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THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO ATLASSIAN CLOUD GOVERNANCE

SPK and Associates

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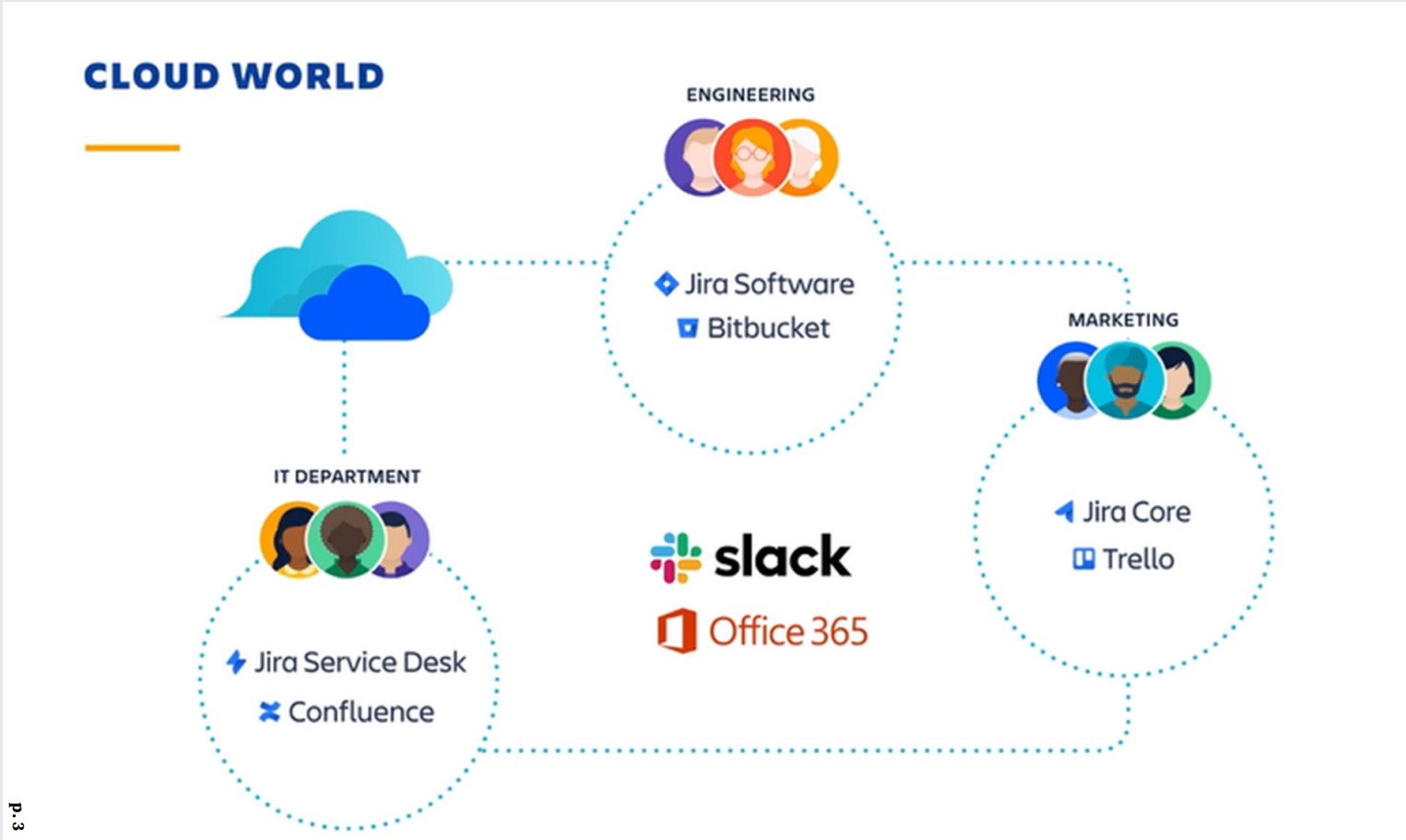
The Challenge

There is a real challenge when it comes to managing large (or small) Atlassian Ecosystems. Many of Atlassian's products are **used**, then **bought**, not **sold**, then **deployed**. This is a huge challenge to normal Corporate IT governance strategies that control the implementation and use of software. Thus, teams can easily purchase and use software without corporate IT even being aware that there are 10 instances they should consolidate and manage differently. This has caused a major challenge with IT administrators, and stakeholders. No longer is corporate IT being asked early in the process to deploy a solution. They are being asked to wrangle what could potentially be an IT governance mess.

Each department could be using Atlassian products, in conjunction with other tools like Slack and Office 365, that fits their own requirements. In this picture, you see 3 different departments utilizing different Atlassian instances. Because of that, there is little to no governance from the IT organization.



(Courtesy of Atlassian: Your 10-step plan to scale & govern Atlassian cloud products - On-Demand Webinar)

What Is Atlassian Governance?

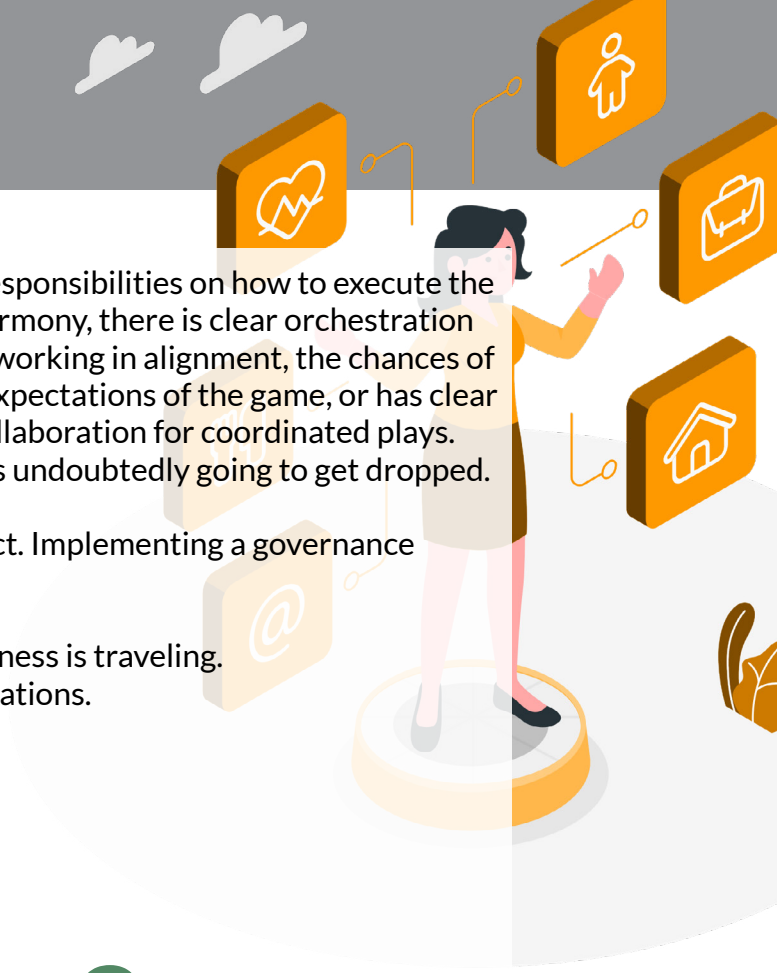
Strong governance has different layers. These layers provide an elastic structure that allows your company to scale without missing a risk.

