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**GOT A
QUESTION?**

Visual Studio Team System: Solving Critical Software Development Challenges

Cindy Anderson is a remarkable and talented Technical Specialist in the UK. In talking with Cindy, she is keenly aware of the problems faced by IT Managers. I asked Cindy for a roadmap and she shared her key thoughts on solving software development challenges. Take the time to **explore the Visual Studio Team System link** she provided.

From Cindy:

Developing software these days is a very complex process, with a focus on SOA, distributed development teams, ever changing business requirements and many other factors. The IT Manager has a significant challenge in front of her to keep her team focused on the providing new business value at the same time ensure all existing systems are up and running successfully.

In my current role, I provide presales technical assistance to customers who are looking at enhancing their current development methodology. Many customers will state that they don't have a current methodology and that is it just an adhoc process they use. I would argue that **every IT shop has a development methodology** of some kind otherwise they would not be able to get the applications out the door and into production. Not only do they have a methodology but they are more likely than not to experience the same pain points as the IT shop next door. So what are those pain points you ask? **Here is a good list of very typical issues** that will come up time and time again as the IT shop goes **through the software development lifecycle, SDLC.**

- Gathering good business requirements
- Assessing the impact of the new requirements on all applications that are currently in production
- Ensuring the bits created in dev will not blow up when they are installed in subsequent environments, like Test, UAT and Production.
 - This is the very present "environmental issue" that tends to be uttered by many a developer. It works in the development environment but no where else.
- Parallel development efforts of current version and the next version of the same application
- Managing/Tracking the project to ensure milestone dates will be hit and the quality of the project will hit the exit criteria set

So I am sure you are all saying yes we know all this as we are living and breathing it. So what is the solution you ask? Is there a magic pill to be consumed by everyone on the project team that could make these pain points that cost significant dollar figures from an IT budget point of view go away?

Unfortunately we all know that there is no simple, straight forward answer for all of these issues. However there is a movement in the industry to look at **integrating SDLC processes into development tools as a way to enhance the entire projects team ability to successfully deliver business value on time and within budget. Microsoft just launched Visual Studio Team Systems which is their first step into this market.** IBM has been in this space for awhile; however, the integration across their tools makes the solution more complicated then desired. Microsoft's product is a V1 and is only a 1st step into a vast problem space. But this is an area for IT managers to keep an eye on as we all struggle with developing high quality software on time and in budget in the every changing world we are live in. [For more information on Microsoft's VSTS.](#)

Cindy Anderson,
Visual Studio Team System, Technical Specialist
Microsoft UK

Thank you Cindy for providing your insights here in this Canadian IT Manager (CIM) forum. You have so many experiences to share about making the work of IT Managers and IT Pros easier.

Best regards,
Stephen Ibaraki

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