



Igniting innovation through business and IT fusion.

Part of the CIO Implications series

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Introduction

While business leaders in companies of every size and industry continue to look for ways to reduce costs and increase operational efficiency, their priorities have shifted. Today the emphasis is on top-line growth and on innovation as the means to achieve it. Business leaders know that sustained competitive advantage lies ahead for those who can rise above the status quo and seize opportunities to differentiate themselves from a growing field of competitors. They also recognize that for innovation to drive profitable growth over the long term, it cannot be a random event. Rather, innovation must be an ongoing process that is tightly woven into the cultural fabric of the organization, crossing all disciplines and encouraged at every level.

IBM’s Global CEO Study 2006 was conducted to understand how CEOs view innovation, to capture their current insights and to learn what is on their innovation agendas. It explored how these business executives are enabling innovation and where they are focusing their innovative energies. The study results contain important messages for all business leaders but should be of particular interest to CIOs, who have long been counted on to support and enable corporate innovation efforts.¹

The study indicates that CEOs are expanding the innovation horizon beyond the traditional focus. While invention, new product development and operational efficiency are still important, globalization, intensified competition and other market forces are necessitating innovation at a more fundamental level, compelling CEOs to rethink the very way they do business. These companies are being driven to find new ways of adding value to their industry and to others by changing their business models. CEOs believe that such business

Highlights

CEOs are looking to their CIOs to help execute the innovation agenda by successfully meshing IT's technology know-how with business intelligence and market insights.

model innovation is imperative for long-term competitive advantage and growth. Moreover, they see collaboration with external partners and customers as a major source of innovative ideas and would like to collaborate more broadly and frequently.

Key to unlocking these growth opportunities is an innovative culture that spans the entire organization and eliminates the infamous gap in alignment between business and information technology (IT). The majority of the CEOs interviewed for the study cited business and technology integration as essential to building such an innovative organization. And while CEOs acknowledge primary responsibility for fostering innovation, they are looking to their CIOs to execute their innovation agenda by successfully meshing IT's technological know-how with business intelligence and market insights. To this end, CIOs must be business executives first and technologists second as they lead the organization in applying technology to drive innovation.

This paper shows how the fusion of business and IT can help companies capitalize on their innovation potential. It discusses the current state of business and technology integration and suggests leadership actions that CIOs can take to further business and technology integration initiatives in their own organization.

Highlights

Most CEOs expect radical market and technological changes to drive positive improvements and innovation in their organization over the next two years.

The IBM Global CEO Study 2006

For the Global CEO Study, IBM surveyed 765 CEOs, business executives and public sector leaders on the subject of innovation. Study participants hailed from 20 different industries and 11 geographic regions, from mature markets and important developing markets, such as China, India, Eastern Europe and Latin America. They included business leaders from large and small companies, both public and privately held. The sizable and diverse survey population provided IBM with a wide array of perspectives and ideas, as well as substantial opportunities for analysis.

The study findings are based on in-depth interviews with this diverse group of CEOs. In 80 percent of the interviews, the CEOs' responses were delivered face-to-face. The remaining interviews were conducted by telephone. The CEOs were frank and passionate, exposing their concerns, their motivations and their plans for the future.

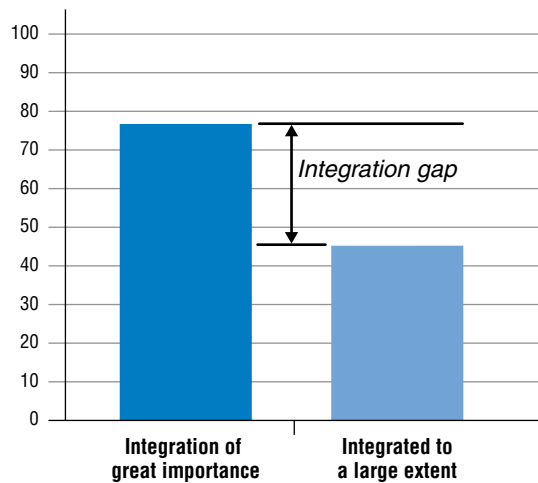
Two-thirds of the CEOs interviewed expect their organization to see radical market and technological changes over the next two years. Rather than being concerned about the potential impact of these changes, however, CEOs are viewing these changes as a positive challenge. They are seeing an opportunity to make needed improvements and differentiate their organizations. They recognize that the most successful organizations will lead through innovation, reinventing their business models to create new markets and meet untapped customer needs. They also recognize that business model innovation is not possible without a conducive atmosphere and that it is their responsibility to create such an environment.

