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The New IT

How Technology Leaders Are Enabling Business Strategy in the Digital Age

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

With the onslaught of cloud solutions, consumerization of technology and increasingly tech-savvy businesspeople, it's time for a manifesto for leaders who recognize — and are nervous about — the demands of the digital age. Whether you're an executive, department head or IT manager, *The New IT* provides an action-ready blueprint for building and strengthening the role of IT in your company — and prescribing IT's future.

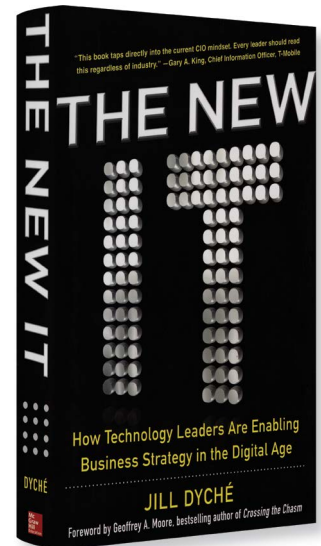
By using field-tested techniques to align your IT department with your corporate objectives, you can leverage the power of technology across the entire company. *The New IT* provides a set of tactical and experience-based frameworks to help you and your colleagues conceive a new roadmap. You'll learn how to bring your business and IT teams together in a way that is truly transformative.

The new IT doesn't just deploy technology. It balances strategy and delivery. It's interactive and inclusive. It's as omnipresent as the smartphone and just as revolutionary.

The New IT equips you with the tools you need to succeed in reframing the IT conversation and propelling your business forward.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To identify your current and future IT archetype.
- How and why you need to make your IT portfolio central.
- To reorganize IT into service lines.
- To build a stronger and enduring role for IT as a business partner.



by Jill Dyché

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: THE NEW IT

by Jill Dyché

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PART I: IT CHALLENGES: REAL AND PERCEIVED

What's Wrong With IT?

It's a discussion in meeting rooms, boardrooms, hotel conference rooms and post-conference cocktail parties: Why isn't IT working? Ask anyone in a corporate or government job, and you'll get an earful.

The responses come fast and furious: "They don't speak our language. They're too focused on résumé building and tinkering, not on driving business value. We don't understand what they're saying when they talk to us. They play favorites with vendors. The CIO hides in his office. They're always 'in the weeds.'"

It's an ongoing battle, and more often than not, IT gets the blame. Indeed, IT bashing has become de rigueur not only in boardrooms but in the popular press and online. Business magazines are rife with discussions of how CIOs can get a seat at the table, how often the CIOs report to CFOs and COOs (versus CEOs), and reasons why the collective reputation of IT leaders has nosedived.

The New Gatekeepers

IT is at a moment when its future is being redefined, and its cultural power is shifting to a new set of gatekeepers. Who are these new gatekeepers? They fall into two classes, business units and customers, and their dominance in the IT conversation is growing.

The Business Unit Rises. Research has found that almost half of the CEOs described CIOs as being out of touch with the business and unable to understand how to apply IT in new ways. Over half also considered IT "a commodity service purchased as needed." Clearly, most

CEOs haven't positioned IT as a strategic differentiator, never mind inviting their CIOs to weigh in on the conversation. The result? Lines of business, particularly marketing and finance organizations, are obtaining their own IT budgets and setting their own technology courses.

These behaviors become entrenched, and eventually they become part of the corporate culture. CEOs and COOs throw up their hands, in effect sanctioning business unit independence and encouraging other departments to build their own rogue systems. There are no penalties. Thus, so-called shadow IT comes out of the closet.

Customer Focus Comes Home to Roost. As with internal business executives, external customers are also getting smarter about technology. The so-called consumerization of technology has meant that a shopper can now go online with a few taps of her smartphone to find the best price on the product she wants and, with a few more taps, buy it. Welcome to the digital enterprise.

Likewise, social media sites are connecting companies with consumers irrespective of brand presence or marketing budget. Unencumbered by years of history, aging management teams or established business processes, smaller companies with strong social media presence are nipping at the heels of established brands.

More and more small companies are cropping up and staying small. For CIOs of more traditional companies, this means new pressures to modernize, exploiting their firms' scale and financial resources while at the same time thinking of new ways to become more nimble and innovative. The problem is that CEOs aren't measuring these CIOs for modernization or innovation. Instead, they're rewarded for keeping the lights on.



