

VIEWPOINT



Jiani Zhang

Technology innovator and president at Persistent Systems

Jiani Zhang is a Technology Innovator and President of Persistent Systems' Alliance and Industrial Solutions Unit. Zhang has extensive experience in technology leadership, management consulting, marketing, and software product development. Before joining Persistent, she pioneered the creation of IBM's industrial analytics/AI IoT solutions.



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Why ISVs Need the Right Partner for Their Product and Application Modernization Journey

Jiani Zhang, a Technology Innovator and President of Persistent Systems' Alliance and Industrial Solutions Unit, shares her view on the application modernization journey for ISVs.

Q: Why are independent software vendors moving their products and applications to the cloud?

We are at a tipping point. We have stopped denying that the movement to the cloud is going to happen. Leading ISVs have settled on hybrid cloud, which offers the benefits of cloud and the flexibility of having capabilities delivered on-premises or through a partner ecosystem.

The reason ISVs are moving products to the cloud is due to business factors including revenue growth, agility, innovation, and cost savings. Cloud can help quickly build new products, onboard new customers, and develop innovative new features. Utilizing the capabilities of cloud also allows ISVs to simplify cost structure and develop more consistently.

Q: What are some common challenges of modernization?

The existing technology landscape is never clean. That's true whether your product is five years old or 30 years old. There is a lot of technical debt that has accumulated because software is constantly evolving.

The modernization challenges we see are: How do you ensure continuity and innovation of your application while dealing with legacy debt? How does each part of the application get resolved cost-effectively? Do teams have the right skills, modern approaches, and execution rigor to tackle the issues?

Q: What role does containerization play in the process?

Containerization is fundamental to making the modernization journey possible. In our experience, it gives ISVs an easy structure so they can focus on what they do best—developing their applications. They don't want to worry about things like deployment, security, optimization, and operations. Leading container platforms like Red Hat OpenShift are critical tools for this journey.

Q: What should an ISV look for when choosing a partner?

Start by identifying a partner with the experience and capabilities that you need to move past your challenges. ISVs want to leverage cloud, but in order to do that, there's a new set of technologies, tools, and capabilities that they don't necessarily have—whether that is knowledge of modern application development skills around containerization, an understanding of legacy code, or an agile approach to delivery so projects can keep pace with the market.

A partner who comes from a software product development background and fundamentally understands modern approaches to application development can provide guidance on choosing and executing the right approach. It is also important that ISVs understand that the product lives in an entire ecosystem. A partner who sees the trends, has an eye on the future, and understands the origins of new architectures is essential.

Q: Why should ISVs act now?

The bottom line is that we are seeing revenue growth that's much stronger for cloud-based software businesses than for traditional on-prem license software firms. The valuations are also higher—often 2x to 4x—which indicates the markets recognize the greater revenue growth, agility, innovation, and cost savings. ISVs must start today mapping the future modernization journey for their applications.

Learn more about how Persistent business partner, Red Hat, is a leader in containerization for application modernization according to Forrester Research.

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