

Collaboration



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Welcome to this special *Technology Decisions* eBook on collaboration solutions for businesses. As organisations scramble to keep up with technological advances, agile new competitors and increasing customer expectations, it's more important than ever that they put in place processes and systems that increase efficiency and responsiveness.

Those solutions will be need to be tailored for different kinds of businesses, of course, but will probably be a combination of mobility technology (both hardware- and software-based), cloud storage and computing, virtualisation and unified communications, to name just a few. All of these technologies can be used to enable employees to more efficiently interact with each other and with their customers.

The articles in this eBook will give you a comprehensive understanding of the pros and cons of the sorts of collaboration solutions available, thereby helping you to make the right decisions about the best courses of action to take for your organisation.

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Can IT work alongside an increasingly tech-savvy marketing department?

Marketing departments in organisations around Australia are asking for web-based tools as a way of engaging with customers, running analytics on those customers and delivering better qualified leads to their sales teams. This appetite for tech among marketers can lead to tensions with the IT department — marketers want tools now, while IT must worry about security, control and support. With both departments having something at stake, the question is: who owns — and has responsibility for — the customer experience? The CIO and CMO of Open Colleges outlined their experiences of this issue during a recent panel discussion held during a Citrix event.

Consulting services company Accenture has claimed that “every business is a digital business”. In making this comment the firm was referring to, among other things, the continued proliferation of mobile devices, the increasing numbers of people constantly connected to the internet and the integration of digital technologies into business processes.

Tomás Rodríguez, a senior product manager at Accenture Mexico, reckons that the “right combination of the different elements of a business with new digital technologies” can help organisations make better decisions in real time, and make more extensive and accurate use of information.

This digitisation of business processes means that technology is becoming an integral part of business operations, instead of a mere enabler or supporter of those processes. For example, where once different business units turned to the IT department for analytics, line-of-business staff now have business intelligence tools at their fingertips.

And while these anticipated benefits are driving technology into other parts of the organisation, this digitisation of business processes can also create challenges for the unwary. It can cause departments to clash over who has control over and responsibility for — or ‘owns’ — different processes of the business. Does the IT department now own the process that has been digitised, since that process now relies so heavily and utterly on a technological solution? Or does the original department retain ownership over that particular domain, since its staff will be using the solution in question?

The marketing department

One example of digital business creating ambiguities of this sort comes from the marketing department, and its use of web-based tools to engage with customers.

Some marketing departments are embracing new webinar and web-based collaboration tools to enhance the customer experience. While the specifics of implementations differ from organisation to organisation, the broad idea is that these tools allow the marketing department to hold information sessions with customers via the web. These sessions can, depending on the tool used, be broadcast to hundreds of individual customers at once. These tools typically allow for interactive sessions — on top of merely disseminating product information, marketers can change session content and answer customer questions on the fly, share their desktop in real time and also collect data about these customers.

This last point — the collection of customer data — is particularly important to many marketers, and core to the idea of digital business. In some tools, marketers can require that customers provide specific information — for example, their names, contact details and job titles — if they want to attend a session. Some tools will also allow marketers to determine which customers were most engaged during the information session. So, not only can the marketing team pass on potential leads to the sales team, they can pass on a list of those leads that are more likely to result in a sale.

And with an increasingly tech-savvy workforce, more and more marketers have an awareness of these tools. These sorts of functionalities are highly sought after by many marketers, who want to provide a nicer customer experience or have access to better leads. As a result, more marketing departments are asking for greater access to these tools and greater control over customer data — things that once would have been the sole domain of the IT department.

This desire from marketers for better tools can lead to tension between the IT and marketing departments. The marketing team would like quick and unfettered access to such functionality, but the IT department must ask whether ceding control of a particular technology would make it harder to secure and support.

This leaves both the IT department and the marketing department wondering: which department has control — and responsibility — over the use of these tools? In other words: who owns the customer experience?

A case study

Open Colleges is one organisation that has taken steps to address this question of departmental ownership. The company provides online learning services, with around 66,000 active students currently. Founded in 1910, the company has, in the last five years, undergone a transition from a traditional correspondence school to a totally online learning provider.

At a recent Citrix executive breakfast held in Melbourne, Open Colleges' chief information officer, Trevor McDougall, and chief marketing officer, Kevin Lynch, discussed how their organisation tackles the issues that can arise with ownership of the customer experience. The lines are apparently clearly demarcated: Lynch and his marketing department own the relationship from lead generation through to a student's enrolment, while McDougall and his IT department manage the experience from enrolment to graduation.

