

EBOOK

A *NEW REALITY*
FOR SYSTEMS
INTEGRATOR
SOFTWARE DELIVERY

An AI-driven inflection point for systems integrators

Systems integrators and consulting firms are entering a pivotal moment. As organizations race to adopt AI, they are turning to trusted partners to help design, build, deploy, and operate intelligent systems at scale — and capture their share of a market projected to exceed \$200 billion by 2029.¹

AI powers a new way forward

Across industries and geographies, systems integrators are being asked to deliver end-to-end AI transformations, from strategy and design through build and run. That means untangling legacy systems, navigating multi-cloud platforms, bridging data silos, and meeting strict regulatory requirements, all without disrupting core operations.

Generative AI and agent-based systems have expanded client expectations of what it means to modernize. Today's enterprises want to embed intelligence into workflows, automate decision paths, and reimagine entire operating models. While doing so, there is a great necessity to focus on standardization across global practices, security, and regulatory scrutiny.

For systems integrators, this represents a significant growth opportunity. But realizing that potential requires rethinking software delivery.

To succeed at scale, consultants must apply AI internally to accelerate development, automate documentation and testing, and improve execution efficiency. At the same time, they must standardize as much of their delivery approach as possible while still tailoring solutions to each client's environment. Achieving both requires a consistent, secure software delivery foundation.



How modern software delivery is changing outcomes

Against this backdrop, Docker partnered with theCUBE Research to quantify how modern software delivery practices are changing outcomes across large enterprises. The independent study surveyed 393 IT and application development leaders to measure the impact of Docker's standardized development environments, secure software supply chain controls, and DevOps enablement on AI delivery, security posture, productivity, modernization, and ROI.²

This industry guide applies those findings through a systems integrator lens. It focuses on how industry leaders are using Docker to accelerate AI and agent initiatives, strengthen software supply chain security, and modernize legacy environments to improve time to market and business value.



“Docker has absolutely helped standardize development environments across our global teams...the time saved daily can be substantial, easily over an hour. That kind of consistency not only speeds up development but also reduces rework and makes scaling much more manageable.”

Ed Wied, Senior Technical Product Manager, John Deere

Why the current models can't keep up

Many systems integrators have successfully launched AI pilots and can stand up proof-of-concept (PoC) environments quickly. But scaling AI-driven delivery across clients, industries, and regions — often spanning multiple regulatory jurisdictions and security requirements — remains difficult. To capitalize on AI's potential, firms must move beyond pilots to deliver repeatable, production-ready solutions that can be deployed consistently across engagements while meeting global security, compliance, and governance expectations.

In large consulting organizations, delivery stacks often vary by practice, geography, or client, sometimes reflecting different regional operating models or regulatory environments. Teams may rely on different cloud platforms, CI/CD pipelines, base images, artifact repositories, and security processes. Custom build scripts and “snowflake” environments proliferate, and what works in one engagement can be difficult — or even impossible — to replicate in another.

The result is duplicated effort, inconsistent quality, and increased risk. Onboarding new consultants takes longer. Moving talent between projects becomes awkward. Reusable IP is limited. Over time, each engagement begins to operate like an independent company, driving up operational complexity and eroding delivery margins while making it harder to enforce consistent security, governance, and delivery standards worldwide.

Security and regulatory pressures only intensify the challenge. Clients increasingly expect partners to demonstrate strong software supply chain controls, artifact provenance, and secure-by-default delivery practices that hold up under global security audits and cross-border regulatory scrutiny. Regulators are scrutinizing end-client environments and the partner processes

that support them. When delivery tooling and governance varies across accounts, proving consistent compliance becomes difficult.

Responsible AI adds another layer of risk. Many programs still treat guardrails like bias mitigation, toxicity controls, explainability, and regulatory checks as optional add-ons rather than embedded requirements. If problems emerge in production, systems integrators may bear the reputational and contractual consequences — even when the underlying issues originate in a client's environment.

At the same time, the role of systems integrators has expanded. They are no longer just implementing applications — they are designing and operating intelligent, autonomous systems that must be secure, compliant, reproducible, and instantly scalable across diverse client infrastructures and regulatory environments. Fragmented environments and inconsistent controls introduce risk precisely where firms can least afford it: in client-facing AI deployments that define long-term relationships and brand reputation.

“(Docker is) not just a tool — it's a symbol of the shift toward modern, developer-friendly practices...(it) has improved engineer satisfaction, supports onboarding, and enables the kind of innovation that helps us retain top talent in a competitive market.”

