

HOW TO MIGRATE WITH EFFICIENCY AND VISIBILITY AT ALL LEVELS

Case Study



COMPANY DETAILS

Company: CARFAX

Industry: Automotive

Company Size: 1000+ Employees

Headquarters: Centreville, VA,

Products: Confluence and Jira
Software

OVERVIEW

When the CARFAX Delivery Team doubled in just four years, the weaknesses in their work management system reached a tipping point. By migrating to Atlassian with the support of Cprime, they found a solution that has helped the entire organization work faster and smarter.

CHALLENGES

From Missouri to Munich, consumers across the globe say, "Show me the CARFAX!" when they want vehicle history information. After all, CARFAX is the largest database of its kind in the world. However, many don't realize that the company has expanded to offer additional products and services as part of its greater mission to provide trusted information that helps millions of people shop, buy, own, and sell used cars with more confidence.

To fuel this growth, CARFAX added over 100 new employees to their delivery team over the past four years – an increase of almost 50%. As the team grew, so did the demand for a more robust, integrated system to manage their products and people. They were using 3-6 different tools, none of which were connected to each other or well-aligned with CARFAX's processes.

This multitude of tools resulted in a number of challenges: Product Managers and executives didn't have visibility into portfolio-wide metrics, which made it harder to make educated business decisions. The technical and management metrics they did have were unreliable. Code repositories were scattered, leading to inconsistencies and inefficiencies. Plus, the fast growth and lack of governance over tools and processes were making the problems exponentially worse. At the same time, Director of Project Services Aaron Hall says the Project Management Office was experiencing cultural challenges and finding it difficult to demonstrate value.

Aaron and his team knew CARFAX needed to consolidate to one platform that would connect their departments and systems. The new solution also needed to add enough structure to

ensure consistency, but not so much that it would hinder productivity or adoption. After partnering with enterprise agile and technology consulting firm, Cprime, and learning more about Atlassian, they knew they had found the ideal way to streamline their toolset and reach their goals.

“Cprime had the knowledge to guide us and the culture, services and approach to make us successful.”

- AARON HALL, Director of Project Services

A COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP TO BUILD A COLLABORATIVE TOOLSET

While gathering platform suggestions from his team and exploring their options at tradeshow, Aaron noticed that Atlassian stood out. *“Atlassian was a clear thought leader,”* he explains. *“Atlassian wasn’t just creating a single product and bolting other things onto it. They were looking holistically at culture, cohesion, and how people work.”*

While many CARFAX team members were advocating for Atlassian, Aaron wanted to be sure it was the right choice for them and, even more importantly, enlist hands-on help with strategy and implementation. He started researching solution partners, and after vetting several firms, he landed on Cprime. He recalls, *“They had the knowledge to guide us down the road, as well as the culture, services, and approach to make us successful. They also provided a dedicated, on-site consultant throughout implementation so we wouldn’t be on our own.”*

Cprime’s Vice President of Professional Services, Swati Jain, agrees that the partnership was a natural fit because CARFAX was looking for a solution, not just a tool. *“We’re a solutions provider,”* she says. *“We wanted to fully understand CARFAX’s needs so we could architect, design, and implement a solution not only for today, but one that could also scale with their future grow.”*

WORKING SIDE BY SIDE FOR A SEAMLESS MIGRATION

Through dialogue with Cprime, CARFAX confirmed Atlassian was the right solution for their team. Cprime then rolled up their sleeves and got to work, focusing primarily on the transition to Jira since it was the most complex part of the project.

The CARFAX Delivery Team had been using Mingle as their primary work management tool. To migrate to Jira, Cprime worked closely with CARFAX through a three-phase process, first completing a design assessment and due diligence; second, architecting and implementing the new solution (Jira and Confluence servers, hosted by AWS) that would mirror existing processes in Mingle; and third, preparing CARFAX for the transition. Along the way, Cprime facilitated workshops and meetings with dozens of CARFAX teams to gather requirements,

create a hosting strategy, plan and manage the migration, provide training, and support a smooth implementation.

As a result, Aaron and colleague Alison Clough, who managed the transition to Jira, say the rollout was even easier than expected. *“It was a non-event,”* Aaron says proudly. *“Not based on luck, but based on having an outstanding platform and engagement with stakeholders, as opposed to saying, ‘Here it is. Use it.’”*

DEPLOYING ON AWS CLOUD FOR SCALE AND RELIABILITY

While a 300% increase in the number of users and highly engaged and motivated teams are definitely a good ‘problem’ to have, CARFAX needed to ensure that this growth would not adversely affect Service Level Agreements and overall stakeholder expectations (with the largest vehicle history database in North America and connections to over 100,000 distinct data sources, scalability and growth were an ongoing concern for CARFAX).