Lynch outlined several key ideas that help the organisation's marketing and IT functions work together.

First, the CMO identified regular communication as critical to keeping the two departments in alignment. Lynch said that he and McDougall meet over lunch once a week to discuss any recent developments, and quickly resolve any issues. This helps the IT department to better understand the marketing department's goals.

"CIOs must develop a strong understanding of what the marketing teams are trying to achieve and develop a strong understanding on the commercial side of things. It really helps when CIOs know the business and know what you are aiming for," Lynch said.

Secondly, Lynch nominated the use of common tools across the departments, a point that's particularly important given the marketing department is responsible for managing its own technology. It's especially important in areas where responsibilities cross over, like student communication, he said.

Using common key performance indicators (KPIs) across the IT and marketing departments is also helpful. "We try to encourage as much collaboration as possible with shared learning for both teams. If you don't have buy-in at the executive level, it is never going to happen at the next level down," Lynch said.

The way that Open Colleges manages data is also important to establishing harmony between the two departments, according to Lynch. The CMO explained that, like all departments within Open Colleges, the marketing department is responsible for managing its own data. However, while data is managed on a departmental level, it is not siloed within each function; it is housed in one area, which allows the company to have a single view of its customers.

"And we are probably one of the few education organisations in Australia — or globally — who has that full view from start to finish," Lynch said.

The CMO discussed the importance of being agile for technology teams in the future, saying that such agility would be critical in enabling organisations to rapidly deal with new challenges and capitalise on opportunities. And he said that collaboration is the key to ensuring this sort of agility.

"The future CIO and future tech teams will need to be as agile as possible, because the marketplace and the competition changes so quickly in today's world; if you don't move quickly you are going to be left behind," Lynch said.

Overall, Open Colleges' CMO and CIO said that there was no single executive or department that claims ownership over or



responsibility for the customer experience. Instead, the organisation divides the customer experience into constituent parts and allots responsibility for each of those parts to different departments. This division is done on the basis of stages in a sequence, with each stage handed to whichever department is deemed most appropriate to handle that stage.

As businesses further digitise workflows, it is clear that IT management will increasingly share responsibility for technology solutions with other departments within the business. IT Management finding themselves in this situation should:

1. Identify departments within your organisation where adoption of new technologies is raising the question of ownership of and responsibility for business operations.
2. Organise regular catch-up meetings with the leaders of those

departments to ensure that any issues related to ownership and overlap are correctly identified and resolved quickly.

3. Make sure you understand what the leaders of these other departments are trying to achieve. Where appropriate, try to make sure the goals of your team and theirs are aligned. If alignment is not possible, help the other department leaders understand why.
4. When there is some degree of shared ownership of operations or organisational overlap, standardising on common tools, practices and KPIs across the departments involved may help the disparate teams understand what others are working on more easily.
5. A more agile stance in the IT department may help your organisation respond more quickly to a rapidly changing marketplace, and the rapidly shifting needs of customers.



Aussie SMBs must learn agility tricks from emerging Asia

Australian SMBs could learn a thing or two from their counterparts in emerging APAC countries, and local companies even have the potential to replicate the regional average high growth rate.

These are among the findings of Asia Pacific's New World of Work (NWOW) study, which explored the digital workplace habits of 11 APAC countries.

The countries were ranked based on the average flexibility and digital productivity of their SMBs, as well as the support employees receive from technology, leaders and workplace cultures.

Australia received an index score of 36, below the APAC average of 40 and significantly below frontrunners Indonesia (62) and the Philippines (61).

Marcus Schulz, APAC Marketing Lead at Citrix, attributed these results to the huge differences in workplace culture and entrepreneurship between countries like the Philippines, Australia and Indonesia.

"Australia's economy recently experienced an enormous mining boom and is now moving into a rapid growth phase for the knowledge based services sector," said Schulz.

"As part of this shift, many Australian businesses are now rapidly innovating, and deploying cloud based services that make it easier

and more productive to share knowledge, and telework." Schulz said cloud based services are also transforming the way businesses can deliver customer service and reach out to new customers.

"Marketing teams within businesses now commonly make use of cloud based marketing automation and webinar tools to reduce the cost of finding new customers," he said.

The report shows that the traditional notion of work is changing in Australia. Some 64% of Australian respondents to a survey conducted for the study said they are required to respond to internal communications within four hours and 58% must respond to external customers within four hours.

