



The Modern IT Playbook:

 **new relic** Shares Their
Strategy for Success at Scale

 **Firstbase**



New Scale Requires New Software

By Thomas Olson | Manager, IT Program Management, New Relic

Key metrics

“Now that I only have one procurement specialist who's managing all of our equipment across the globe – which is, in essence, around 4000 laptops – it's very difficult for us to maintain the same level of success without having a managed partner like Firstbase helping us facilitate that.”

 **4000**
Laptops

 **1**
Procurement Specialist

Tech Utilized



CHALLENGES

Thomas Olson from New Relic is the Manager of IT Program Management and the driving force behind leveraging Firstbase to streamline their IT Logistics globally. Here, he gives an inside look at how his team successfully met the demand associated with an increased headcount and a larger global footprint — without hiccups or hair-pulling. Read on to learn how your IT team can do the same by embracing software and automation solutions that enable a zero-touch approach.

SOLUTIONS

We realized that to scale smoothly and securely, we needed software and automation solutions that minimized operational challenges and streamlined each step of the way.



Provisioning



IT Management

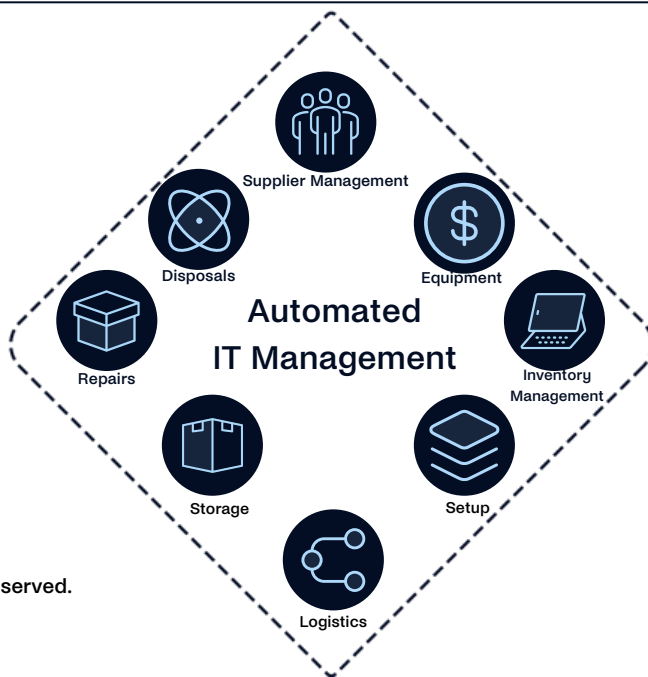


Retrievals



Security

BENEFITS



New Scale Requires New Software

Seven years ago, our New Relic IT team shipped employee laptops by hand and onboarded country-specific vendors each time we opened up operations in new regions.

With a headcount of 1,000 employees, it was painful.

With the 4,000 laptops we have in rotation today, it would be downright impossible.

As New Relic headcount fluctuated and our presence spread across the map, our team's ability to provide a high-quality and timely employee experience became a challenge. During the pandemic, this challenge was doubled by the fact that our offices transitioned to almost fully remote.

We realized that to scale smoothly and securely, we needed software and automation solutions that minimized operational challenges and streamlined each step of the way.

Ironically, today our IT team is *smaller* due to restructuring – yet we're able to successfully oversee a vast global inventory and serve more New Relic team members than ever before.

Here, we'll share our take on effective IT logistics for scaling and global expansion, and how leveraging Firstbase allowed us to automate processes and maintain operational excellence.

