Supporting Government Innovation and Automation Objectives

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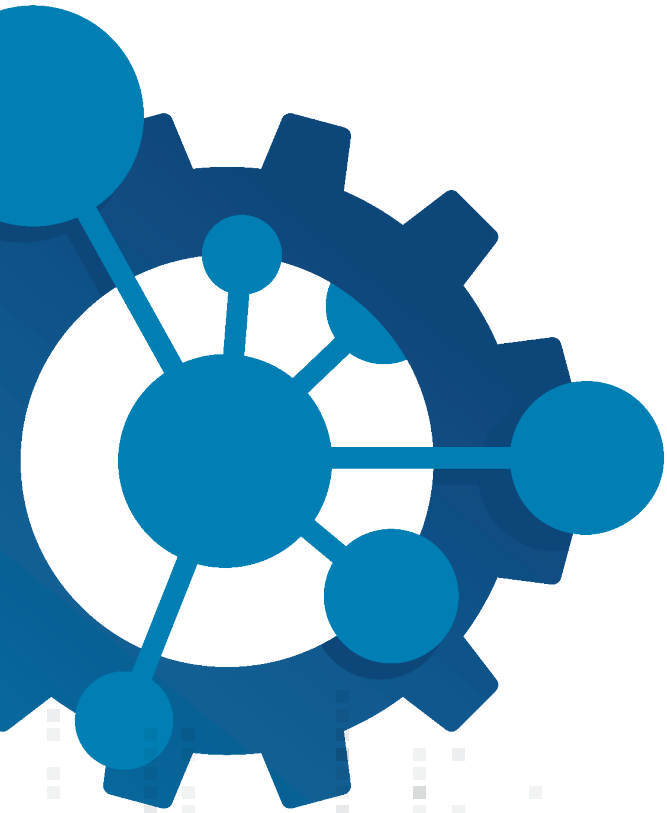


STRATEGIES FOR INDUSTRY

Industry Plays a Vital Role in Government Innovation

Let's talk about innovation. Big "I" and little "i" innovation is a theme Fierce has heard at our government digital transformation round table events and an important concept for all industry teams to be aware of.

Government is striving for digital transformation and is seeking innovation support from its industry base. Agency strategic objectives outline a grand vision of modernized digital enterprises, efficient utilization of cloud, and missions optimized by AI/ML. This is big "I" innovation. Little "i" innovation is the small-scale, incremental changes that organizations make to advance performance over time. Little "i" innovation is essential in enterprise digital transformation because it helps build a culture of innovation, reduces risk, and creates a foundation for big "I" innovation.

Both industry and government leaders need to make sure little "i" innovation gets out beyond the teams in immediate proximity to the software factories or the big "I" objectives will not be realized. Innovation must be democratized, organization wide. Employees need an environment where they can learn and discover for themselves, and this is best enabled with a dependable set of platform tools. Leveraging the enterprise baselines of tools such as Ansible, Terraform, and GitLab focuses the upskilling of staff and allows knowledge to spread and the cultural transformation to take hold. This culture of innovation allows the industry teams to build better capability faster and more consistently.

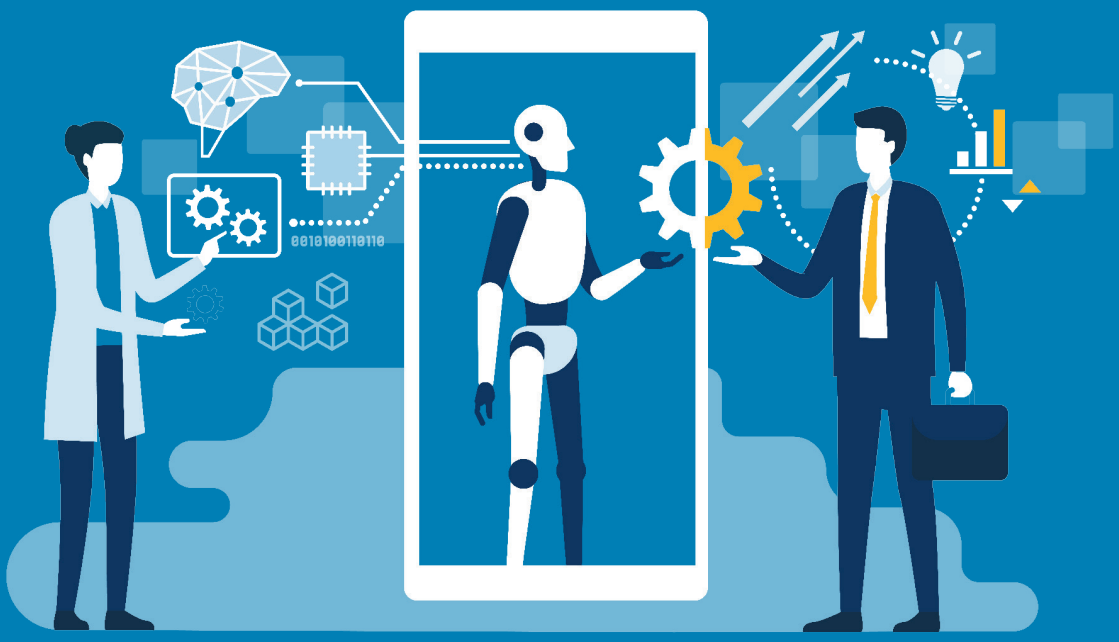
A fragmented automation tooling strategy does not produce meaningful transformation. Instead, it produces disjointed automation that isn't sharable, and instead of making progress toward the big "I" innovation objectives, the smartest engineers in the organization just churn on their own island of excellence. A more effective strategy is to take a prescriptive approach to automation tooling. This frees up the metal energy of key staff to work on mission advancements. It also has the added benefit of creating a one-team culture across different teams. When issues are discovered later in the development cycle of programs, the focused automation efforts enable a faster recovery with less risk to the program milestones.

