Innovation in IT - Delivering Enterprise Solutions

by Bill Poston

One last thought on the subject of innovation in large-company information technology functions. Recently I wrote about the trend of business functions sidestepping the CIO and implementing cloud-based software-as-a-service solutions without the involvement of the IT function. The motivation may be based on costs, desire for speed, or simply frustration with IT in general.

No business leader wants to see their unit out at the end of a three-year implementation roadmap for a critical business system. Given the dynamic nature of the business system marketplace, a three-year program means that you will be implementing obsolete software by the time you get to the tail-end of your deployment schedule.

An alternative idea is for the corporate IT function to become a software-as-a-service provider. Instead of competing with and trying to block solution providers from selling to your business customers, maybe you should adopt the same strategy and develop solutions that can be deployed rapidly with little IT involvement.

Rather than spending enormous sums of money developing lowest-common-denominator solutions to meet the needs of diverse business units, we can invest in hosting a diverse portfolio of solutions that can be subscribed to by businesses based on their needs.

The reality is that there is no longer any competitive advantage to be gained from implementing enterprise software solutions. The only way to gain advantage is in the way those solutions are delivered to the business. If your competitor is spending $300 million over five years to deploy a system, how can you deliver the same or superior business capabilities in eighteen months for 20% of that investment? It can be done, but it requires an innovative approach to the delivery of technology.

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For the past 30 years, Bill has helped executives in technology-driven industries transform their competencies to deliver results. He is a highly regarded consultant, speaker, and writer on the topics of innovation strategy, product development, portfolio management, technology commercialization, and the software systems that enable innovation. Keep up with Bill’s latest research and thoughts on innovation and the rising role of the Chief Innovation Officer at www.TheChiefInnovationOfficer.com.