Governance works in a similar way to the way sports teams operate. Think about governance like a playbook.

The **owner and front office staff** are responsible for the overall funding of the players and a strategy of where the team should be heading. They make the big decisions.

The **coach** is responsible for understanding how hard they need to train the team. They work on understanding tactical plays and coordinated moves. They ensure the team is aligned.

The **players** use their skills and expertise to have coordinated team discussions, and deliver the plays once the whistle blows. They provide feedback to the coach on what the other team may be doing in order to adjust the team's plan.



Each person within the team has set roles and responsibilities on how to execute the plan and achieve greatness. When working in harmony, there is clear orchestration and a strong team dynamic. Without each layer working in alignment, the chances of winning the game fades. No one is clear on the expectations of the game, or has clear direction or their role in the game. There's no collaboration for coordinated plays. Everyone is just doing their own thing. The ball is undoubtedly going to get dropped.

Atlassian governance works in a similar construct. Implementing a governance structure allows your business to:

- Have clear direction on which way your business is traveling.
- Maintain good working order and legal obligations.
- Address and mitigate risks.
- Ensure the business is performing well.

Why Does Atlassian Governance Matter?

The Harvard Business Review suggests 60-70% of all the change initiatives undertaken in organizations fail. In 2018, out of over 2,000 managers participating in the survey from the Harvard Business Review, 47% reported that in order to survive, they needed to reinvent their businesses every three years or less. Data from 2020, showed that the number has jumped to 58%. Companies are designed to solve problems and generate revenue but change is not easy because there are so many variables and invisible components that can go wrong. You're trying to accomplish something and sometimes, like the sports team, everyone needs to understand the direction and individual expectations in order to get paid and move forward. When a player is no longer meeting standards, the owner and front office staff have the power to reset expectations, clarify direction, or purchase another team player.

Change is required to meet the marketplace and every changing landscape. Just like our sports team, when building a governance structure you want to ensure that the people that are involved in the activities are really grassroots as well as top-level influence. It's critical that there is a breadth of representation in the governance structure to allow for diverse expertise and input. Furthermore, having a breadth of expertise at the table enables better transparency across the business. This is particularly true where clear communication helps drive strategic outputs.for large organizations working collaboration cross-function, and potentially globally.

The governance structure exists to support the discussion, decision and implementation of Atlassian products, applications, components and configuration. It allows for consideration of how we can structure and configure those tools, whether they should be standardized or customized for a specific team and so forth.

AN EXAMPLE OF WHY GOVERNANCE MATTERS

As part of the overall business strategy, organizations may explore how to create better standards workflows. There could also be potential apps from within the Atlassian ecosystem you want to implement. But, this app is charged for all the users on your base product. For large organizations with thousands of users, this can inject vast amounts of cost. Quickly. One person's decision could impact that ROI you have been hoping for this quarter. Furthermore, that app didn't align to the broader strategy. It was a knee-jerk reaction from one employee that you now have to provide additional labor time to unpick. And, it's just putting your strategy back a month allowing space for the competition to pitch to your customers because you now can't deliver on your promises.

That's just one example of why it's critical to have good governance in place. By implementing a good knowledge base with a breadth of expertise you can prevent simple risks coming to fruition.

Teams or individuals in silos have knowledge. But implementing Atlassian governance enables wisdom. Like the old metaphor that knowledge is knowing tomato is a fruit, but knowing not to put it into a fruit salad is wisdom.

The wisdom of Atlassian governance allows you to better deploy your strategy by ensuring you have the right tools and expertise that apply to your organizational needs. Then understanding how these tools and people's expertise can work in synergy to achieve goals and drive revenue.

The Goals Of Good Governance

There are two main goals within the Atlassian governance structure: Scalable Growth and Transparent Controls. Let's discuss both.

SCALABLE GROWTH

01

We work in a highly competitive, and for some a highly-regulated, economic environment. Scalable growth is key to survival. And that must translate across our ecosystems, including your Atlassian products. Scalable growth in your company is going to mean more users and Atlassian products. And, for example, more projects in Jira need more supporting content and documentation in Confluence. Most likely more projects in Jira will also mean more repos in Bitbucket or at least the expansion of existing repos and so on. Therefore, scalable growth must be a key goal within your Atlassian governance structure.

TRANSPARENT CONTROL

02

Transparency is vital throughout the entire organization to achieve success. And keeping control over the Atlassian evolution within your business ensures you are working in alignment to the overarching business strategy.

Transparent control enables you to expose metrics and expansions across the organization and across your Atlassian suite. Transparent control enables knowledge. And with knowledge, we empower our teams whilst ensuring they remain within their field of expertise and align to strategy. When we empower our teams, they become more passionate about doing the right thing and enable user ownership which is the ideal framework for a governing situation. Creating grassroots momentum around governing activity and decisions creates a healthy governance ecosystem.

Companies that share knowledge go further. So our governance structure must be reflective of this. Utilizing tools like Jira creates transparent control where everybody contributes to activities.

A Repeatable Governance Model

Depending on the size of your organization your governance structure may vary. For larger organizations, your structure may include a dozen or more employees. For smaller organizations there won't be this many. However, there are a few key underlying principles that we highly recommend are followed when creating your Atlassian governance structure.

In its simplest form, the Atlassian Governance structure is held up by 3 pillars, based on a strong foundation. Let's start with a strong foundation.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES AND BUSINESS

As mentioned in the previous section, scalable growth is critical to organizational survival. But many companies originally started their Atlassian journey with just one product, and unlikely had an Atlassian governance structure in place. But now, the company is expanding. They need to review the IT ecosystem, standardize processes and complete an infrastructure cleanup.