These insights inform two strategies for industry teams to take as they build automation strategies to support government big "I" innovation requirements.

Take a Prescriptive Automation Tooling Approach

The first strategy is to have a focused, prescriptive automation tooling strategy and to bring this forward as a differentiator in proposal efforts. The less mature a government program is in its digital transformation initiatives, the more important it is for industry proposal teams to put forward firm best practices and a recommended approach to automation. Industry teams that take the approach of "figure it out when we win" will quickly fall behind teams that bring a corporate expertise and a deep skillset across their full staff.

Tools like Ansible, Terraform, and GitLab are dependable industry pillars. The nearly universal knowledge from using the open source baselines of these capabilities ensures the ability to staff teams. Staffing approaches that take advantage of this broad knowledge base in the market are more credible in proposals and more deliverable in execution. Tooling focus also enables more efficient staff training, the creation of a robust set of corporate best practices, and automations that can be reused across government customers.



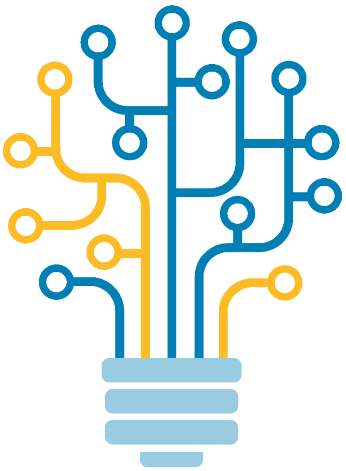
Lean on Enterprise Tools to Scale Automation

The second strategy is to lean on enterprise tools to scale automation efforts far beyond the core base of knowledge in the company. Industry teams too often start with a narrow product vision for their DevSecOps factory. They start with the leading open source solutions from Red Hat, Hashi Corp, and GitLab and push out simple functionality. This approach works initially with the teams immediately around the software factory team. As more developers adopt the services, however, cracks can begin to form. The open source baselines include the basic functionality but lack enterprise-grade user management, security, and governance for key workflows. As these issues start to show up, software factory teams must spend valuable time and effort making the tools perform at enterprise scale, at significant opportunity cost.

Relying on heroics from key staff is not a strategy for scaling. Instead of focusing on improving mission outcomes, these high-skill engineers are investing effort in undifferentiated tasks that do not bring the team closer to the big "I" objectives of meaningful transformation. The bandwidth of the most talented staff is a precious asset for any services business, and businesses that want to win must prioritize their best people on the most differentiated tasks. Understanding and leveraging this dynamic as a strength differentiates industry teams who bring forward approaches that scale to meet the big "I" objectives.

On the little "i" innovation side of the equation, industry teams can take advantage of enterprise features to return time to their staff and allow them to focus on what's next. The key to a culture of innovation is time and mental energy. There are plenty of challenges to address in government digital transformation that technology can't fully solve. That is why it is so important to take advantage of commercial grade technology and focus on the differentiated next steps. Red Hat, Hashi Corp, and GitLab have built optimized experiences that return invaluable time to industry delivery teams.

Leverage the Features that Return Time



These are just a few examples of features that simplify obtaining consistency at scale and returning time to development teams to focus on larger innovation objectives. By taking a prescriptive approach to tooling and leaning on the enterprise features to scale, industry teams can rise above the competition and differentiate their approach to government automation.

Red Hat's Ansible Automation Platform, specifically the Ansible Automation Controller, provides an intuitive user interface experience that makes it easy for novice users to execute playbooks they have access to, while the centralized logging provides accountability through robust tracking of who ran what and how they customized it. This accessibility delivers on the need to push innovation far from the software factory team. Because Ansible is a results-based automation and not a process-based automation, playbooks are significantly less brittle, easier to maintain, and far more resilient to personnel turnover when compared to scripting. The oversight Ansible Automation Platform provides for broadly tracking automations ensures the consistency industry teams will need to both innovate and recover from failures faster.

Hashi Corp's Terraform Enterprise enables software factory teams to use policy as code to enforce infrastructure as code consistency and, more importantly, set controls for cloud costs. The user interface brings in people who are not necessarily Terraform experts and allows them a self-service experience that still operates within the guardrails set by the leading engineers. Extending enterprise governance goals into Hashi Corp's Vault allows controls for sensitive credentials and access keys, enabling simple key rotation and promoting more secure system postures.

GitLab Ultimate provides a single, scalable interface for organization wide DevSecOps, reducing handoffs across tools and teams and returning significant time and effort to industry teams. The built-in security testing, compliance, and preventive security for cloud native applications help teams manage security risk and guide distant development teams toward building compliant systems in line with the enterprise objectives.

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Fierce Software is standing by to help industry teams assemble an enterprise-ready strategy for delivering automation at scale to government. Our team makes the connections between market leading vendors and government requirements. We are your Innovation Broker. Contact **sales@fiercesw.com** to get started.

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