Highlights

The large majority of CEOs are frustrated by their companies' inability to integrate business and IT to the desired extent.

Furthermore, CEOs realize that technology is increasingly becoming embedded in all business activities. In order to fully exploit their company's innovation potential, business leaders must be aware of the business potential of new technologies. Similarly, IT leaders must become more aware of the technology implications of current and emerging business opportunities and of changes in business strategy. However, the overwhelming majority of CEOs are challenged by the large gap that exists between their current and desired levels of business and technology integration.

Figure 1. Importance versus extent of business and technology integration
(Percent of respondents)

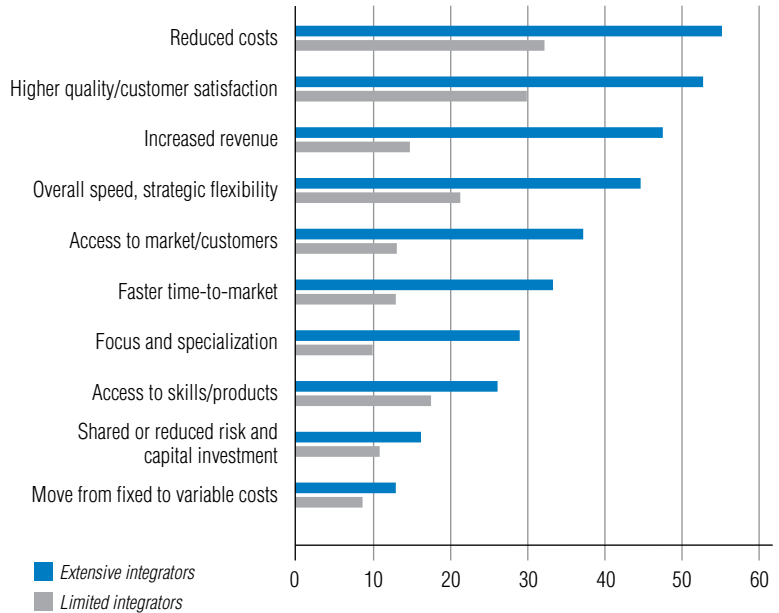


Highlights

Companies that have integrated business and IT extensively are seeing significant cost and operational benefits compared to their less integrated peers.

Nearly 80 percent of CEOs studied rated business and technology integration of “great importance,” while less than half felt that their organizations were “integrated to a large extent.” Most have simply been unable to integrate business and technology to the desired extent. These CEOs find the lack of integration to be a real source of frustration. Though they would like to improve the current situation, they feel unable to do so.

Figure 2. Benefits cited by extensive integrators versus limited integrators
(Percent of respondents)



Highlights

Language differences are largely responsible for the lack of integration between the business and IT communities.

It is clear that CEOs understand the advantages of a well-integrated operation, and so their frustration is well founded. Those whose organizations have achieved a high degree of business and technology integration reported significant benefits in cost savings and top-line revenue growth. CEOs in those companies cited greater customer satisfaction, strategic flexibility and faster time-to-market than their less integrated peers. They reported revenue increases three times as often as less integrated companies, and independent financial analysis, conducted as part of the Global CEO Study, showed similar results: companies that had integrated extensively grew revenue five percent faster than their competitors.

Integration starts with communication

In order to achieve integration, companies must abandon the notion of business-IT alignment and acknowledge that IT is business. Alignment fosters a reactive approach to doing business. That makes it fine for insourcing shared IT services but not for driving innovation and creative thought. Furthermore, alignment, by definition, perpetuates the separation of IT and business. In contrast, integration creates a unified whole and eliminates the lines of demarcation between IT and business.

