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What's IT Worth?

Emtec consulting group helps Axcan gain both insight and foresight into tech spending.

Technology is clearly critical to modern business, but organizations have historically been frustrated in their attempts to quantify the value of their IT investments. Many executives have come to regard the notion of IT value measurement as an essentially impossible proposition, much like time travel, perpetual motion and sneezing with your eyes open.

However, Axcan Pharma ("Axcan") is convinced the task not only is possible but essential to its future growth. With assistance from Emtec, Inc.'s subsidiary KOAN-IT, the multinational pharmaceutical company is gaining unprecedented insight into its IT spending while developing a definitive strategy for aligning IT with its operational and business objectives.

Axcan is an international company with offices in the U.S., the European



Union and Canada. The company employs more than 500 people worldwide. The company develops and markets a broad line of prescription products to treat a range of gastrointestinal diseases and disorders. In February 2008, Axcan went private after having been acquired by TPG Capital. The acquisition was the first step in a multi-year growth strategy designed to help the company increase market penetration of its existing products, develop new products and seek suitable acquisitions.

Information, Please

As part of this effort, the company embarked upon a comprehensive review of its IT infrastructure. Axcan has always employed a somewhat "virtual"

approach to business technology, with IT management-level staff in all locations but a heavy dependence on outsourced services. As such, it was imperative to have an extensive assessment of its key outsource provider to ensure it could keep pace as Axcan moves forward.

"I would say we depend on outsourced services for about 80 percent of our IT needs," said Jean Morin, Senior Director of Information Technology and Solutions, Axcan. "Having such a heavy dependence on outsourcing, it is important for us to be sure we can rely on our vendor and that we're going in the same direction. We had some concerns about the levels of contractual obligation the vendor had with us, and we needed to be sure they would be able to grow with us through our next acquisition."

Axcan knew that traditional metrics such as uptime and application response times wouldn't provide the type of business-centric information necessary to make an informed decision about its outsourcing arrangement. That's why Morin and IT Service Delivery Manager, Gilles Hébert, began looking for a partner with the tools and expertise to aggregate all of the typical IT-centric measurements and present them in an easy-to-understand format for business unit executives and end-users.

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IT THE WAY IT'S MEANT TO BE

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Managed Services on the Rise

Almost 20 percent of IT professionals are purchasing more managed services as a result of current economic conditions, according to a recent survey by Forrester Research. Forty-seven percent of enterprise and 37 percent of small to midsize business (SMB) respondents say that they have already purchased managed or outsourced telecommunication services.

However, the motivations behind the adoption of managed services have changed, the research firm says. In past years, the top reason was cost savings. Today, both enterprises and SMBs say they are motivated to use managed services in order to focus on their core business competencies and not just keeping the network running. Improving business agility is another key factor.

"While the down environment is making most technology areas suffer, managed services is getting a boost as firms look for more flexible payment models that limit capital expenditure but also can keep them current with technology changes that help their firm," said Ellen Daley, vice president and research director at Forrester. "This further accelerates an industry move to a more flexible services model for fulfillment of telecom, network and IT technology changes."

Telecommuting Benefits

More companies are evaluating a telecommuting strategy to save costs and lower carbon emissions as well as to retain top talent. A recent Cisco survey of almost 2,000 company employees highlights the gains that a sound telecommuting strategy provides for employees and employers alike.

The average Cisco employee now telecommutes two days per week. A majority of respondents experienced a significant increase in work-life flexibility, productivity and overall satisfaction as a result of their ability to work remotely. Sixty percent of the time saved by telecommuting is spent working and 40 percent is spent on personal time.

Approximately 69 percent of the employees surveyed cited higher productivity when working remotely, 75 percent said the timeliness of their work improved, and 67 percent said their overall work quality improved when telecommuting. Eighty-three percent said their ability to communicate and collaborate with co-workers was the same as, if not better than, it was when working on-site.

Cisco calculates that its teleworkers prevented approximately 47,320 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions in 2008 due to avoided travel. Cisco employees report a fuel cost savings of \$10.3 million per year due to telecommuting.

CRM Market Grows

Worldwide CRM market revenue totaled \$9.15 billion in 2008, a 12.5 percent increase from 2007 revenue of \$8.13 billion, according to Gartner. Analysts said that market growth was driven by enterprise investments in technologies focused on customer retention, analytics and on-demand solutions.

Software as a Service (SaaS) continued to drive the market forward, representing nearly 20 percent of total CRM software market revenue in 2008, up from just over 15 percent in 2007. Interest in social networking and social software also escalated.

Overall market share of each CRM subsegment shifted slightly in 2008, with sales remaining the largest subsegment, representing 42.8 percent of the market and enjoying the highest growth of 14.7 percent. Marketing automation also continued to grow in 2008, with a 10.4 percent increase, representing 20.6 percent of the CRM market.

Cover Story

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"We talked to four or five companies to help us evaluate our outsourcer, and we went with KOAN-IT based on the level of detail they provided, their VBM methodologies based on value, and the credibility of their resources," said Morin. "What impressed us was the number of subject-matter experts they could bring to bear on this project. It wasn't going to be just one person sent on-site to do the job. Of course, we had a key contact, Renée-Claude Lafontaine, who made management of the project easier, but KOAN-IT also had a team of subject matter experts with expertise in a variety of areas — from contracts and help desk processes to staffing levels and disaster recovery — that ensured all aspects of this project were properly addressed."

Planning Ahead

The KOAN-IT team headed by Renée-Claude Lafontaine, IT strategic value consultant, began by soliciting proposals from a half-dozen other IT solution providers in order to develop benchmarks for assessing Axcan's outsourcing partner. These concrete measurements of services, including key cost and quality metrics, provided the rationale for Axcan's eventual decision about its IT strategy. In addition, KOAN-IT provided a detailed report describing the pros and cons of four possible scenarios: engage a new provider, bring all IT functions in-house, renew its contract with the current provider on a short-term basis, or renew on a long-term basis with contingencies for a range of improvements and investments to be made by the current provider.

Axcan ultimately chose the fourth option.

"KOAN-IT helped us identify and confirm what we were looking for," said Morin. "We knew going in that the level of maturity of our outsourcer wasn't very high when it comes to the ability to produce formal documents and agreements on the services. But it was also clear that our outsourcer was extremely dedicated to helping us.

