Vero
Technologies

MODERNIZATION PLANNING · GUIDE

The business case for change

Nobody approves a platform because it is modern. They approve it because someone put a number in front of them they could defend. This is how to build that number, and the argument around it, without us in the room.

FORMAT	TIME	COMPANION
Guide and worksheet	An afternoon	The 2030 Blueprint

Why good cases fail

Most internal cases for modernization are not rejected because the idea is wrong. They are rejected because they are unfalsifiable.

A case built on efficiency, better experience and future readiness gives a committee nothing to test. It cannot be checked, so it cannot be trusted, so it competes badly against a proposal that quantifies something. The winning proposal is frequently the smaller one, because its author did the arithmetic.

The three failures below account for most of it.

01 The problem is described, not sized

“Title processing is manual and slow” is a complaint. “Title processing consumes 1,100 hours a year at a fully loaded cost of $62,000” is a case. The second one can be argued with, which is exactly what makes it persuasive.

02 Doing nothing is priced at zero

Status quo always looks free because its cost is already in the budget. It is not free. It is a recurring cost you have stopped noticing, and it usually grows with volume.

03 The benefit is claimed rather than sourced

A vendor percentage in your case makes the whole document a vendor document. Numbers you generated from your own operation survive scrutiny. Numbers you inherited do not.

A committee is not deciding whether to modernize. It is deciding which quantified proposal to fund.

Step 1 · Separate the fires from the priorities

Teams under operational pressure see problems everywhere. The first job is not solving them. It is establishing which ones are worth solving.

List every issue, inefficiency and recurring fire affecting the operation. Do not filter while listing. For each, capture four things: what it is, which teams or processes it touches, what it consumes (time, money, people), and whether it recurs or was a one-off.

Then place each on the grid below. Impact is what it costs you to leave it alone. Effort is what resolving it takes, including the change management, not just the software.

IMPACT AGAINST EFFORT

HIGH IMPACT · LOW EFFORT	HIGH IMPACT · HIGH EFFORT
Quick wins. Do these first and use them to earn the credibility to propose the hard ones.	Strategic bets. The ones that change the operating model. These need the full business case.
LOW IMPACT · LOW EFFORT	**LOW IMPACT · HIGH EFFORT**
Housekeeping. Worth doing only when they do not compete with the two quadrants above.	Decline, and say so explicitly. An unspoken no returns every quarter.

ONE CORRECTION WORTH MAKING

High impact combined with high effort is often mislabelled a quick win in prioritization templates. It is not. Naming it a strategic bet sets the right expectation with the people funding it, and stops the programme being judged against a timeline it was never going to meet.

Step 2 · Put a number on it

Five numbers carry a modernization case. All five can be gathered internally, and four of them are simply arithmetic on things you already know.

01 Hours

Take your three highest-volume manual steps. Time them honestly for one week, with the people who actually do them rather than an estimate from a manager. Multiply by annual volume and convert at fully loaded cost, not salary.

02 Headcount avoided

Against your growth plan, how many people does the current operating model need in 24 months? The gap between that and today is the number, not the cost of current staff. This is the figure that survives contact with a CFO, because it is about a commitment not yet made.

03 Leakage

Income you did not collect because a calculation was manual. Interest and fees not billed, curtailments applied late, collateral discrepancies found at audit rather than at funding. Sample a month and extrapolate. Most teams have never measured this and are surprised.

Step 2 · The five numbers, continued

01 Maintenance already being paid

Internal engineering hours on the current system, vendor support fees, and the enhancement backlog you have deferred. Deferred work is a real liability, not an absence of cost.

02 Revenue at risk

Dealers lost, or never won, because of the operational experience. Your relationship managers know this number and are rarely asked for it. It will be soft. Include it anyway, labelled as an estimate, because it is usually the largest one.

Sum one through four. That is your floor: the defensible, arithmetic-backed case. Number five is not part of the floor. It is the argument for acting this year rather than next.

> **HANDLE NUMBER FIVE CAREFULLY**
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> Revenue at risk is the number most likely to be challenged and the one you can least evidence. Present it separately, labelled as an estimate with its method shown. A case that quietly folds a soft number into a hard total loses the whole total when the soft one is questioned.

Step 3 · Give the committee three options, honestly

A case with one option is a request. A case with three is a decision, and decisions are what committees are for.

Present all three with real advantages. If the status quo column is empty, nobody will believe the other two.

OPTION	ARGUES FOR ITSELF AS	WHERE IT FAILS
Status quo	No spend, no disruption, no migration risk. The team knows the system.	The cost is already being paid and grows with volume. Every year of deferral adds to the eventual migration.
Incremental	Cheap, fast, low risk. Fixes a visible symptom quickly.	Adds another seam. Point solutions solve one step and create a new handoff either side of it.
Comprehensive	Changes the operating model rather than a step in it. Compounds.	Highest cost, longest timeline, real change-management burden. Needs sustained sponsorship.

Score each on five dimensions

- **Cost against benefit**, with the timeline to seeing it, not just the total
- **Implementation feasibility**, including training and the internal capacity actually available
- **Scalability**, meaning whether it still works at your 2030 volume
- **Risk**, in both directions: the risk of acting and the risk of not
- **Internal alignment**, meaning whether it has a sponsor who will still be there in 18 months

Recommend one. State plainly why the other two lose. A recommendation that does not dispose of the alternatives invites the committee to re-run the analysis themselves, in the meeting, badly.

Step 4 · Write it for the room it will be read in

The document has one job: let someone who was not in your analysis defend your conclusion to someone else.

- [x] **Lead with the number.** The recommendation and the figure belong in the first three lines, not after the background.
- [x] **Show the arithmetic.** One page of method. Anything a reader cannot reconstruct will be treated as an assertion.
- [x] **Name the assumptions.** List the three that would most change the answer if wrong. Doing this pre-empts the question and signals you looked for the weaknesses yourself.
- [x] **Separate hard from soft.** Your floor total and your estimate, clearly divided.
- [x] **Give it a first step.** A phase with an owner, a date and a cost is approvable. A programme is not.

How it will be attacked, and the answer

01 **“These hours look inflated”**

Which is why you timed them rather than estimated them. Name the week, the people and the volume. Offer to re-run it.

02 **“We can fix this with process, not software”**

Sometimes true, and worth conceding where it is. Point at the steps that are structural: two systems that do not talk cannot be reconciled by discipline.

03 **“Why now?”**

This is where number five earns its place. The floor total justifies doing it. Revenue at risk and the growth plan justify doing it this year.

> **BEFORE IT GOES TO COMMITTEE**
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> Show the model to one person who will be in the room and is inclined to say no. Their objections are free, and they are the same objections you will get in the meeting with less time to answer.

Want a second set of eyes on your assumptions?

Build the model with the worksheet, then send it to us. We will tell you which numbers will get challenged and where we think you are being too conservative. This is a real offer, not a demo request.

Send us your model

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