Business policies and standard operating procedures are vitally important. This documentation explains your system configurations and the guardrails for usage and changes. The Atlassian tools ecosystem governance documents should include information on:

Configuration Management

This includes ways your Atlassian Cloud environment contains key settings and configurations. This includes things like the order of comments, date formats, how linked issues are displayed, etc.

Access Management

This includes being able to manage users, roles, permissions, and groups using any number of methods including your organization via Atlassian Admin Hub (admin.atlassian.com), or Atlassian Access and your IDP provider.

Change Management

This includes the roles that are on your change management Board/committee, when and where changes will be documented, roles and responsibilities for changes being made, scenarios for documentation of changes, changes within policy vs. outside of policy, etc.

For larger organizations, these policies and procedures may be owned by multiple teams splitting the ecosystem administration (i.e. Confluence, Jira Software, Bitbucket and so on.) Smaller companies may have a singular team managing the ecosystem administration.

Having a Governance Board

Governance documents are created, owned, and managed by your Governance Board. Due to the intricate nature of IT ecosystems and downstream impacts when updating or deploying configurations etc, this Board is responsible for the entire ecosystem's health and management including:

- Governance business policies and standard operating procedures.
- Reviewing processes and procedures to ensure alignment to business policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs).
- Defining change request evaluation criteria.
- Change requests analysis and decisions.
- Implementation and communication of ecosystem change requests.
- Communication of tool changes in functionality.
- Training programs and enablement.
- The company's adherence to the business policies, SOPs, and best practices.

This Board is designed with the following principles:

01

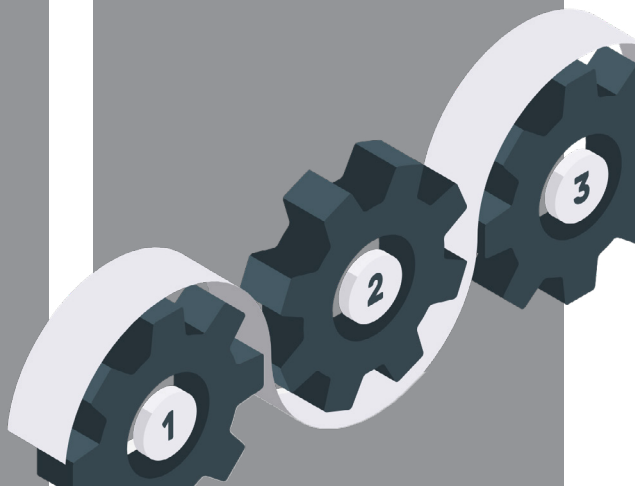
The Board includes at least four key roles and should include an odd number of members for voting purposes

02

Smaller organizations may have smaller Boards.

03

It is recommended that individual contributors be part of Boards as well, not just leadership roles.

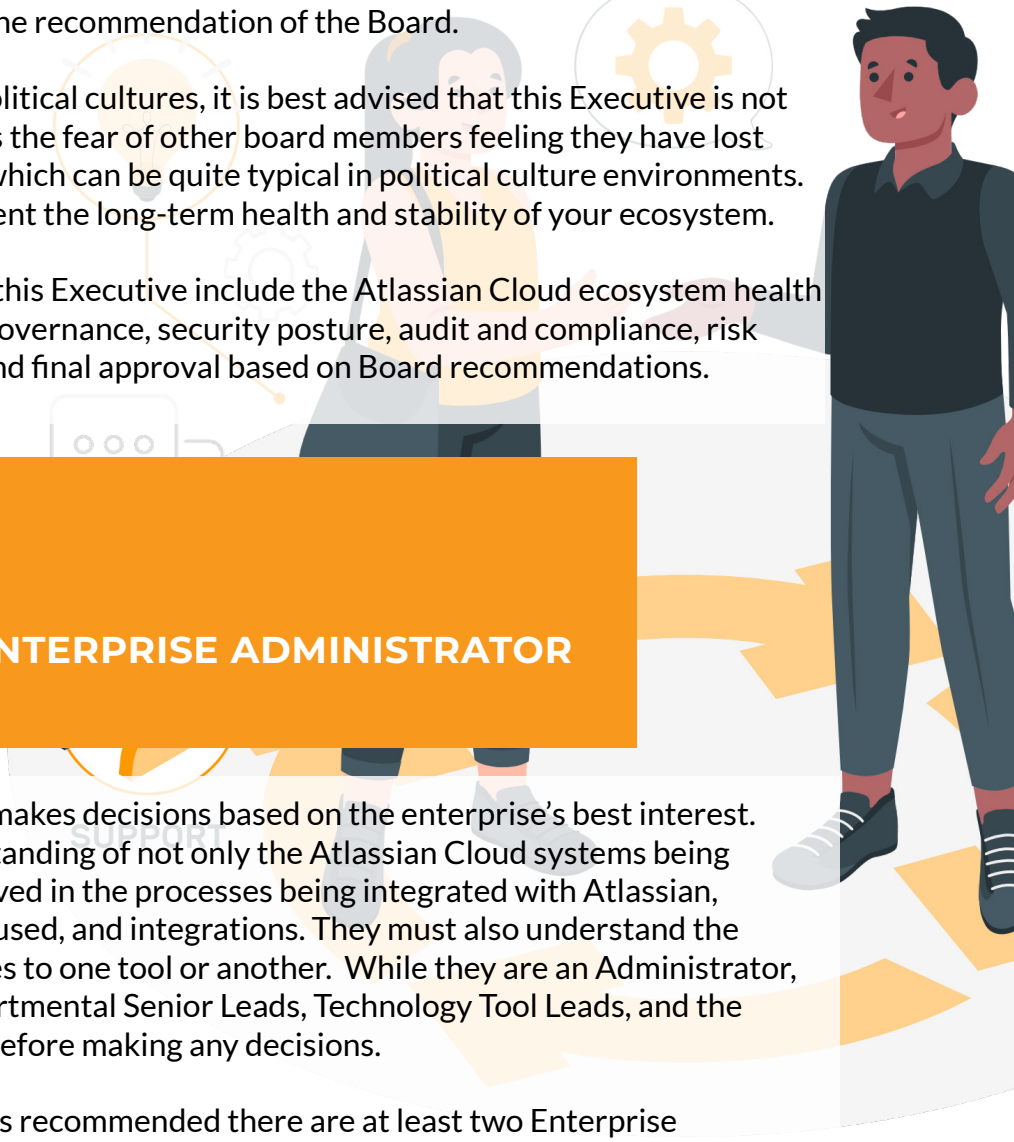


KEY EXECUTIVE STAKEHOLDER

The Key Executive Stakeholder is responsible for the entire Atlassian Cloud ecosystem. They make decisions based on the company's best interests. This person may or may not be a voting member. One of the primary considerations is the political culture of the company. However, this Executive will always have final approval authority and will typically make decisions with the recommendation of the Board.