Nearly two-thirds of Australian employees are required to be contactable outside of work, but only 48% feel well equipped with the technology to respond in this time frame. In addition, 65% of Australian employees are already spending more than 20% of their time working outside of the office. Yet 66% are working in SMBs that do not support remote workstyles with formal policies and encouragement.

The most common reason cited for needing to be in the office is that the tasks required to be completed need specialised equipment and tools, or the provision of in-person services. More than four in 10 Australian employees also report not having full access to the information needed to perform their job while not in the office.

To close the gap, SMBs need to enable secure remote working, communicate and collaborate in real time from anywhere, allow work from any device and democratise access to technology, the report states.

Employees likewise need to change to be more flexible, collaborative, tech-savvy and self-managing. Managers will have to learn how to lead dispersed teams, provide spaces for collaboration and embrace changing technology.

“Virtual meetings and webinars in particular allow enormous improvements in productivity for both the host company and the attendees,” said Schulz. “The savings come through dramatically lower costs, more flexibility, and a far better experience for attendees compared to the time and hassle of travelling to attend a traditional seminar or meeting.”

Other findings from the report show that BYOD has firmly taken hold in Australia, with 49% of employees reporting using personal devices for work tasks. Email services are the most widely used remote work tools, however, having been adopted by 91% of local respondents. Other popular services include social tools, document collaboration tools, virtual meeting tools and file-sharing services.



Australia lagging behind in cloud policies

Australia's cloud computing policies have fallen behind global leaders, with the nation's legal and regulatory environment not keeping pace with cloud innovation according to BSA.

The software alliance's latest Global Cloud Computing Scorecard ranks Australia sixth out of 24 major IT economies, down from second in 2013.

The scorecard report, which tracks change in the international policy landscape for cloud computing, showed global cloud readiness continues to improve in every region of the world, but important exceptions exist in certain countries, threatening to slow economic growth in those markets.

"Cloud services operate across national boundaries, and their success depends on access to regional and global markets. Restrictive policies that create actual or potential trade barriers will inhibit or slow the evolution of cloud computing," the report stated.

Countries were graded based on strengths and weaknesses in seven key policy areas, including intellectual property rights, IT readiness and broadband deployment, data privacy, security and whether policies promote free trade.

According to the BSA: In order to obtain the benefits of the cloud, policymakers must provide a legal and regulatory framework that will promote innovation, provide incentives to build the infrastructure to support it, and promote confidence that using the cloud will bring the anticipated benefits without sacrificing expectations of privacy, security, and safety.^[1]

BSA Senior Director of Policy for APAC Jared Ragland said Australia's slide in the ranking suggests that it must redouble its efforts to keep pace with global leaders in promoting cloud innovation policies.

"Countries around the globe must recognise their policies affect the global cloud marketplace. The report is a wake-up call for all governments to work together to ensure the benefits of the cloud around the globe," he said.

However, even with our slide in the rankings, Citrix APAC Marketing Lead Marcus Schulz said Australia still provides a strong environment for cloud services.

"The Global Cloud Computing Scorecard measures the barriers and enabling government policies for cloud-based services within each country," he explained, adding, "Australia continues to be one of the best countries in the world for cloud services to operate. Other countries are now simply catching up."

According to the report, the top five countries in the rankings included Japan, the US, Germany, Canada and France.

While just getting edged out of the top five, Australia, along with Italy and South Korea, received the highest scores for privacy protection.

“The report demonstrates that Australia has some of the world’s best government policies for data privacy, cybercrime and intellectual property rights,” said Schulz.

“The popularity and rapid growth in the use of cloud services by Australian businesses shows the effectiveness of these world-leading policies.”

The report indicated negative trends have emerged as well. For example, while many countries are focused on data protection and cybercrime, few are promoting policies of free trade or harmonisation of cloud computing policies. Despite also scoring highly in the cybercrime section, Australia’s lack of mandatory data breach notification laws gave it a relatively low score for security, while the country’s standings also suffered with a low score for promoting free trade.

The BSA stated that countries offering a policy environment in which cloud computing services can flourish “gain in productivity



and economic growth”, while countries inhibiting, or failing to support, the use of cloud computing will “not keep pace” with those embracing the tool.

[1] BSA The Software Alliance, 2016, ‘2016 BSA Global Cloud Computing Scorecard: Confronting New Challenges’, Galexia Consulting, p. 3, < http://cloudscorecard.bsa.org/2016/pdf/BSA_2016_Global_Cloud_Scorecard.pdf>.

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