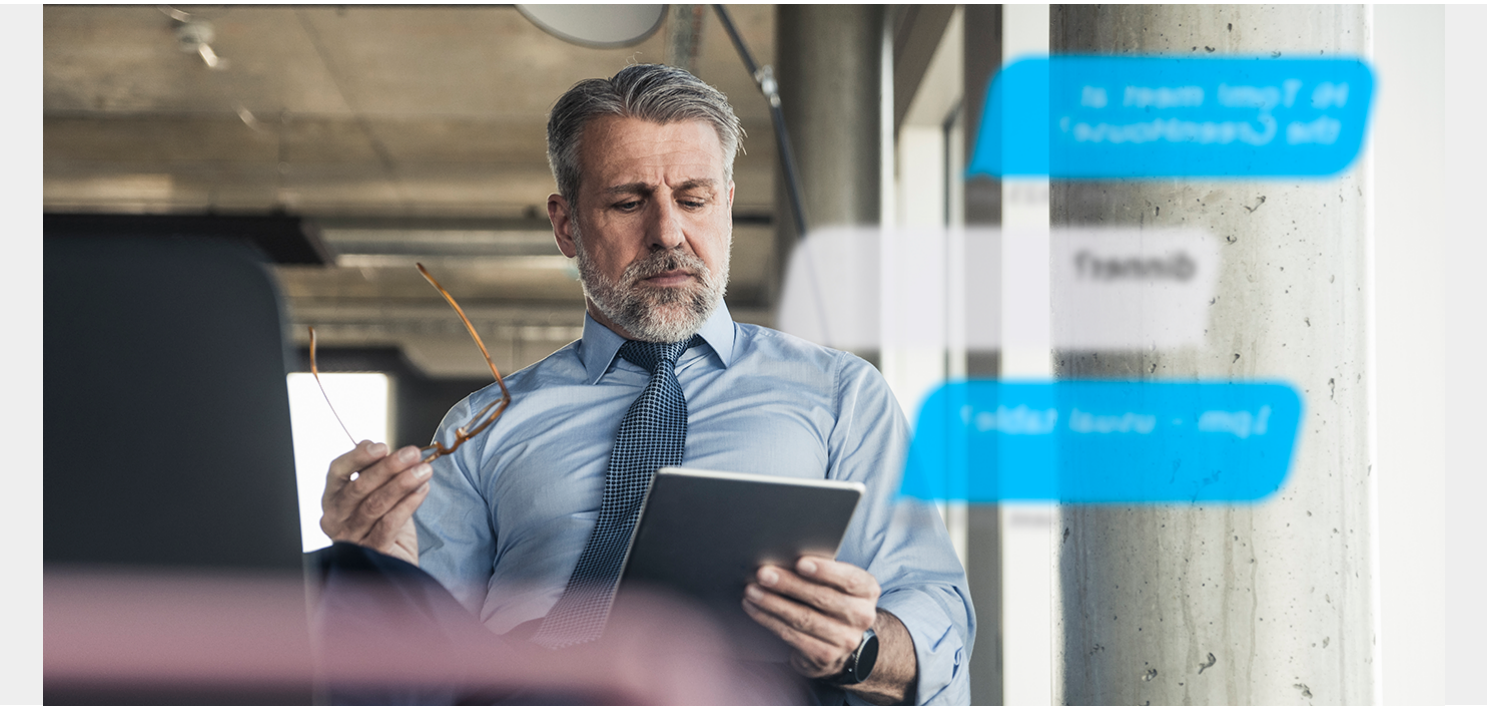
TOP 4 REASONS YOUR MAINFRAME TEAM NEEDS CHATOPS



In my career, I've witnessed workplace communication evolve with technology, transforming from scribbled messages to voicemail to pagers to email and text messages. The communication technologies that win are those that make things move faster and retain a history, while also improving focus and providing better automation. That's why today I mainly rely on chat apps like Microsoft Teams and Slack to communicate with team members.