In companies with fractured political cultures, it is best advised that this Executive is not a voting member. This removes the fear of other board members feeling they have lost their voice in Board meetings which can be quite typical in political culture environments. Unfortunately, this can detriment the long-term health and stability of your ecosystem.

Key areas of responsibility for this Executive include the Atlassian Cloud ecosystem health and stability, the approach to governance, security posture, audit and compliance, risk management and mitigation, and final approval based on Board recommendations.



ATLASSIAN CLOUD ENTERPRISE ADMINISTRATOR

The Enterprise Administrator makes decisions based on the enterprise's best interest. They must have a deep understanding of not only the Atlassian Cloud systems being used, but also other tools involved in the processes being integrated with Atlassian, along with how they are being used, and integrations. They must also understand the downstream impacts of changes to one tool or another. While they are an Administrator, they should also listen to Departmental Senior Leads, Technology Tool Leads, and the rest of the Board very closely before making any decisions.

Regardless of company size, it is recommended there are at least two Enterprise Administrators to ensure continuity at all times, because hey… we all like vacations.

The Enterprise Administrators are responsible for the Atlassian Cloud ecosystem health and stability, the approach to governance, security posture, audit and compliance, risk management and mitigation, operations, integrations, standard operating procedures, best practices, and training of other Configuration Experts/Administrators.

DEPARTMENTAL SENIOR LEAD(S)

Departmental Senior Leads are responsible for ensuring their line of business, division, or portfolio(s) maintain standards and best practices and represent these during Board meetings. They speak about the requests they bring before The Board, and they vote on proposals for change.

Departmental Senior Leads can wear two hats. These Departmental Senior Leads can be stakeholders in their area. An example of this would be a leader in the financial department that is using JSM approvals for budget requests. These Departmental Senior Leaders can also be users of the system that interact with Atlassian tools on a daily basis beyond that specific process.

Key responsibilities for Departmental Senior Leaders include ensuring their line of business, division, or portfolio upholds the standard operating procedures and best practices that the organization has established, providing feedback on updates and changes to systems that the Board should consider, determine if requests should be brought to the Board, vote on changes to the ecosystem, and provide impact analysis as needed, and ensure implementation strategies are thoroughly discussed.

TECHNOLOGY TOOL LEADS

Technology Tool Leads are subject matter experts or power users on one or more specific tools. For example, you may have a Bitbucket Tool Lead or a Jenkins Tool Lead. Alternatively, one person may cover multiple tools. Be sure to include all tools that touch, integrate, impact the utilization of Atlassian Cloud.

Key responsibilities of Technology Tool Leads consist of upholding organizational standard operating procedures and best practices for their tools by users, bringing change requests to the Board, providing support and training for their tool in question, and ensuring risks are mitigated for integrations with the other tools in the ecosystem.

CONFIGURATION EXPERTS / CLOUD ADMINISTRATORS

Configuration Experts or Cloud Administrators have the ability to make changes to the Atlassian Cloud tools, but should not do so in a vacuum. Meaning, that they have expert knowledge of the system but they should be able to provide feedback to the Board on the potential unintended consequences of changes.

Key responsibilities of the Configuration Expert are documenting requested changes and their potential impact for other Board members to understand, implementing changes the Board has approved, being involved in the decision making process, and evaluation of change requests.

Governance Board Meetings

It is typical for The Governance Board to meet regularly when defining the framework, governance policies, and evaluating change requests.This regular meeting schedule could be weekly or bi-weekly.

Following the implementation of your Atlassian Cloud ecosystem, it is typical for The Board to resume either monthly or quarterly. The frequency depends on change request volumes. These meetings should be formalized, and members should be prepared before the meeting to make decisions during the session. Meeting minutes can be documented in Confluence for ease of reporting and review for audit purposes.

Board meetings provide an opportunity for each voting member to ask about change requests, and for Configuration Experts to gather additional information needed for the Board to make decisions.

It is also a good idea to utilize Jira Software Cloud for the tracking of requested changes (discussed on the next page). By creating a Governance project, you can track request changes, get comments from stakeholders, and have a history of decisions for approval or denial of governance change requests.

