



This year's Gartner Fall Symposium/ITxpo – held from 3rd through 7th November in Cannes, France – was organized around the theme of IT and the economy. This report offers an overview of what was on attendees' minds and what they learned from Gartner analysts and each other.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Leaders of business intelligence and information management (BIIM) initiatives learned how to define business value and impose governance over their projects. While much of the buzz at the conference was on the economic downturn, BIIM initiative leaders were of the view that their projects would take on increased importance because of the heightened need for IT to help the business to use information and insight to make better decisions, function smarter and discover new revenue streams. Among the lessons learned:

- BIIM encompasses five kinds of initiatives that must be managed separately, since the technology and value opportunities will mature at different rates. But they must also be guided by a common vision, architecture and governance principles.
- Any BIIM project must include careful planning, demonstrated business value and buy-in from senior managers if it hopes to succeed.
- Management of these projects will require the IT organization to be approachable and actively engaged in the business. Leaders need to promote their projects and successes and offer education, training and support to increase user buy-in and engagement.

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

The Business Intelligence and Information Management Scenario

Leaders of BIIM initiatives need to resist the view that BIIM is just one big project or initiative. Rather, BIIM encompasses five initiatives. They tie together, but each has its own future, uncertainties, challenges and opportunities:

- Business intelligence and performance management
- Social software and collaboration
- Enterprise information management (EIM)
- Enterprise content management (ECM)
- Data management and integration

Recommendations:

- Identify the business drivers for an improved information infrastructure and better tools and capabilities for thought leaders and business managers. Map these drivers and user needs across the five BIIM initiatives.
- Prioritize investments in the initiatives needed to run, grow and transform the business accordingly.

Best Practices for Data Quality Improvement: Delivering Data You Can Trust

Most organizations view data quality as an IT issue, and they rely on the IT department to make sure the data is high-quality, accessible

and secure. But this is a wrong view; data quality is really a business issue. It directly affects compliance, customer retention, growth and profitability – which are all business issues and need business involvement. Poor-quality data or an IT only view to the solution will expose an organization to great business and compliance risks, harm productivity and increase costs.

Recommendation:

Define data quality for the organization, set the vision and choose a reasonable initial scope. Use Gartner's Data Quality Maturity Model to plan a data quality program and measure its impact.

Information Governance Helps Control Costs and Realize Information Value

Anecdotal evidence suggests that up to 90% of all data stored on local devices (not in data centers) is redundant, outdated or otherwise not useful. Companies that save less redundant data could cut their storage costs in half or more. Better information governance practice can help companies clean up unwanted, unnecessary and risky stores of legacy data, while also ensuring that costs stay under control.

Information governance requires a cross-disciplinary business and IT strategy as well as dedicated projects that better relate people, policies, processes and technology to the information needs of business leadership. If not stored, protected, harnessed and metered effectively, information is wasted, weakens in value, or can pose many risks.

Recommendation:

Focus on one or more of these benefits then set the objectives for an information governance program and measure the outcome.

Harnessing the Social Software and Collaboration Explosion

Actively collaborating with colleagues, partners and customers can improve productivity, innovation, and decision-making. But most organizations start with collaboration by alternating periods of working apart and then working together. Collaboration technology is changing that pattern, so that tasks are pulled together, and transitions between review and work periods are more seamless. This approach improves productivity and effectiveness. But unless the infrastructure delivers performance and flexibility, it's like not having one at all.

As such organizations need different kinds of collaborative technology and support that is more integrated with the way people work – systems that have low barriers to entry and evolve quickly as business needs dictate and can support and promote non-routine interactions.

Recommendations:

- Plan how your organization will absorb these new technologies, and the ways of working they bring with them. Facilitate a guided discussion with users.
- It's not unusual for users to find it difficult to imagine how collaboration technologies can improve the way that they work. Experiment with social software and consumer offerings, while ensuring that traditional systems are well-managed and well-run.



KEYNOTES

Welcome Address and Analyst Keynote

Organizations (and increasingly individuals themselves) are realizing that there are no easy or safe decisions in the next year. As a result we need to be smarter, conquer fears and make some hard choices. We are in a new age in which IT is still essential – but so is change. Gartner recommends you take action now; examine your investments, rank them to find your priorities, question everything you have, protect your key people who can deliver your priorities, reconsider each budget line, plan for multiple futures and then choose where to cut AND where to spend.

IT is very good at acquiring systems but it's time to learn how to better "manage what you have." Use this opportunity to move from the accidental legacy architecture you've most likely inherited toward a 21st Century sustainable architecture. Use the downturn as a chance to modernize and prepare for the return to growth; remember this is your opportunity to get executive support for the change process needed to do what's necessary to succeed in the long run.