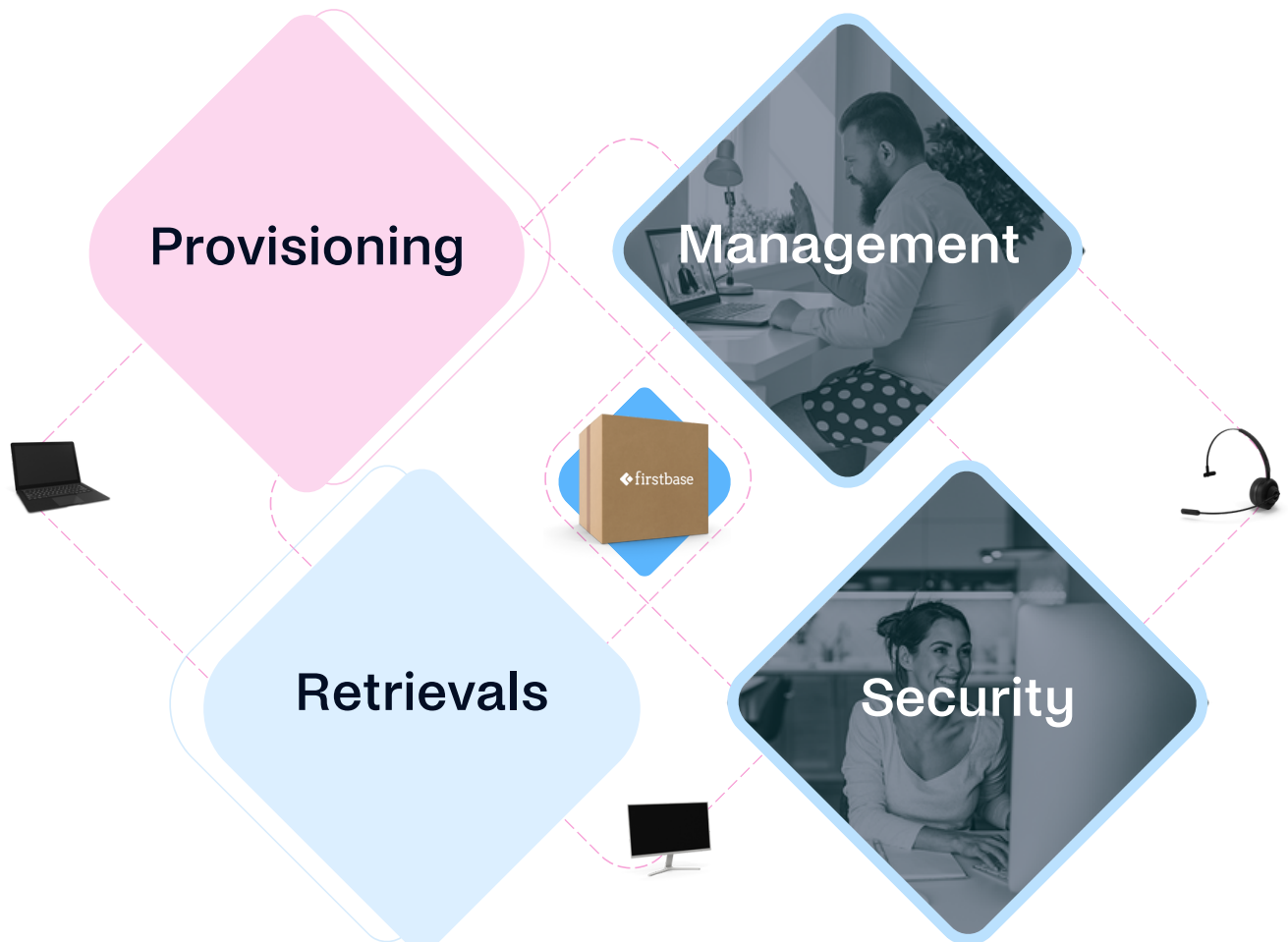


How to Run Effective IT Logistics at Each Stage

Serving a large, distributed workforce poses a challenge for many companies—and IT is a crucial piece of the puzzle.