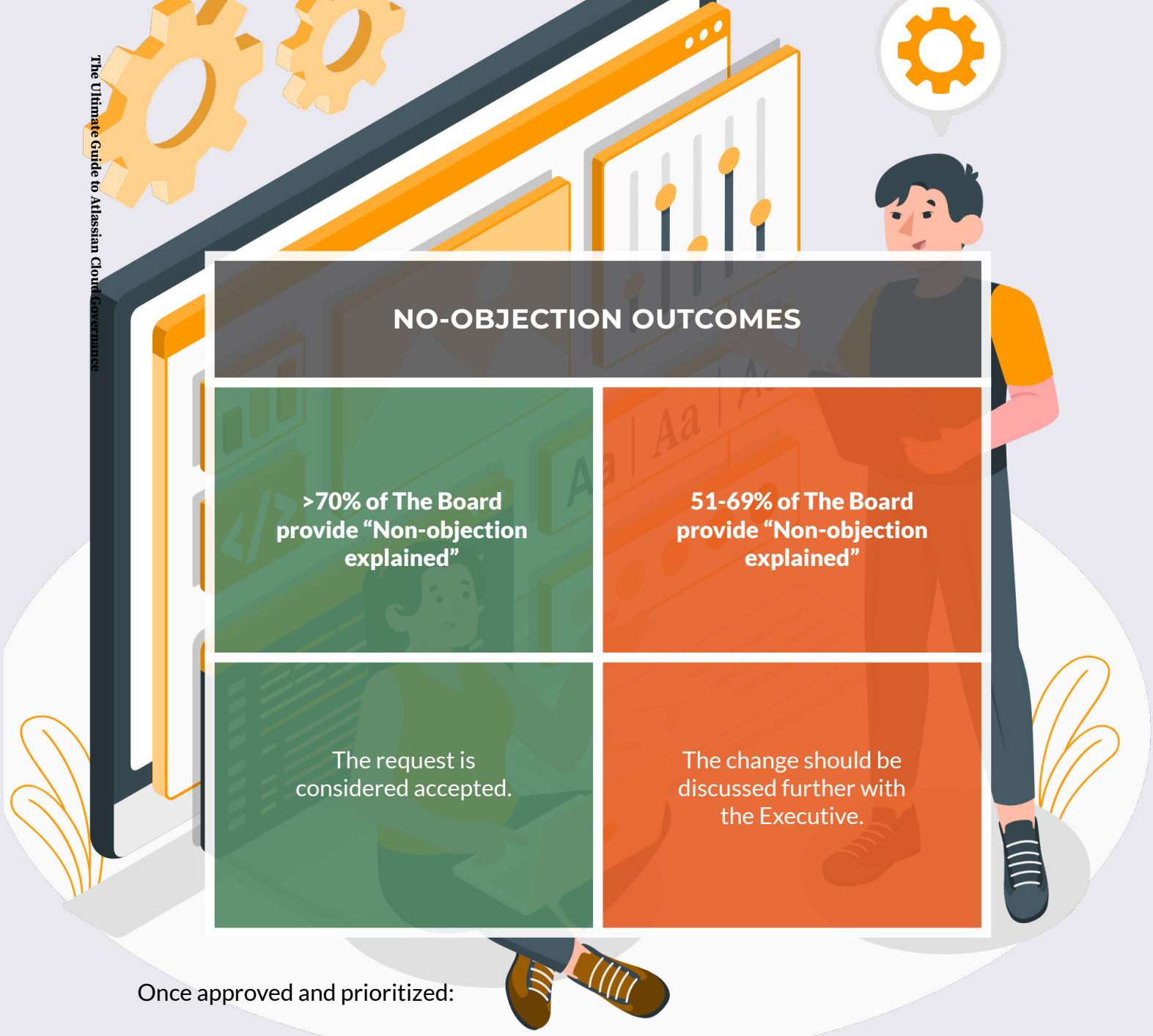
Governance Change Request Process

A centralized change request process should be implemented. Here is an example of how some organizations have implemented these change requests.

The Executive should always review changes which affect more than one line of business or portfolio. Then, **Departmental Senior Leaders** should input change requests on behalf of their teams into the Governance project in Jira. Items in this project can be used as an agenda for the meetings. Departmental Senior Leaders should thoroughly review changes by getting feedback from their team(s), and present an overview of the change request and the impact to their team(s). Once that is completed, **all members of the Board** should review the change request in advance of the meeting, request additional information of others on the Board (i.e. Departmental Senior Leader asks Technology Tool Leader how a specific change may impact a specific process), and discuss the requests at the next board meeting. **Each member of the Board** should provide an objection or non-objection to the change request.

Discussion and voting criteria includes:

- Is this change within the policy limits of acceptable changes (not requiring a formal vote)?
- Will this change impact anything architectural with regards to Atlassian Cloud or other tools involved?
- Will this change impact any other integrations or automation?
- Who will this change impact, and is someone from that area represented in this meeting?
- Will this change impact the area that I am responsible for representing, and if so, how?
- How will this change impact enterprise or company reporting?



Once approved and prioritized:

- The planned changes should be communicated to notify staff of the upcoming change in advance of the change implementation.
- Once the change is completed, remind the company of the change and any impact.
- Communicate all software changes for any of the Atlassian Cloud apps or plugins that impact the user.

The above communications should be reviewed by The Board and the organization's Corporate Communications team prior to distribution. This could be via email, Slack or Teams notification, Confluence post, etc.

Managing Your Governance Strategy With Atlassian Cloud

Your overarching Atlassian Cloud governance project can live in Jira with all of your other projects. This makes it highly collaborative. If you have a governance request that's coming in and that needs to trigger something into other projects within Atlassian, you can automate that into other projects. The governance project is just like any other project in Jira. There will be a cue to identify issues coming in, what the issues are and a real-time view of their progress. A Jira project for governance can help facilitate the goals of governance.

Additionally, managing your governance project in Jira, allows you to create dashboards to identify the percentage of issues coming in with the same themes, and the average time it is taking your business to solve them.

Business Processes and Standard Operating Procedures

Think back to our sports team for a second and how this applies to The Board and the team responsible for managing governance. The Board is designed to provide guidance and structure, not to play the field.

A policy sets a framework we need to work within. A business process is what we do within that framework. Standard operating procedures are how we are supposed to execute the processes. It is important to have these documented for Atlassian practices within your organization. Additionally, these must adhere to the governance documents The Board has created.

Atlassian solutions can be used company wide, including in HR, marketing and non-IT or non-software departments. They need to be managed in combination with other critical enterprise tools. Different solutions in different organizations require specialized processes and procedures customized to that situation. Processes included within the scope of the Board are the:

- Access management process.
- Change management process.
- Creating a new team process.
- Creating a new enterprise project.
- Creating a new Jira project.

A comprehensive continuity book of procedures can help maintain. This includes:

- Creation of a new user group(s).
- Creation of a new team.
- Creation of a new project (depending on requirements and architecture: issue vs. project space).
- Creating a new Jira project.
- Creating or adding a new user.
- Moving a user from one team to another team.
- Moving a team from one program or department to another.
- Changing a configuration.
- Altering a group a user is a part of.
- Disabling or removing a user.

With scalable growth, your Atlassian ecosystem will need to change. Your organization's governance body should work on defining a set of formal processes and procedures that combine general best practices for the Atlassian Cloud environment with those that apply to your business or industry.

