MAINTAINING APPLICATION READINESS BEYOND WINDOWS 10 MIGRATION

6 steps for continuous application readiness

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Inform IT. Transform IT.

Maintaining Application Readiness Beyond Windows 10 Migration

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Summary

Many IT managers have successfully overcome the tendency within their organization to view application readiness as a one-time event and have advanced the idea that it needs to be a continuous process.

Keeping pace with innovation

IT managers have had to overcome the tendency within their organizations to view application readiness as a one-time event, such as a Windows 10 migration, or the implementation of new technologies, such as the MSIX application deployment format. In this era of fast-paced digital transformation and complexity, IT must quickly deliver new platforms, update operating systems and make applications accessible on an ongoing basis.

The scope and resources required for adopting new technology keeps growing: discovery, cataloging, compatibility testing, remediation, conversion, packaging, new formats, virtualization, etc. Most organizations don't have a continuous process for delivering IT services in a reliable, predictable way.

Enter Application Readiness — the new norm for managing the continual flow of new application and operating system releases along with business-as-usual application requests – with no additional resources. It's a process to continually, reliably and predictably prepare and deliver any application to any device at any time.
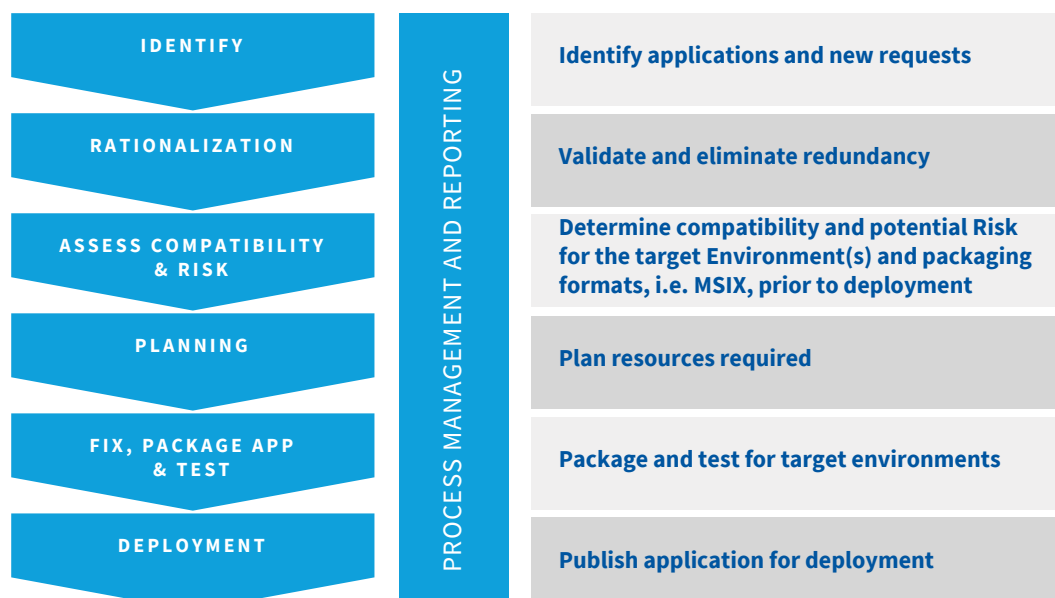
PROCESS FLOW	PROCESS MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING	DESCRIPTION
IDENTIFY		Identify applications and new requests
RATIONALIZATION		Validate and eliminate redundancy
ASSESS COMPATIBILITY & RISK		Determine compatibility and potential Risk for the target Environment(s) and packaging formats, i.e. MSIX, prior to deployment
PLANNING		Plan resources required
FIX, PACKAGE APP & TEST		Package and test for target environments
DEPLOYMENT		Publish application for deployment

Figure 1: A high-level view of the six steps to continuous application readiness

Every transition, whether a request for the latest Windows 10 version, a single request for a Microsoft application or a change to a new deployment format, can be undertaken with the future in mind. Application Readiness supports successful digital transformation with the ultimate objective of building a future-proof environment that easily adapts to both fast-changing technologies and ever-changing business service levels (SLAs).