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Forging a New IT Identity

Leaders must take a deliberate and honest look at where they're going in order to induce change. Before you can really know where you're going, you need to know where you are and what's driving the need for change.

The first step is to pinpoint the current challenges IT faces in the age of the cloud, big data, decaying legacy systems and digital everything. Figure out what the "ideal state" looks like. Then, plan what IT assets will help bolster the brands of both the IT organization and the company at large.

The steps for creating a new IT identity are as follows: Identify your challenges, choose your brand, plan your portfolio and lead your team. Indeed, in order to successfully rebrand their organizations and redefine their own roles, IT leaders should consider three new decision levers that will drive change: operation, connection and innovation. ●

The IT Leader's Identity Crisis

The consensus among both IT and business professionals is that change is not only necessary, but it is also inevitable. The problem is that many leaders are at a loss for what to do. At the end of the day, the issues come down to two things: the ability of the company's executive leadership to include IT as a strategic lever and the tendency of the culture to allow this to happen.

The Six IT Archetypes

There are six different organizational behavior sets in IT. IT archetypes connote not just theoretical models but actual focus areas, structures and behaviors. Your company's culture very likely is what has informed its current IT archetype. Whether you use these different models to explain your current state or inform your vision, they can help reveal your company's appetite for change.

Type 1: Tactical. CIOs whose organizations fit the Tactical archetype are commonly acknowledged for keeping the lights on. Conversations with senior executives and peers consistently involve outages, uptimes and upgrades. You are sought out for input not on business issues but on operations, automation and cost. Being tactical should not be dismissed as an anachronistic model responsible for the widespread disaffection with IT. Many large telecommunications companies and banks have thrived for decades in this mode.

Type 2: Order Taking. In their haste to be seen as business enabling, many IT departments master the art

of release management. Business units approach them for new projects, which they unfailingly insert into a development pipeline. In the best scenarios, requests for IT resources are guided by an overarching mission that is represented by isolated business requests and fulfilled accordingly. At worst, the Order Taking approach marginalizes IT. The requestors not only tell IT what they need but often how to deliver it.

Type 3: Aligning. Every IT leader is trying to improve business alignment. Indicators that your team has Aligning as its primary archetype include formalized business-facing IT roles, and the team uses business unit plans to inform a central IT-specific plan. The best indicator is that the alignment isn't simply indicated by job functions but also by processes and behaviors that give it teeth — and staying power.

Type 4: Data Provisioning. In the Data Provisioning archetype, the company maintains a robust inventory of data from both internal and external sources, it has invested in data-specific IT skill sets separate from the systems and applications that generate the data, and it has earmarked big data or other strategic data trends as critical to its success.

Type 5: Brokering. The Brokering archetype relies less on a single organization and more on a network. The network will likely encompass both insiders and outsiders. This requires being circumspect about the IT organization's competencies and bequeathing what's left. The Brokering archetype means ceding control, if only temporarily, because when this model works well, control of how individual projects are deployed gives way to control over the optimal delivery channels.

Type 6: IT Everywhere. IT Everywhere applies to inside the company and to the outside world. Finance buys its own general ledger software or outsources it to a cloud provider. Sales might choose to administer and maintain the product catalog and price list while outsourcing compensation and territory management. Customers manage and update their own profiles. IT is no longer a black box where all the magic happens (or doesn't). IT becomes a thin layer of program oversight that monitors progress, reports on delivery and projects future demand. It might not even be called IT anymore.

When evaluating the six archetypes, it's helpful to ask, "What's our *primary* model?" This should help you focus on where you are — and where you want to be. When in doubt, consider how your organization behaves when it's under stress. Do you revert to heads-down operations, doubling up resources to make sure things run smoothly?

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Do you look to outside partners for help? Do you cast off systems or teams that are underperforming?

The six IT archetypes can help identify predominant organizational behaviors that you can choose to embrace or overcome. ●

PART II: YOUR IT TRANSFORMATION TOOLKIT

Strategy on a Page

Strategy, defined in its simplest form, is the set of actions a company takes to gain competitive advantage. Strategic planning typically includes a discussion of where the company wants to go, a critical study of the competitive landscape, an appraisal of emerging market trends, and the creation of a set of objectives against which the company must deliver in order to realize its goals.