While there are undoubtedly many causal factors responsible for the separation of business and IT, one fundamental reason is language. Quite simply, many IT leaders don't speak "business"; they speak technology. Business leaders, on the other hand, speak the language of the business. The combination leads to ineffective communication and can be a root cause of the less-than-optimal returns that many companies realize on their IT investments. Moreover, recent surveys by Gartner and McKinsey & Co. highlight the communication gap as a major reason for CEOs' dissatisfaction with IT.²

Highlights

CIOs can advance their company's innovation efforts by institutionalizing the use of a common business technology language within the IT organization.

For effective communication to occur, at least one party must learn to speak the language of the other. In the case of business and IT, both parties ultimately need to become conversant in a “business technology language” that integrates the two languages and is common to their industry ecosystem.

CIOs and other IT leaders can help advance their firm's innovation agenda by institutionalizing the use of a common business technology language within the IT organization. To accomplish this, however, they must learn to speak the language of the business and then integrate that business language with technology language in a meaningful way. CIOs must think in business terms. They must use metrics that are relevant to the business and that inform business leaders about how technology affects business operations. CIOs need to understand how technology is changing their industry, their competitive landscape and their customers' buying behaviors. With such business acuity, CIOs become positioned to ignite innovation by actively shaping their company's business strategy.

Many CEOs are already taking steps to bring a greater business understanding to IT. Increasingly, they are selecting CIOs who are educated in business practices, come from business positions and expect to return to business careers. CIOs, in turn, are taking steps to improve their ability to communicate by placing a higher priority on the role of business liaison. In a 2006 CIO Executive Board survey, CIOs ranked business liaison right after security as the IT function that is incurring the greatest number of staff increases.³

Highlights

***CIOs have a pivotal role to play
in transforming IT and enabling
the fusion of business and IT.***

Recommended leadership actions for CIOs

The innovative value of business and technology integration is both real and substantial. Technology is a catalyst for innovation, and innovation fuels business growth. To help their companies realize the promise of innovation, business leaders must view technological change as integral to strategy development discussions. CIOs can provide leadership in these discussions by analyzing the current business model through a technology lens. Such analyses make it possible for IT to recommend sound business model alternatives enabled by existing and emerging technologies.

This is the beginning of business and IT fusion, and CIOs have a pivotal role to play in advancing such efforts. They not only need to talk the business technology language, they need to help create a collaborative climate in which business and IT professionals regularly work together to generate new, innovative ideas. As their company's leading technology executive, CIOs are strategically positioned to be the stewards of this organizational transformation. Three leadership actions are recommended:

- *Operationalize business technology governance that promotes the use of technology for a broad mix of business innovation*
- *Build portfolio management competence to manage business technology investments and assets in accordance with strategic and operational priorities*
- *Infuse the IT organization with "hybrid" business skills that contribute to shared cognition.*

Highlights

Operationalize business technology governance

Governance has always existed in some form. The concept first emerged when people began organizing themselves for a common purpose. Governance models created business value by enabling them to effectively balance risk and return via collaboration and more structured, fact-based decision-making.

While a single, universally accepted definition of governance does not exist, one constant theme is present: ensuring that the power of the organization is harnessed for an agreed purpose. To this end, corporate governance provides the organizing logic that ensures the interests of each business unit and function (finance, legal, human resources and so on) are sufficiently accommodated and integrated to allow for productive collaboration and the efficient use of resources. This is how value is created, and those companies that govern well are rewarded with a market premium.⁴ Given the ascension of technology's role in today's business models and the resultant increase in IT spending, it is clear that business leaders are demanding more from IT. This trend necessitates better IT governance, and every company's governance framework must be extended to include the governance of IT resources.

Modern corporate governance has traditionally not encompassed IT governance, which can be defined as the distribution of IT decision rights, organizational structures and processes that ensure the efficient and effective use of IT resources in shaping and executing business strategy. IT governance frameworks have typically been defined and implemented separately from corporate governance frameworks. This duality has caused problems for the business, most notably in the form of weak returns on a company's IT investments. The response is often a renewed emphasis on business-IT alignment. However, as

The importance of technology in today's business models necessitates that corporate governance frameworks be extended to include the governance of IT resources.

