Why New-age IT Operating Models are Necessary for Enhanced Operational Agility

To contend with persistent change and resource challenges, IT organizations need a new operating model consisting of automated tools, refined thinking around operating discipline, and more relevant talent acquisition and management strategies. This new model will not only help IT deliver tailored services to a new generation of users, but it will also unlock the vast potential of emerging digital business opportunities made possible by the quickly maturing SMAC Stack.
Executive Summary

IT is at the cusp of a Darwinian moment, when it can no longer simply support business enablement; it also must power next-generation digital business models. Emerging and existing digital technologies, such as mobile channels for customer engagement, social collaboration tools, business analytics and wearable computing, are transforming business by simplifying underlying IT infrastructures, transforming business models and seamlessly bridging the online and physical worlds. The SMAC Stack (aka social, mobile, analytics and cloud technologies) and its accelerated pace of adoption by users across industries, is steering business-technology leaders to reshape digitally-driven growth strategies. The result: a pervasive strategic shift in which organizations must simultaneously optimize their business and IT operating models to extract synergies and improve performance on both the top and bottom lines.

The issue for many organizations is empowering IT to withstand and even harness this wave of disruption and the accompanying volatility that is sure to continue – in essence, to craft a sustainable next-generation operating model.
Pivotal to reinvigoration is an IT operating model in which business-driven IT constructs intelligent processes that meet user demands, inside and outside the company’s four walls. Moreover, the model must energize the millennial workforce strategy and leverage disruptive technology-enabled capabilities built on a SMAC foundation to generate business value.

The key success factors for a seamless transformation to this new model include selecting the right organization model; ensuring strong leadership commitment and sustained change management; adopting an ecosystem of partners to drive delivery and innovation; and instituting a phased implementation strategy, characterized by a step function transformation with incremental investments.

This white paper illuminates the major trends that are reshaping the way IT operates. It also presents our take on the elements that will define the future IT operating model, and the key success factors critical to adopting this new-age operating model. We also illustrate our work in helping two Fortune 100 companies embrace this new approach.
Major Trends Influencing the IT Operating Model

CIOs are fast realizing that their carefully crafted enterprise-wide technology infrastructure and talent base built over the years are falling short in light of disruptive forces such as the SMAC Stack. The growing need to cultivate an agile organization that can quickly respond to market disruptions makes it imperative for organizations to intertwine their IT and business objectives.

Figure 1 highlights the emerging trends that are recasting the role of IT and mandating a continuous IT reinvention.

Emerging Trends Driving the Next-generation IT Operating Model

Business-savvy Tech Workforce to Drive Innovation

As the role of IT in the business value chain evolves into a potent innovation engine, the demand for a business-savvy tech workforce has intensified. This growing demand is influencing IT to restructure itself into a skill-driven, role-based work unit with greater tech know-how and relevant business skill sets.

Accelerated Technology Disruption

New technologies such as ubiquitous computing, the Internet of Things (IoT), smart analytics, etc. are relentlessly unfolding on many fronts. The rapid availability of new digital technologies, coupled with the “consumerization of IT,” is transforming the enterprise technology stack and landscape. The pervasive digitization of business is reflected in the need for consistency in both data and applications, across products and services.

Heightened Consumer Expectations

In today’s digitally-enabled world, consumers expect a seamless multi-channel experience. Millennial consumers are increasingly comfortable adopting new digital technologies, and this informed consumer base is defining market conditions and compelling businesses to rethink traditional operating models.
WHY NEW-AGE IT OPERATING MODELS ARE NECESSARY FOR ENHANCED OPERATIONAL AGILITY

IT-Enabled Business Transformation

Increased technology consumption is elevating the demand for information over process (e.g., using advanced analytics to inform and deliver curated customer experiences) to sustain competitive advantage. This has interlocked the business and technology value chain, placing IT in the driver’s seat of technology-led transformation. IT is expected to deliver technology to streamline business processes and define future business value. As a result, IT’s role is broadening, and the boundaries between IT and functional areas are fading. To achieve this, the CIO must work more closely with functional leadership and other CXOs.

Demand for Agile IT

Accelerated technology disruption, heightened customer centricity and a growing dependence on IT to transform the business model have resulted in a demand for enhanced IT agility. IT needs to respond to this business imperative and deliver high-quality end products quickly.

Run IT Like a Business

Agile organizations are always on the look-out to better manage enterprise IT demand. As business becomes more IT-intensive, IT must metamorphose like every functional area by demonstrating financial discipline, increasing its transparency and delivering measurable value. To manage delivery through the lenses of technology cost, supply and demand, organizations need to simplify and modernize their service portfolio.