Although executives insist that strategic planning is still a key tool in their management toolboxes, many strategies never see the light of day. It's no surprise, then, that when it comes to what IT leaders obsess about, corporate strategy isn't on the list of what keeps them up at night. In fact, many CIOs can't even articulate where their companies are headed, let alone describe key business objectives.

Confusion over the role of strategy often means that when CEOs relate strategy and IT, it's usually in the context of saving costs via shared services, improving business alignment, or outsourcing systems and skills. In their quest to standardize back-office functions, CEOs unwittingly fan the flames of the raging business-versus-IT inferno that continues to scorch relationships on both sides.

Supporting strategy doesn't have to be a science project. In fact, a discrete exercise in strategic alignment can inform IT's long-term future, helping you target the right IT archetype.

IT Strategy on a Page

It's one thing to link strategies, but it's another thing to communicate those linkages in a way that engages those outside of IT. Like strategy maps, Strategy on a Page illustrates a top-down relationship between high-level corporate goals with their associated execution tactics. Unlike strategy maps, Strategy on a Page communicates delivery components, concisely answering the question, "What will it take?" Its basic components are the following:

Vision. Vision statements articulate the future that organizations want to create for themselves.

Performance measures. This answers how IT measures itself and applies to both the vision and the strategic imperatives.

Strategic imperatives. These are mandates that support the company's strategic goals.

Initiatives or projects. These are the individual work efforts that will support the defined strategic imperatives — and thus deliver on the vision.

When filled in, the Strategy on a Page can orient people around an IT conversation, a reliable reminder of what IT is working on and why. Many leaders begin their management and staff presentations with the Strategy on a Page, in effect reminding their audiences of the inception of their work. Strategy on a Page can also change minds about IT's relevance, showing how IT can contribute value, thus enhancing IT's internal brand.

Understanding how strategic your company is will give you better insight into the direction your IT organization should move toward — in other words, your desired-state IT archetype. Moving from one archetype to another usually means evolution, not revolution. More often than not, the movement involves slow and incremental changes.

Ultimately the lack of deliberate strategic thinking is a failure of leadership. The company and its future can suffer as a result. ●

Operations: Rethinking Your IT Portfolio

IT staff are often busy doing the wrong things. Cumber-some legacy-system maintenance, hardware and software upgrades, and tire kicking in the name of research take up far too much of IT's time — time that could be spent building valuable business solutions.

When IT leaders are uncertain of priorities and direction, they often hunker down, tinkering with their budgets while trying to keep up with ever-shifting project demands. The dozens or even hundreds of concurrent IT projects, with their oozing scopes and ballooning costs, are a testimony to the project-as-panacea phenomenon. But projects in a vacuum don't work. They need justification in the context of something greater. And they need to be prioritized based on their business value.

Building — Then Forgetting About — Your Operating Framework

Any IT organization is the sum of its complex, interrelated and constantly moving parts. At the end of the day,

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the IT operating framework should serve as a means of connecting these parts and ensuring that they serve the IT strategy — and by extension, the business strategy — very well.

Let's briefly touch on the meaning and importance of each component in the IT operating framework.

IT Portfolio. Your IT portfolio is the collection of business capabilities and functions deployed by IT over time. The IT portfolio helps communicate IT's collection of work efforts. It defines IT's job.

IT Governance and Policy Making. IT governance is the management of IT assets, be they systems, people, content or other resources with value attached to them. Governance is often misinterpreted as IT operations management. IT governance is really about the policymaking and oversight of IT efforts.

Budgeting and Resourcing. This component is what many executives often mistake for strategy in IT. In reality, the resources and budgeting enable business and IT leaders to deliver against their company strategies via their IT portfolio. They are a means to an end, not the end.

Systems. Including systems as part of the IT operating framework is a given. However, in many ways this is the biggest commodity portion of the framework. Technology platforms are increasingly cheaper and easier to procure.

Innovation. Including innovation in an IT operating plan ups the odds that it will be taken seriously by constituents who might be cynical about IT's ability to offer fresh ideas and nontraditional solutions. A few small, incremental innovations can drive a cultural shift that positions IT as the curator, if not the owner, of new technologies and delivery mechanisms.

Talent. Calling talent management out as part of the operating framework in its own right cements the point that IT skills are unique, differentiated and important to nurture. Leaders should share a common philosophy of rewarding and keeping top talent and measuring it according to delivery.

