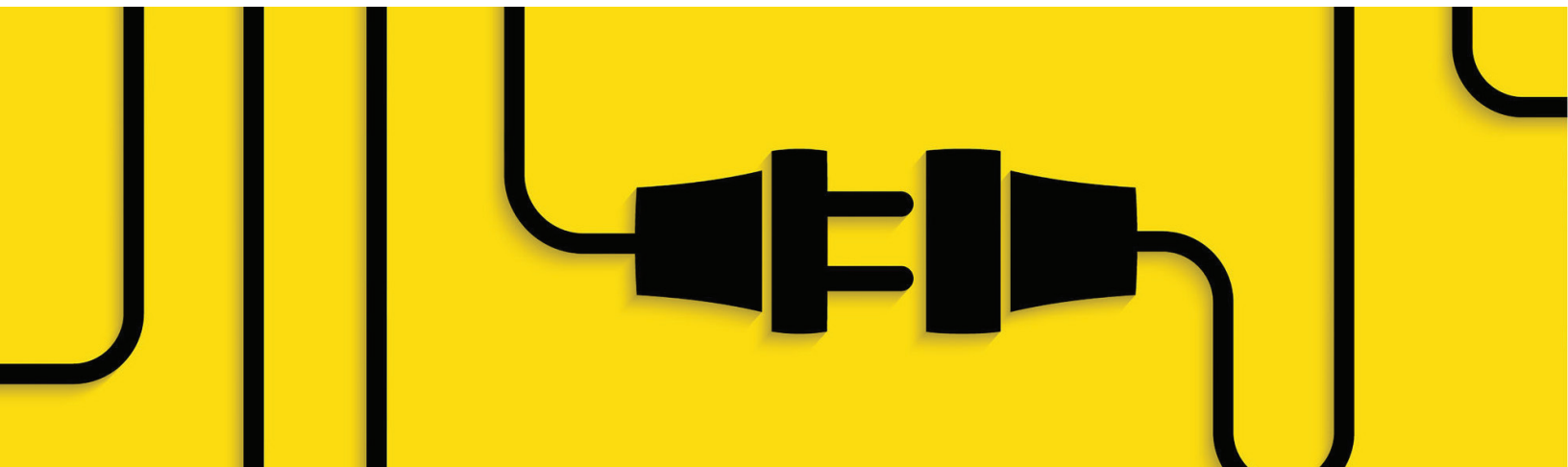
- Programmatic-level deployment experience with tools primed for specific agencies, like Jira, Confluence and Crowd, that incorporate customization, security and context into government IT workflows

- Industry partnerships that thrive on honesty and integrity, while not overpromising or overselling with each plug-in or tool procurement touchpoint

- Integration expertise: deployments of Atlassian tools require touching outside the toolset

  - Provide guidance and training on how to evolve from procurement to implementation to maintenance and upgrading

  - Share knowledge of which third party solutions Atlassian tools can integrate with, and how public sector partners can best select APIs for migrating data to other tools like Jira

Powering Public Sector Digital Transformation with Data Center

Jira Data Center is a solution that allows organizations to self-host Jira software or to access it through managed hosting providers like Contegix. Jira Data Center's specific benefits for government clients include:

Flexibility: Jira Data Center's open API and ability to integrate with third party tools makes it highly customizable and compatible with external web, content, and documentation solutions employed by specific agencies.

Scalability: Jira Data Center lets agencies easily add new nodes without downtime or service interruption. New and existing nodes are automatically synced allowing agencies to scale their digital operations without problems.

Performance: Data Center auto-scales with the use of multiple servers and clusters. Which means a business can grow without the need to change or upgrade to a new platform, reducing the risk of degraded performance. Agency administrators can also dedicate nodes for automated tasks and drive remaining traffic to others to optimize service.

Elimination of Downtime: In addition to scaling, the use of multiple servers means that the risk of downtime is greatly reduced due to hardware failure or overload. If a node fails, the load balancer will automatically redirect users to another active node, without noticeable downtime. In addition, Jira Data Center upgrades its system one server at a time, which means companies won't have downtime due to system improvements.

Disaster Recovery: Jira Data Center offers the ability to have a disaster recovery site located separately from production to be used when needed. If a disaster occurs, users can be redirected to the disaster recovery system.

Navigating Procurement and the Value of a Partner

There is immense power in developing agile IT systems and upgrading infrastructure to welcome new solutions without disruption. In both the private and public sectors, selecting and adopting digital tools or solutions often requires enlisting a partner (or several). In-house teams benefit from the wisdom of partners who are familiar with specific legacy systems and know how to introduce new tools or solutions that complement or improve them.

Buying decisions tied to new solutions for government use are often made by dedicated IT procurement officials reporting to a different leadership structure, or within an agency by non-technical leaders with budgetary discretion. Even if agencies could handle the entire procurement process in-house, difficulties would remain in the areas of staffing, training and workflows needed to usher solutions through complex, bureaucratic and often lengthy adoption cycles.

Common procurement challenges for the public sector:

- Many agencies require unique registrations, licenses and approval processes to begin bidding on procurement contracts.

- Agency IT experts or engineers make a wish list to send to agency procurement offices and rarely have contact with the solution provider.

- There's little consultative work or selling activity before agencies secure a license for a new IT or technology solution—and even less once a solution is deployed.

- Once a solution is deployed, it's rare to keep industry partners around to help implement, configure the workflows or configure software to be most efficient to how the agency does business. This often leads to performance, latency and effectiveness issues.

