Is Your Company’s Technology A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OR A LIABILITY?

4 Key Areas to Assess Whether Your Infrastructure Is Ready to Support Key Business Goals

Firms of all sizes must constantly reevaluate their infrastructure and service needs to ensure they are properly equipped to achieve business goals and growth objectives.

In today’s rapidly changing technology landscape, business leaders must be ready to adopt innovative tools – and the technology infrastructure required to support those tools – to improve productivity and maintain a competitive edge.

Consider just a few of the specific questions that decision-makers must address when they weigh a firm’s technology needs against its growth, productivity and competitive requirements:

• Is a firm equipped to empower and support today’s global, often remote, workforce?
• Can it respond nimbly to market changes and prepare for rapid growth without opening the door to security risks or compliance lapses?
• Is a firm investing enough money, and is it investing in the right areas, to prepare for and sustain expected growth?
• Can a business deliver sustained employee productivity improvements, especially given the need to balance productivity against security compliance requirements?
• How fast can a business respond to market changes and new opportunities?
• Does a business have a real-time view of key business data sources? How accessible is that data, and is it the right data to make fast and actionable business decisions?

This white paper will help decision-makers answer these questions in the affirmative by helping them to understand and assess four key areas where the right IT infrastructure investments can have a critical impact. By looking at challenges related to business productivity, innovation, scalability, risk management and cost management, we’ll explain where to look for key IT infrastructure bottlenecks and how to understand their impact on a firm’s long-term business performance.

ONE: IMPROVING BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY

Businesses have always pushed to be more productive: streamlining processes, improving communication, expediting decisions and finding better and more cost-effective ways to do business. Consider the following IT infrastructure capabilities when assessing your firm’s ability to pursue its productivity goals.

• Are critical business applications enhancing or limiting productivity?
  Disconnected systems, archaic user interfaces and siloed applications can severely impact a business: According to one recent estimate, 42% of service agents are unable to efficiently resolve customer issues due to these and related IT issues.¹
• Do employees have the right tools to foster effective collaboration?
  Strategic planning around productivity and collaboration solutions helps companies determine exactly how to invest in their evolving workforces. Businesses need to unify their people and teams without straining tight technology budgets or compromising security. Audio and video conferencing, voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) integration and cloud-based applications can connect your workforce.

¹ Salesforce Blog, 18 Interesting Stats to Get You Rethinking Your Customer Service Process, blogs.salesforce.com/company/2013/08/customer-service-stats.html
GROWTH CALLED FOR CLOUD SOLUTIONS
A call-tracking and marketing-automation service chose Verizon’s enterprise cloud to support the company’s aggressive growth strategy.

THECALLR had historically co-located its IT infrastructure at third-party data centers in Paris — a model that proved inflexible, as well as costly and complicated to maintain alongside the company’s rapid growth. THECALLR took a new approach to expand its business around the globe: Verizon’s cloud solution, which offered the security, flexibility and scalability THECALLR required.

“Verizon’s solution gave us exactly what we were looking for,” said Taoufik Zagdoud, CEO and co-founder of THECALLR, “speed and ease in setup, no on-site hardware to order or install, easily scalable capacity, and a trusted and expert team.”

### 89%
OF COMPANIES
SAY THOSE WHO
DON’T ADOPT A BIG DATA ANALYTICS STRATEGY RISK LOSING MARKET SHARE & MOMENTUM.³

- **Is the firm taking advantage of tools that support today’s always-on business landscape?** Employees want and need tools that free them to work anywhere, at any time, without sacrificing a firm’s IT management and administrative capabilities. By building an integrated portfolio of mobile, cloud, productivity, security and network solutions, employees can access the data and tools they need to be responsive and productive.

**TWO: INCREASING INNOVATION & SPEED TO MARKET**

Today’s best-in-class firms are agile enough to act quickly and seize emerging business opportunities before their competitors. When firms assess the competitive impact of their IT infrastructure investments, several key capabilities stand out.

- **Taking business networks to the next level with M2M capabilities.** An estimated 5.4 billion devices will be connected to the Internet by 2020.¹ Equipment connected to the Internet of Things and networked using machine-to-machine (M2M) technology offers opportunities for operational efficiency and cost savings, as well as delivering new insights from a constant flow of data.