As an ongoing process, Application Readiness should implement best practices and technologies to ensure consistency and optimal operations. It should leverage prior investments, such as packaging technology, wherever possible. It should automate each phase of the process. And it should standardize practices and procedures so deployments are reliable and predictable.

With these goals, it's possible to evolve from a reactive, project-oriented approach to a proactive one of continuous readiness for everyday application requests.

Flexera has defined an Application Readiness process that continues beyond a Windows OS migration. Use it as a guide to assess current state and determine what can be done to advance your process. By understanding where your organization is, you'll have a starting point to chart your path to higher levels of business value. Each step yields incremental efficiencies resulting in faster, more reliable application delivery, lower costs and decreased risk.

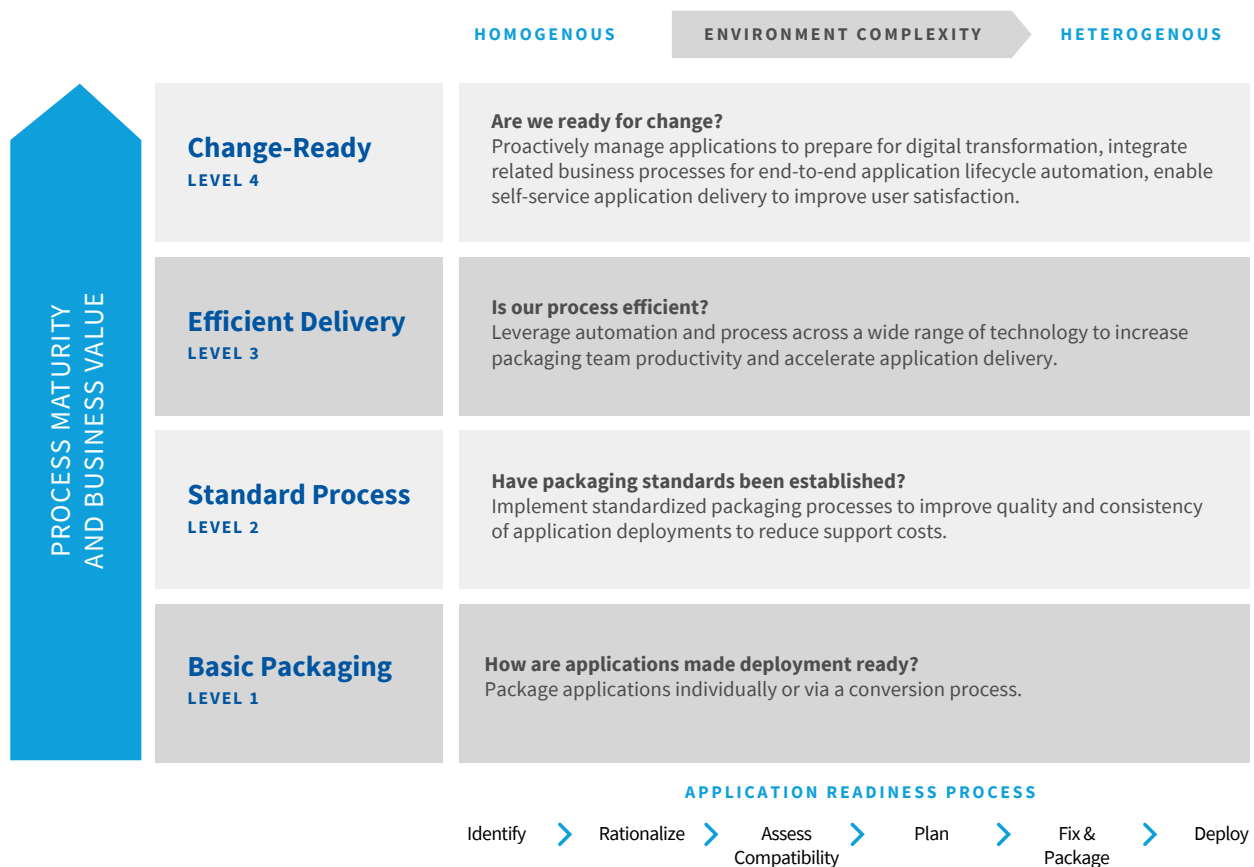## Basic Application Packaging to Predictable Application Delivery