It's also time to innovate. It's time to "learn to let go" instead of always seeking to control and stamp out user driven innovation and technology choices, find the opportunities for reinvention. By cultivating innovation and identifying where you can make a difference, you will be able to drive down costs and harness new ideas. You need to upgrade or you risk lower speed, lower power and performance than more agile competitors. Rationalize your portfolio, exploit commoditization, use the cloud, and leverage partners where appropriate. Take stock and decide what you need – and what you can change.

Mastermind Interview: Ian Livingston, CEO, BT

For the next year, things are going to be tough across the business world. The key message from Ian Livingston, CEO of BT, is you should plan for it – being prepared won't harm you. No one is recession proof. No one is going to escape the present climate unscathed. Companies should be looking at both the top and bottom line simultaneously, to cost cutting as well as continuing to seek opportunities for revenue growth.

Remember that in this difficult time the need for green IT is not going to go away. And with innovations like telepresence and virtualization, it isn't a case of paying for green IT at the expense of the business. Green IT can and does save you money if approached sensibly, and is something customers want to be a part of.

Reducing headcount is definitely going to be one of the core approaches CEOs adopt; it's inevitable. When talking to its customers, BT is finding that they are examining costs and looking to refocus on higher growth regions of the world. The opportunity for IT is to streamline the bureaucracy and to move to a position where the CIO and the key IT management are change leaders and change enablers contributing to overall business efficiency and effectiveness.

Radical moves in the name of cost cutting are not the right approach. Use technology and process to reduce failure, work on increasing agility and ensure customer experience is at the forefront of each decision. This has to be the answer; making the organization more able to realize opportunity and deliver to customers more effectively. Don't force people to use new technologies; think about where social networking technologies, cloud computing, Software as a Service (SaaS) and remote working can make life better for the business and for employees and use the technology to serve those ends – make people want to use the new approaches.

Mastermind Interview: Steve Chambers, CIO and Valerie Dias, Executive Vice President, Chief Risk and Compliance Office, Visa Europe

In the main, "How do we get Business and IT to work effectively together?" is a constant question. According the Visa Europe we should stop asking the question altogether as the divide between business and IT does not exist unless you create it. In Visa, they have formed joint project boards and everyone is encouraged to continually ask "why?" It's vital to identify, in clear business terms, the purpose and goal of a project. Success must be measured in business terms – how will the project positively impact the business?

It's important that everyone understands that they are all part of the one organisation. Creating trust at all levels across the business and within IT is critical. Visa ensures this by having an IT directorate embedded throughout the organisation. All project teams should ask the "why?" question when they are asked to undertake a project. This close relationship between business and IT can be the key to achieving competitive advantage. If IT is not closely aligned to the business, a gap is created that will add unnecessary risk, time, complexity and cost to a project. A key objective for any CIO should be to minimize this gap.

Overcoming scepticism can be a difficult hurdle. Leaders need to be firm in their beliefs, demonstrating on a practical level that their ideas and solutions can work. This process may take some time, but over time, behaviours and attitudes will begin to change. Success breeds change, which in turn breeds more success. Leaders need to have a sustained vision and purpose to ensure this.

People, politics and personalities are often the root cause of conflict. Conflict can, however, be useful, so long as it is focused on solving the challenge and moving forward. But when conflict becomes about entrenched positions and blame, then it benefits no one.

If you can't articulate the value of technology spend... then all you are doing is spending money. Always, always, ask "why?"

THINGS TO WATCH FOR

BIIM divergence: BIIM leaders may view their work as a giant project, but in fact BIIM projects will diverge in the future, depending on a variety of factors. Leaders need to recognize that these initiatives, while tied together, are ultimately individual, traveling at their own pace. This view will help make decisions about BIIM investments.

"Shadow IT": Shadow IT is now exploding, with, for example, work teams using Google Apps and Facebook for their collaborative projects, without the IT organization's approval, and even providing support for one another. This is scary to the typical top-down IT organization. But younger, prospective employees believe they need this flexibility to see new opportunities to which many others may be blind. BIIM leaders should look for examples of Shadow IT to discover areas where the business is being underserved by the IT function and learn from the gaps.

CIO leadership on BIIM projects: It's the case that CIOs are deeply involved in BIIM projects, including how to set up a strategy, where to start and what size investments to make, however to gain maximum value (and help to address the behavioral issues that always arise as part of these projects) its imperative that other senior execs take an active, engaged sponsorship role too.

Gartner Business Intelligence
Summit 2009

20-22 January, The Hague | europe.gartner.com/bi

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Quote code: RC-SUM09