- **Turning Big Data and advanced analytics into competitive weapons.** 84% of the companies surveyed by Accenture felt Big Data analytics “has the power to shift the competitive landscape” by 2015. Eighty-nine percent said companies that do not adopt a Big Data analytics strategy by 2015 risk losing market share and momentum.¹ Cloud-based infrastructure and a Big Data analytics strategy can provide an intelligent view to secure, actionable data. Historical data needs, real-time data processing and predictive analytics should all be part of the enterprise strategy.

- **Using cloud computing and managed IT services to build a more agile and responsive technology infrastructure.** With the right technology, you can respond to marketplace changes on the fly—spotting new market opportunities before your competitors. A well-planned cloud computing strategy, supported by a portfolio of managed IT services, allows businesses to move swiftly without being tied to obsolete technology, expensive capital investments or administration and management tasks that divert an IT team from more valuable activities.

**THREE: SCALABILITY TO SUPPORT GROWTH**

Nothing can disrupt a promising business plan more quickly than a failure to anticipate growth. A burgeoning customer base — and an expanding headcount to serve those customers — demands the ability to plan effectively and invest wisely. Consider the following issues when you assess your current IT infrastructure’s ability to support smart growth:

- **Is your IT leadership team focused on how business growth will impact technology planning and investment?** Evaluate your current capacity against future needs, including expansion and planned mergers and acquisitions. Are your systems and services scalable to your business growth strategy?

- **Does your business understand how the cloud can support swift and cost-effective growth?** With cloud-based and hosted solutions, you can scale up more quickly when your needs expand or technology changes — without having to make an investment until the actual changes occur or more capacity is required.

- **Do key IT systems pose potential barriers to growth?** Some firms, for example, find that critical business applications aren’t architectured to scale. In other cases, key infrastructure components, such as mobile device management solutions, may be missing or underutilized as a firm’s head count grows.

- **Is your business always looking around the next corner?** Best-in-class firms take a consistent, long-term approach to monitoring critical systems and anticipating new or emerging IT needs. This includes, but isn’t limited to, a plan to monitor capabilities such as:
  - Data storage capacity
  - Network performance
  - Application support for customers and field employees
  - Security needs

**FOUR: CONTROLLING OPERATING COSTS**

Worldwide IT spending is expected to reach $3.875 trillion in 2014, a 4% increase over the previous year, according to a Gartner forecast. Infrastructure and operations account for 55% of IT budgets.

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² Verizon State of the Market, The Internet of Things 2015 Report
Those staff members, and the resources they require, could be devoted to solving high-value business problems rather than simply keeping the lights on. In order to achieve this goal, however, business and IT decision-makers must adopt the right tools and tactics:

- **Embrace the cloud as a core platform for building and deploying high-value business applications.** Collaboration between IT and lines of business will be critical if cloud is to deliver the transformative results that leaders increasingly expect. Seventy-one percent of Verizon’s cloud customers use the cloud for external-facing production applications.  
  
- **Use the cloud and managed services to slash CapEx, shift resources to OpEx, and capture the benefits of a cutting-edge IT infrastructure.** Firms that understand how to leverage the cloud to enhance IT efficiency are able to retire expensive, obsolete technology, peripherals and software and consider a cloud-based infrastructure. In addition, managed services offer predictable monthly costs, helping to avoid hefty investments in new management tools and staff.  
  
- **Understand the ROI impact of mobile collaboration tools.** A more mobile, collaborative workforce helps increase operational efficiency and improve customer responsiveness.  
  
- **Turn your data management infrastructure into an engine for innovation and productivity.** IT and the enterprise workforce at large need to work more closely together to targeting common goals and using technology to succeed faster and control operational cost. People need instant, digitized access to data, apps, services and collaboration tools that boost productivity and retain talent. And operational data should power insight and automation, allowing LOBs to focus on more strategic priorities by collaborating with IT.  

**CONCLUSION**

Assess your organization’s infrastructure and identify changes your company can maintain to provide a competitive advantage by improving productivity, increasing speed to market and providing scalability, better managing risk and controlling operating costs.

Verizon Enterprise Solutions is a leading provider of advanced IT and communications services to enterprise and governments around the world. To learn more about how technology can help you grow your business, contact a Verizon representative.

Verizon professional and managed services can help reduce much of the technology risk. Verizon is a global leader in cloud, security and mobility solutions, and can help you navigate the changing technology landscape with ease.

Verizon’s network coverage and enterprise-class cloud services, combined with its leadership in cybersecurity and contact center solutions, are unmatched.

Verizon security services can help you guard against the threats you face by applying their unique security insight in the solutions they provide.

To learn more about how technology can help you grow your business, contact a Verizon representative at TechAdvantage1@verizon.com.

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