

Schneider delivers better value to the business with Digital.ai

The environment

- Digital.ai Release and Digital.ai Deploy
- GitHub Enterprise
- Jenkins
- Nexus
- Cherwell IT Service Management
- SonarQube, Nexus IQ, Aqua
- OpenShift, AWS, Microsoft Azure, WebLogic, Oracle

The challenge

Schneider is one of the largest trucking and logistics companies in North America, with nearly \$5 billion in annual operating revenue. Like many modern enterprises, Schneider increasingly relies on digitizing its business; the applications it develops, deploys, and manages are critical assets that keep its business running. However, despite adopting agile development practices, Schneider continued to face delays and bottlenecks in software delivery processes. According to Pat Krah, vice president of infrastructure, “Speed to market is essential when delivering innovative capabilities to the business. Our old processes and tools did not allow us to deliver these capabilities in a timely, high quality, and consistent manner.”

The solution

The Digital.ai Value Stream Platform’s release orchestration and deployment automation features have enabled Schneider to standardize and automate application releases to all of its environments, both on-premises and in the cloud. With Digital.ai, Schneider has eliminated hand-offs between teams, automated common developer workflows, and gained visibility into processes so it can measure performance and identify areas for improvement. Thanks to Digital.ai, agile teams at Schneider can deliver software faster with fewer hurdles, providing better value to the business.

Results

- **30+ agile teams using repeatable release orchestration and deployment automation pipelines in the Digital.ai Value Stream Platform**
- **5X faster application deployment setup than with legacy tooling**
- **10X faster application deployment execution than with legacy tooling**
- **4-6X faster patching of certain environments, with minimal manual work required (reduced from 13-17 hours per environment to less than three)**
- **Standardized, self-service templates for faster developer on-boarding**

Background: scaling up after an agile transformation

Several years ago, the tech team at Schneider was facing challenges that IT teams at many large, innovative enterprises face: an increasing demand for features and functionality from the business, combined with pressure to develop and release software faster using the tools and resources it already had. “We needed to deliver more with the tech team we had at the time, without adding staff or outsourcing work,” said Amanda Heintz, release manager at Schneider.

To address this business need, Schneider started adopting agile development practices that would help it push incremental improvements to users more frequently. However, even after improving their development strategy, teams still faced bottlenecks in the process required to release applications to their environments. Schneider performed a root cause analysis on the software delivery process and discovered a large number of hand-offs between individuals and across teams.

“We diagrammed what was needed to build one application and deploy it to just one environment, and we immediately saw that there were a lot of hand-offs that caused delays. Multiplying those delays across all of our environments meant huge amounts of wasted time. That was really a tipping point for us. We knew we needed a release orchestration tool that would help us address that waste,” said Heintz.

The root cause analysis also uncovered the fact that development teams often relied on informal, undocumented information about how to build and release applications. “We have people who have been in the tech department for 30-plus years, so they have a lot of tribal knowledge. When they need something, they know who to talk to. That makes it hard to onboard new team members, because they first have to learn the ‘go-to people’ who can help them get things done,” said Heintz.

From tribal knowledge to executable documentation

To address process bottlenecks, Schneider defined two main goals: eliminate time-wasting hand-offs and make it easier to onboard new developers. “We needed to better enable our developers to safely deliver value to the business faster, more frequently, at higher quality, and with confidence,” said Kraus. To achieve these goals, Schneider needed a solution that could automate a variety of release tasks and that would be easy for everyone to learn and use.

Schneider chose the Digital.ai Value Stream Platform for its powerful release orchestration and deployment automation capabilities, along with its out-of-the-box support for many different types of environments. Using Digital.ai, Schneider can automate release work that required manual hand-offs in the past. Schneider now uses Digital.ai to deploy applications to a variety of target technologies, including a large on-premises Oracle installation, an on-premises cloud running on OpenShift, and public cloud environments on AWS and Microsoft Azure.

The Digital.ai Value Stream Platform has also helped Schneider turn tribal knowledge into workflows that are not just documented — they're executable. Schneider now defines commonly used workflows as standardized, reusable templates in Digital.ai Release. "Capturing our release procedures in templates means developers can onboard themselves to our standard way of doing things. Digital.ai Release is so intuitive and easy to use that they know it's their one-stop shop for almost everything that they need," said Heintz.

In addition to release and deployment work, Schneider has used the Digital.ai Value Stream Platform to automate tasks such as configuring infrastructure, patching middleware, upgrading databases, setting up Git repositories, and creating change requests. Agile teams can run these processes themselves, so they're no longer stuck searching for the right person to help them.



The flexibility of the Digital.ai Value Stream Platform has been key for our success. The platform gives us endless options for automating IT processes so teams can use services without needing extensive onboarding, additional access, or time-consuming approvals. No other tool can do that without custom scripting.

Amanda Heintz, Release Manager

A single source of truth for software delivery

The Digital.ai Value Stream Platform is now Schneider's single source of truth for standardized procedures, real-time information about the status of active tasks, and historical information that can be used for continuous improvement.

Digital.ai provides all stakeholders with visibility into workflows in one centralized place. Agile teams can easily see where they are in a running process and what tasks are coming up in the flow, while the IT team can see which environments are in use at any given time, so they can plan maintenance work more effectively. In addition, one-click dashboards make it easy for Schneider to see how many release tasks have been automated so far and measure whether the level of automation in its processes is increasing over time.



Because we have Digital.ai as a single source of truth for our processes, we can measure key performance indicators such as lead time from commit to production. The data Digital.ai captures has also helped us start working on other areas that need attention, such as environment reservations and maintenance scheduling.

Amanda Heintz, Release Manager

Continuing to grow

The Digital.ai Value Stream Platform provides a solid foundation for the automated processes that help Schneider's agile teams deliver applications faster with higher quality. Schneider now relies on Digital.ai for a new initiative in its business: a mobile application that will support the thousands of freight carriers it works with every day.



While building a brand-new, consumer-grade mobile app, we used Digital.ai Release and Digital.ai Deploy as key components to automate our Microsoft Azure infrastructure. As we develop and test a digital marketplace that will be used by over 35,000 carriers, our ability to continuously deliver software is key for our success.

Justin Sachs, Director of Operational Excellence

While Schneider has come a long way in its agile and DevOps practices, there's always room to grow. Schneider plans to continue identifying and implementing impactful changes that save time and streamline processes. It also conducts regular information sharing sessions to promote DevOps culture throughout the company. "We're excited to keep working with Digital.ai to innovate and find ways to make ourselves more efficient, so we can continue to deliver real value to the business," said Heintz.

About Digital.ai

Digital.ai enables enterprises to focus on outcomes instead of outputs, create greater business value faster, and deliver secure digital experiences their customers trust. The Digital.ai Value Stream Platform seamlessly integrates all the disparate tools and processes across the various value streams, uses data and AI/ML to create connective tissue between them, and provides the real-time, contextual insights required to drive and sustain successful digital transformation. With Digital.ai, enterprises have the visibility they've been seeking to deliver value, drive growth, increase profitability, reduce security risk, and improve customer experience.

Learn more at [Digital.ai](#)