



## Change Management Strategy for Legacy IT Transformation

One of the biggest challenges facing IT executives and organizations trying to transform their legacy applications, infrastructure and operations is the resistance to change. In many cases, this resistance to change is likely justifiable for numerous reasons – shortage of time, skills, resources or perceived disruption to the business. More often than not though, the true cause of resistance is due to the “unknown” in terms of a lack of understanding of new technology and the state of poorly documented/understood applications, systems, dependencies and actual user experience.

The other big “unknown” is actually due to IT’s inability to step out of the box of solving today’s problem and create a proactive planning dialogue with the business that transforms the current relationship of support provider. In particular, a structured, open, frank mutual exchange about the current state of affairs – a scorecard of how each other is doing (as users or abusers and as suppliers or strategic partners); the current state of how the value chain of the business is executed against the technology platforms of applications, information and infrastructure components with their associated workloads.

From our experience, to address this dual challenge to implementing change and transforming legacy IT, firms need to employ both a top down and a bottom approach at the same time.

Top Down begins with an executive dialogue and exchange between IT and the business, to understand fact based, documented, natural language defined service requirements (the “what, who, how, where is expected by volume, loads, users, geography, business calendar, historical requirements, peaks & valleys, day in the life” etc...) with current operating level configuration of delivery AND their corresponding “gaps, misses, or just ain’t doin it for us feedback” in terms of performance, price and associated efficiency from the business. In return, IT should provide a similar, structured feedback as to gaps, misses or disruptive decision making that the business employs which creates documented examples of behavior that has an associated cause/effect which limits IT’s ability to deliver service that meets the needs of the business. (This is easier said than done, but it has been done. Moreover, this barrier must be broken at some point to ensure the value chain of business and IT is integrated properly and operating optimally.)

Bottom Up approaches that employ instrumentation, data gathering and analytics with objective, factual data captured, trended and documented in illustrative visuals will enable very powerful results. With real time user experience instrumentation firms can benchmark and identify true end to end quality of execution in terms of the IT components of the organization’s value chain. Using application mapping, discovery and dependency mapping tools, firms can capture critical knowledge of what actually exists, how it is connected across the digital value chain and where there are limitations, barriers or bottlenecks in terms of design. Tools that capture and correlate usage consumption of users and applications, infrastructure, etc... across factors of time, quantity, location, etc.. in a service unit like paradigm help create a clear understanding of waste, in appropriate design or poor management. Additionally, tools that can extend current systems management tools and correlate real time root cause, proactively identify upcoming problems and make sense out the chaos that exists in legacy IT platforms today can bring sanity to the change process.

This dual prong approach enables IT to remove or mitigate the obstacles of change –lack of transparency & alignment understanding between the business and IT AND lack of fact & data driven insight of the IT value chain and the cause/effect of how it delivers service.

The bottom line, if IT organizations want to be able to ensure alignment with the business, raise the profile of IT as a strategic partner and drive optimal efficiency, then it is our experience and recommendation that implementing such a dual strategy approach to change will have the most effective impact.

Posted by Tony Bishop on April 8, 2008 ([http://weblog.infoworld.com/real-time-enterprise/archives/2008/04/change\\_management.html?source=rss](http://weblog.infoworld.com/real-time-enterprise/archives/2008/04/change_management.html?source=rss))