Next-generation IT Operating Model

Our take on the next-generation IT operating model is grounded in the four foundational elements of organization structure, process, workforce and sourcing, and technology (see Figure 2).

Core Constructs of the Next-generation IT Operating Model

![Figure 2](image-url)
Organization Structure

For years, IT has been guided by a mission to “align with the business” and “deliver business value.” The accelerated pace of technology disruption, however, extends beyond alignment, to deep integration, where IT is embedded in the business and not merely viewed as a supporting function. We believe this trend translates into three broad operating structures (see Figure 3) that cut across industries and will soon dominate the operational landscape.

The Next-generation IT Function

Integrated Business Services Model
- Emphasis on integrating core IT into business and externalizing commodity services.
- This model is suited for large (multi-BU) companies looking to further improve business-IT alignment.

Product/Platform-Centric Model
- Integrated business and IT rendering products/platforms.
- This model is suitable for technology product or B2B companies offering products/solutions.

Customer/Channel-Centric Model
- Focus on aligning business and technology groups to customer-serving channels.
- This model is suitable for companies that have embarked on an omni-channel strategy.

Integrated Business Services Model

Today’s fast-paced business environment demands efficiency and joint accountability for execution and outcome. To keep pace, IT must create a new delivery model and organizational structure. Traditional IT silos must be dismantled, and IT services that require business knowledge (e.g., requirements management) will be handled by an integrated business service (IBS) group residing within dedicated lines of business (LoB). Most other domain-agnostic and commoditized services, such as development, testing, infrastructure, etc., will be externalized.

The focus of core IT will be curtailed to provide technology-centric services, such as application integration, portfolio management, decommissioning, etc. (see Figure 4, next page). Case in point is UniCredit, a large European banking group that launched an integrated service organization to consolidate and reorganize IT functions to facilitate better functioning of the groups’ business by optimizing time-to-market and adding flexibility to service delivery.

Such integration provides business agility, as business service owners have greater control over IT enablement for their respective areas.
Quick Take

IT Operating Model Refresh for a Fortune 100 Financial Services Company

We conceived the integrated business services (IBS) operating model for a Fortune 100 financial services company to enforce cohesive coordination and service integration between business and IT. Based on the operating model, we developed a next-generation workforce strategy to speed operationalization.

Our approach focused on creating an IBS function within business operations to deliver capabilities such as business analysis, operational readiness, special initiative support, business coordination and client communications. We augmented implementation by provisioning a lean process repository and a tailored metrics framework, and designing a workforce strategy around the key pillars of managed services-driven sourcing, global talent management and smart competency center design.

By operationalizing the model, we delivered a projected annual savings of $3 million to $4 million through an improved business value focus and an enhanced service component, cross-leveraging business and IT, and a 25% to 30% gain in productivity from smart workforce engagement.
Product/Platform-centric Model

In organizations whose revenue is primarily driven by products and platforms (e.g., card pre-processing companies, technology product players), there is increased fusion between business and IT. In such ecosystems, traditional IT silos are completely broken, integrated with business services and reorganized into a four-tiered functional structure, in alignment with the product/platform lifecycle (see Figure 5). Increasingly, banks are following the lead of technology companies, such as Google, Amazon, Apple, etc., by creating a platform- and product-centric organization and capabilities (e.g., digital wallet, digital money management, etc.).

- **Product sales**: A traditional sales organization that focuses on selling product/platform services to end customers. The enabling marketing activities to drive sales will be delivered by the strategy function.

- **Product strategy**: A business and IT strategy function that comprises product strategy, market strategy, product planning, enterprise architecture, etc. Several of these services are shared across product groups and work directly with corporate functions and business/IT leadership to drive product vision into reality.

- **Product engineering**: This is the backbone of the enterprise, encompassing product research, design and development of sub-functions. While several core activities, such as product design, quality audit and business coordination, are internally managed, most of the development work is externalized and sourced to vendors. Almost all services are provisioned in an integrated (i.e., business and IT) fashion.

- **Product support**: This function includes all product support and Infrastructure services. Product support services are the lifelines for seamless product delivery and customer experience management. Business and IT are well-integrated into such services, which are also leveraged by product strategy and product engineering functions.

This model ensures tight coupling of business and IT into the product/platform lifecycle, thus enabling accelerated product delivery.