When you can spin up an employee workstation quickly, a new hire is able to contribute from day one. This results in increased productivity right out of the gate (great for the company) and less friction and thumb-twiddling during onboarding (great for the new employee). The positive experience continues when you can upgrade their equipment seamlessly as it ages out, and securely retrieve a laptop if an employee moves on.

In our eyes, successful IT logistics span four key stages:





1. Provisioning

In IT, a primary goal is to get equipment — e.g. laptops — into the hands of employees. In the past, our team created new employee accounts, installed software, and manually delivered laptops or packed them into boxes to mail off.

It was a zero-touch experience for the employee receiving the equipment, but for our IT team, it was a hands-on, high-touch approach that resulted in significant delays.

In contrast, our current playbook is about leveraging true zero-touch provisioning. This allows us to take our equipment from Firstbase or from the manufacturer and drop ship it to an employee. Once the employee signs in with their credentials, everything they need downloads to the laptop and configures automatically.

New Relic is an Apple company, with 98% of our workforce using MacBooks. Today, we procure our hardware from Firstbase and use [Jamf](#) to manage our policies. When we get wind that employee headcount is growing, we:

- 1. Place the order for more laptops with Firstbase**
- 2. The new laptops are reflected in our equipment inventory**
- 3. Firstbase connects to Jamf to fully prepare the laptop for the employee**
- 4. We deploy the new laptop from end-to-end with no IT-employee interaction required**

Going from high-touch IT provisioning to a true zero-touch model has allowed us to support New Relic's massive growth without blowing a metaphorical fuse.

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— [Thomas Olson](#) | Manager, IT Program Management, New Relic

2. Management

Getting a laptop to a new employee isn't the end of the IT lifecycle — it's only the middle stage of the journey. At New Relic, our laptops sit on a four-year refresh cycle, after which our employees are eligible to upgrade to something new.

For a long time, we struggled with a painful dance between our IT team and equipment end users. For every single upgrade, we had to:

- **Collect the employee upgrade request**
- **Confirm employee eligibility**
- **Place the order for the new laptop**
- **Ensure the laptop was delivered**
- **Set up the new laptop**
- **Transfer existing data and documents**
- **Send a return label with instructions to return the old laptop**
- **Wipe the old laptop and place it in a graveyard state**

Just reading that list probably brings on a cold sweat. Multiply that experience by thousands of employees and it's simply not feasible. In contrast, a zero-touch approach with a managed partner like Firstbase means with literally two clicks of a button, we can initiate a return and replacement for an employee who's eligible for a new laptop.