HOMOGENOUS   ENVIRONMENT COMPLEXITY   HETEROGENOUS

PROCESS MATURITY AND BUSINESS VALUE

Change-Ready
LEVEL 4

Are we ready for change?
Proactively manage applications to prepare for digital transformation, integrate related business processes for end-to-end application lifecycle automation, enable self-service application delivery to improve user satisfaction.

Efficient Delivery
LEVEL 3

Is our process efficient?
Leverage automation and process across a wide range of technology to increase packaging team productivity and accelerate application delivery.

Standard Process
LEVEL 2

Have packaging standards been established?
Implement standardized packaging processes to improve quality and consistency of application deployments to reduce support costs.

Basic Packaging
LEVEL 1

How are applications made deployment ready?
Package applications individually or via a conversion process.

APPLICATION READINESS PROCESS

Identify > Rationalize > Assess Compatibility > Plan > Fix & Package > Deploy

Figure 2: Application Readiness Maturity Model

There are six key steps to ongoing Application Readiness. AdminStudio and App Portal can reduce the risk and cost of service transition through a consistent approach using these steps to deliver application services on a regular basis.

Step 1: Identify what's being used (and what isn't)

You need an accurate view of your applications across the enterprise. This is a good time to take stock of what's actually being used versus what's deployed.

The Flexera Software solution integrates with industry-leading systems management technologies, such as Microsoft™ System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM), to extract both application and hardware data as a baseline for continuous application readiness

With this process, new requests are automated to capture the requirements and documentation needs up front. The request then executes other Application Readiness activities automatically to increase efficiency and reduce manual wait times between process steps. With a centralized catalog, application managers are able to immediately understand whether the requested application is new or has already been packaged.

Step 2: Rationalize to cut costs and eliminate unused and redundant applications

With a clear view of deployed and used applications, you can address application sprawl and reduce costs. This is a prime opportunity to verify the need for continued support of applications and to consolidate and reduce the number of supported products, versions and vendors. This directly benefits software license spend.

With Flexera's continuous Application Readiness approach, once applications have been discovered and cataloged, they are classified and sorted by type. Redundant versions and multiple vendors within each type can be identified and consolidated. Identifying and retiring unused applications no longer needing support can generate significant cost savings. This will also help reduce security risks resulting from unpatched applications.

Based on Flexera engagements, estimates are that for each application removed from a Windows migration project, savings can be between
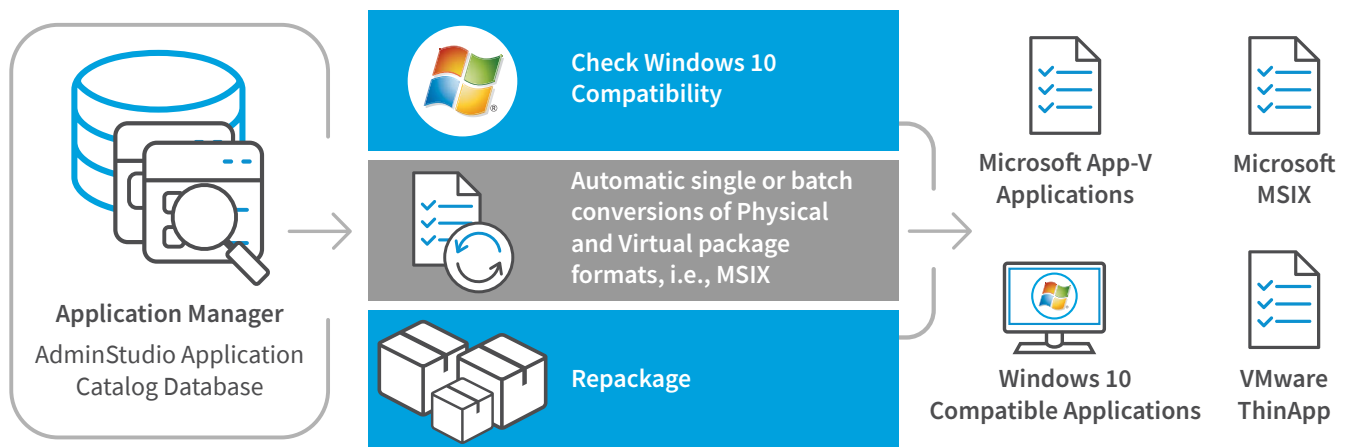
$3,000 – $5,000

