IT Innovation Portfolio Management

Rationally Introducing Emerging Technologies for Competitive Advantage

cébé IT & Knowledge Management offers a systematic methodology to examine the business needs of your enterprise and create an IT Innovation Management program.

Many unmanaged innovation efforts focus on introducing technologies that may be "cool" but are not grounded in a real business need. A constructive dialog between technology advocates and business managers will lead to the rational adoption of game-changing approaches prioritized on the basis of business impact.

Innovation management also depends on an organization's attitude with respect to new technology. Gartner classifies companies into three groups:

- "Type A" companies are early adopters, ready to take risks in exchange for the promise of technological advances that might "change the game" in their market.
- "Type B" companies wait for the technologies to mature before adopting them. They like to follow quickly, but are uncomfortable leading the way.
- "Type C" companies are so cost-driven that by the time they adopt a new trend, others have moved on and the technology is no longer what is really needed.

Another distinction between organizations is whether IT is considered "core business," a "critical enabler," or just a utility. The answer is not always obvious: for example, the financial industry now considers IT to be a core business, because today they handle information, not actual money. The oil industry is critically dependent on IT, yet for many of its executives IT is still only about keeping the network running and PCs serviced.

When companies realize that they need to look into advances in information technologies, they need a solid process to manage the identification, introduction and nurturing of these efforts.

We propose to our clients the five-level model shown in the figure, which assigns each technology to a level of interest. Each successive level requires a greater level of commitment and investment. Therefore the decision to transition a technology from one level to the next must be made carefully. We recommend a governance process appropriate to your culture and organization, typically centered on an IT Innovation Committee that includes business representatives and reports to the CIO and/or CTO. This body will manage the allocation of finite resources to a short list of pilot projects and industrialization projects proposed by technology advocates. They will also handle the most difficult task in such a system: stopping projects that are not yielding positive results after they have been given a chance.

We will also help you put in place an external collaboration framework to leverage outside resources. In most cases, collaboration with academic research centers is an excellent way to obtain state-of-the-art input, and also to motivate your personnel by having them interact with the brightest minds in the world.

In summary, we will help you put in place a well-managed IT Innovation Program, aligned with your business needs, and capable of introducing game-changing capabilities.