IT Roadmap. The IT roadmap represents IT's delivery master plan. The roadmap might span multiple years, and it will usually include budgets, resources and projects. While many IT leaders would position the IT roadmap at the center of their operating frameworks, it's important that the roadmap be the result of deliberate IT portfolio planning, not the driver of it.

Leaders should adopt a portfolio approach to managing IT projects. The true value of managing IT efforts as a portfolio of projects is that it provides a means of prioritization, driving investment decisions in a more concrete and timely

way. In fact, IT project prioritization is just as important as IT spending, as it affects long-term ownership, outsourcing, development cycles and resourcing decisions.

Once your company has identified the components of its IT portfolio, a committee of IT decision makers and business stakeholders should collaborate to apply a structured taxonomy to IT initiatives-based quantifiable metrics. Categorizing IT projects in a sustained and structured way can inform development processes, resource decisions, new vendor conversions and hiring strategies.

There is no set means of establishing important prioritization metrics. They should come from a deliberate process of examining what's worked in the past and what's important for the future, with an emphasis on what the culture can accept and adopt. When done right, technology-portfolio planning can ensure that innovation is part of a sanctioned process for planning and budgeting, rather than it being considered a luxury or afterthought. ●

Organizational Models and IT Service Lines

The typical IT organization has evolved into a *shared service* — that is, a centralized department that offers a range of skills and technologies to a range of business units across the company. IT is seen as the purveyor of technology platforms and applications that can automate these business units' processes and supply the operational systems that run the company.

Savvy leaders understand that the value of IT isn't in the platforms and applications or even in the economies of scale promised by the shared-services model. A successful IT leader can blend a variety of foundational, transformative and innovative activities and demonstrate how they all support corporate objectives.

Executives in the midst of IT transformation embrace the idea of IT services, but they would like a simpler way to categorize IT into different delivery competencies — something they can use to connect with senior executives and business peers. Such a framework can also define “buckets” for investment and delivery.

The service-lines concept delineates various specialties that represent organizational competencies. The service-lines structure allows IT executives to determine ownership boundaries between lines of business and IT. This is perhaps the biggest challenge facing IT organizations, and it is the single biggest issue in fighting the business-versus-IT dragon that rears its fierce head daily in

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corporate cubicles, executive offices and boardrooms. Let's take a brief look at the most common service lines in IT organizations:

User Access Devices. As mobile devices have become more diverse — now encompassing not only smartphones and tablets but also wearable technologies and smart sensors — executives have ceded to the reality of a multitude of devices.

Analytics. It's rare to find analytics called out as an independent service. Large companies, including Walmart, Bank of America and Verizon, have produced centers of excellence to centralize their business intelligence (BI) and analytics skills. But a growing number of companies have formalized BI as its own bona fide service line, with a dedicated executive, robust and specialized development tools, and a lens into corporate objectives that illuminates high-impact strategic opportunities that can be achieved through analytics.

Local Applications. The reality that business units are intimate with their own problems, combined with a newfound ability to find good technologies and the accompanying skill sets more quickly and cheaply than ever, means that they're increasingly bypassing IT altogether.

Enterprise Applications. As lines of business continue to attain their own IT budgets, some may have their eye on replacing in-house operational systems — many of which have entered the enterprise lexicon as “legacy systems” — with cloud-based or custom solutions that better suit their needs. Recently, IT leaders have been more receptive to this option, offering skills and support but not ownership in these business unit-specific undertakings.

Data. Data is a business asset, and it should thus be sourced, maintained, provisioned and analyzed to support business objectives. But data is also a shared resource. Many IT leaders have identified data knowledge as one of their core differentiators. Indeed, as many CIOs hand over local applications to their respective lines of business, they simultaneously formalize shared data services as a flagship IT offering.

Infrastructure and Platforms. Infrastructure still matters. Leaders across business and IT struggle with automating operations while at the same time encouraging innovation with no new headcount on the horizon. The challenge for IT leaders is to support infrastructures while finding new avenues for increasing economies of scale and operational efficiencies.

Every IT organization is structured differently. Some rely on simplicity, limiting the number of units in IT to remain as elegant as possible. Most IT leaders, though,

break their structures into more discrete functional areas. Once you've decided on service lines and ownership, you can be much more deliberate about how the IT organization should be set up, who should own what, and how the constituencies should connect.