We must constantly strive to make it easier for the mainframe to leave its "waterfall" and become an agile DevOps platform with a delivery schedule that aligns with those of distributed systems. Anything that prevents the mainframe from becoming nimbler, including communication tools, is a constraint that must be supplanted with agile-enabling innovation. Chat apps should be considered essential for mainframe teams as they work to incorporate the platform into their enterprises' DevOps toolchains. This enables "ChatOps," in which developers use chat to interact not only with each other, but with messages and alerts from their development tools, making these tools just another member of the team.

To support this collaboration, BMC now offers chat app notifications from BMC AMI DevX Abend-AID. Developers can create webhooks to send notifications to their teams when application abends occur in production or testing. This instantaneous notification gives team members the ability to react quickly, and includes the program name, abend code, and associated user ID, etc., along with a link to the report in the Abend-AID web viewer.

Here are the top four reasons chat apps like Teams, Slack and others will help your mainframe team address issues other communication technologies can't as it moves from waterfall to agile DevOps.

1. **Real-time dialogues**: DevOps teams must be in constant communication. Anything that inhibits

dialogue must be addressed. Email has its place, but chat apps are more agile because they enable real-time messaging, cutting out the send-and-receive process of email. You can see if someone is available or away without even initiating a chat. You can send your message now, or wait for the person to be available.

Chat apps also work on mobile devices, so a developer can elect to be available regardless of whether they are at their desk.Yes, you can be fast with email, but there's no argument that notification through chat apps is faster. Abend-AID becomes your designated team member to alert on abends in testing or production. A developer can see this notification and let other team members know they will be responding to it. They can also ask questions of the other team members within the chat.

2. **Organized conversations:** Part of the success of agile and DevOps is the elimination of waste. When tasks are being handed off, there is little time to get up to speed. You need to be organized. Searching for and digging through an email chain is unproductive. Chat apps are inherently more organized than email because they contain the entire history of a conversation in one place. Anyone can join a conversation and seethe complete history without needing someone to cc them on a reply or forward an email chain to give them access to the preceding discussion. The conversation can be reviewed in order, by all parties. This is critical for abend resolution, where there can be no wasted time.

3. **Forced concentration:** In a waterfall world, there is plenty of time to allocate for large tasks with deadlines that are months away. But in an agile DevOps environment, there are several tasks that must be completed within two weeks. This demands a higher level of discipline and concentration, and chat apps are ideal here.

   Because messages in chat apps transmit in real-time, they more closely resemble actual conversations, unlike email, so you likely feel obliged to pay attention and respond. Chat apps also allow you to open focused channelsfor a team or specific project. When projects span teams, you can establish one place for quick questions, discussions, or updates. Team members can set up alerts to be notified of new posts or just notice there is a new post they have not seen. They can also scan conversations to see whether a question they have has already been answered or contribute more to an existing answer.

   Additionally, having the team be aware of an issue and its resolution as it happens keeps everyone informed. This communication can help bring the team together.

4. **Increased automation:** DevOps is all about automating handoffs and breaking down walls. In DevOps, your tools become team members, handling tasks you may have done manually in the past. These new team members need to communicate with each other. Chat apps are designed to work well withwebhooknotifications. If you work with modern advanced software, like BMC AMI DevX Abend-AID, you can use the webhook to sendnotificationsto your specific chat channel. If there is an error, everyone in thatchannelwill be able to see and react in an orderly manner. These abend notifications can supplement notifications provided by BMC AMI DevX Code Pipeline foractivitieslike code promotions or deploys.

As more and more mainframe sites move from waterfall to agile, they see the value in adopting better communication. In fact, it becomes essential when working in a two-week sprint to eliminate as much lag andconfusion as possible. Chat apps are another part of the DevOps toolchain that will

allow mainframe teams to bring the platform up to speed with the rest of IT. After all, which Agile team couldn't benefit from having a new team member?

Learn more about webhook notifications for BMC AMI DevX Abend-AID in this BMC Community post.