"This assessment confirmed for us that in the short term, were we are better positioned staying with our existing partner because they have extensive understanding of our technical environment and there will be no significant impact on end-users. However, if we were to double the size of our workforce through a merger or acquisition, our outsourcer would need to expand to support us. KOAN-IT helped us develop a performance-improvement plan in conjunction with our provider to address the weak components of our current service offerings and plan for future growth."

Making a List

The key improvement has been the development of a detailed IT service catalog, which is essentially a database or structured document that ideally should describe all live IT services, including information about deliverables, service levels, staffing levels, prices, contact points, ordering and requesting services. Morin admits that the previously "loose" relationship between Axcan and its outsource provider did include a catalog but not with much detail.

"We basically had an agreement with about 20 lines of defined services, which really were only very conceptual ideas about servers, desktops, monitoring and a few specific applications," said Morin. "A lot of services were being supplied, but we couldn't tell which ones were included in the catalog and which ones we should be billed extra for."

KOAN-IT has counseled the provider in how to develop a user-friendly catalog in which IT services and processes are described in terms end-users can understand, written in non-technical terminology, and address immediate concerns or needs. The catalog now has grown to more than 150 detailed services, grouped logically in user-related, infrastructure-related and project-related services.

"Now we have access to a stronger, more efficient service catalog," said Hébert. "With this, we have a clearer picture of the IT services we're offering to our users, so we're able to measure the value associated with it."

Identifying Value

As the catalog grows and Axcan gains more insight into the cost and value of its IT services, the company is moving closer to what KOAN-IT calls Value-Based Management (VBM). Today's businesses need IT departments that are business partners rather than merely service providers. KOAN-IT's VBM approach is designed to give IT managers the ability to demonstrate value to the business in terms of performance, cost and risk.

As a supplementary element of this project, KOAN-IT has introduced Axcan to its four-step methodology for creating a VBM. These steps include understanding business goals and assessing the availability of metrics and data, creating a structured model that includes performance expectations and budgets, gathering data and populating the value model with the data.

"With this concept of value-based management and the value chain, we're able to create a more strategic view of IT," said Morin. "We're improving things, but we're also developing the ability to look forward. When you look at our alignment of services now, we describe subcomponents and multiple connections to other services. We have the ability to rate our services as good, fair or poor based on feedback. Now if management wants to go in a certain direction, I have the ability to identify the services IT needs to provide, whether that service needs improvement and where I need to shift my focus. With the tools KOAN-IT has given us, I have a roadmap for continuous improvement. We can clearly identify the additional costs required to improve on any given area and we have specific reference points for precisely describing the impact to the organization.

"Emtec (KOAN-IT) is helping us realize our strategic plan — to evolve our IT division from someone who just delivers PCs or support to an integral part of organization bringing solutions and strategies that truly accelerate corporate strategy and goals. We are changing the value of IT to our organization."

Old Threat Makes Comeback

Experts say surge in SQL injection attacks an indication of widespread flaws in basic Web application security.

A network of hacked computers that went quiet after being used to infect tens of thousands of Web pages with malware in mid-2009 suddenly became active again in October, several security experts confirmed. The ASProx botnet is the delivery vehicle for what the ScanSafe security firm describes as a "potent Trojan cocktail consisting of backdoors, password stealers and downloaders."

What is particularly disturbing about ASProx is its attack mechanism — SQL injection. Used by cybercriminals for more than 10 years, SQL injection is one of the oldest forms of Web application attacks around. Nevertheless, there has been an unusually large increase in the number of SQL injection attacks over the past two years.

SQL injection attacks exploit Web application coding flaws to compromise

widely used back-end databases and steal important information or introduce malicious code. Although the methodology is well understood, SQL injection attacks in recent years have successfully compromised such sensitive Web sites as the Department of Homeland Security, the United Nations and the U.K. government, along with many other high-profile attacks against banks, security companies and retailers.

Easy Pickings?

According to the IBM X-Force research and development team, SQL injection attacks jumped 134 percent in 2008 and another 96 percent in the second quarter of 2009 to replace cross-site scripting as the predominant type of Web application threat. Security vendor Breach Security agrees that the use of SQL injection to plant malware on target Web sites

is now the leading attack method for online criminals, with more than 500,000 successful such attacks last year.

"The purpose of these automated attacks is to deceive and redirect Web surfers to Web browser exploit toolkits," said Kris Lamb, senior operations manager, X-Force Research and Development for IBM Internet Security Systems. "This is one of the oldest forms of mass attack still in existence today. It is staggering that we still see SQL injection attacks in widespread use without adequate patching almost 10 years after they were first disclosed. Cybercriminals target businesses because they provide an easy target to launch attacks against anyone that visits the Web."

Web sites are often the Achilles' heel of corporate IT security because they provide a public-facing gateway to back-end networks and data. Unfortunately, many organizations are using off-the-shelf Web applications that are riddled with known vulnerabilities or custom applications that can have numerous unknown vulnerabilities that can't be patched. According to the X-Force team, more than half of all vulnerabilities disclosed are related to Web applications, and of these more than 74 percent have no patch.

Simple but Serious

SQL injection is not a particularly sophisticated attack method, but its simplicity is the key to its prevalence. Any online application that uses a back-end SQL database server, accepts user input, and dynamically forms queries using that input is a potential target. It doesn't matter if the database is Oracle, Microsoft Access, MS SQL Server, MySQL or Filemaker Pro, because all use SQL (structured query language) to manipulate and retrieve data.

Browser-based forms that accept input, such as log-in pages, are essentially executing code to pass information to the database server. SQL injection attacks exploit poorly coded Web applications that allow SQL commands to be "injected" into the user input fields. The right command can trick the Web application into running unauthorized queries against its back-end database, thus giving an attacker complete control of the database to steal or alter its contents.

To mitigate SQL injection attacks, organizations should use a layered approach to secure Web applications and their associated databases. The first layer is patching servers, databases, programming languages and operating systems on a regular basis. Web application firewalls and intrusion prevention software are additional layers of defense. Security experts also recommend performing thorough audits of Web sites and Web applications to discover SQL injection vulnerabilities. Tools for analyzing source code to identify flaws, detect infections and suggest mitigation include:

HP Scrawl: This free scanner from HP will crawl a URL for hyperlinks in order to build up a site tree and then test all discovered links for SQL injection by sending HTTP requests containing SQL injection attack strings in querystring parameters. Any pages found to be vulnerable will be reported, along with the associated input field.