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### Product/Platform-centric Model Constructs

![Diagram](image-url)
Customer/Channel-centric Model

As IT continues to evolve from its position of a supportive function to partnering with the business in driving top-line growth, customer centricity of IT services is emerging as a top agenda for CIOs. Alignment of IT functions with customer service channels (e.g., online) is the first elemental step toward driving customer centricity (see Figure 6). We have worked with a major U.S. bank to design and develop a channel-centric organization model that included the merging of current lines of business management and the enterprise-level product and technology functions for a given channel. (For additional insight on this topic, please read our white paper “Digital Banking: Enhancing Customer Experience, Generating Long-term Loyalty.”)

Here again, the traditional role of IT and silos are segmented and further regrouped into three core functions:

- **Customer-centric functions**: These are customer-oriented, such as product innovation and user experience design, and will be coupled to each individual channel of business. This cluster will promote agility in response by quickly translating customer expectations, business ideas and demands into channel solutions.

- **Communities of practice**: Harnessing disruptive technologies requires specialized technology skill focus; we believe that IT development, testing, etc. are fit to be co-sourced under “communities of practice.” In this new context, IT plays the role of a “broker,” or a mature orchestrating unit.

- **Shared business services**: Overarching functions such as enterprise PMO and risk management reside within this cluster. These functions have a strong enterprise-level business-value orientation and, therefore, are shared across customer service channels.

Such a channel-centric model will enable IT to improvise customer responsiveness since the function is focused on delivering efficient and innovative channel strategies.

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**Customer Centric-model Constructs**

![Diagram of Customer Centric-model Constructs](image-url)
Process
For a seamless transition into the future of IT, organizations need to establish process frameworks that tie together and take full advantage of new-age technologies. Our research and experience at a number of clients suggest two expansive principles that are significantly influencing future IT process models.

Agile Lifecycle and Lean Delivery Becomes the New Normal
The nature of new-age digital technology and increased emphasis on user experience means organizations must deliver higher quality products quickly. This necessitates Agile development, rapid release cycles, automated testing and deployment, and embracing a “test and learn” approach to change management. To bring about process nimbleness, the application of Agile lifecycle and lean delivery to IT has become the new normal (see Figure 7).

Key Building Blocks for Agile and Lean Principle-driven
IT Process Transformation

As organizations embark on an Agile transformation, it is imperative to start small, showcase success and then expand the implementation. To this end, IT organizations need to initially deploy light Agile processes with minimal intervention before a full-fledged roll-out. Initial success in rapid prototyping, experimentation, micro delivery and accelerated activity closure will be pivotal to broader adoption of these principles. In our experience, Agile is now mainstream at best-in-class companies, many of which execute 50% to 60% of their project portfolio using a form of Agile or iterative development methodology.

Lean principles go hand-in-hand with Agile methods to help organizations unlock additional value with fewer resources by eliminating waste, variability and inflexibility. It is an essential element of the new-age operating model as the efficiencies gained (cost, quality, time) from the application of lean principles enable them to quickly adapt to changing business/technology conditions.
Intelligent Process Automation

Today's connected customers across multiple channels have led to the creation of environments that combine diverse architectures and platforms serviced through multiple vendors. Tasking IT with managing this complex environment manually is laborious and expensive. More importantly, the digression to manage manual tasks reduces IT agility and prevents knowledge workers from focusing on technology incubation.

We suggest that organizations reconstruct process flows based on a standardized set of best practices, to automate IT operational tasks across multivendor environments and ensure optimal operational efficiency. This maximizes service uptime, optimizes resource utilization, improves service levels, ensures compliance, and minimizes costs.

We recommend analytics-based automation of IT processes, as needed. For example, processes such as patch management and release execution can be automated to remove manual intervention in such repeatable activities, thereby optimizing service provisioning. Automation of service procedures and repeatable processes allows for the creation of established workflows that are scalable and provision service catalog-based IT operations.

To ensure the success of intelligent process analytics, organizations need to build capabilities not only to manage data but also to translate the analysis outcome to speed up business processes (e.g., social collaboration to provide quicker incident resolution to customers). In our experience, best-in-class companies are looking for intelligent process automation to reduce the amount of manual interventions across IT by 55% to 60% over the next one to two years. We estimate this move will provide more than 20% operational cost savings through productivity gains, process standardization and better insights into process optimization. (For more insights on this topic, please read our white paper “The Robot & I.”)
Workforce and Sourcing

With the merging of IT into business and the mandate for information over process, the outlook of the IT workforce has changed from service provisioning to knowledge work. As a result, there is greater emphasis on leveraging new-age technologies to advance the organizational workforce strategy (see Figure 8).