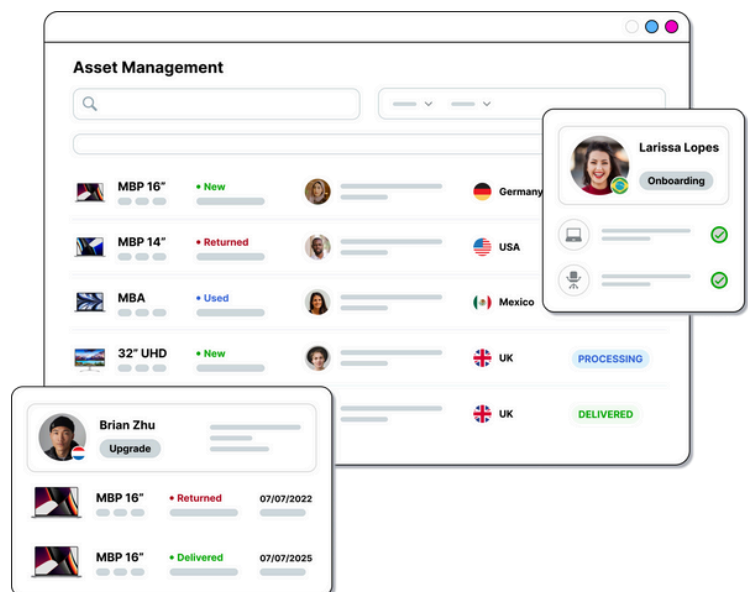
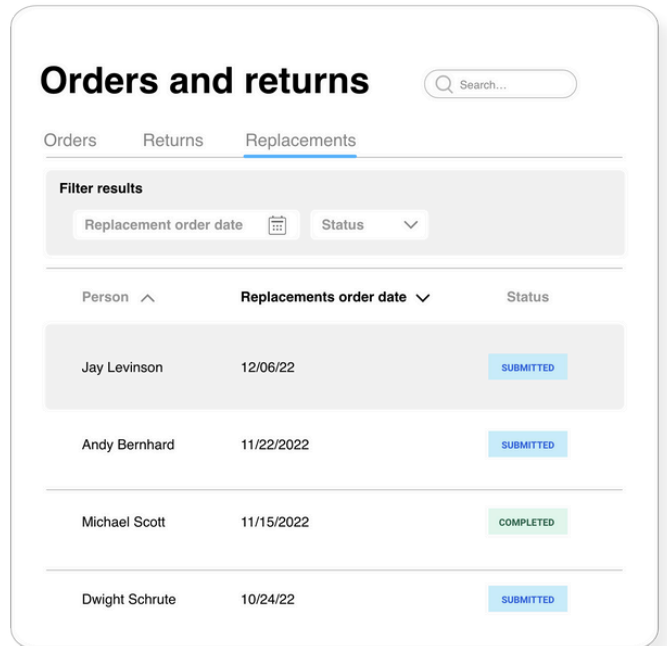
Firstbase manages the communication with the end user. They coordinate the pickups. They do the data hold. They wipe the old machine — all without any time or energy expended by our IT team.

3. Retrievals

Offboarding employees requires collecting their equipment swiftly and securely. Just recently we integrated Firstbase into Workday, our HRIS system, which extends the automated zero-touch experience into the retrieval process.

As employees exit, HR updates their employment status in Workday, which in turn feeds directly to Firstbase. Every night, the return process initiates automatically to kick off the process of recovering employee equipment. We were already proud of our high equipment return rate, and Firstbase allowed us to maintain that success when we underwent our recent headcount reduction.

The best part is that while the retrieval process is now fully automated, Firstbase adds an intentional personal touch. An employee who is moving on deserves more than a return label sent their way. That's why an actual human from the Firstbase team jumps in to ensure exiting employees know what to expect, the steps to follow, and how they can reach out with questions. At New Relic, we view that approach as a major positive differentiator.