UrlScan: This free tool from Microsoft intercepts every HTTP request a Web server receives, scans for anything unusual and blocks harmful requests from reaching applications. Multiple UrlScan instances can be installed as site filters, each with its own configuration and logging options.

Microsoft Source Code Analyzer for SQL Injection: This stand-alone tool scans source code, identifies flaws that can lead to SQL Injection vulnerabilities and generates an output that displays the coding issue. This is particularly useful during the development phase, before a Web application is put into production.

For years, most organizations have concentrated their security efforts on the network perimeter. The sudden rise in SQL injection attacks on known vulnerabilities seems a clear indication that Web applications, which are easy to deploy and update, have not been subjected to the same rigorous testing more ubiquitous applications.

"The security industry has long been centered on network security, but the security focus is shifting," said Frost & Sullivan research analyst Chris Rodriguez. "Organizations are recognizing Web applications and other custom applications are not secure and represent a dangerous point of attack."

Social Networking Scams Surging, FBI reports

The FBI warns that there has been an increase in the hijacking of social networking accounts, citing a growing number of reports to the Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) about cybercriminals hijacking accounts and sending out distress messages claiming they are in some sort of legal or medical peril and requesting money from their social networking contacts.

So far, nearly 3,200 cases of account hijackings have been reported to the IC3 since 2006.

Cyber thieves are also using spam to promote phishing sites, claiming a violation of the terms of service agreement or creating some other issue which needs to be resolved. Other spam entices users to download an application or view a video. Some of these messages appear to be sent from friends, giving the perception of legitimacy. Once the user responds to

a phishing site, downloads an application, or clicks on a video link, the electronic device they're using becomes infected.

Some applications advertised on social networking sites appear legitimate but install malicious code or rogue anti-virus software. These empty applications can give cyber criminals access to your profile and personal information. These programs will automatically send messages to your contacts, instructing them to download the new application too.

Infected users are often unknowingly spreading malware by having links to infected websites posted on their webpage without the user's knowledge. Since the e-mail or video link appear to be endorsed by a friend, social networking contacts are more likely to click on these links.

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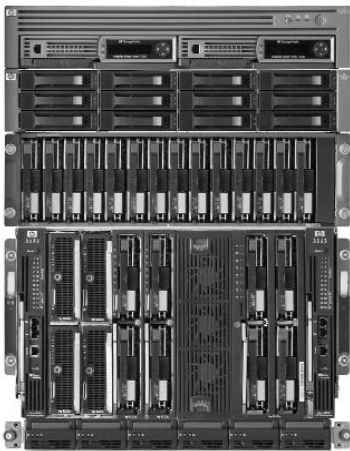
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Serving Up Cost Savings

The data center can be the source of budgetary relief with these seven cost-saving strategies.

Faced with budget cuts, IT managers often wonder how they can reduce costs and still support the business. According to Gartner, the data center is the first place they should look. Whether the data center consists of a couple of servers in a closet or a vast facility filled with gear, it can be the source of substantial cost savings that can help IT managers resolve conflicting budget and service-level requirements.

"While responding to contracting budgets, IT managers are expected to deliver an ever-increasing level of service to users, and many are charged with showing tangible financial savings as part of cost-cutting measures," said Rakesh Kumar, research vice president at Gartner. "Significant savings can be made in the data center. For example, removing a single x86 server will result in savings of more than \$400 a year in energy costs alone."

Gartner has identified seven effective ways organizations can reduce costs in the data center over a 12- to 18-month period.

1. Rationalize the Hardware.

Hardware rationalization will result in savings in several areas. First, it will help with asset and inventory management and provide a clear picture of the boxes that are being used effectively and those that are not. Second, server rationalization should lower maintenance and support charges. Third, server rationalization will lower energy costs, typically more than \$400 per server, per year. Finally, hardware rationalization projects usually yield savings of 5 percent to 10 percent of the overall hardware costs, when measured post project.

2. Consolidate Data Center Sites.

Most organizations still have multiple data centers for their IT operations, ranging from large complex installations to small machine rooms. Consolidating these multiple sites into a smaller number of larger sites will often result in financial savings. Such economies go beyond real estate savings and include getting rid of redundant IT assets, software, maintenance and support, and disaster recovery contracts. While these projects often result in reducing the number of data center operational staff needed, Gartner advises users not just to get rid of people but to retrain them to fill skill gaps in other parts of the data center or wider IT organization. Site consolidation can typically result in savings of between 5 percent and 15 percent of the overall data center budget.

3. Manage Energy and Facilities Costs.

Energy costs are rising for most data centers because the energy consumption of the underlying hardware continues to increase as new technologies, such as blade servers, are more widely used. As floor space runs out, more hardware is crammed into the space, thus requiring higher levels of cooling. Gartner recommends employing the following tools and techniques to manage the energy cost curve: raise the temperature of the data center to 24 degrees Celsius to reduce the level of cooling required; use outside/free air as an alternative to expensive air conditioning; use hot aisle/cold aisle configurations, blank-

ing panels and economizers; and use server-based energy management software to run workloads in the most energy-efficient way, such as taking advantage of lower energy tariffs.

4. Renegotiate Contracts. Data center managers must work with finance and procurement teams to revisit all hardware, lease, software, maintenance and support contracts. In some cases, it may be appropriate to terminate a contract because it's too expensive, while in others, new terms and conditions may secure a lower payment schedule. Vendors are used to reviewing contracts during downturns.

5. Manage People Costs. People costs still form the largest single cost element for most data centers, sometimes running as high as 40 percent of the overall costs. Gartner advises IT managers to review staffing levels and the types of skills needed for the next 24 months and make adjustments accordingly.

6. Sweat the Assets. Delaying the procurement of new assets should be considered a necessary step for all data

center managers. This may result in a performance disadvantage and possibly an energy use increase but will defer the capital expense of a new acquisition. Users should negotiate on maintenance and support costs in such instances, as well as ensuring that software is still supported on servers whose working life is being extended.

