

# Create a Configuration Management Roadmap

A CMDB is only as valuable as the processes it supports; select these before you invest.

Without a Configuration Management Database (CMDB) or formal Configuration Management system, there is no way to obtain accurate information about IT assets and the relationships between them. A CMDB ensures that IT decision makers have access to valuable information about the IT environment, and enables better decision making and service delivery. However, CMDB projects can be difficult to right-size, and it can be difficult to ensure that the benefit of the system outweighs the cost of recording, maintaining, and analyzing the data.

**Do not let stories of CMDB failure prevent you from deploying a system with the potential to vastly improve IT's service delivery.**

The potential for reward is significant. You should consider investing in a CMDB, but do not build or purchase a solution without first considering what the CMDB will be used for.

Configuration management is an enabling process. Without defining what you want the CMDB to enable, it will be difficult to design a CMDB that gets used to realize tangible benefit. Decide which processes the CMDB will support and then build or purchase a solution that will meet your needs.

## Do not overthink it!

A CMDB is simply a repository of configuration information. It serves one central purpose: to provide information about IT assets, their components, and the relationship between components.

When you know what is in your environment and how it fits together, you can make smarter decisions, perform work faster, and deliver better service.

**With a CMDB, you can rely less on the knowledge held by individual staff members and maintain more sustainable, accurate sources of truth.**

Every decision maker will have access to the same knowledgebase, and they will be able to work faster because they are not starting from scratch each time a request is received. Increasing access to information with a CMDB will enable repeatability of process and should drive significant service management improvement. Consider these practical applications:

The CMDB can be used to perform faster and more accurate change impact analysis, identifying dependencies before they cause incidents.

This will also decrease the change turnaround time, increasing IT's ability to meet business demands for new functionality.

The CMDB can be used to accurately determine the pre-requisites that must be in place for a target system to accept a release and avoid failures when the change goes live.

The CMDB can be used to perform quicker and more accurate root cause analysis of problems, preventing incidents before they occur.

The CMDB can be used to map reported incidents to the source, reducing incident resolution time and restoring service faster regardless of how familiar the technician is with the impacted component.

The CMDB can be used to proactively determine which assets are nearing the end of their useful lives and stay ahead of impending capacity shortages.

The scope of the CMDB can be easily managed. It will only contain the depth of information required to render it useful, nothing more and nothing less. Creating a solid roadmap that details the processes that will integrate the use of a CMDB will help you design a solution that gets used and drives value.

## Steps for success

### Step 1 Assess Your Project Fit

- Learn about the challenges associated with CMDB projects and understand Info-Tech's approach to successfully implement a CMDB and formal configuration management.
- Consider the potential benefits of implementing a CMDB and ensure that you are ready to kickoff this project.

### Step 2 Launch the Project

- Many organizations skip this important objectives-setting step and suffer when the CMDB does not provide any value.
- Avoid this pitfall by committing a small team to creating a roadmap that sets you up for CMDB success down the road.

### Step 3 Gather Requirements and Frame the End State

- A CMDB is only as valuable as the IT processes it enables. The first step to creating a configuration management roadmap must be to select the processes the CMDB will support and decide how these processes will be improved through use of a CMDB.
- This should be done by identifying process pain points that can be directly reduced through use of a CMDB.

### Step 4 Select a Technology Target State

- Vendor solutions are only one option – ideal for some, but too costly for others.
- Depending on the size and complexity of your environment and your configuration management needs, something as simple as an Excel spreadsheet may suffice.
- Ensure that you strike a balance between cost and benefit when selecting a CMDB solution.

### Step 5 Build a Roadmap

- The cost of achieving the benefits of a CMDB depends heavily on the level of data you need to record in the CMDB for a particular process.
- Process benefits will be more costly to achieve for early initiatives because a high level of data will need to be collected.
- Once one process, like change management, is re-designed and integrated, it will become easier and cheaper to integrate the next.

### Step 6 Sell the Roadmap

- The support of senior executive stakeholders is critical to the success of your roadmap rollout.
- Focus on the ways in which the CMDB will support service management and increase SLA fulfillment.
- Don't let this come across as a "boil the ocean" project – this will diminish your chances of obtaining approval and resources.