Highlights

discussed earlier, chasing business-IT alignment only reinforces the separation of business and IT and is, therefore, fundamentally flawed. To escape this self-perpetuating cycle, a company's governance framework must integrate explicitly the use of IT resources for business innovation and value.

Business technology governance abandons the "we-they" divide and promotes a holistic and integrated view of a company's resources to respond to current and future business demands and competitive threats. Decisions about how technology is employed to create innovative IT-enabled business products and services must be made jointly by the parties most knowledgeable: business and IT professionals. Business professionals define, develop and produce products and services to address market and customer needs. IT professionals contribute insight to improve the methods used by the business to define, develop and produce, but also contribute to business innovations that embed technology into the final products and services. Effective business technology governance encourages such collaborative and integrated behaviors in daily operations and in strategic planning.

Effective business technology governance encourages collaboration and integration between business and IT.

Operationalizing business technology governance is therefore a fundamental business imperative for business innovation. The development of a business technology governance framework that integrates IT and business resources and establishes integrated accountability for the administration of those resources is a critical first step. CIOs are uniquely positioned to help the organization take this first step and to ultimately lead the organization in operationalizing that framework.

Highlights

IT can help drive changes in the current governance framework, ensuring that the business has the technology information needed to support its business cases and strategic plans.

IT can drive changes in governance

Though business leaders have an equal stake in the implementation of an integrated governance framework, IT leaders can take some specific steps to assure its success. They can foster integrated governance by:

- *Relating IT performance, risk and compliance metrics to specific business initiatives, processes, organizations and applications*
- *Evaluating the risk, return and cost objectives of each area of the business and tailoring the governance process appropriately*
- *Proactively visualizing and communicating information with the business in a way that is tailored to the needs of business decision-makers*
- *Reducing the overhead associated with collaborative and structured decision oversight through the use of governance process management tools*
- *Communicating current and future demand for all IT capabilities relative to industry trends and the organization's strategic business plans*
- *Creating and communicating a portfolio view of IT supply and demand that not only assesses the cost, risk and performance of IT capabilities, but also relates specific IT capabilities to current or new business capabilities for performance or compliance improvement*
- *Providing IT operational and financial data to strengthen the business case for innovation and advanced business capabilities*
- *Reducing the IT cost and risk associated with business cases by enabling tight integration of all subsidiary IT governance processes including development, change and security.*

The influence of the business technology governance framework must extend to every part of the organization, including the IT function. All IT professionals, from those in development to those in operations, must understand how

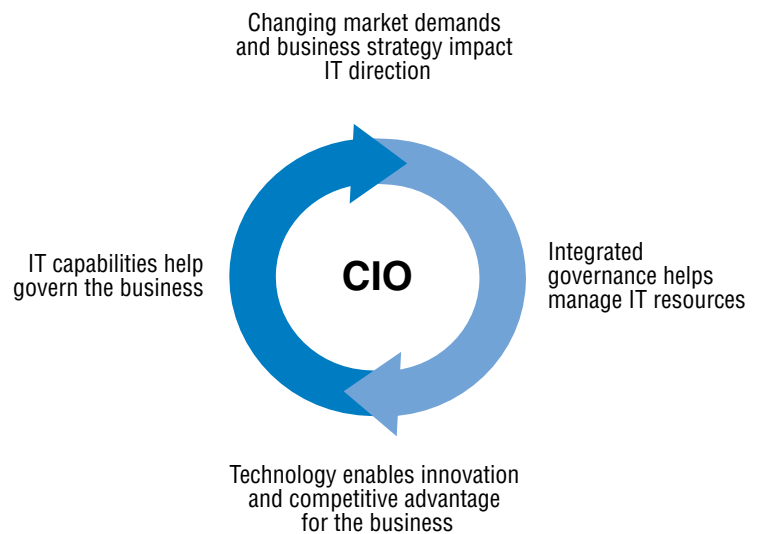
Highlights

to apply the framework’s principles to their daily activities. For companies pursuing a growth strategy, the prevailing logic emerging for business technology governance is characterized by a collaborative network structure that operates internally and with external partners.

