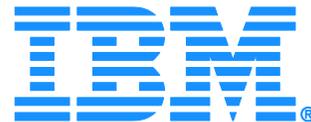




Effective ALM Planning; How to Appoint a New Management Team

Proper ALM planning and the appointment of a change and configuration team can help align business goals with application development goals, explain concepts to management and improve quality throughout the SDLC. In this eBook, readers will learn keys to ALM planning and effective ways to introduce ALM to the organization.

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By Dr. John Scarpino

Application lifecycle management (ALM) must be in place before any type of quality assurance (QA) activity commences. Too often, QA is conducted without any supervision to ensure that it is being done correctly. That said, the thought of moving to ALM may be daunting to some QA and project managers. In this article, we'll take a look at ways of establishing effective ALM and QA processes within your organization.

Outlining the effect that QA procedures will have on the company's revenue, sales, reputation, marketing activity and overall quality, should occur before the process is ever instated. There also needs to be appropriate oversight on the project, from which a sphere of influence can be pushed by the top corporate decision-makers down to the bottommost rungs of the organization. ALM managers are often stranded without any communication, direction or support from executive management. If this becomes the case, the ALM process will be managed with a haphazard sense of direction.

An effective way to ensure this scenario does not happen is to introduce all ALM changes and additions through change and control board (CCB) meetings. C-Suite decision-makers are usually present at these meetings, so you will have their undistracted attention for at least a few minutes. It is important that they understand how a change in ALM will affect the company, the same way a technical change or software risk would. Such modifications should not be carried out behind closed doors without first consulting higher management – nor should changes be decided upon, documented and finalized by higher management before reporting to the ALM manager. In order for any change to the ALM process to be effective, all involved parties must engage in meaningful dialogue prior to implementation. After the changes are agreed upon by all parties, they can be executed through the application lifecycle.

So, what is the most effective way to introduce Application Lifecycle Management within a company?

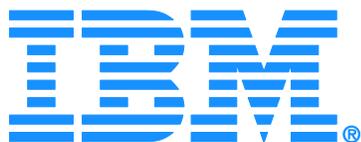
First of all, a change and configuration management team must be appointed and an evaluation of the current situation should be conducted. Turnover of code and infrastructure environments assist with managing and directing how procedures will work. Change and configuration management is the centralization of all development, management and environment changes.

Next, a quality assurance team should be formed. ALM and its corresponding technology should belong to the QA Team, which ensures that the process and end-product meet the standards of quality set by the organization. While ALM creates and analyzes the processes, the QA team must assure that ALM aligns with the intended project and development in progress.

Finally, upper management must be available for communication as needed. ALM personnel, like QA analysts, should not report to a CIO or CTO. They should report directly to an individual who holds an unbiased position and cannot put influence on the output of the project. This person is usually a comptroller or CFO, whose job it is to make certain that the ALM process does not adversely affect the organization's finances, or wellbeing of the product and customer.

Don't let a consultant or vendor talk you into believing that all companies run their ALM process the same – as this is not the case. Application Lifecycle Management processes are all unique depending on each company's culture and procedural norms. Even companies operating within the same industry may have completely different ALM processes simply because the corporation upholds a unique mission and values statement. So before your ALM process becomes too detailed, too comprehensive and too confusing, take a step back and think about planning for long-term success instead of planning for quick results.

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