Talent Acquisition

To attract the knowledge worker, IT organizations are increasingly adopting new techniques and concepts such as gamification (i.e., recruiting candidates through social games on platforms that include Facebook, LinkedIn and job boards such as Monster), social publishing of jobs, automated skill-matching, engaging startups through incubation and digitizing the recruitment process. This strategy hinges on leveraging techniques and channels that are not only well understood but also extensively utilized by the millennial workforce. Case in point, Citigroup recently engaged coders in developing apps that will work with the IoT and wearable technologies. This is part of a broader trend in which a handful of large banks have solicited external developers to extol the virtues of future digital business frontiers.

Talent Retention

Flexible workplace policies, enhanced engagement and opportunities to augment new-age skills will play a major role in retaining the millennial workforce. It is increasingly becoming an imperative to enable the workforce with front-line devices and concepts such as BYOD, and to boost technology through virtualization. In addition to flexible policies, continuous employee engagement and partnership-based skill augmentation is essential for talent retention. Case in point, State Street has established an enterprise social collaboration platform and organizes events such as its “innovation rally,” which have significantly improved employee engagement and retention.

Talent Management

Developing effective talent management is critical to the modern HR function. Talent analytics is a comprehensive talent management platform category that provides end-to-end capabilities, such as intuitive goal monitoring, self-service performance management, career planning and context-based analytics. Talent analytics represents a new paradigm in talent technology, enabling direct integration of business strategy to talent. Instead of measuring contextual data around the talent, talent analytics helps measure the talent itself (i.e., it measures what workers want and what they do best). It is the next step in extracting value from talent data, keeping organizational objectives squarely in focus.
Nurturing Innovation

Collaboration is essential for innovation. Organizations need to digitize IT in a way that promotes access to online collaboration tools, such as enterprise social networks, cloud-based document collaboration and design programs, including hackathons, to promote a culture of innovation.

Business Outcome-driven IT Sourcing

Organizations that follow a structured process to developing a business-driven sourcing strategy succeed in achieving their cost, performance and business goals, thereby taking advantage of disruptive innovations. IT organizations that fail to redesign their sourcing lifecycle are less likely to right-source and effectively manage technology changes.

Our research on the sourcing paradigm of the future shows that traditional service delivery and commercial models that constitute the bulk of current business will advance toward managed services that use alternate outcome-based commercial constructs. (For additional insights, please read our white paper “Output and Outcome-based Service Delivery and Commercial Models.”) Key to successful adoption of these models is the ability to implement appropriate enabling conditions and safeguards. The collaborative capabilities and behaviors of both buyers and sellers of IT services will determine the extent of success. Establishing effective governance mechanisms and managing change in a planned manner is critical for success.

Technology and Tools

The growing complexity of business and IT ecosystems, the availability of multifarious technologies and the rapid obsolescence of technology tools are forcing organizations to create a portfolio that facilitates a next-generation enterprise IT operating model. IT strategists need to carefully evaluate technology options and align the right technologies with appropriate functions and support layers (e.g., front office, back office and middle office) to maximize returns.

Quick Take

Future IT Operating Model Definition for a Global Accounting Business

We shaped the operating model for a global accounting and professional services organization to improve the business centrality of IT services, infuse agility by reengineering IT processes on lean principles, design the strategy for millennial workforce engagement and a sourcing plan, and fashion the incubation model into a repeatable structure to harness technology.

By deploying a holistic and objective approach to this transformation, we put in place a four- to five-year roadmap to implement a new IT operating model and provide effective change navigation. The program has led to successful commercialization of identified technology services and realization of yearly portions of the total estimated $20 million to $30 million in savings just from the organization model reorientation.

At an aggregate level, the deployment of IT process agility has increased business satisfaction by 15% to 20%, and improved time-to-market by 30%. In the current timeframe, several of the client’s global offices are on course to launch millennial engagement and competency development programs.
Based on the tooling characteristics, nature of support required, business centricity and operational enablement needs, we recommend that IT organizations develop a tiered tooling reference architecture to harness new-age technologies. This includes:

- **Front-office tools**: A set of primarily customer-focused tools that drive business growth and customer interactions, focusing on usability, experience and business value. Experimentation and innovation driven by SMAC technologies, open source, interactive user interfaces, artificial intelligence, etc. are core to the continuous evolution of front-office tools. Delivery agility and flexibility to meet changing customer demands and business priorities are critical for effective management of front-office solutions.

- **Middle-office tools**: The backbone is composed of enterprise analytics, information engineering and integration across various data, customer channels and front-end services. Middle-office solutions should focus on business intelligence and process automation, and leverage intelligent middleware and intelligent process automation that drive time-to-market reductions, cost optimization, decision agility, and overall operational efficiency.