IT should serve as a role model for the rest of the organization by transforming existing IT governance structures, such as steering committees, councils and boards, into collaborative governance structures that integrate business stakeholders into the decision-making process. The IT change management board, for instance, which should be part of any business technology governance framework, would involve both business experts and IT specialists in determining risk on the basis of technological and business factors. IT operations personnel must be guided by policies and procedures that reflect the distribution of decision authorities and the desired use of IT in the business technology framework. The business-focused CIO proactively brings IT capabilities to the corporate governance and strategic planning table in order to drive business innovation and growth.

To drive business innovation and growth, IT personnel should be guided by the policies and procedures inherent in the corporate governance model.

Figure 3. Fusion fosters business technology governance



Highlights

An effective portfolio management program takes on projects that maximize return on investment while maintaining an acceptable level of risk.

Promote the use of technology for business innovation

Business value and innovation are predictable outcomes of integrated governance. An integrated governance model helps drive a new level of productive collaboration between business and IT professionals. Such collaboration, to the extent it becomes routine, increases the organization's repository of knowledge with respect to the use of existing and emerging technologies for differentiation and competitive advantage. This is how technology ignites innovation – and ignites it in a way that is both continuous and relevant.

Build portfolio management competence

There are two ways to succeed in the business of IT: doing projects right and doing the right projects. Too often, the focus is on the former, with little or only initial attention paid to the latter. Good portfolio management requires both. Organizations must make investments in the projects that maximize business value and they must ensure that each project consumes resources efficiently. And they must see to it that the appropriate level of emphasis is placed on both throughout the life of the investment. An effective portfolio management program, therefore, helps companies decide how to best invest their resources for maximum gain and for a given level of acceptable risk. Additionally, an effective portfolio management program is one that is responsive to shifts in business demands and competitive dynamics, reallocating project funds quickly to address changing market needs.

Such a program “project-izes” the entire collection of resources available to the IT organization, including personnel, technology and budget, and then categorizes each project based on its primary objective: “run the business” or “grow the business.” Different risk and reward profiles characterize “run” and “grow” projects, and good portfolio management necessitates investments in

Highlights

Constructing an optimal portfolio depends on a company's ability to effectively meld business and technology know-how and balance competing objectives.

both. Projects designed to help the business “run” generate value by keeping the current business model operational and enhancing its efficiency. Projects designed to help the business “grow” are generally more risky because they generate value by expanding current business operations with new products and services or by entering new markets.

Certainly other portfolio categorization schemas can be used besides “run” and “grow,” as long as the one selected spans all IT resources and spending. Successful organizations aim to have a balanced portfolio of projects, categorized by varying levels of business innovation. The portfolio management team oversees all the resources comprising the portfolio. Similar to a financial fund manager, the portfolio management team manages the spread of projects across the investment categories in order to produce the greatest combined return with the minimum risk and exposure.

Enlist cross-functional teams

Constructing the optimal portfolio depends on the effective melding of business and technology knowledge. As a result, more effective portfolio management teams include both business and technology professionals. Together, the integrated portfolio management team must balance several competing and often conflicting factors, including the goals of individual business areas, limitations of current applications and infrastructure, the reality of resource constraints and the risks inherent in business and technology choices. Through ongoing dialogue and collaboration, the integrated team learns how to apply its collective wisdom to business problems and opportunities, and to place bets on “winners,” selecting projects that deliver maximum competitive value and innovations that really matter to the business.

Highlights

Savvy CIOs can provide the leadership to build the organizational structures and process disciplines required for effective business technology portfolio management. To succeed, portfolio management will need to become part of the organization's broader business technology governance framework. CIOs should enlist their organization's finance leaders (including leaders in risk management, controls and compliance, and planning and performance management) to jointly develop the processes and economic models that effective portfolio decision-making demands. This new level of partnership can be used to foster approaches that optimally balance risk and return, drive business performance and maintain compliance. It should also help CIOs ensure that decisions regarding the use of IT leverage the same financial discipline that is used in making resource decisions for the business. Moreover, it demonstrates how integrated governance can bring great practical value, especially in business cases for more innovative uses of IT. The IT and non-IT aspects of a project must be considered together. It would make no sense to justify an IT investment without considering the corresponding marketing, sales, service and support aspects of that investment.