Sarah Andres, Former Principal Architect, Avality

Here's the good news: Organizations that standardize development environments, embed software supply chain security earlier in the lifecycle, and tightly align development with CI/CD and delivery practices are materially better positioned to scale AI safely and profitably.²

Docker sits at the center of that shift, providing a standardized, secure, and developer-friendly container platform that enables systems integrators to standardize delivery across engagements. Docker has evolved beyond container tooling into a foundational platform that enables scalable AI development, embedded security controls, reusable architectures, and faster time to market, helping systems integrators move from one-off projects to scalable delivery models that expand margins and strengthen client outcomes while maintaining consistent governance and security practices.

What the data reveals: key findings from theCUBE Research

Independent findings from theCUBE Research show that organizations adopting Docker as a standardized software delivery foundation achieve materially better outcomes across AI delivery, security posture, productivity, modernization, and ROI. Docker delivers this through:

 **Standardized development environments**

 **Secure, trusted content**

 **Reliable access controls**

 **AI-accelerated development**

 **Continuous supply chain insights**

The following insights highlight the outcomes that matter most in today's consulting environments.

AI acceleration and reliability

For systems integrators, speed and reliability are business imperatives. Today's digital and AI systems underpin core functions across solution design, systems integration, application development, cloud migration, data engineering, and managed services. These systems influence delivery speed, system resilience, client outcomes, and regulatory compliance.

Research from theCUBE shows that Docker reduces one of the primary barriers to AI execution: inconsistent development environments. By providing standardized, reproducible environments, Docker customers significantly reduce setup time, improve testing rigor, and prevent failures as AI projects move into production.



% of surveyed orgs

Outcome

41% → 51–75% faster AI setup time

44% → 26–50% fewer project failures or delays

53% → Significantly improved AI testing and validation

These results are driven by Docker's capabilities, which standardize how models and agent systems are built, tested, governed, and deployed across the enterprise:

- Run and test AI models locally in consistent, isolated environments that reduce setup time, cut cloud costs, and accelerate iteration for AI development workflows.
- Search, deploy, and connect to hundreds of verified AI services, with setup, authentication, and security handled centrally, so teams focus on building, not managing tool configurations.
- Build, run, and share AI agents using simple declarative configuration, packaging complete agent stacks to run consistently across every environment without custom code or manual reproduction.

What the data reveals: key findings from theCUBE Research

Security, compliance, and vulnerability reduction

As AI adoption increases, so do regulatory expectations around software supply chain integrity, third-party risk, and access governance. Docker embeds security earlier in the development lifecycle, reducing vulnerabilities before they reach production and making compliance readiness a by-product of how software is built, not an afterthought.



% of surveyed orgs	Outcome
43%	26–50% vulnerability reduction
17%	50%+ vulnerability reduction
53%	Significant improvement in security posture
81%	Achievement of compliance goals

Docker strengthens security posture across the full development lifecycle through multiple layers of protection:

- Builds on trusted, minimal base images that have been continuously verified for vulnerabilities, establishing a secure foundation before a single line of code is written.
- Enforces consistent, auditable security policies across developer environments with centralized, auditable controls.
- Governs which AI tools and services teams can access during agent development, with centralized authentication and credential controls that prevent unauthorized integrations from inducing risk.

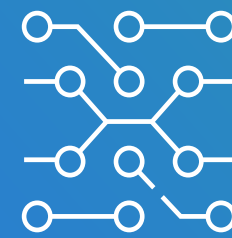
What the data reveals: key findings from theCUBE Research

Developer productivity and DevOps maturity

Developer productivity directly impacts business continuity, operational resilience, and delivery speed. theCUBE Research shows that improving development workflows reduces operational risk, strengthens collaboration, and increases release reliability.

Docker improves developer productivity across key workflows:

- Less time spent configuring environments and more time building with fast, consistent, reproducible development workflows that work the same way across every team and environment.
- Configuration drift eliminated between development and production, reducing rework, release failures, and debugging cycles that slow delivery.
- Onboard new team members faster and improve cross-team collaboration with shared, standardized environments that work consistently everywhere.



% of surveyed orgs

Outcome

73%	→	Significant workflow efficiency gains
64%	→	Productivity improvements of 26–50%
39%	→	Completed a full DevOps transformation
65%	→	Significant improvement in development and CI/CD alignment
68%	→	Improved cross-team collaboration

The benefits are reflected in key findings from theCUBE Research:

More consistent workflows reduce rework, errors, and release fragility while preserving governance. The result is faster iteration, fewer environmental issues, smoother collaboration, and a significant boost in developer productivity and organizational DevOps capabilities — all of which make Docker a foundational accelerator for modern software delivery.

What the data reveals: key findings from theCUBE Research

Application modernization and time to market

Modernization is a top priority for systems integrators, but few organizations can afford to rip and replace critical systems. Docker enables incremental modernization by bridging legacy platforms and modern cloud-native architectures, allowing teams to deliver new capabilities without destabilizing existing systems.