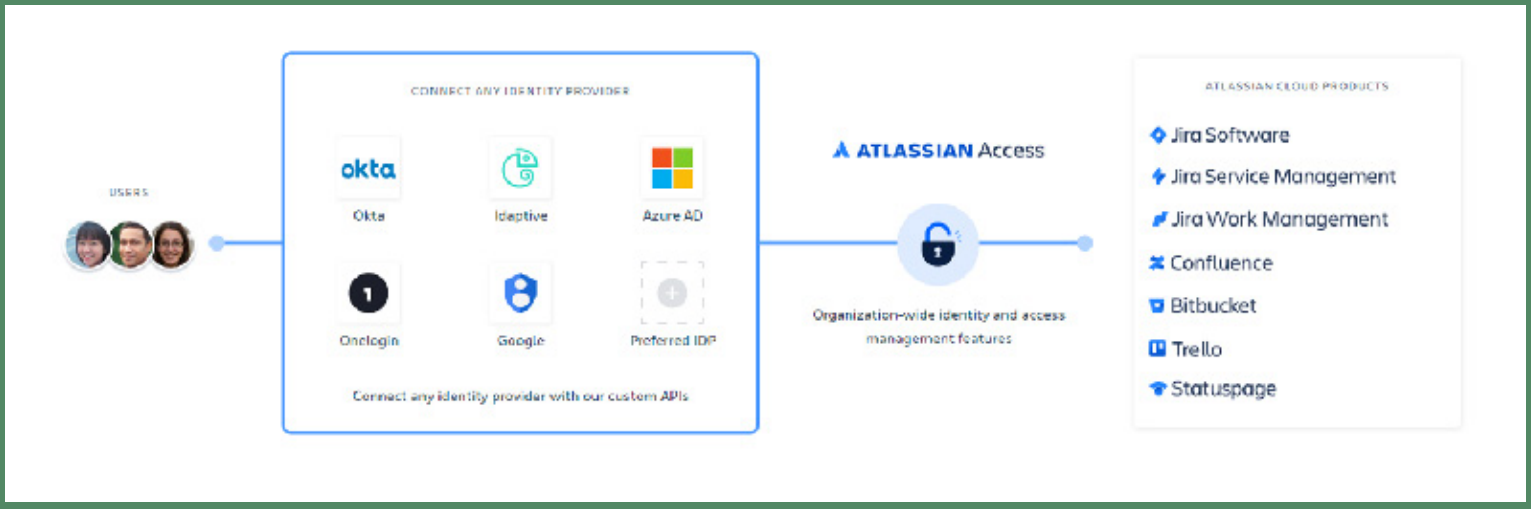
Some of the Atlassian tools like Confluence are great for providing openness so people know what's going on. You cannot have a successful governing structure without content. At the ground-level of the organization, Confluence can provide easily accessible how-to articles that assist in the overall governance strategy. This easily accessible information can enable more people to do the right thing and self-serve, reducing labor time elsewhere. Be mindful of the structure of your documentation in Confluence as a common pitfall of the use of Confluence is "I can't find anything in Confluence." Organizing and making it easy for users to find the information they need in order to follow your business processes and procedures is as important as the right processes and procedures themselves.

Configuration and Access Management

As a starting point, follow these best practices that focus on aligning your organization and providing methods that will allow you to scale.

ATLASSIAN ACCESS

As companies move from on-premise Atlassian instances to the Atlassian Cloud, many will have to work with Atlassian Access. Organizations already using some method of single sign-on (SSO) will want to invest in Atlassian Access and the benefits it provides. Atlassian Access is an organization-wide subscription that connects your Atlassian cloud products to your identity provider, like Okta, Azure AD, Onelogin, etc. Using your IDP and Atlassian Access, your Atlassian investment now has access to enterprise-grade authentication features, and additional oversight, across your company domains. Many mid-market and large organizations are using Atlassian Access for their Atlassian cloud ecosystems (and potentially their on-premise Atlassian instances) in order for easier user and group management for the users in their organization. While there is a cost to Atlassian Access, it does deliver value for the ease of use for IT administrators and the ability to manage groups and security in one location (your IDP) as opposed to managing all users via the Atlassian Admin Hub.



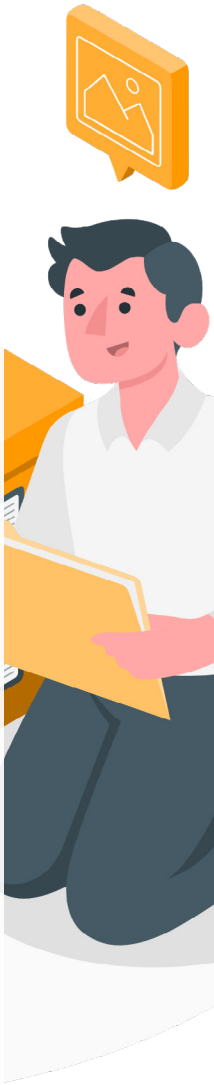
JIRA CLOUD HIERARCHY

To understand the roles and permissions that may need to be applied, you need to know the available options and types of permissions available, especially for administrators.

- **Organization Administrator** - This user has access to the organization settings and can manage all the settings available. Since the cloud functions as an instance, an organization administrator is the highest administrator on all products that are connected to the instance.
- **Site Administrator** - This user manages users and groups for the site's products (plural). Basically, the site administrator is a lower authorization level that cannot access the entire organization page and settings.
- **Project Administrator** - This user is a role-controlled admin for one or more projects.

And you need to know there are three types of permissions associated with the roles, they range from the high-level to granular:

- **Global permissions** - These apply to applications as a whole, not individual projects (for example, whether users can see the other users in the application).
- **Project permissions** - Organized into permission schemes, these apply to projects (e.g. who can see the project's issues, create, edit and assign them). While project admins can assign users to a project, they can't customize the permission schemes for a project. There are lots of project-level permissions you can set to control what users can do within a project.
- **Issue security permissions** - Organized into security schemes, these allow the visibility of individual issues to be adjusted (within the bounds of the project's permissions). For example, issue security permissions can let you set up types of issues that can only be seen by project admins or users in specific groups.



The **Organization Administrator** typically deals with all the financials, security and high level items:

- Access your organization at admin.atlassian.com.
- Make other users organization admins.
- Verify or remove domains for your organization.
- Subscribe to Atlassian Access and apply security policies on managed accounts.
- Managed accounts, meaning you can edit details and deactivate or delete accounts, among other things.

Site Administrator typically is the architecture/design layer. It can:

- Access the site's Admin at https://admin.atlassian.com.
- Make other users site or product admins.
- Configures and administers Jira Software
- Manages global settings including users and groups, roles, global permissions, and schemes.
- Creates projects, sets up project permissions, and assigns Jira project administrators Site settings so that it displays your company's branding and image.
- Administer users for your site, meaning you can invite, remove, and export users, among other things.
- Groups and product access, meaning you can update settings for how users get access and add users to groups.
- In a nutshell, Site Administrators can configure Project Schemas, Workflows, Fields, Automations, Integrations, Templates and other cross team/group items.

