

How Cisco IT Uses Software Configuration Management to Minimize Business Risk

Application change management process improves software quality and developer productivity.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Increased quality
- Reduced risk
- Increased developer productivity
- Improved IT service

“Our processes are now repeatable, standardized, and scalable, because they’re automated. They also provide an audit trail for easier reporting within the company.”

– Terry Clark, Director of IT, Cisco Systems

Early in the company’s history, management at Cisco Systems® consciously tolerated the risks associated with a high rate of application change.

For example, when Cisco® deployed its first Oracle ERP implementation in 1995, Cisco IT began enforcing segregation of duties: the person responsible for developing code could not also be responsible for placing it into production. Instead, the Cisco IT Software Configuration Management (SCM) team assumed responsibility for all production promotion.

When Cisco prepared to deploy Oracle 11i in 2003, management realized it needed to increase the rigor behind its application change management. With 400 to 500 developers producing code, the amount of change was unprecedented in the company’s history.

Cisco needed to implement a new paradigm for managing software projects that would increase quality, reduce development costs, and mitigate risk by helping to ensure that processes are repeatable and predictable. The strategy allowed developers to focus exclusively on their core competencies while charging the Cisco IT SCM team with providing centralized and automated mechanisms to manage and predict change. Most notably, the Cisco IT SCM team would become involved in application change management much earlier in the process—as soon as code was developed, rather than just before it was produced.

Increased quality and reduced risk. By adopting SCM for Oracle 11i at an earlier phase, Cisco IT enhanced application quality through earlier detection of dependencies and deviation from file-naming conventions and standard installation practices.

Increased developer productivity. Developers can focus more of their time on their core competencies because the Cisco IT SCM team is now responsible for context activities, such as code version tracking, code deployments, application patch process, quality reviews, security controls, and dependency tracking. In addition, application maintenance requires less time because the Cisco IT SCM team enforces standards that help increase an application’s sustainability.

Improved IT service. The Cisco IT SCM team now offers its IT clients a reporting service that lists failed deployments and provides the reason for the failure.

Enhanced scalability. Since their adoption in 2003, SCM processes and tools have scaled to accommodate additional languages, developers, applications, and sites. With SCM, Cisco is prepared to handle a greater volume and velocity of application change.

Case Study: http://www.cisco.com/en/US/about/ciscoitnetwork/case_studies/business_management_dl2.html

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To read the entire case study or for additional Cisco IT case studies on a variety of business solutions, visit Cisco on Cisco: Inside Cisco IT www.cisco.com/go/ciscoit

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Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
170 West Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134-1706
USA
www.cisco.com
Tel: 408 526-4000
800 553-NETS (6387)
Fax: 408 527-0883

Asia Pacific Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
168 Robinson Road
#28-01 Capital Tower
Singapore 068912
www.cisco.com
Tel: +65 6317 7777
Fax: +65 6317 7799

Europe Headquarters
Cisco Systems International BV
Haarlerbergpark
Haarlerbergweg 13-19
1101 CH Amsterdam
The Netherlands
www-europe.cisco.com
Tel: +31 0 800 020 0791
Fax: +31 0 20 357 1100

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