Figure 3: The Flexera Software solution simplifies the tasks of fixing compatibility issues and packaging applications into the desired deployment format

Step 3: Assess compatibility, determine suitability for target platform

The increasing complexity of today's Hybrid IT environment makes it even more important to perform application compatibility testing before introducing new or updated applications into the enterprise. This identifies applications needing to be addressed in order to securely run on the target platform. Those with unfixable compatibility issues need to be replaced or updated.

Many applications may initially appear to work, but over time, as features and functions in the application are used, compatibility issues may arise. This can cause unpredictable application performance, crashes in the production environment and ultimately affect end user productivity.

In addition to assessing application compatibility on Windows, organizations implementing application virtualization should also check for application suitability for their chosen virtualization technology since not all applications can be converted to run as virtual applications.

AdminStudio provides a highly effective method to quickly identify applications that have compatibility issues and provides detailed information on the location and specifics of the issue. The solution is fully automated, able to assess hundreds or thousands of applications and gives a view of the overall application compatibility across the Windows estate, along with suitability testing for application new packaging formats such as MSI and virtualization. This automated approach saves significant time compared to manual tools and clearly shows where to focus remediation efforts.

With Application Readiness, new applications are automatically assessed for compatibility across multiple target environments to improve service quality, reduce help desk calls and increase end-user satisfaction.

AdminStudio tests apps for server, desktop and laptop compatibility

• Identifies application dependencies

• Provides detailed configuration dependency info for Universal Windows Platform (APPX) applications

- Identifies supportability issues, such as Windows 10 compatibility

- Creates a fix list by automatically determining apps and installers with known compatibility issues

- Provides overall status on errors, warnings and other compatibility issues from multiple viewpoints for all applications

- Checks application and configuration dependencies for 300+ versions of Java

- Uncovers older, unsupported versions of Java that put apps at risk

AdminStudio tests apps for mobile device and OS X compatibility

- Indicates the configuration and property settings of mobile apps

- Looks inside iOS, Android and Windows universal application properties and application programming interfaces to determine mobile device behavior

- Keeps risky apps out with reputation scanning, BYOD policies and blacklisting.

4: Scope and plan application delivery

Since application compatibility is one of the most costly and time-consuming components of a migration, having an accurate view of the applications to be transitioned, and their readiness for the target platform, provides the information required to budget for and resource the project.

Work completed in the Rationalize and Assess Compatibility phases arms you with a list of rationalized applications and details of compatibility issues that must be addressed. This information gives you a clear view of the magnitude of the project, enabling you to accurately calculate costs and timeframes for migration projects and business-as-usual application requests.

Traditionally, IT has delivered applications and operating systems as a major IT project planned well in advance and involving roll out of new technology to functional groups all at once. This 'big bang' approach puts stress on IT operations and support as well as the business users that must endure interruptions in their daily routine. Utilizing an enterprise app store can help relieve that stress, smooth out the transition and provide business users the ability to choose when to install new technology.

Step 5: Fix compatibility issues, reliably convert to any packaging format

Applications presenting issues during the Assess Compatibility phase must be fixed to run on the target platform.

Organizations implementing Microsoft's new MSIX format or application virtualization or a virtual desktop infrastructure strategy need to convert applications to the required format for their chosen vendor's technology.

Application repair and format conversion is a time-consuming, manual process, so utilizing technology to automate these tasks and leveraging the investment in packaged applications will yield considerable savings and ensure a consistent approach to application readiness.

