



IDC Opinion

The Business Value of IBM Open Source Support

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For as long as there has been open source software, there have been perceptions — often incorrect — about where potential cost savings and benefits can be recognized. Because open source software is available in non-commercial, community-supported form, and in many cases as a technology with a formal support service behind it, it becomes important to understand which approach offers the best benefits to organizations using that software.

Too often, organizations gravitate to the dimension that is easiest to see and measure — the subscription cost — and contrast that quantifiable cost with the absence of that cost when using community-supported open source software. They use this metric to determine the relative cost comparison of two use models for a given solution. [Read on...](#)

BUSINESS VALUE HIGHLIGHTS

30% lower
three-year cost of
operations

38% faster
to deploy new applications

44% faster
to resolve unplanned
downtime

28% more efficient
impacted IT teams

47% more efficient
IT infrastructure teams

42% faster
to deploy new servers

Five months
to payback with benefits
about three times
greater than cumulative
investment within one
year of use

Using the subscription cost as a lone metric is an overly simplistic comparison, which misses the far more important drivers of operational costs. That includes the burden that community open source software places on in-house staff to provide technical support, maintenance and quality control related to the open source software itself, along with managing patches, fixes or updated releases coming from the community that is behind the technology.

IDC research conducted on a selection of open source software technologies that have commercial support options available, compared the experience customers had when using those open source software technologies both with and without the commercial support. The collection of open source software solutions considered in this research is a suite of technologies for which IBM offers commercial support services.

IDC spoke with these customers about how they are using IBM Open Source Support to optimize their use of open source application runtime software, database, and DevOps software solutions and applications. For the study participants (and the industry overall), open source technologies are increasingly important to their overall IT and business strategies, pushing them to find ways to increase both the breadth and depth, as well as the effectiveness, of their use.

The use of IBM Open Source Support clearly delivered benefits to customers, who saw improvements in operational efficiency, a reduction in downtime and other risk factors, and a reduction in staff resources that are needed to deliver technical and operational support for the open source software technologies in use. These customers credited IBM Open Source Support with improving their confidence in and ability to create value by enabling them to run open source solutions more effectively, efficiently, and robustly.

Based on the interviews conducted, IDC calculates that IBM Open Source Support customers will realize value worth an annual average of \$2.08 million (\$54,100 per 1,000 employees) by:

- **Increasing the efficiency of IT teams in running open source solutions** through best practices, direct support, and enablement of automation, reducing internal resource requirements for the open source software;
- **Optimizing the cost of using open source solutions** through licensing and infrastructure-related consolidation and overall use efficiency;
- **Reducing risk and improving performance of open source solutions**, thereby increasing operational resilience and the organization's willingness to invest in open source technologies;
- **Leveraging open source solutions to improve business operations** through greater agility and improved performance.

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