CARFAX made a strategic decision to migrate and host their Atlassian solution on the AWS cloud. Migrating to AWS would provide CARFAX with uninterrupted scalability and elasticity that would be hard to match with an on-prem deployment. *“Hardware upgrades with our prior platform involved significant internal and external resources, multiple environments, regular outages for users, etc. AWS was the clear leader,”* Aaron Hall says. *“We needed automatic scaling, reliability and a deployment that would align with our overall cloud strategy. AWS offered us that.”*

CARFAX migrated Jira and Confluence to the AWS Cloud, running all application nodes on Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (Amazon EC2) in addition to a mix of AWS services including EBS, RDS, SES and Route53. CARFAX also took advantage of Amazon CloudWatch to monitor Jira RAM usage and bandwidth, to more easily optimize the application.

The AWS deployment accommodates current volumes and would guarantee support for any future levels of growth in scale and business activity. Besides increased in overall reliability and reduction in infrastructure costs, CARFAX expects to redirect IT staff from infrastructure admin tasks to more pressing, core business activities. See Figure A at end of this paper for an illustration of the architecture of Jira in AWS.

WELL-PLANNED, WELL-EXECUTED, WELL-RECEIVED

In the months following the transition to Atlassian, CARFAX has achieved all the results they hoped for and more. From day-to-day tactical improvements (like increasing efficiency and better managing backlogs) to strategic organizational growth (like building transparency and visibility throughout the enterprise), Aaron describes the change as *“seismic.”*

Alison agrees, saying their team now lives in Jira day in and day out. *“Jira is core to what we do. It’s how we get work done,”* she explains. *“What’s even better is that the developers don’t even know they’re enabling key management decisions. Jira is providing direct insights that are tactically serving developers, all the way up to management as they make decisions about where we invest time and resources.”*

Aaron adds that CARFAX executives not only rely on Atlassian data for strategic insights around team productivity, but also enjoy seeing real-time data. *“Executives never signed in to our old system. Now, they actually want to sit down with me and look at Jira so they can see what’s happening in real time and filter down to specific problems that we never would have noticed before.”*

The wide adoption of Atlassian tools is unlike anything CARFAX has ever experienced, thanks to internal advocacy, stakeholder involvement at every stage, proactive communication throughout the process, and hands-on training.

Although huge upticks in usage like this typically cause system performance issues, Swati points out that CARFAX has seen the opposite thanks to Cprime’s help building a stable infrastructure.

Despite a 300% increase in users, platform downtime has decreased by 79%, saving over 2,000 hours of productivity each year.

With happier, more efficient, more informed teams, CARFAX has seen double-digit revenue growth and close to 90% customer satisfaction for most products, while laying a strong foundation to scale in the future.

CONFLUENCE: A SURPRISE SUCCESS STORY

While Aaron and Alison expected Jira to be well-received based on the groundswell of internal support and extensive planning, they were surprised by the equally warm reception to Confluence. Even though the focus of the migration was originally on Jira, Confluence has blossomed as a go-to collaboration tool, with almost the same number of users as Jira. Aaron explains, *“We’ve used Confluence to automate processes that were either done manually or with outdated technology. Now, it’s not only in a more engaging format that increases readership, but the people who populate the content are ecstatic because it’s so much easier to use.”*

A SUCCESSFUL MIGRATION THAT’S DRIVING MEANINGFUL RESULTS

With invaluable support from Cprime, CARFAX has successfully completed the migration to Atlassian and experienced improvements enterprise-wide. From greater development efficiency for Engineering, to more regular updates and scalability without interruption for IT, to consistent and real-time analytics for the C-suite, staff across the organization can work faster and smarter than ever before.

These improvements have not only made a difference in employees' day-to-day work, but also helped reinforce the Project Management Office's value as part of a broader focus on the team's competence and capability. *"We're pivoting to more of a hub-and-spoke model with our Product and Technology Teams, where they are embedded in the business,"* Aaron describes. *"The business leaders at CARFAX are looking to our team for people who can bridge the gap between Technology and Management. Atlassian's solutions help us do that."* The team's work has even earned them a PMO of the year nomination from PMNetwork.

For Aaron and Alison, that's where Atlassian has made the biggest impact: breaking down barriers between teams and having access to real-time, portfolio-wide data for smarter decision-making. *"The depth of Atlassian's functionality and the breadth of business functions have been head and shoulders above the rest,"* Aaron says. *"But to me, the transparency and visibility have been the biggest wins."*

Figure A: Architecture of Jira in AWS