AdminStudio automates the complex process of fixing compatibility issues, packaging and converting applications to the required deployment format. It helps IT organizations quickly and reliably prepare applications on a daily basis and for ongoing migrations and virtualization. By standardizing or implementing software packaging, you can reliably repackage applications in minutes and deploy software to desktops or mobile devices with virtually 100 percent success.

Equally important, AdminStudio can enable the quick conversion of applications for technologies such as Microsoft MSI, MSIX and App-V. It simplifies the move to the new Microsoft MSIX packaging format and application virtualization by identifying which MSIs are good MSIX and virtualization candidates, and converting them to those output packages automatically—with no extra repackaging required. And by taking a vendor-neutral approach, AdminStudio maximizes your flexibility while directly addressing some of the biggest challenges of converting to a new application format. For example:

• You don't need to start from scratch when you move to the virtualization model because the solution has a clear, fast and complete process for converting legacy and existing MSI packages to virtual packages (or applications)

• Learning curves are minimal because the solution replaces the need for multiple vendor-specific application packaging tools

Step 6: Predictably deploy packaged applications

The number of deployment types and target devices keeps increasing. Through the continuous Application Readiness approach, you can automate and accelerate the process of deploying uniform applications directly to your deployment system, smart device, or enterprise app store – without additional copying of files. Predictable application delivery helps IT operations exceed service levels and gives business users greater speed and access to more applications on a growing number of devices.

AdminStudio can pass application packages to virtually any deployment solution, including Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager and simultaneously create a new catalog item in App Portal, the Flexera enterprise app store, where it is immediately available to end users.

AdminStudio also facilitates distributing packages and patches via network destinations, FTP servers, administrative installations and more through the Distribution Wizard feature. Plus, it uses the same process to deliver mobile applications directly to Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager with Windows Intune Connector, AirWatch and other mobile device management systems.

System-to-system automation transfers the application package and complete meta data to the deployment system, saving huge amounts of time, ensuring accuracy and providing feedback on the success or failure of deployment in order to improve the process and package quality.

The Workflow Manager Dashboard displays a real-time status of every request, who is working on it and any related issues, so you can act to ensure SLAs are met. Whenever packaging issues arise, Workflow Manager facilitates resolution with dynamic emails to IT staff or stakeholders to notify them of the details of the request and the issues to be resolved increasing operational efficiency and keeping the right people informed.

Conclusion

The six-step process for continuous Application Readiness allows you to shift from reactive to proactive application management. The result is the ability to define, track and deliver the speed and quality of service delivery the enterprise expects when it comes to obtaining software applications.

AdminStudio is a source of significant benefits for many groups within the enterprise and for the business as a whole.

- **IT leaders** can significantly reduce the cost and complexity of major service transitions and increase the ability to adapt and scale in response to changes in technology and business needs

- **IT operations** managers can increase predictability in terms of outputs and measurements to accurately scope and budget for service transitions so there are no surprises

- **IT service delivery managers** can exceed SLAs and deliver services to the business faster and more reliably

- **Developers** can spend less time dealing with application conflicts and compatibility issues and focus more time on adding the new features end users are requesting

- **Employees, customers and partners** get faster and more reliable access to the latest technology without outages or interruptions in service

- **The enterprise** gains a new level of agility in responding to fast-changing business conditions, competitive threats and customer needs

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NEXT STEPS
To learn more about AdminStudio, download the data sheet

DOWNLOAD NOW

ABOUT FLEXERA

Flexera helps executives succeed at what once seemed impossible: getting clarity into, and full control of, their company's technology "black hole." From on-premises to the cloud, Flexera helps business leaders turn IT insight into action. With a portfolio of integrated solutions that deliver unparalleled technology insights, spend optimization and agility, Flexera helps enterprises optimize their technology footprint and realize IT's full potential to accelerate their business. For over 30 years, our 1300+ team members worldwide have been passionate about helping our more than 50,000 customers fuel business success. To learn more, visit **flexera.com**

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