7. Use Virtualization. Virtualization of hardware should be encouraged to improve operational efficiency, as well as to support consolidation, decommissioning and cost-management programs. For most organizations, the net benefits will include a smaller hardware estate, which, in turn, will mean lower operating and depreciation costs and less-expensive maintenance and support. Virtualization is also a good way to control energy costs. Although virtualization involves license and project costs, organizations can expect to see net savings within 24 months, and the effective use of virtualization can reduce server energy consumption by as much as 82 percent and floor space by as much as 86 percent.

Cloud Computing Helps Cut Data Center Costs

Top-performing companies that have adopted cloud computing have reduced IT costs 18 percent and data center power consumption by 16 percent, according to a new study by Aberdeen Group.

The new report, "Business Adoption of Cloud Computing: Reduce Cost, Complexity and Energy Consumption," examined the business adoption of cloud computing of 184 organizations, including small to midsize businesses and large enterprises. The survey revealed the top business pressures driving the adoption of cloud computing include:

- Overall cost of IT infrastructure
- Need to enhance competitive advantage
- Lack of flexibility in the current IT environment
- Need to support additional services or users

"Small businesses and startups are adopting cloud computing to break down traditional technological and financial barriers in the delivery of new categories of software innovation," said Aberdeen Group Research Director Bill Lesieur.

"Larger businesses are cutting costs with cloud computing while embarking on a transformation of their IT service delivery models based on SOA architectures and cloud computing."

Survey results show top performing organizations shared several common characteristics, including:

- 77 percent monitor cloud applications for efficiency and use
- 75 percent have a cloud team or task force
- 69 percent use a formal cloud evaluation process
- 62 percent have a formal education plan for training cloud team

Cloud computing is changing the role of IT from predominantly one of maintenance to one that enables innovation through the new service delivery model of cloud services. Consequently, top companies are realizing the critical need to establish a governance model around service-oriented architectures and cloud-based service delivery.

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Knowledge Is Power

Business intelligence can help organizations of all sizes leverage data to boost revenue and profits.

It's been said that organizations are drowning in information but starving for knowledge. Organizations today collect enormous amounts of data from numerous sources, but the problem is how to turn that information into insight.

For example, businesses have spent billions on enterprise resource planning and customer relationship management applications only to find that these systems collect data wonderfully but tend to produce reports that nobody wants to read. In an attempt to make sense of the data stuck in these big-ticket enterprise systems, many organizations have invested heavily in business intelligence (BI) software.

BI software is designed to give an organization the ability to extract meaning from its data. With these tools, companies can mine the raw data they obtain from multiple sources to expose patterns of customer behavior and make informed business decisions. This insight into market trends and customer habits can help companies identify cost-cutting ideas, uncover new business opportunities, develop crossover sales leads, react quickly to retail demand, optimize prices and more.

Think Big

The value of a well-conceived BI strategy is becoming more evident in all organizations, but particularly in small to mid-size business (SMBs), according to a recent report by Aberdeen Group. With the emergence of Software as a Service (SaaS), open source BI, and other on-demand approaches, the analytical firepower that was once reserved for the heaviest wallets in the industry is now available to smaller and more resource-conscious organizations.

"Many companies, particularly smaller organizations, suffer from a lack of transparency when it comes to the key aspects of their business that drive performance. As a result, data shows that SMBs are turning to BI in order to improve visibility into these business processes," explains Michael Lock, research analyst

for business intelligence at Aberdeen Group.

In the past, BI software was of limited usefulness to those outside of IT departments. BI tools focused on querying, reporting and multi-dimensional analysis on top of a data warehouse were too complex, costly and disengaged from everyday software tools to provide much help to the average end-user. By treating business intelligence as a set of technologies rather than an essential business process, organizations tend to create increasingly complex systems that fail to meet user needs.

Today, business intelligence is evolving as a platform not just for the IT department, but for everyone else. The latest BI applications give everyone in the organization access to simple tools that allow them to utilize analytics, alerts and feedback mechanisms to improve individual performance. In such an environment, critical data that once was available only to corporate analysts can be placed into the hands of business users throughout the organization, giving them direct access to information they can use to make better decisions, create more effective plans, and respond more quickly to problems and opportunities.

Tools You Can Use

Aberdeen Group collected data from 530 SMB organizations globally and found that these companies are exploring a multitude of deployment options for BI in order to affect more functions within the organization as well as more job roles within each function. Leading SMBs were able to implement their BI solutions in an average of 14 days, enabling them to expend fewer resources to deploy and manage the BI solutions, and to reduce the total cost of ownership of their BI strategy.

The research firm also found that 99 percent of top-performing organizations were able to deliver BI to their employees in a self-service, non IT-assisted capacity, helping improve adoption of the tools and spread them throughout the organization. By leveraging a simultaneously tactical and strategic approach to BI, these SMBs

were able to spread BI across their organizations in order to produce substantial revenue and profit growth.

Some BI software packages now include simple query and analysis tools that allow users to extract business information and answer ad hoc questions themselves, without advanced knowledge of the underlying data sources and structures. For example, a user might type in simple yet extremely practical questions such as "Who are my top customers?" or "Which are my most profitable stores?" and receive the answers quickly through an uncomplicated interface. The data can then be displayed in a basic table or pushed to an Excel spreadsheet.

Interactive visual models allow anyone to quickly turn ordinary spreadsheets into engaging business presentations with dynamic charts and graphs. Performance management products help users track and analyze key business metrics via management dashboards, scorecards, analytics and alerting.

Information is power — that has been the promise of IT for a long time, but it is not delivered very often. Rarely do organizations have tools that business users can actually use. However, the migration toward self-service business intelligence will allow organizations of all sizes to transform that information into knowledge.

All Top Performers Deliver BI Directly to End-Users

The value of enterprise resource planning (ERP) has traditionally been tied to the standardization of business processes and centralization of information across many areas of the business. Increasingly, ERP customers have come to realize that value can be increased dramatically through analysis of the consolidated data captured within ERP.

Research firm Aberdeen Group found that the top pressure impacting ERP initiatives is the need to reduce business costs. The ability to identify and analyze costs is a core capability of business intelligence (BI) software tools, and is driving investment in BI as a way of extending and deriving more value from data captured within ERP systems.