IT professionals that have a blended knowledge base with sufficient business competencies are better equipped to deliver technology-enabled business services that positively impact top-line revenue.

Infuse the IT organization with "hybrid" business skills

IT organizations with the right mix of business and technology skills are better able to formulate technology strategies that address the specific needs of the business environment. Moreover, they are better equipped to execute successfully on such strategies, delivering innovative business services that positively impact top-line revenue. They become masters of change, rather than recipients of it.

Highlights

This blended knowledge base allows IT professionals to look at business artifacts, such as a balance sheet, elicit relevant trends and then collaborate on technology implications using business terms. IT can acquire this more well-rounded perspective by developing skills in both multidisciplinary and business competencies:

- *Multidisciplinary skills, such as leadership, communication, problem solving, project management and people management*
- *Business-specific skills, such as business planning, marketing, sales, finance, and an understanding of corporate strategy and business dynamics.*

In addition, industry knowledge or direct experience implementing projects in particular industry settings is seen as a distinct advantage. IT and business professionals alike need to understand how to make decisions within an industry context, especially if they are in leadership roles.

Become a business partner

Any successful business has to understand its value chain and proactively respond to market demands and competitive threats with appropriate operational changes, service enhancements and differentiating innovations. For IT, that means taking a more serious look at the external forces that are shaping the business and the industry, and then making the changes needed to generate value. It also means taking a business approach to customers and suppliers by providing better relationship management and skin-in-the-game accountability:

Better relationship management and accountability to customers and suppliers are essential to generating new value in response to market demands.

Highlights

- **Customers.** *Customers are the business units and individuals within the enterprise who buy services and have specific near- and long-term requirements that need to be satisfied at a reasonable price. When IT runs like a business, its market segments must be identified, services marketed, prices negotiated and “contracts” managed. Post-sales support and product improvement are part of the services lifecycle and should not be shortchanged.*
- **Suppliers.** *Suppliers are the internal organizations, external vendors and collaborative groups (such as open source communities) that feed the “business of IT” design. Competence in supply chain management is an important determinant of business value. IT leaders must balance suppliers’ delivery costs and quality with customers’ demands and needs.*
- **External factors.** *IT leaders must stay on top of changing regulations, technology advances and adoption, security threats and the emergence of alternative business models (such as software as a service). They must continually evaluate the impact of external factors like these and use that knowledge to shape the “business of IT” business model.*

IT organizations need to adopt a business perspective and operate like a business to build credibility with the business community.

Adopting a business perspective and operating under a business-oriented model builds IT’s credibility with the business. CIOs must take the lead in IT’s business makeover, helping the organization understand that IT is one with the business and must be governed and managed in harmony with business practices.

Build business understanding and hybrid skills

Building the hybrid business skills needed to increase business insight is essential to IT’s business transformation. To serve as an effective role model for the enterprise, IT professionals need to demonstrate an understanding of the business relevance of current and emerging technologies. To accomplish this, they must engage collaboratively to identify and act on opportunities for business innovation that truly drive growth and operational excellence.

Highlights

Component business modeling can help IT professionals see IT through a business lens and, thus, build business understanding.

CBM-BoIT enables IT leaders to understand which IT operations drive the most value for the business and which have the highest potential for productivity gains.

Some organizations are turning to “component business modeling” techniques to help build business understanding.⁵ The process decomposes an enterprise into well-bounded, discrete business “components,” or activities, that produce identifiable business value. This type of analysis enables companies to understand the resources, technologies and know-how that constitute a given component and that are required by that component in order to deliver value. It results in a framework which identifies the core components that differentiate the business and enables the organization to assess cost and staffing tradeoffs relative to the effectiveness and business value of each component. As well, the framework is a key communication vehicle for helping the business understand the extent to which technology enables the business model.

