

TAKING FLIGHT WITH APPLICATION PORTFOLIO RATIONALIZATION



CONTEXT

The client, a group within the DoD focusing on Research and Development (R&D), managed an expansive IT portfolio, including over 1,844 applications ranging from custom-built solutions to off-the-shelf software. They wanted to start with improving the value of their Program Management Office (PMO) suite of applications.

IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The client's primary challenges were overlapping functionalities, disparate data entry points, high maintenance costs, and misalignment with the strategic goals related to agility - e.g., faster research and frictionless bizops. LSA Digital analyzed the PMO IT landscape and to understand its current technical condition and business value, and recommend a roadmap for future changes. We:

- 1. Modeled the Current State:** We mapped the existing applications, capabilities, assessing costs, usage, redundancy, and strategic fit.
- 2. Analyzed for Insights:** Using the Gartner® "TIME" (Tolerate, Invest, Migrate, Eliminate) framework and latest product market research from Gartner & Forrester, we evaluated each application's business and technical value.
- 3. Recommended App Portfolio changes:** We created optimized the portfolio recommendations with a preference towards commercial-based agile solutions.
- 4. Planned realistic changes:** We developed a prioritized roadmap for phased implementation, risk management, and responsiveness to client feedback.

SNAPSHOT



Application Portfolio Rationalization



USAF Research Labs



ARIS

PAIN POINTS

Overlapping functionalities, high maintenance costs, skill gaps, and misaligned goals in the application portfolio.

RESULTS

- Mapped capabilities to applications, reducing redundancy and gaps.
- Prioritized updates for 65% outdated applications.
- Identified 80% requiring specialized maintenance skills.
- Categorized applications: 0% eliminate, 10% migrate, 36% invest, 54% maintain.
- Developed sustainable roadmap and dashboard for portfolio management.

RESULTS & BENEFITS

Our solution was engineered to be lean and agile, minimizing the application portfolio footprint and integrating scalable, adoptable tools. We leveraged ARIS (see our [ARIS case study](#)) for key results:

- **Capabilities to Application Mapping:** Enabled a clear view of how applications support business functions, identifying redundancy and gaps within the portfolio. This framework streamlined the path towards a more efficient and strategically aligned application landscape.
- **KPI Development and Technology Assessment:** Revealed that over 65% of applications relied on outdated and under-supported technology. This insight was critical for prioritizing updates and investments in the application portfolio to mitigate risks and ensure technological relevance.
- **Specialized Skills Requirement Analysis:** Uncovered that over 80% of applications required specialized skills for maintenance, highlighting a significant dependency on scarce expertise. This finding underscored the importance of strategic planning in skills development and knowledge management to ensure sustainable application maintenance and support.
- **TIME Chart Analysis:** Our detailed analysis led to a strategic categorization of the client's applications using the TIME (Tolerate, Invest, Migrate, Eliminate) framework. We identified that 0% of applications were slated for elimination, 10% for migration to more efficient platforms or solutions, 36% for investment, highlighting areas for enhancement and growth, and 54% to be maintained in their current state, optimizing the balance between performance & expenditure.
- **5R/TIME Matrix Outcomes:** We merged the TIME and 5R's cloud migration frameworks to refine application strategies, ensuring alignment with operational needs and sustainability. This dual-framework method enabled precise, actionable recommendations for each application's future. Our analysis showed that 76% of the portfolio and program management applications should be retained and roadmapped for long-term success.

WORDS OF ADVICE

Transforming your IT landscape to achieve operational excellence requires a comprehensive approach - starting with understanding of the technical condition and the User Experience (UX) of the existing app portfolio (see our case study: [Effective UX collaboration: don't let good research sit on the shelf](#)). Use frameworks like TIME for "first pass" disposition analysis, but deep-dive, leveraging UX research to understand the nuance of tech condition (e.g., poor security) vs. value (why isn't anyone using it?). Continuously engage stakeholders to align efforts with business needs and goals, and build a realistic roadmap that respects the organization's ability to consume change.