This research, based on responses from 990 enterprises, investigates the steps top-performing companies are taking to derive more value from ERP investments through the use of BI. The report reveals what leading companies have been able to achieve through their ERP/BI initiatives, such as:

- ◆ A 17 percent reduction in operating costs and 18 percent reduction in administrative costs
- ◆ Elimination or redeployment of 12 full-time employee positions
- ◆ Ability to close a month in less than four days
- ◆ 100 percent (or greater) ROI on BI deployments within the first six months

"Companies today sit on mountains of data both in ERP and surrounding enterprise applications. While the economy has forced everyone to attempt to 'do more with less,' by leaving this data largely untapped, companies instead run the risk of 'more is less,'" says Cindy Jutras, VP and research fellow, Aberdeen Group. "Massive amounts of data can be overwhelming, particularly when the relationships between data elements become more complex. The good news is that BI tools have reached a level of maturity that can elevate executives from the depth of the details, bringing them to a higher operating level where they can add strategic value to the organization."

Opportunity Knocks

Gartner highlights five CRM strategies that cost little to nothing but will generate positive results.

Lessons learned from previous downturns indicate that 40 percent of companies will use the current economic slump as an opportunity to generate post-recovery growth via effective use of customer relationship management (CRM) strategies, according to Gartner, Inc. Companies that fail to invest in CRM strategies because of the tough economic climate will delay perceived benefits by at least 12 months once the economy recovers, giving rivals an advantage in the market.

"Just because times are tough and budgets are being cut, companies should not think that means no CRM investment," said Scott Nelson, managing vice president at Gartner. "Companies need to think in terms of spending smarter, not spending less. There are zero-cost or low-cost strategies that can be implemented now that can make all the difference, generate competitive differentiation and not draw the attention of the CFO."

Nelson said there is no such thing as a true "zero-cost strategy," as money has often already been spent on CRM systems and there are ongoing care and maintenance expenses. However, CRM success can be secured without spending more money on technology. Many organizations have large investments in call centers, Web sites, marketing systems and sales force automation. Companies can wrap effective strategies around these tools and generate real success from a customer standpoint.

"CRM is a journey, not just a one-time-and-done strategy," said Nelson. "If the right strategies are employed now, then companies will get a 'slingshot' effect going into the eventual recovery, putting them well ahead of the rivals who chose to wait and who equate CRM success with spending more money on technology."

Gartner has identified five strategies that companies can undertake now that cost very little or nothing, but which will generate positive results.

Customer Communities — Gartner predicts that CRM of the future will be about creating online communities of customers via emerging social media such as Facebook, Twitter and similar Web sites. The economic downturn provides a great

opportunity to begin experimenting in this area, and Gartner advises companies to set up accounts on the various Web sites and learn what they do and don't do, and how users interact.

Analytics — Once they are bought and installed, analytic tools can be put to good use during economic downturns. Many companies have more information than they know what to do with, and now they have the opportunity to study attrition models, look at next-most-likely-to-buy models, and figure out channel-usage patterns. While doing so, companies should bear in mind that customer behavior may change when the economy improves.

Segmentation — Many segmentation schemes are based on psycho-demographics, profitability or account attributes. However, a down economy provides companies with the opportunity to review their segmentation strategy and see if it really is best.

Process Redesign — Process is an often-overlooked part of CRM. In many cases, all CRM technologies have done is taken out old, broken processes and made them run more efficiently. Now is an excellent time to study customer processes with a view to redesigning them and creating a win/win situation for both the company — which gets greater efficiency — and customers — who get a "partner" who interacts with them in a meaningful way.

Organizational Redesign — Organizational change is one of the most difficult areas of CRM strategy, but many companies need to make the move from product-centric to customer-centric. In a down economy, with fewer distractions, many companies will find that this is the perfect time to start addressing some of the organizational issues that get in the way of serving the customer.

"At the end of the day, CRM is all about change. Changing from product to customers, changing age-old processes, changing enterprise mindsets, and changing how companies relate to customers," said Nelson. "All of this can be done without new systems, and the challenging economic environment may give companies just the chance they have been waiting for."

Green IT in the Limelight

Senior-level IT executives report significant interest in "green" IT strategies and solutions. Data from a recent survey by Symantec points to a shift from implementing green technologies primarily for cost-reduction purposes to a more balanced awareness of also improving the organization's environmental standing.

Ninety-seven percent of respondents state they are at least discussing a green IT strategy, while 45 percent have already implemented green IT initiatives. Respondents cited key drivers as reducing electricity consumption (90 percent), reducing cooling costs (87 percent), and corporate pressure to be "green" (86 percent). Furthermore, 83 percent of respondents are now responsible or cross-charged for the electricity consumed in the data center, bringing visibility and accountability to bear on the ultimate consumer of these resources.

IT executives report a significant increase in green IT budgets. The typical respondent reported spending \$21 million to \$27 million on data center electricity. At the same time, IT is willing to pay a premium for energy-efficient products. Two-thirds of respondents said they would pay at least 10 percent more, while 41 percent are willing to pay at least 20 percent more. Additionally, 89 percent of respondents said IT product efficiency is either important or very important.

IT professionals are regularly deploying several key initiatives for green IT purposes. Replacing old equipment was the most popular strategy (reported 95 percent), followed by monitoring power consumption (94 percent), server virtualization (94 percent), and server consolidation (93 percent). Additionally, more than half (57 percent) of respondents see software-as-a-service offerings as green solutions.

Small Businesses Buying Communications

Most small businesses in North America (59 percent) say they are investing in communications technology right now, or plan to do so within the year, according to a recent survey on small-business technology trends from Avaya.

The survey results reveal a small-business environment that is still interested in investing in communications technology, even during these tough economic times, with 75 percent saying that communications technology is critical to their business. Some key reasons cited: When it comes to keeping employees as productive as possible, communications tools are the top response (46 percent), followed by compensation and flexible work schedules.

Telecommuting and mobile technologies are of interest to small organizations, with the majority (69 percent) saying they would let employees work from home if it could be done on a trial basis first. The most popular reasons for allowing employees to work from home are to increase productivity (39 percent) and retain employees (35 percent).

However, most small businesses are not yet equipped to let employees work from home or mobile locations. According to the survey, 66 percent of respondents say that less than a quarter of their employees — and in some cases no employees — are currently equipped to work away from the office.