Docker supports modernization and faster time to market across the application lifecycle:

- Containerizes legacy applications without replatforming, allowing modern development practices without disrupting core systems.
- Introduces new features and services faster, using consistent packaging and deployment workflows that reduce delivery friction.
- Supports hybrid environments and gradual migration, enabling teams to bridge legacy infrastructure with cloud-native architectures.
- Reduces time to market without sacrificing governance, enabling incremental modernization within existing compliance and security frameworks.



% of surveyed orgs

Outcome

50%



Modernized 31–60% of their application portfolios

62%



Reduced time to market by 11–25%

49%



Reduced time to market by 26–50%

theCUBE Research shows the impact of these modernization strategies:

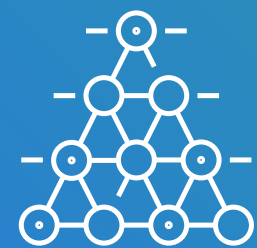
theCUBE Research findings show that Docker enables incremental modernization and materially accelerates delivery timelines. These outcomes allow systems integrators to modernize integration platforms, application portfolios, and data environments without destabilizing core systems.

What the data reveals: key findings from theCUBE Research

Business value and ROI

The research makes clear that these gains translate into measurable financial outcomes. Respondents consistently reported meaningful cost savings and strong ROI.

Docker's business value extends beyond development efficiency. By reducing vulnerabilities before production, accelerating modernization timelines, and enabling teams to deliver AI capabilities faster, Docker delivers measurable financial impact that CFOs and CISOs can quantify:



% of surveyed orgs	Outcome
43%	Saved \$50,001–\$250,000 annually
22%	Saved \$250,000–\$1 million annually
6%	Saved more than \$1 million annually
41%	Achieved 101–200% ROI
22%	Achieved 201–500% ROI
6%	Achieved an ROI above 500%

Docker delivers substantial financial impact by reducing operational costs, accelerating modernization, and increasing development efficiency. Organizations consistently report meaningful annual savings and high ROI — often far exceeding initial investment — confirming Docker's ability to translate technical acceleration into bottom-line business value.

“We’ve achieved over \$1 million in annual savings (with Docker). The productivity gains and reduced infrastructure overhead alone justify the investment.”

Ian Brown, Engineering Manager, JVM Ecosystem, Netflix

Next steps for foundational AI-ready software delivery

Systems integrators are at an inflection point. Across industries, clients are moving from AI experimentation to enterprise-wide mandates, expecting partners to deliver strategy, build, deployment, and ongoing operation as a unified offering across complex global environments. At the same time, margin pressure, regulatory scrutiny, and rising expectations around security and responsible AI are intensifying. The question is no longer whether to offer AI services, but whether existing delivery models can support them at scale while maintaining consistent security, compliance, and operational practices across regions and engagements.

The research points to a clear conclusion: Organizations that establish a standardized, secure foundation for software delivery are better positioned to scale AI across engagements, strengthen software supply chain controls, accelerate time to market, modernize legacy environments, and deliver measurable client value while protecting margins.

For systems integrators, progress does not require reinventing every engagement or constraining flexibility. It means strengthening the common foundation that underpins how applications and AI systems are built, secured, governed, and deployed — creating repeatability behind the scenes while preserving customization where clients need it most.

Docker's practical blueprint helps consulting firms achieve AI success at scale through five essential steps:

1

Establish consistent development environments across teams to reduce variability, improve collaboration, and standardize how applications are built and tested across engagements and client environments.

2

Implement centralized controls for identity, policy, and access to enforce organization-wide security and compliance standards across development and production.

3

Integrate container-based delivery into existing infrastructure to enable incremental modernization without disrupting core systems.

4

Operationalize AI development workflows by providing secure, governed access to third-party services and ensuring development environments are aligned across domains.

5

Align software delivery with enterprise CI/CD practices to reduce time to market, increase release reliability, and support continuous improvement at scale.

This proven path enables systems integrators to deliver AI-enabled products and services that are secure, scalable, and commercially differentiated across diverse environments and regulatory contexts. And it's how Docker can help your organization accelerate innovation without increasing risk — translating technical capability into sustained competitive advantage.

To explore the full findings behind this guide, read the complete theCUBE Research x Docker report.

To see how Docker can help your organization build secure, AI-ready software delivery at enterprise scale, connect with the Docker team.

1. Kadyan, A., et al., "[Tech Services and Generative AI: Plotting the Necessary Reinvention](#)," McKinsey & Company, June 2024.

2. "[Docker's Impact on Agentic AI, Software Supply Chain Security, Developer Productivity, ROI](#)," theCUBE Research, October 2025.