Typically, the **Project Administrator** is the local team optimization layer.

- A team member who configures the Jira project to match the team's processes.
- Works with the Jira administrator if the configuration requires global changes.
- Tasks include configuring project boards, setting up sprints, assigning team members to roles and creating reports.
- The Jira project administrator may be a product owner, product manager, project manager, scrum master, developer lead or power user.
- In a nutshell, Project Administrators can configure specific-to-the team Project Schemas, Workflows, Fields, automations, and templates.

CREATING NEW PROJECTS

Consider the following when determining your strategy for creating projects in your instance. Jira projects and your organization's projects may not have the same construct as you think. Additionally, you should refrain from creating too many variations of standardized project "templates" using shared configuration schemes. Evaluate new project requests against the existing template configurations and create all new projects with a shared configuration based on a template project.

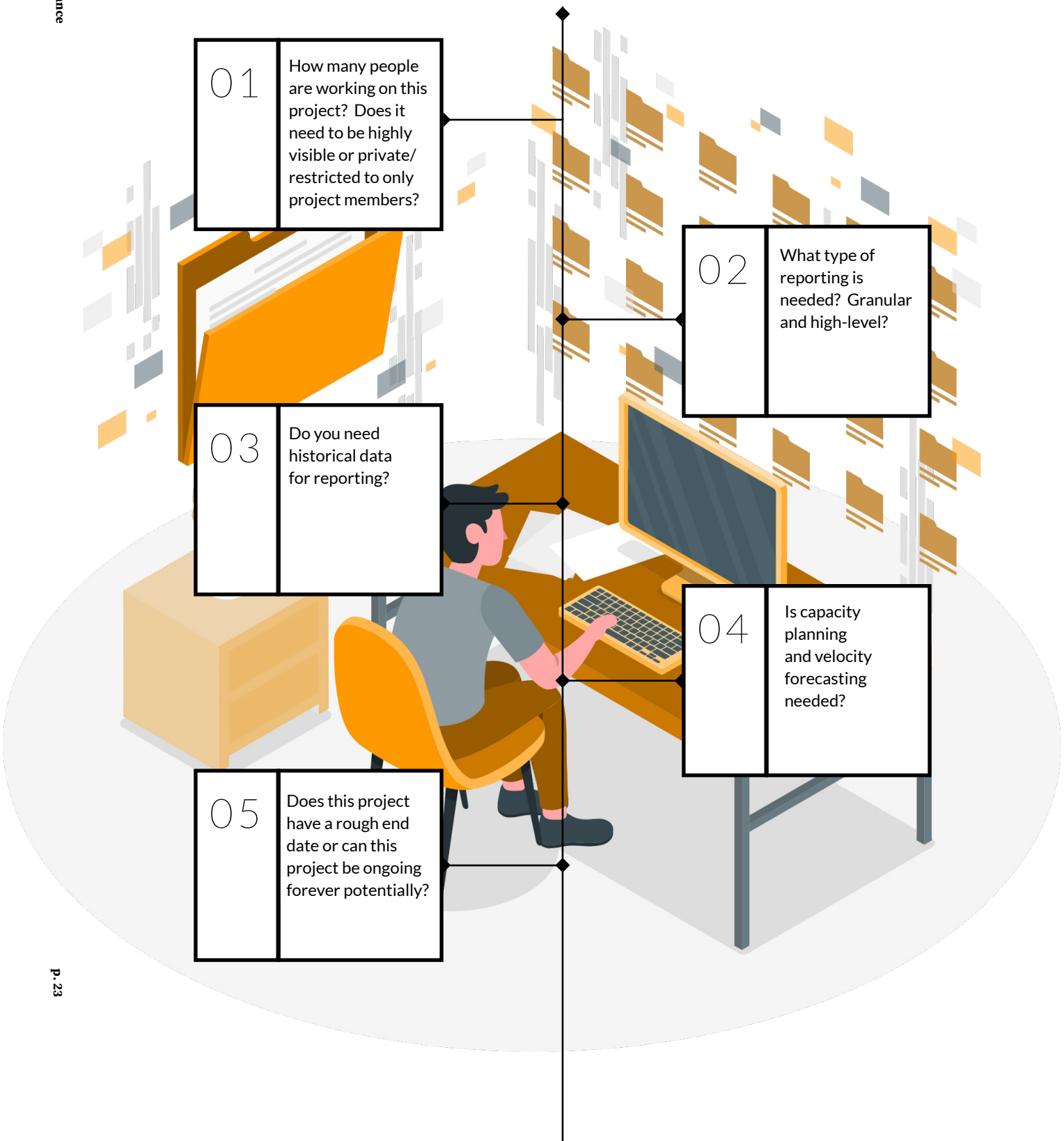
Top tips for setting up Jira Projects:

- Projects are containers for a body of work.
- Projects help you group work easily. Projects can normally be assigned to a specific team of people.
- Projects are useful as a centralized source for reporting and status information. Avoid exporting information into Excel for status reporting.
- Projects consist of elements specific to each project. For example, the **Releases** and **Component** fields can be managed directly by the project administrator and do not require system administration permissions to edit.
- With the implementation of Atlassian Cloud, organizations now must understand the difference between team-managed and company-managed projects and ensure users are educated on when to use both. We have found this Atlassian article explains the benefits of each option the best.
- Keep in mind that Jira does allow you to create a backlog of work shared across various sources in the event your company separates work into multiple projects. You identify the source of each item in the backlog via the project key.

Try to organize your projects in a meaningful way. Also refrain from creating more projects than needed or easily maintained. By utilizing Jira effectively with these baseline principles, you can easily find work, ensure quality data and metrics are available.

Project Strategy Considerations

Adopting a well-considered project strategy for your organization enables users to quickly identify where to find their work is located. It also enables quality data, reliable metrics and reporting. Here are some considerations when creating projects:



Issues, Fields, Screens & Workflows

One of the complex issues for administrators with Atlassian (Jira Software and JSM mostly) is the use of custom fields, and application of those fields to screens, issues and workflows. Generally, you'll be far better off with fewer variations of workflows, screens, fields, and issues you can support that meet most users' needs. It makes it easier for users to understand how to use the system and reduces the overall administration complexity and costs. However, if you are too rigid with this information, users will begin to use fields available to them for other purposes than those intended. So this is a double edged sword.