Mobile Data Traffic Surge Expected

In 2014, the volume of mobile data sent and received every month by users around the world will exceed by a significant amount the total data traffic for all of 2008, according to a new study from ABI Research.

Global mobile data traffic surpassed 1.3 exabytes transferred during 2008. By 2014, an average of 1.6 exabytes will be sent and received monthly. Video streaming will grow 62 percent between 2008 and 2014, faster than any other IP traffic type. Nearly 74 percent of the world's mobile data traffic will be from Web and Internet access by 2014. By the same time, 26 percent will come from audio and video streaming. Peer-to-peer file sharing and VoIP contribution to overall mobile data traffic will be less than 1 percent.

According to senior analyst Jeff Orr, the bulk of today's traffic is generated by laptops with PC Card and USB modems. While add-on cellular modems represented two-thirds of traffic in 2008, computers with embedded 3G/4G modems will lead in 2014 with more than 50 percent of the world's mobile data traffic.

"The launch of 4G services promises even more data capability — full multimedia on a greater number of devices," Orr said. "But it's a more pragmatic approach than 3G's: Data-centric devices will be adopted first, rather than a large number of phones. As network coverage and service plans satisfy market expectations, a variety of specialized consumer electronics devices with the ability to connect anywhere will emerge."



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Unified Fabric

Reduce costs and increase flexibility with a single data center interconnect.

Pressures to reduce cost and improve agility during an era of unprecedented data growth are driving technology organizations to transform their data centers through consolidation and automation. Virtualization and cloud computing represent breakthrough technologies in this effort, but obstacles remain. A unified server I/O architecture could remove one of the more considerable barriers.

Today, the typical data center supports multiple networks — one for data and applications, one for storage, and perhaps another for server clustering. As such, servers must feature multiple network adapters that fulfill the I/O requirements of each function. What's more, servers commonly have dedicated interfaces for management, backup or virtual machine live migration.

Supporting all of these interfaces contributes significantly to data center complexity and imposes significant costs related to cabling, rack space and upstream switches. In addition, the rat's nest of different cables and connections required for each different function makes it harder to heat and cool the data center and contributes to skyrocketing power costs.

All Together Now

A unified fabric (UF) is designed to aggregate I/O and server resources with a "wire-once" interconnect — a single high-bandwidth, low-latency network cable running from server to switch to storage. In addition to reducing the number of server adapters, cables and switches required to support the data center, UF supports broader data center virtualization by providing consistent, ubiquitous network and storage services to all connected devices.

Although a wide range of companies (including Cisco, HP, IBM, Brocade, Qlogic, Intel, EMC, Sun, Mellanox, NetApp, Emulex and many others) now offer UF products or support, there is no consensus on the best interconnect for creating a unified fabric. The vendor community remains divided largely between two options — InfiniBand or Ethernet.

InfiniBand is well established as a consolidated, flexible, low-latency and high-bandwidth interconnect, and it is the dominant protocol in high-performance computing (HPC) environments. A March 2009 Tabor Research report noted that 60 percent of HPC organizations surveyed said they used InfiniBand as a sys-

tem interconnect. And those HPC organizations that were considering a unified fabric strategy said they were more likely to consolidate on InfiniBand than on Ethernet.

"InfiniBand already possesses the attributes needed to successfully implement unified wire infrastructures, including compliance with standards, highly secured lossless fabric, high bandwidth and low latency," said Jie Wu, research manager, High Performance Computing at IDC. "Among the benefits envisioned for these future infrastructures are simplified administration, higher application and storage performance, and lower total cost of ownership."

Advantage: Ethernet?

However, recent enhancements could tip the scales in Ethernet's favor. The development of Fibre Channel over Ethernet (FCoE) and Converged Enhanced Ethernet (CEE) are significant for organizations that already have a considerable investment in Ethernet and Fibre Channel, along with the management and operational structure to support them.

FCoE enables organizations to consolidate single-purpose storage networks based on FC with existing LAN and other storage traffic over Ethernet. CEE is an extension of the Ethernet standard that supports a unified Ethernet network and allows FCoE to share the same wire with multiple data traffic types — including NFS, CIFS and iSCSI — as well as the rest of the LAN. CEE allows prioritization of traffic types to maintain lossless transmission of the FCoE storage traffic while permitting lower service levels for applications that can afford temporary variability in transmission quality.

Cisco Systems has made FCoE the basis for the UF that underlies its Unified Computing and Data Center 3.0 strategies. That's a marked strategy shift, considering Cisco spent \$250 million on InfiniBand switching firm Topspin Communications in 2005, and upgraded its line of switches with Topspin technology the following year. Industry analysts say Cisco's backing could push FCoE into a prominent role in the data center.

"FCoE will play a more prominent role in purchasing discussions with CIOs and data center managers," said Bob Laliberte, senior analyst, Enterprise Strategy Group. "Given the challenging economic climate and that FCoE offers significant savings, these solutions have the potential for rapid adoption in the data center."

Web 2.0 Powers Public Sector

Early public-sector adopters of Web 2.0 are using it to improve services to citizens and to foster collaboration internally and with their stakeholders, according to a new report from Accenture.

Accenture's research looks at national, state and city government agencies' use of Web 2.0 technologies and highlights examples of public-sector benefits of technologies such as blogs, wikis, crowd-sourcing, social networks, so-called rich Internet applications, "virtual worlds," and RSS publish-and-subscribe services. It points to Web 2.0's public-sector value in the following areas:

- ◆ Improving the scope and timeliness of services to citizens;
- ◆ Improving collaboration between agency executives/managers and agency workforces;
- ◆ Engaging citizens to participate directly in governance;
- ◆ Delivering cost efficiencies by enabling and encouraging self-service; and
- ◆ Driving innovation by engaging internal and external constituents to find and pursue new solutions to public challenges.

"Web 2.0 technologies resonate with governments because these technologies support a deeper engagement of people in their own governance," said Greg Parston of Accenture's Institute for Public Service Value. "The era of 'e-government' is now moving to 'e-governance.' The shift is really being driven by citizens, and public-sector leaders are responding by figuring out how to use Web 2.0 technologies to improve services to, and more deeply engage with, their citizens."

Consumers in the Cloud

Some 69 percent of online Americans use Webmail services, store data online, or use software programs such as word processing applications whose functionality is located on the Web. In doing so, these users are making use of "cloud computing," an emerging architecture by which data and applications reside in cyberspace, allowing users to access them through any Web-connected device.