With the deliberate design of a new IT organization that maps to corporate goals, IT and business leaders can begin to distinguish themselves from their management colleagues, who increasingly have their own plans for technology delivery. They can begin positioning themselves as leaders in their own right, willing to drive transformational change and enlist their superiors and peers in decision making in an effort to garner support and drive wholesale improvements. The challenge, irrespective of your current IT archetype, is overcoming entrenched biases and assumptions about IT — and about those who lead it. ●

Innovation, Going Digital and Other Uphill Battles

Even those executives who hold their cards close to the vest will freely admit that when it comes to innovation, their companies could be doing a much better job. According to one study, only 2 percent of CIOs consider their companies' innovation potential to be fully realized. What qualities characterize an innovation-ready company?

Encouraging questions. “Who do we want to be?” or even better, “Who *could* we be with new delivery or engagement mechanisms?” are questions that could lead to breakthroughs.

Maintaining an enthusiastic and up-to-date knowledge of emerging technologies. At the same time, companies need to take a sober approach to adopting them.

Shifting organizational competencies as the company's strategy evolves. True innovators understand that technology is a moving target.

Moving away from insularity. Studies have shown that companies that innovate the most reach out beyond their four walls to partner with others, educating each other in the process.

Considering research as no longer a means to an end, but the end itself. This implies a willingness to support, fund and cancel research into emerging technologies. Delivery is and should remain the goal.

The hallmark of progressive leaders is a willingness to try new things, to experiment and learn, and to design

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anew. Whether this means funding more software prototypes, hiring people with nontraditional skill sets, or exploring solutions in the so-called social, mobile, analytics, and cloud (SMAC) stack, leaders both inside and outside of IT need to support — and fund — trials and discovery exercises. This is true even if these efforts don't result in new technology adoption. They form labs or incubators that manifest these new behaviors. They fail fast and they try again. Where you start should depend on where the pain is as well as what your culture should support.

A Seven-Point Innovation Checklist

Here are seven questions to ask yourself as you begin expanding awareness of innovation opportunities at your company:

1. Are we willing to make innovation a part of regular conversations and meetings?
2. Can we distinguish between invention and improvement, and can we establish the importance of each?
3. Are we willing to cultivate innovation talent even if it means defying cultural norms?
4. Are we willing to modify reward structures to encourage new ideas and innovation delivery? Can we work with HR to modify compensation models?
5. Do we know who the detractors will be, and are we confident — with time and some successes — that we can convert them?
6. Can we decouple innovation from skunk works or stealth efforts, making it a general corporate goal and inviting everyone to contribute?
7. Are we willing to set aside seed money for innovation, abandoning established orthodoxies about time to delivery and ROI?

When it comes to supporting and implementing new ideas, understanding your company's strategy and culture is critical. Some companies can quickly support invention, while others must encourage incremental improvements. Both should be attached to focus areas, and both should be measured. ●

PART III: LEADERSHIP IN THE NEW IT

Fighting the Talent Wars

Here's what we know: There's a growing shortage of tech talent. Executives routinely report that finding and keeping skilled workers is their biggest challenge. The

demand for programmers, data scientists, statisticians, database administrators, system architects, business analysts and application experts has begun outstripping supply.

The problem is that despite the changing workforce demographics, most IT and business executives feel the pressure to work within their existing corporate cultures to hire and retain talent. Think about your company for a minute. Could you effect change in the face of the following recruitment and retention trends?

- Studies have reported that 37 percent of technology professionals would take a 10 percent pay cut to work from home.
- The companies most successful at attracting and keeping skilled employees engage managers and senior leaders inside and outside the candidates' targeted departments in the interview cycle.
- Google's famous "20 percent time" program encourages engineers to work on self-directed innovation projects.
- The size of the U.S. workforce is expected to decline. Aging baby boomers will make up a growing percentage of this workforce.
- The gap between the necessary skills and the skills actually filled will continue to grow.

The problem most companies have is their lack of principles to guide them through talent management. Staffing is dependent on revenue forecasts and budgeting, not on the work pipeline. The companies that have consistently achieved strategic objectives are those with the highest staff retention rates, and for good reason: the connection between talent and performance is only as effective as corporate priorities are clear.