TOP TIPS FOR CREATING OR CUSTOMIZING

Only create new custom types if it is drastically different from an existing issue type. Too many issue types that represent similar kinds of work can lead to reporting and metric inaccuracies. Before creating a new field, screen, issue type, or workflow state, search to see if any similar objects can be effectively used or repurposed.

The number of custom fields can impact system performance. Try to make fields more generic so they can be adopted at scale across other teams. Use field context to help further tailor field values for specific projects.

Maintain generic workflow state names and consider how other teams could adopt them across various workflows. Keep workflows simple whilst also providing teams with the necessary information to track and manage progress.

Utilize comments for communication and keep the workflow tailored to reporting meaningful high-level progress metrics.

Organize information into smaller groups using tabs and organize fields according to where they will be relevant in the workflow.

Permissions, Roles & User Access Management

Permission settings allow you to define an access framework for specific individuals, groups of users, or user roles. This is one of the most important factors in your governance. Take time to consider and plan:

- Your overarching access management strategy. This provides and protects access to your information.
- Ensuring consistency for how permissions are applied. You can set up automations to look for anomalies and report them on a regular basis.
- Using groups and project roles to assign permissions to users in smaller organizations. This standardized approach to the creation and use of permission schemes enables project administrators to determine which users are added to the roles within their projects.
- Process and procedure documentation detailing when it is appropriate to assign permissions to individuals. This should be reserved for rare exceptions as it can generate downstream impacts on future wider-scale permission changes.
- With Atlassian Cloud products, you'll have the ability to manage them via the Atlassian Admin Hub or via your IDP if you have Atlassian Access. The same general concepts apply (groups, roles, etc) whether you're using Atlassian's user management or your IDP. When combined with Atlassian Access, you should be able to use the same groups and permission settings you're using today in your IDP to apply to your Atlassian Cloud instance.

For Atlassian Cloud, Atlassian has gathered feedback from users that have managed Cloud systems and created some best practices in their Cloud Admin Security Guide located here. We highly recommend utilizing this to define your security and visibility strategy for Atlassian Cloud products as this document is always evolving.

Best Practices for Marketplace Apps and Integrations

Atlassian has a large variety of Atlassian and third-party created Apps and integrations to your Atlassian Cloud suite which allows you to extend the native functionality of your products. The Atlassian Marketplace has over a thousand apps that address anything from productivity to reporting, code review to design tools. Many of these apps have fully-functional free trials so you can utilize them to determine if they fit your business needs. While this is highly convenient, it also comes with some potential problems as well.

APPS & INTEGRATIONS BEST PRACTICES

Within the Atlassian Marketplace you'll find many apps providing similar functionality for various use cases. And if you are unable to find an app that suits your needs, you can also explore whether your target system can use Atlassian's APIs to update or share data and create your custom integration. But otherwise, Apps are your best bet for quickly integrating or sharing data with other systems.

CHOOSING AN APP

When choosing a marketplace app, you'll want to be sure you have looked at many of these topics to ensure scalable growth.

- Choose an app from Top Vendors in the marketplace. Top Vendors have demonstrated that they meet Atlassian benchmarks for traction, support, and reliability within the Atlassian ecosystem.
- Use Cloud Fortified apps as they have been tested by Atlassian to support important security and reliability standards.
- Explore the vendor's support model in case you need support in the future.
- Check whether the app is widely adopted or received well by users by scanning the reviews and comments.
- Most apps provide a free trial license to check whether the functionality meets your needs and confirm zero conflict with your other existing configurations or apps. Install the app in your sandbox environment first.

MAINTAINING APPS

The apps in your Atlassian ecosystem environment will require occasional updates. This could be due to new releases or vulnerability fixes. It is typical for historic version support to be withdrawn by the vendor. Staying on the most appropriate and supported version for your toolset is critical to prevent bugs, security breaches and more.

But sometimes your new app may give you just as much of a headache. It may cause conflicts with other apps or integrations too. That's why it is important to remain on the latest version that is proven to be compatible with your overall tooling solution and integrations. This means enacting a process to evaluate updates by reviewing changelogs and feature updates to identify any potential conflicts before considering an update or upgrade. If you need support with this, it's best to partner with an expert like ourselves at SPK to help you navigate.

It is also a good practice to revisit these apps from time to time to ensure a.) they are being utilized still by the business stakeholders, and b.) to ensure it still aligns with the business and technology needs of the organization. Once per quarter to once per year are good intervals for revisiting those apps.

- Check the vendor's app details to ensure they retain their settings and data in the tool's database in the event of an error occurring.
- Test the app in your Sandbox. This will enable you to test against a close replica to your production environment.
- Thoroughly test new features or functionality.
- Perform functionality testing with apps to ensure there are no complications.
- If an error exists, contact the vendor and save a copy of the logs for future troubleshooting.
- Revert the app to a previous version until the issue is resolved.

Deploying Atlassian Governance

Atlassian tools help facilitate strong governance, but ultimately, the final pillar of the Governance Structure comes down to the people in the organization. It requires people to create, participate, collaborate and accelerate governance, throughout all levels of the business. This should include:

- An established training program that upskills the team.
- Ensuring everyone in the organization understands the business processes and SOPs within the governance policy.
- Active and competent members of The Board.
- All employees adopting best practices and utilizing Atlassian in line with the strategy, whether that's your engineer using Jira for ticket management, your Senior Lead doing prelim Change Request reviews, or your wider team maintaining Confluence how-to articles.

Conclusion

Strong governance has different layers. These layers provide an elastic structure that allows your company to scale without missing a risk.

The governance structure exists to support the discussion, decision and implementation of Atlassian products, applications, components and configuration. It allows for consideration of how we can structure and configure those tools, whether they should be standardized or customized for a specific team and so forth.

Whether you are a current cloud adopter, or you are still using on-premises solutions, you still need to ensure that your Atlassian ecosystem is governed.

By deploying Atlassian governance correctly, as described in this white paper, you can ensure scalable growth and transparent control. It empowers your team to make the right decisions and propel your business in the right direction of travel.

SPK and Associates is an Atlassian partner. We've supported companies worldwide to implement both ecosystems and governing policies. If you need support with anything related to Atlassian, including how to govern it correctly in your organization, you can contact our helpful team for further support.

SPK and Associates

SPK and Associates is focused on improving Engineering with smart information technology solutions. SPK understands the systems, processes, data and applications critical to successful product development, and dedicate ourselves to helping clients build, test, and release products faster and better. For 25 years, we have helped our customers harness technology to optimize engineering and accelerate product delivery.

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