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**New-age Tooling Reference Architecture**

**TOOLING INFLUENCERS**

- **Customer Demand**
- **Disruptive Technology**
- **Target IT Capability**
- **Product/Service Innovation Demand**

**ENTERPRISE TOOLING LANDSCAPE**

**FRONT-OFFICE TOOLS**

- **Customer-facing**
- **Revenue & Growth Supporting**
  - Artificial intelligence solutions
  - Product/service demonstration solutions
  - Information distribution, media & publishing tools
  - CRM/customer support & intelligent service desk solutions
  - Virtualization and enterprise collaboration platforms
  - Sales/field services solutions

**MIDDLE-OFFICE TOOLS**

- **Business-enabling**
- **Integrated Architecture Focused**
  - Enterprise analytics engines (includes big data analytics)
  - Process automation/robotics suites
  - Content/knowledge management solutions
  - Information engineering platforms & channel integrators
  - Data integrators and data modeling tools
  - Competitive & market research tools

**BACK-OFFICE TOOLS**

- **Business-enabling**
- **Lights-on/BAU-focused**
  - Cloud-sourced IT infrastructure
  - Project portfolio management tools
  - Data services and security solutions
  - Vendor management & sourcing solutions

- **Disruptive Technology-based**
- **Transformative**
  - Multi-channel access (e.g. mobility) & smart GUI
  - Solutions within product/service innovation lab
  - Branding and investor relationship management tools

- **Large Enterprise Suites**
- **Automation-driven**
  - Business intelligence suites
  - Reporting solutions
  - Enterprise search/navigations and utility library management

- **Infrastructure Focused**
- **Usability/Productivity-driven**
  - HR systems (payroll, recruitment, absence management, etc.)
  - Finance and accounting tools
• **Back-office tools:** The focus here revolves around infrastructure, hosting, enterprise enablement, data and security services. To this end, cloud/SaaS, big data, ERP, etc. are the prevalent technologies in which IT organizations will need to invest in the near future. Most of these investments should be in solutions directed at optimization/consolidation and externalization of vendor solutions, with the exception of data services and security offerings.

Adoption of this multi-layered tooling construct will drive faster collection of business requirements across functional departments, enhance collaboration across the distributed workforce, enable innovative business processes, and allow for analytics to prioritize decisions that will support the growth agenda. This will catalyze the implementation of innovation mechanisms such as intelligent process digitization, the establishment of digital labs, the creation of innovation spaces, etc., alongside seamless business enablement and infrastructure support.

**Key Success Factors**

A successful IT operating model transformation is a complex exercise requiring a specialized focus. Based on our experience of implementing similar transformations, the critical success factors include:

• **Selecting the right organizational model.** Focus on identifying the right organizational model (i.e., integrated business service, customer/channel-centric, product/platform-centric) by taking into consideration the organizational vision, current context (i.e., business and IT operating model), internal capabilities and associated change impact. Develop a process, workforce and technology strategy in alignment with the selected organizational model.

• **Ensuring strong leadership commitment and sustained change management.** IT operating model transformations require sustained effort and commitment across all levels of the organization. When operating model transformations are driven or sponsored by the highest levels of management, they are more likely to succeed. In addition to senior leadership commitment, a robust change management strategy is critical to ensure pervasive adoption of the new model.

• **Adopting an ecosystem of partners to drive delivery and innovation.** As the future IT operating model relies heavily on disruptive technology adoption, innovation and skill augmentation, it is imperative to identify the right ecosystem of strategic partners/vendors to deliver relevant outcomes. Clear categorization of core and non-core activities will help streamline existing partnerships and provide better leverage for accelerating the transformation agenda.

• **Instituting a phased implementation (step function transformation with incremental investments).** As the new-age operating model constructs require massive change across business and IT, it is prudent to follow a step function-based transformation (i.e., implementation and investment) to manage associated risks. Our research indicates that a pilot-based, phased implementation and roll-out, with a robust feedback mechanism, significantly enhances implementation success.
Looking Ahead

As IT increasingly becomes agile, innovation-driven and competitive, its positioning must move from a standard cost center to a business-integrated organization that drives the design of products and services, captures consumer choices and fuels top-line growth. Businesses will look for tailored IT service offerings that can rapidly enable business models and also retire them as needed, keeping pace with elastic consumer needs and business priorities. Additionally, CIOs soon will have additional responsibilities of innovation, augmenting their current role to steer “innovation offices” of the future.

Given these expected developments, we offer two imperatives to effectively navigate this perfect storm:

• First, ensure the structures are in place to continuously monitor rapid and radical technology transformations impacting your business model.

• Second, ensure proactive implication assessments of the identified trends, supported by a top-down willingness to change.

Footnotes


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