Online users who take advantage of cloud applications say they like the convenience of having access to data and applications from any Web-connected device. At the same time, however, they express high levels of concern about storing personal data online when presented with scenarios about possible uses of their data by companies providing cloud services. Ninety percent say they would be very concerned if the company with which their data were stored sold it to another party, while 80 percent say they would be very concerned if companies used their photos or other data in marketing campaigns.

"Even as large numbers of users turn to cloud computing applications, many may lack a full understanding of possible consequences of storing personal data online," said John B. Horrigan, Associate Director of the Pew Internet & American Life Project and author of the report. "These findings give consumers, the technology community, and policymakers a chance to discuss the tradeoffs between convenience and privacy and figure out where there are needs for education to improve public understanding."

Smartphone Apps Set to Boom

For some time, mobile operators have been offering a branded catalog of mobile content and services that could be purchased from the handset itself. However, all that is changing for smartphones. As smartphone penetration in the U.S. mobile markets continues to increase, newer types of targeted app stores are being introduced to enable the device owner to purchase content from outside the operator environment.

Smartphone downloads from all app stores will reach 6.67 billion in 2014, according to analysis from Frost & Sullivan. The availability of a large number of inexpensive or free mobile applications will help drive adoption. These applications will leverage the next-generation technical capabilities of the target device — such as touch screens, accelerometers, full Web browsing, and location-based services, among others — to deliver a truly compelling proposition.

"Next-generation devices are being introduced at a rapid pace, and stakeholders are offering app stores to facilitate downloads of compelling applications from multiple categories, serving a wide range of communication, entertainment, information and personalization requirements of the mobile user," says Frost & Sullivan analyst Vikrant Gandhi. "For example, Apple, Google, Nokia, Palm and Microsoft have either already introduced app stores or are in various stages of app store rollouts and are working to ensure that the entire service experience is compelling for the end-user or device owner."

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Nothing Stays the Same

Leadership techniques to empower people during change initiatives.

By Jonathan Gilbert,
Project Management Professional (PMP)

Every organization is affected by change, especially during times of economic volatility. However, project managers tasked with leading change initiatives are all too aware of the alarming failure rates that can occur. The critical missing piece is frequently the failure to take into account how change affects an organization's people.

According to a study by PriceWaterhouseCoopers, nearly 75 percent of all organizational change programs fail because they don't create the necessary groundswell of support among employees. When organizational leadership employs a three-phase Organizational Change Management Lifecycle methodology and techniques to address the stages of change, change management initiatives stand a much greater chance for success.

Phase I: Identify the Change

While it may seem obvious, clearly articulating the proposed change in common, consistent language is the fundamental first step for any change initiative. Leaders need to identify and communicate the need for change so that it is understood and supported by people at all organizational levels. Project leaders should also be aware that there are intellectual, psychological and neurological responses that people have regarding change that can be addressed with the following recommended techniques:

Get People's Attention — Change distracts and disturbs human beings, so directing their attention in a positive way will help them focus on the proposed change. Introducing the initiative in a setting away from people's daily routines, off-site if possible, will create a shared sense of urgency and ownership in the change.

Align Their Disturbances — A disturbance is a neurological term for the conflict or gap between a person's current mental map of thinking and the mental map required to operate in a changed state. To align disturbances means to create agreement among the individuals in an organization so they have a common gap between their current way of thinking and the mental state needed to adopt the change. This will enable them to agree on the direction and organizational response needed for change.

An important technique leaders should use to align disturbances is to create a compelling vision of the future state and continually communicate it. The vision should take into consideration the change needed at every organizational level so that the day-to-day work experience of the staff is described along with high-level change goals.

Phase 2: Engage the People

The next step in the change management lifecycle is to engage people in the planning of the organization's response to the change. This concept is the antithesis of a top-down rollout strategy in which a change initiative is delivered to the people expected to implement and adopt the change. Giving people the opportunity for intellectual, emotional and psychological reaction to the proposed change enables them to become accustomed to the idea of change and begin thinking in ways that can identify potential trouble spots and contribute to process improvement. It is critical to their personal stake in the proposed change.

A technique project leaders can use to facilitate adoption of a change is to conduct organization-wide workshops on appropriate change response. These sessions enable people to participate in the dialogue about how a deliverable should be used in the organization, and contribute to the emergence of an aligned approach for managing and adapting to the change. Aligning reactions and encouraging involvement in the change response typically moves people's behavior to addressing the problem and creating a direction to facilitate change.

The implementation strategy for change response can then be developed at a high level. The people executing the strategy, as well as those who will be impacted by it, should be included in the strategy development. The strategy needs to be acknowledged by all involved as a

flexible plan so that changes can be made once implementation is begun.

Phase 3: Implement the Change

During the final Implementation phase, change strategies developed in the Identify and Engage phases are translated into actions for achieving the proposed future organizational state. If the first two stages were effectively addressed, people will be well prepared to participate in the development and implementation of new processes and technology, and the implementation should essentially be a monitoring activity for leaders. However, most organizations spend the majority of their time in the implementation phase and don't adequately address their people's role in change. In such instances, successful change adoption rarely occurs.

Prototyping is a critical technique to get the change under way incrementally without waiting for a highly detailed, master plan that can potentially stall the change initiative, while allowing flexibility to respond to changing conditions. Prototyping takes into account people's thinking and activities as new processes and technology are deployed. Since their thoughts and actions are used in developing the change response, it further increases people's ownership in the change initiative.

The urgency of circumstances that precipitate change results frequently in the introduction of new processes and technology which are doomed to failure without the input and buy-in of an organization's people. Leadership that recognizes the importance of making change a personal commitment for all its people — not just executives and stakeholders — will be more successful at implementing change. Using the Change Management Lifecycle methodology's three phases of Identify, Engage and Implement and related techniques provides organizations with a framework for creating a receptive environment for positive, lasting change.

Jonathan Gilbert, PMP, Executive Director of Client Solutions for ESI International, has more than 30 years of experience as entrepreneur, educator, CEO, construction manager, management consultant, project manager and engineer. He earned his B.S. in Civil Engineering from the University of Maryland at College Park, concentrating in project/construction management and environmental engineering. For more information, visit www.esi-intl.com.

