

What Makes Up the ROI of DevOps Transformation?

In times of financial instability, IT budgets get tighter. So, when leaders decide whether or not to start a DevOps initiative, they naturally want to know if it will pay off.

Calculating ROI involves looking at two key aspects: the investment put into a project and the return gained from that investment.

On the investment side, it's not just the cost of new software or hardware. Important extras include training for staff, potential downtime as people learn a new system, long-term maintenance fees, and retiring old architectures. The specific costs depend on where the organization is in its evolution.

The returns come in two flavors: value-driven and cost-driven. Let's break those down.

Value-driven returns are about rapidly responding to business needs, like your customers asking for new features or competitors releasing an edge. Things move so fast today that tech leaders have to optimize for speed rather than cost. Value lost equals opportunities missed to satisfy users and stand out in the marketplace.

A big yet overlooked area is the revenue and customers you never earn because software takes too long to upgrade. Think of it as a cost of delay — what's lost by not shipping faster. Just because these returns are hard to quantify doesn't mean they aren't real or substantial.

On the cost side, DevOps can make manual work way more efficient. This frees up employees who used to have to do those tasks by hand. Some common targets are less downtime from bugs and swapping out hand-coding for automated systems. Even though the savings matter, the gains tend to be one-off. Without continuously looking for new ways to improve, waste can creep back in overnight. Thus, it's important to take the money and time you free up and funnel it into making even more enhancements.

When making the case for DevOps, people often focus mostly on cutting costs since those numbers are clear and easy to show. But where DevOps really pays off long-term is by enabling companies to give users new features and fixes way faster. Moving quickly to match what customers want is what separates the top players in a market from everyone else. Both hard cost savings now and future flexibility matter, even if the value of speed is trickier to measure with DevOps.

OUR CONTACT

+357 25 059376

hello@itoutposts.com

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Dmitry Vishnyov

Co-founder & CBDO