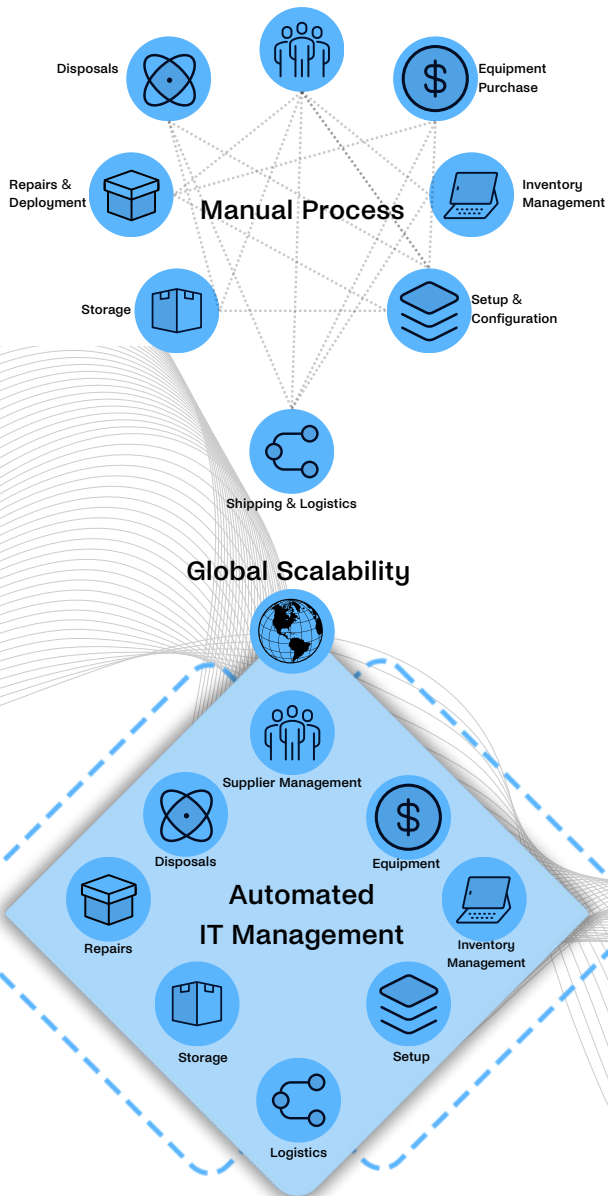


4. Security

Everything we've described so far falls under the domain of IT, and all of it requires a strong level of security. As a data company, New Relic needs safeguards that ensure employee and company data is protected.

Thanks to our zero-touch provisioning practices, laptops are fully encrypted during setup. We also leverage Okta internally for identity verification purposes, which Firstbase supports. This ensures that all employees and vendors log in to company equipment via authorized SSO credentials.

When equipment is retrieved, we're now trusting a third-party vendor to hold equipment that contains very sensitive data. But laptops are quickly cleaned and donated, or disposed of by Firstbase resulting in a certificate of destruction that provides peace of mind, every time.



The Firstbase Partnership: From Test to Global Fix

Partnering with Firstbase has transformed our IT practices at New Relic for the better. Here are a few more details on the challenges we were facing and how we landed on Firstbase as the solution.

Headcount Challenges

Before using Firstbase, New Relic operated in three main regions. We had a dedicated procurement specialist assigned to each, resulting in sufficient global coverage to support all employees.

While coverage was adequate, we were constantly hustling to complete high-touch provisioning – often spending an entire day each week imaging laptops, creating user accounts, confirming addresses, and collaborating with our logistics partners and FedEx.

During COVID, we even resorted to storing high-value equipment in employee homes. Post-COVID, we created a back-office inventory that was soon overflowing as New Relic headcount scaled up.

Then, our pivot moment: company restructuring suddenly took our IT team down to one procurement specialist responsible for managing all 4,000 laptops in rotation across the globe. That's when we knew we needed a managed partner to help us distribute the burden and continue to operate at the level of excellence we were known for.

Pilot Testing

We vetted several managed partnerships to assist us with our assets before deciding to pilot test Firstbase in Israel. It was a small geographic area where we were experiencing our biggest pain points.

Israel is just outside the EU, and we didn't have a New Relic IT presence in Tel Aviv. That made deploying, managing, and recovering employee assets very difficult. We knew that if Firstbase could solve our problems there, they would be a viable solution to roll out across the entire company.

Firstbase took over managing assets for us in Israel, and the results were impressive. Next, we had them expand our partnership to the UK – another region outside the bounds of the EU where we had recently lost our European procurement specialist.

A Global Solution

After using Firstbase on a trial basis in both Israel and the UK with positive results, we felt confident expanding our partnership globally, across all New Relic regions.

Compared to other vendors we considered, the flexible pricing model that Firstbase offers sealed the deal. They also support every single region in which we have employees, granting us 100% global coverage.

Today, the relationship extends to every single New Relic employee and allows our lean IT team to stay successful and focus on strategic initiatives versus administrative checkboxes.

“The barrier to entry in new regions as we continue to grow and scale is much lower with Firstbase by our side than if it were us having to go alone.”