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'Scareware' Security Scams On the Rise

Scareware or rogueware — fake security software that attempts to steal money from computer users by tricking them into paying to remove nonexistent threats — is rapidly becoming one of the most lucrative activities for cybercriminals, raking in as much as \$34 million per month by some estimates.

PandaLabs, Panda Security's malware analysis and detection laboratory, says that approximately 35 million computers are newly infected with scareware each month.

Rogue security products can be difficult to spot by end-users who may not be particularly computer-savvy. Some known scareware products carry legitimate-sounding names such as WinFixer, WinAntivirus, Windows Pro Police, DriveCleaner, ErrorSafe and XP Antivirus, and feature professional-looking graphics.

Pop-ups typically warn that threats such as viruses, spyware or registry errors have been detected, and users are baited with the offer of a free scan to identify all threats. Then comes the catch — one must purchase the application to get rid of these alleged threats.

Worse yet, scareware frequently seems to leave users with no options. Upon execution, these rogue products not only prevent legitimate security software from loading, but also block access to system tools, third-party applications and security Web sites with the claim that these all represent unsafe executions. Each mouse click only produces more prompts and more offers to download installation files. This is when exasperated users are most likely to give in and buy the bogus products.

In a best-case scenario, the product will simply deactivate its own scareware.

In the worst cases, users, having already surrendered credit card and other personal information during the purchase process, will actually wind up downloading additional malicious code such as Trojans, keyloggers or bots that will continue to silently infect their PCs.

Industry experts say there often is a way out of these ambushes with a few simple steps. The first thing to do is end the pop-up nightmare and regain control of the desktop by killing the scareware processes. This involves pressing "ctrl+alt+delete," clicking on the Windows Task Manager tab and terminating suspicious processes such as the exe file for the offending scareware (i.e. "winfixer.exe). This should allow you to run an anti-virus scan to find and remove the offending program and its related files. Freeware tools from Malwarebytes and Superantispysware are known to be effective

in rooting out and eliminating scareware.

Webroot, a provider of antivirus and antimalware applications, further recommends the following precautions against scareware and rogueware:

- ◆ Always have a current version of an industry-leading antispysware, antivirus and firewall product
- ◆ Never download free product or purchase them from unknown Web sites and vendors
- ◆ Never purchase a product that is the result of an unknown alert
- ◆ Don't click on links in e-mail or on social networking sites
- ◆ Use a credit card that has sufficient fraud protection
- ◆ Never use a debit card online.



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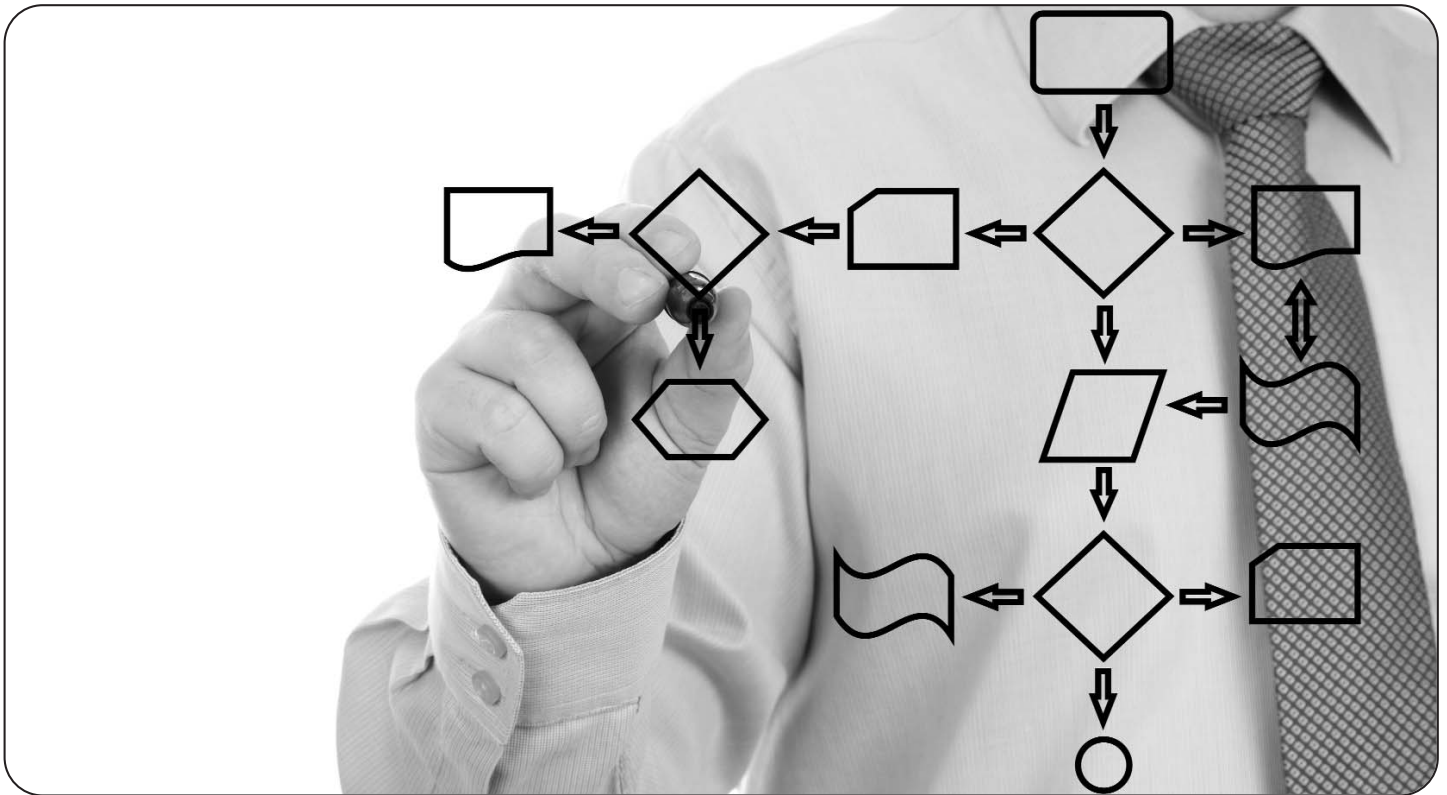


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