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Book production:

Electronic Printcenter, Nieuwegein, The Netherlands

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High Performing DevOps Enterprises

A Perspective of Dutch Technology Leaders

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Foreword

DevOps has matured from being considered a “fad” to being a proven approach backed up by science. In the 12 years I have been actively involved in DevOps improvement, I have seen the understanding of DevOps grow from a merger of Developments and Operations to integrated, frictionless value delivery across the whole value stream, from business inception right up to the delivering of value to the customer.

A major shift in current thinking is the adoption of Lean thinking. I see a strong parallel with how the car industry moved from mass production towards Lean production in the early 1960s. A lot of IT shops are still run as mass production factories with waste, large inventories (tickets in ITSM systems), and long lead times to get standard services such as Compute, Network changes, and IAM changes.

DevOps is more than a pipeline or test automation. It is also about creating a safe environment, setting the right priorities, allowing experimentation, improving quality, and enabling autonomy.

This book is testimony to that and will help you understand where you are and what you need to work on. This book is about IT leaders sharing their vision and experience of how they achieved a high-performing DevOps enterprise. It is not about theory, but about practical experience and examples of how these leaders improved their company’s performance.

The authors Rahul, Markus, and Leo have decades of combined experience in DevOps. They have captured the knowledge and experience of IT leaders through interviews and created a book that makes it very accessible for others to learn from the experience of all the leaders that were interviewed.

I am sure this book will provide you with inspiration and ideas on how to improve your enterprise.

Wiebe Wiersema

Lead Consultant DevOn

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

“The end of a transformation means the start of another.”

– Rahul Sah

The overall idea of this book is to research, analyze, and share how a DevOps mindset and principles can impact an organization’s performance. As a starting point for this book, we interviewed several technology and IT leaders in the Dutch market. Now we would like to share their viewpoint with you.

Over the years, DevOn has helped many large-scale enterprises with their needs around DevOps transformations. In doing so, we have discovered that organizations have differing opinions about DevOps and its benefits. Even 10 years after DevOps came into being, the subject still seems to confuse many people.

What is DevOps? A formal definition of DevOps is as follows: A compound of development (Dev) and operations (Ops), DevOps is the union of people, process, and technology to continually transform and improve the value delivery to customers. The idea is to create a culture of everyone wanting to continuously get better.

What does DevOps mean for teams and organizations? DevOps enables formerly siloed roles – software development, IT operations, quality engineering, and security – to coordinate and collaborate to produce better, more reliable products. By adopting a DevOps culture along with DevOps practices and tools, teams gain the ability to better respond to customer needs, increase confidence in the applications they build, and achieve business goals faster.

A correct and common understanding of DevOps and its principles, across all levels of an organization, is a crucial ingredient in the successful transformation to a “high-performing organization”. According to the State of DevOps Report published over the last five years, high-performing organizations are twice as likely to exceed profitability, market share, and productivity goals. For enterprises listed on the stock exchange, it was also found that the high performers had 50% higher market capitalization growth over three years. These high performers also had higher employee job satisfaction, and lower rates of employee burnout. This is one of the major drivers for organizations to adopt DevOps across the enterprise.

We do realize that implementing DevOps is challenging, and that scaling DevOps and becoming a high-performing organization is even more difficult. The journey to become a high-performing organization requires perseverance and agility. But despite this, there are many successful examples of Dutch organizations that have reached a high-performance state. Therefore it seemed logical for us to discover the recipe of these high-performing organizations.

This book is dedicated to sharing what we have learned through interviews conducted with 14 technology leaders from 12 high-performing organizations in the Dutch market. In Chapter 2: Analysis & Model, we summarize the insights we gained through the interviews. In Chapter 3, you can read each of the 12 interviews in full. Each leader shares their success stories, vision, and learnings from their journey towards high performance. During the interviews, we asked questions like “What is the value of being a high-performing organization?”, “What are the challenges to get there?”, “What are some solutions to these challenges?”, and “What are the learnings from such a transformation?”

We hope that this book inspires you and provides insights into how a DevOps transformation can accelerate your organization’s journey towards high performance.

CHAPTER 2

Analysis & Model

“*DevOps is not a goal, but a never-ending process of continual improvement.*”

– Jez Humble

What is the value of being a high-performing organization?

High-performing organizations are out-performing their peers in both financial and non-financial aspects of the business. High-performing organizations also have a higher market share, profits, and customer satisfaction compared to their industry competitors.

When asked what the value of being a high-performing organization is, we saw that the technology leaders have an aligned vision on this.

High-performance enterprises are able to deliver faster with higher quality and reliability towards their customer needs. High-performance enterprises are also resilient and hence stay ahead of the competition even during uncertain economic times.

High performers are working on this throughout the whole organization and remove waste from their processes, enabling autonomous teams to make decisions and continuously improve.