Delivering more Rapidly and Reliably

Key Facts

Industry: Government Agency

Company: Kainga Ora

Employees: 1000

Contributing to thriving communities.

Environment

→ Oracle SOA Suite, OSB
→ E-Business Suite 12.1.3
→ Oracle APEX, Database
→ Jira
→ SVN
→ SoapUI
→ Microsoft .NET

Benefits

→ Improved speed of delivery by 10X
→ Reduced business impact and outage windows
→ Improved job satisfaction
→ Improved transparency and control
→ Increased confidence from the rest of the organization

Kainga Ora is a government agency in New Zealand providing rental housing for New Zealanders in need. Their name translates to "wellbeing through places and communities," a representation of their mission to provide housing for people and families in need while delivering the support required to help them live well. With a charge as important as Kainga Ora's, the agency needs the entire organization to be performing at its peak.

Challenges

Before finding and implementing FlexDeploy, the processes within Kainga Ora's IT group were manual and scripted. This had negative downstream effects across the team and organization.

- **Time consuming and costly**: Tasks had to be requested (via e-mail), executed (a DBA would push a button and watch execution), tracked (the DBA would report back what had been done, when it was done, etc.), and reviewed (the DBA would request review of completed deployments via email) manually.
- **Job satisfaction**: Parts of the delivery lifecycle required someone (internal or contractor) to sit in front of their screen babysitting the deployments. This work was not satisfying or energizing, and lead to boredom and decreased job satisfaction.
- **Process and governance transparency**: No visibility into the change lifecycle outside of manual reports of the who, what, where, when.
- **Process coordination**: It took the team hours of work to coordinate releases. Even a minor release required multiple Word and Excel documents noting what was changing and scripts to run that had to be collated and coordinated.

The lack of automation made delivery incredibly slow and was hindered the team's ability to keep up with business needs and demands.

The Solution: FlexDeploy

Kainga Ora decided to implement FlexDeploy to transform their software delivery lifecycle. Not only did FlexDeploy have support for their main toolset – Oracle E-Business Suite and SOA OSB – but it was also a flexible and extensible platform with support across the build, deploy, and release lifecycle. Vincent Shaw, Manager: Release and Environments, noted, "in my history of working in the government, there's an off-the-shelf model of software that's preferred, but you typically have to spend 18 months customizing it beyond recognition to fit your needs. Because FlexDeploy is so configurable, we were able to use it out-of-the-box and it could fit our lifecycle."

Kainga Ora were quickly up and running using FlexDeploy with EBS and SOA OSB. They also used FlexDeploy's integration with Jira to see specific Jira issues on each release – details of version, environment, approvals, etc. FlexDeploy has quickly become the core tool for the developers, administrators, and release team.

Challenges before FlexDeploy

- Dependent on manual processes and human intervention to complete simple tasks
- Manual and tedious work was not satisfying or energizing, and lead to decreased job satisfaction and boredom.
- No visibility into the lifecycle outside of manual reports of who, what, where, when, etc.
- Process coordination to plan a release was painful and took a huge amount of work.

Life after FlexDeploy

- Improved speed of delivery by 10X
- Reduced business impact and outage windows, allowing more frequent deployment windows
- Improved job satisfaction across development and release teams
- Improved transparency and control to the who, what, when, and where
- Increased confidence from the rest of the organization

With FlexDeploy

The team realized streamlined releases and more Continuous processes, leading to:

1. **Improved speed of delivery**: The team is delivering faster, and they have improved their ability to respond to emergency requests and requirements. For example, before FlexDeploy, an emergency fix would have taken about two days to get into production. With FlexDeploy, the time from issue identification to the fix being released into production was four and a half hours, reduced further to two hours when approval wait time is excluded. That is a 10X improvement, and Vincent described it as "quite an achievement on our side."
2. **Reduced business impact and outage windows**: Where previously the team had many manual tasks for reboots, restarts, etc., they now automated these activities with FlexDeploy. Not only can FlexDeploy execute these processes faster, but they have also managed to add efficiencies to the workflows. For example, before FlexDeploy core/application restarts would have been executed in a big-bang fashion with a massive business impact. Now they are done in a rolling fashion via configuration, and the team can restart an OACore or restart an integration without impacting the business.
3. **Improved control and job satisfaction:** With FlexDeploy, the release team has taken control of releases instead of requiring the DBA team to do simple tasks. Alternatively, DBAs are now able to focus on more value-add and interesting work rather than spending their time pushing buttons and watching a task complete. Additionally, with reduced business impact and outage windows, restarts can be executed during business hours and do not have to be held until weekends. This has greatly reduced the number of weekend hours required, further improving satisfaction across teams.
4. **Improved transparency and insights**: Thanks to built-in reports and dashboards, the team knows exactly what is being deployed in a release and have real-time visibility when needed. With log information at their fingertips, they can react instantly to issues, where before it was an investigation exercise to figure out the status of a deployment.
5. **Increased confidence allows continuous delivery**: The improvements realized by the Kainga Ora team has inspired the confidence of people that support Production environments. The release team can release to Production more often, do it quickly, and even release on weekdays, and the rest of the organization knows it will work. The standing of the development and release teams are increasing across the rest of the organization because of these improvements.

Vincent is excited about continuing to grow with FlexDeploy. "Utopia is that nothing goes into production unless it's using FlexDeploy. All manual deployment tasks should be out of the DBAs' hands so they can spend their time working to improve environments, rather than spending time pushing buttons. We have only scratched the surface of what we can do with the tool, and no one can imagine going back. We have seen such a payoff. FlexDeploy truly is a hero."