– [Thomas Olson](#) | Manager, IT Program Management, New Relic

IT Best Practices for Scaling Headcount and Expanding Internationally

IT leaders today should be forward-thinking when it comes to logistics at every stage. If your company is aggressively planning to scale headcount or take on new regions, you can set your IT team – and company – up for success when you proactively take steps to -

Focus on Compliance

Build Internal Relationships

Prepare for Expansion

Leverage Automation

Prepare for Expansion

It takes an average of 30 minutes to provision an employee laptop manually. Do the math to quickly gain a sense of how your IT team will be impacted if your company grows by a factor of X. When you implement the power of zero-touch provisioning, it immediately allows you to scale more quickly and efficiently.

For example, New Relic is currently looking at expanding into India. Having our laptops in a pending state ready to be configured before they even leave the box means a new employee can hit the ground running instead of spending time configuring their laptop – it all happens automatically.

Obviously, cost is a major factor in the decision to invest in a managed partner. You'll want to make sure that the value your company will attain will be worth the price tag of offloading managing assets. For New Relic, the selling point was that Firstbase offered scalable pricing. The more regions we turned on, the more we saved.



Build Internal Relationships

It's critical to have open lines of communication with finance, human resources, and legal so that you can accomplish everything from securing budget for new equipment to retrieving old equipment from former employees.

If you choose to run asset management on your own without leveraging a managed partner, this means being very high-touch and hands-on. Before partnering with Firstbase, our IT team was in constant communication with HR to ensure we knew when employees were entering or exiting the company. Then, we had to set aside time to engage in ongoing follow-ups with incoming and former employees to walk them through the process of receiving and returning equipment. Often the check-ins seemed neverending as we attempted to recover equipment from non-responsive employees.

Recovering and tracking equipment is also critical for successful finance relationships. Not only is there sensitive company data and intellectual property on each laptop, but those machines are fixed assets that live on your financial books. This means missing equipment poses both a security risk and a financial risk. At New Relic, we are fortunate that Firstbase shares our mantra on security, and today continues the recovery process on our behalf to ensure that every asset remains accounted for.

The approach above can work, but it hinges on a high degree of communication and efficient relationships between internal departments. When you streamline IT logistics using a managed partner, you free up time, attention, and resources for longer-term, higher-level, more impactful business strategy conversations.

Leverage Automation

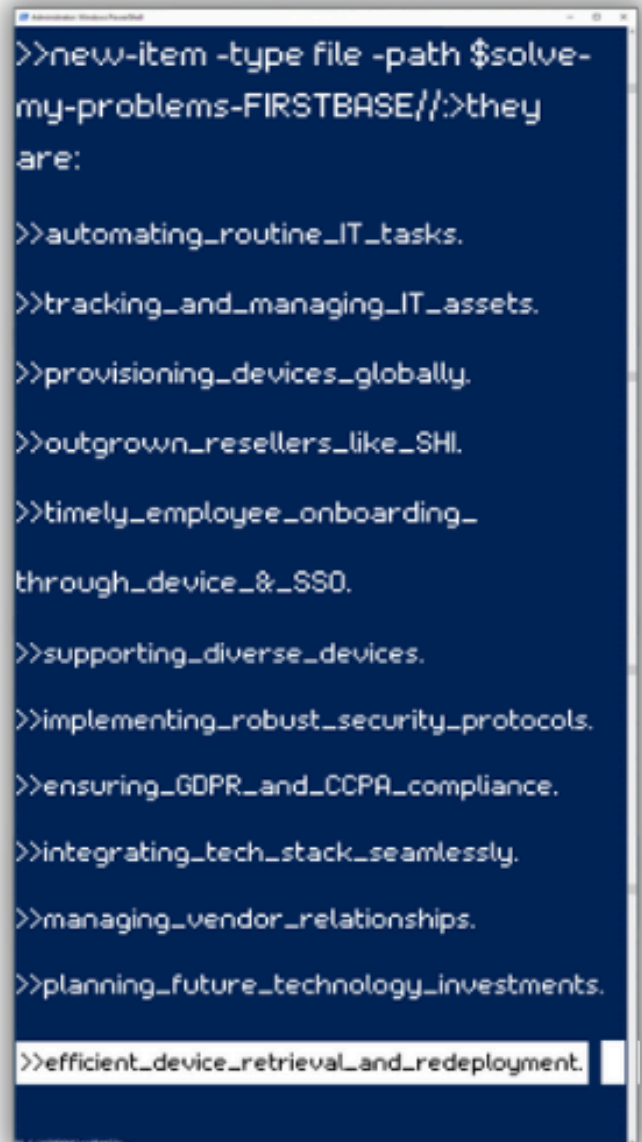
The more processes you can streamline, automate, and accomplish in fewer clicks, the better. Thanks to advances in technology, that is easier today than ever before. At New Relic, we are making strides with our initial implementation of Firstbase – and are still only scratching the surface of what’s possible.