Business Strategy Driving IT Talent Management

Once strategic initiatives are established and prioritized, they can be used to drive the demand and prioritization of which resources to hire and when to hire them or whether to outsource the work. The advantage of considering your IT portfolio for hiring decisions is that it's simultaneously strategic and tactical: strategic in the sense that it's informed by corporate priorities and can incorporate weightings to rigorously rank the importance of individual initiatives; but tactical in the sense that each initiative becomes a project, with its own success metrics, release schedule, delivery timeline, technologies and, yes, talent.

A question like, "What skills do we need to deliver this project in a way that fulfills the stated metrics?" can end up informing how a company would determine the skills

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for the project in question. This provides a structure that managers could use to be more thoughtful about whether internal people were qualified to fill the role or whether an external search should be launched.

The truth — and many IT leaders find this a bitter pill to swallow — is that teams should be formed only after IT service lines and individual skill sets have been identified.

Getting and Keeping a Seat at the Table

Let's talk about how technology managers can earn the right to get their ideas heard, their problems fixed and their visions taken seriously.

It's time to call out the behaviors of well-intentioned IT executives who have jeopardized their reputations and those of their departments through bad behavior or poor choices. These are behaviors that can ultimately ruin IT's reputation. Here are six ways IT leaders sabotage themselves:

Overrelying on Consensus. IT leaders need to balance soliciting opinions with making decisions that will inevitably be unpopular with a portion of the constituents.

Not Delegating Enough. Most of our team members can do more than what we're giving them, and the exceptional want to do more.

Abusing External Relationships. Be honest with your business partners about your weaknesses as well as your strengths. A little vulnerability goes a long way. And remember, the IT industry has a short attention span, but it has a very long memory.

Overexplaining. Effective IT leaders understand that businesspeople don't care about the "how" as much as they do about the "what" and the "when." Analogies make the complex simple, and one of the best things an IT executive can do on behalf of the business is to make the complex simple.

Tinkering with Organizational Charts. By moving tiny boxes and lines around a page, managers feel as if they're accomplishing something. The ripple effect of misdirected organizational change can cost a company millions of dollars and hundreds or even thousands of employees. At the end of the day, people don't quit their jobs; they quit their leadership. Or the lack of it.

Waiting to Get Invited. Many senior leadership teams are too busy with their workaday concerns and daily routines to notice that a talented manager might have earned

the right to join their ranks. The superiors are responsible for checking in on others. Is he happy? Does he feel he can contribute? They may never know if they never ask.

Pull Up a Chair

If you want a seat at the table, first determine what that means to you. Does it mean a C-level title? Does it mean participating in senior leadership meetings? Contributing to corporate strategy? Shedding operational responsibilities to someone else? All of the above? Know three things:

You need to show senior leadership what getting a seat at the table looks like. Be specific about what you want — and what you don't want.

You have to do something new. You can't just fight for a bigger title and more organizational authority and do the same thing you're doing.

You need to continue to sharpen the sword. You're still learning. Everyone is. Be honest about that, and be an example to colleagues both above and below you in the hierarchy. Learn new things and apply them.

You have a choice. You can sit back and watch as your personality-driven culture rewards its squeaky wheels and penalizes thoughtfulness, failing to recognize improvements and to formalize processes that produced them. Or you can begin seeding change, recognizing the role that technology can play in your company's future, rewarding the agents who deliver it and renewing the role of the IT group, whatever its ideal archetype might be.

And someday in the not-too-distant future, you'll be in a meeting, and it will dawn on you that these changes are making a difference at your company and that something you did, some series of decisions — perhaps inspired by these ideas — made things a little better than they were. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The New IT* you'll also like:

1. ***Trust Agents* by Chris Brogan, Julien Smith.** Trust agents are digitally savvy people who use the Web to humanize businesses, using transparency, honesty and genuine relationships. The authors will show you how to build profitable relationships with trust agents or become one yourself.
2. ***Viral Loop* by Adam L. Penenberg.** Many successful Web 2.0 companies are examples of what Penenberg calls a "viral loop." This is a must-read for any entrepreneur or business interested in uncorking viral loops.
3. ***Six Pixels of Separation* by Mitch Joel.** Digital-marketing expert Mitch Joel integrates digital marketing, social media, personal branding and entrepreneurship in a clear, entertaining and instructive way.