Navigating Procurement and the Value of a Partner

For public sector IT procurement leaders, enlisting an industry partner who knows the ins and outs of potentially transformative IT solutions (like Atlassian's suite), as well as how they can fit into an agency's diverse ecosystems can prove helpful. In the process of procuring and rolling out new solutions, public sector agencies need to build lasting relationships with selected partners that can deliver technical expertise and managed services that extend beyond procurement and purchasing to implementation, integration and upkeep.

IT procurement best practices for government agencies

- Determine internal steps required for agency IT leaders or procurement specialists to launch fresh bid selections in transit to procurement.

- Work to request, access, or uncover budget for new IT solutions.

- Develop assets that explain agency-specific IT and tech procurement processes, as well as establish rules of engagement for industry partners that map to agency capabilities and needs.

- Consult government-approved IT ecosystem providers and distributors. These organizations have already gone through lengthy vetting processes for guidance on what technical expertise and/or solution features to look for– and which to avoid—when launching a new procurement process.

- Connect with IT leaders and procurement managers to survey where current bids stand. Uncover any lessons from them that can improve new efforts moving forward and determine realistic specifications to include in new bids.

Strategies for Overcoming Procurement Obstacles

According to an April 2020 IDC survey of government CIOs, 61% of those surveyed are in the process of accelerating their digital transformation efforts. Federal administrative agencies like the U.S. General Services Administration are playing a proactive role by releasing government-wide assets, like buyer's guides, that open the door to advances in public sector innovation and digital transformation. Despite increasing interest and efforts in modernizing agency IT capabilities, many government IT teams are still in the initial phases of figuring out how to achieve comprehensive and sustainable advancement.

At the federal, state and local levels, it's also common for policies and procedures to have governed IT purchasing within and between agencies for decades. A few reasons:

61% of government CIOs are in the process of accelerating their digital transformation efforts.

At the federal level:
Every federal agency has a different set of rules and regulations providing IT purchasing governance and oversight. Beyond bid selections, integrating solutions to achieve compatibility and interoperability remains elusive within agencies, let alone scaling solutions to work between them.

At the state and local levels:
Every state and municipality has unique policies governing IT purchasing and budget. External events that impact overall government operations like budget cuts, furloughs, natural disasters or public health crises can impact IT procurement.

For federal, state and local government IT leaders in each agency, now is the time to survey specific IT needs, regulatory hurdles and skills gaps.

Gartner's recommendations for government CIOs:
- Implement business relationship management strategies that clearly communicate the value that IT is delivering in terms of mission outcomes.

- Incorporate information and technology enablers into business-led investment proposals to address overall cost optimization concerns and improve mission effectiveness.

- Clearly communicate the cost and risk of proposed cuts to IT budget as they relate to service delivery, program outcomes and the organization's reputation.

- Improve resourcing capacity and resilience through succession planning, cross-training, and personal development programs for the workforce.

- Deliver IT in the form of products with planned iterations and clear performance metrics to overcome cyclical leadership transitions and better ensure continuity of IT strategy.

Moving Toward Procuring Powerful and Adaptable Solutions for the Long-Haul

Public sector IT procurement, implementation and integration success requires more from external partners than just selling licenses and leaving agencies to deliver outcomes without partnership or guidance along the way.

Government IT organizations should seek to work with vendors and systems integrators who understand vetting and procurement cycles. They need to develop relationships with both IT leaders and decision-makers (who may be in an entirely different office or location), in order to deliver offerings that will address public sector pain points with tools and solutions developed to solve for them. Vendors pitching their IT services and solutions need to focus on how their offerings inject efficiency, security, and visibility into digital government activities. Such as, delivering online public health information through a dedicated web property. In the process, companies should look for opportunities to showcase technical expertise that extends beyond day-to-day IT operations.

Opting for industry partnerships with organizations, like Contegix, can help government agencies implement, upgrade and maintain solutions, like Atlassian's Jira, Jira Data Center, Confluence and/or Crowd. Working with Contegix enables agency IT teams to assess platform, solution, and tools needs that align with long-term infrastructure planning. Maintaining the health and value of the system, as well as to ensure compliance and optimized performance. Public sector agencies that decide to follow this path versus going for one-off buys may be able to unlock a more efficient and less complex IT procurement future.

For more information about Contegix's work with the public sector, visit: https://www.contegix.com/public-sector.

About Contegix

Our Story

Your digital applications power your business. Customers and employees expect you to deliver user-friendly, fast, and delightful digital experiences. At Contegix, we understand how critical these apps and the underlying cloud infrastructure are to your success. You need to move quickly, and you can't afford to worry about maintenance, upgrades, downtime, and other system issues. That's why we built our business.

Contegix was founded in 2002 as Atlassian's primary hosting partner and added consulting services to help Atlassian customers customize their toolsets. From there, we expanded our capabilities to support content management systems (CMS), and through our BlackMesh heritage, we have been managing a multitude of mission critical and highly trafficked websites in the world for the last 16 years. We also added extensive Service Desk capabilities, extending support to your end users, ensuring a great experience.

You're Unique. We Get it.

We understand the complexity of your unique applications, and that's why the industry's most sophisticated Drupal, WordPress, and Atlassian users work with us. We start by offering "concierge-level" application hosting with proactive, personalized support you won't find elsewhere. Then, we partner with you to advance and future-proof your apps, integrating into your team and advising you on best practices.

Our depth of expertise in CMS platforms and the Atlassian toolset paired with our FedRAMP authorization allows us to support and optimize the most complex and secure environments.

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