Currently, we are in the process of implementing new hire automation with Firstbase. Soon, incoming employees will automatically get an email asking them to select their preferred laptop, monitor, mouse, and keyboard. This automated outreach will ensure that new hires get exactly what they need to be successful on their first day of work.

Similarly, navigating company expansion into new regions is vastly easier with Firstbase automation. Before, our team had to navigate country-specific customs rules and vet new IT vendors. With Firstbase, we're able to confirm they support the new region, sign an order form, and flip the switch to deploy hardware to the new country.

We also plan to use Firstbase to eliminate the \$20K per year we currently spend on Amazon Business to supply employees with IT hardware and peripherals. Where Amazon Business only supports select markets, Firstbase has a global reach.

Across the board, we’ve found that automating processes results in saved time, smoother processes, happier employees, and a lower barrier to entry to doing business in new regions.



“There's value to be gleaned from automating processes from both a headcount and operational overhead perspective – and also the value you're squeezing out of the assets that you're spending thousands of dollars on. Now, we're able to maximize that in having a centralized, full lifecycle management program in place with a platform like Firstbase.”

– [Thomas Olson](#) | Manager, IT Program Management, New Relic

Focus on Compliance

Security is critical for a company's well-being, and each piece of equipment you deploy represents a potential security liability. Then there are compliance factors to contend with. This is perhaps most critical at the tail end of the equipment lifecycle.

As a data company, New Relic houses sensitive data for thousands of companies. This means we need to contend with not just safeguarding employee data, but client data as well. That's why our biggest focus with Firstbase was to dial in asset disposal best practices.

For every employee laptop disposed of, our goal is to get a certificate of destruction. This feeds into our security benchmark goals and ensures we have the documentation we need from a compliance perspective.

With our Firstbase partnership, today our process follows the steps below:

- 1. Each laptop that we dispose of through Firstbase in turn goes to [Revivn](#), an E-waste provider**
- 2. If equipment is still usable, Revivn responsibly redeploys the assets to schools and communities**
- 3. We receive certificates of destruction from Firstbase at the time of disposal, or as equipment is wiped for re-use**

Our recommendation? Work with your security and InfoSec teams to identify your key compliance pillars. Then, carefully vet prospective asset management partners to gain assurance that your requirements will be met.

Asked to do more with less? **LEAN INTO IT**

Scaling a company always results in growing pains, and that's to be expected. The goal is to address those growing pains and prevent them from hindering your IT team and negatively impacting the organization as a whole.

When you optimize logistics across all stages of the IT lifecycle, you can ultimately accomplish more goals with fewer resources. In many cases, this requires establishing trusted systems and processes with a managed provider like Firstbase who can help you reign in your team's workload and rebalance your priorities.

We discovered that the more processes we automate and delegate, the more time we have for the meaty strategic endeavors that help our IT team – and our company – thrive.

Want to learn how you can master full lifecycle equipment management with Firstbase?

Whether you have 250 employees or over 5,000, discover how an integrated SaaS platform with a global physical operations engine can impact your organization.

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