IBM Component Business Model™ for the Business of IT (CBM-BoIT) leverages component business modeling for the purpose of improving the value that the IT organization contributes to the business. It is also an important tool in helping the IT professional community deepen its business knowledge because CBM-BoIT looks at the IT function through a business lens. IT leaders are able to understand which IT operations drive the most business value and which IT operations have the highest potential for productivity gains. Company leaders can then manage the business technology portfolio more effectively and make smarter investment decisions with less risk.

CBM-BoIT enables companies to assess their competency in managing the business of IT across numerous activity dimensions:

- *Long-term strategic activities, like service delivery and IT support strategies*
- *Short-term tactical activities, like financial management and information resource management*
- *Day-to-day activities, like staff administration and solution maintenance.*

Highlights

Business-based technology fluency is increasingly the distinctive characteristic of top-tier companies.

CBM-BoIT can also help companies determine where hybrid business skills are needed most. Such skills should be strong for the components that are core to the business. For example, if regulatory compliance is determined to be imperative to expanding a company's customer base, then the IT organization needs to stay abreast of the latest mandates and understand the implications for the systems and applications that underpin the business model. Having this knowledge enables IT professionals to provide valuable insights on initiatives targeted for customer base expansion.

Hybrid skills can also be acquired by leveraging the knowledge that exists across the enterprise. IT personnel who work directly with different business units can gain a good understanding of associated business challenges and are more likely to uncover ways to identify technology-enabled business innovation. IT leaders should see that there is a mechanism for sharing this knowledge across the entire IT professional community. To this end, more effective collaboration channels and forums within the IT organization also play a key role in building hybrid business skills.

Become a fountainhead for innovation

The shift to integrate business and technology know-how is one of the most profound developments in the history of both IT and business management. Two decades ago IT professionals were not expected to be knowledgeable business partners, nor were business students expected to devote any time to understanding technology. The environment has changed dramatically on both sides. Today master of business administration (MBA) programs are focused heavily on technology, and IT professionals are earning MBA degrees in record numbers.

Highlights

CIOs have a major opportunity to champion their companies' business and technology integration initiatives.

Business-based technology fluency is increasingly the distinctive characteristic of the top-tier companies. IT organizations that do it well are developing innovations that are precisely on-target with business and market needs. As a result, these IT organizations are making important contributions to the transformation of the enterprise and, in some cases, the entire industry.

Consider electronic commerce and online auctions. Both of these technology-based business innovations have answered an array of consumer and business needs, including greater convenience and efficiency, but, in addition, they have literally changed the way in which business is conducted. Such novelties exemplify how the fusion of business and IT can be a fountainhead for innovation that maximizes business value.

Conclusion

Innovation leadership relies on the integration of business and technology. Technological know-how is the fuel that facilitates and drives innovation, and it must be combined with business and market insights in order to produce innovation that matters to the business.

IBM's Global CEO Study 2006 offers strong evidence to support the importance of business and technology integration. CEOs understand the financial and operational rewards of integration and are, in general, dissatisfied with their organization's current level of integration. They are looking to their CIOs to turn this around.

Toward that end, CIOs have a major opportunity to champion integration initiatives for the organization. A critical first step is to promote and practice effective communications using a common business technology language.

Highlights

CIOs can drive the fusion of business and IT and, thereby, drive their companies' innovation and growth.

Effective communication provides the foundation for undertaking three leadership actions that can ignite innovation through business and IT fusion and, thereby, drive growth:

- ***Operationalize business technology governance that promotes the use of technology for a broad mix of business innovation.*** CIOs should orchestrate the design and adoption of an integrated governance model that promotes the effective use of IT—across the organization and from top to bottom.
- ***Build portfolio management competence to manage business technology investments and assets in accordance with strategic and operational priorities.*** Using a holistic approach to manage the business technology portfolio, organizations are better able to maximize resource efficiency while simultaneously optimizing their return on investment.
- ***Infuse the IT organization with hybrid business skills that contribute to shared cognition.*** Game-changing technology innovations require strong business technology management acuity. IT leaders are perfectly positioned to be role models for their organization.

For more information

For further details about the Global CEO Study 2006 or to learn how IBM is working with organizations around the world to help them become more innovative, visit:

ibm.com/innovation

To speak with an IBM representative in your region or industry, send an e-mail to:

CIOAgenda@us.ibm.com

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