

***Five principles to help embrace the hybrid enterprise***  
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Even though the cloud has brought many benefits to businesses: providing access to data when and where we want, the ability to sync our mobile devices and the ability to collaborate in real-time, it has also created new challenges for business leaders. With its growth in popularity, most people expect constant cloud-like experiences, when not all enterprises can, or will, offer all of their applications in the cloud.

It's impossible to put every application in the cloud, nor would you want to –budget constraints, technical limitations, security concerns, performance issues can all be valid barriers to doing so. This is where the hybrid enterprise fits in. The hybrid enterprise uses a mix of data centre with private and public cloud-hosted apps and data, as well as networks that are made up of high quality and expensive VPNs , point to point circuits), and supplemented by internet connectivity. It is this type of IT environment that is becoming ever more relevant. According to [Gartner](#): “nearly three-fourths of large enterprises expect to have hybrid deployments by 2015.”

To survive the next wave of technology changes, organisations need to be prepared to have a modern enterprise that offers tangible benefits in the form of technology. To help IT managers, C-level executives and stakeholders in the business, we've put together some guidelines to help the enterprise thrive. Innovation is no longer a nicety, but is now a necessity as business models are turned on their heads by the latest technology developments. This means we all need to move faster and network infrastructure is no exception.

**How would a tech company approach this?**

Whether you're a tech company or not, there are many trends driving every business towards leveraging new kinds of technology. These include big data for better business decisions, mobile for productivity, social and cloud platforms for collaboration, to name a

few.

Technology can help companies differentiate or level the playing field, as it offers up a range of opportunities and different strategies to follow. So in the age of digital, every company needs to address its digital approach, as this will form a key part of how your business is redefined. If done well, technology can in fact bring about new business models (think Google transforming from a search engine to a major tech company in its own right).

The key to digital mastery involves understanding the new technology practices that can be visible or invisible opportunities, as well as current challenges to your company and industry. This is what tech companies do to create and transform their own business value on a daily basis. We mustn't forget though, that employees are a company's greatest asset, and by doing this you'll be investing in the younger generations – those born with technology at their fingertips – that will be joining your organisation and have an impact of its future success.

### **Using technology as an enabler**

It's becoming more and more clear that application performance and other technical necessities equal business performance. In this world, business objectives – not technical constraints – should drive technology decisions so that data and applications best serve the business. This goes back to the age-old concept of designing for function.

In IT this translates to “build, buy or subscribe” analysis. Doing this kind of analysis allows an organisation and its leaders to use global resources, reduce costs associated with running the business and maximize employee productivity.

Technology should never get in the way of business objectives so sometimes you'll need to build, sometimes buy and sometimes subscribe. This tirade of technology development isn't going anywhere so one must consider fit for function in our hybrid computing environments or risk making poor investments.

## **Plan how your hybrid enterprise will delight your workforce**

Though technology presents endless opportunities for the enterprise, this doesn't mean you should go down the route of technology "for technology's sake".

It's important to create a vision for the technologies you roll out within your company (the fit for function analysis is one place to start). That vision must be based on the employees and how they understand, appreciate and enjoy a technology. Technology vendors should take note of these three principles because they translate into adoption from employees and then customers.

An effective digital, hybrid enterprise takes these commitments seriously and works to have visibility and control over technologies so they can optimise them to ensure employees never notice performance issues. This contributes to their appreciation and enjoyment when using the application. Employee faith in the company's technology solutions is critical, otherwise they will turn to other options, creating "Shadow IT," which will only create more complications for the IT department.

## **Understand how to manage Shadow IT**

Shadow IT is here to stay. Consumer technology is moving faster than enterprise technology.

Good technologists are aware of this and anyone in business lives it with their Dropbox account, Google Docs and iPhone. Therefore, leaders must understand Shadow IT is part of the hybrid enterprise. Technologists can no longer have the mindset that Shadow IT has defeated them, while continuing to try and fight back against it. The only solution is to embrace it. This is done by holding an organisation both internally and externally to collaborative accountability.

For example, if a business unit wants to use a specific service outside of what IT supports, it needs to be a joint budget and service venture. It also means vendors of Shadow IT must work with

organisations to maintain this accountability in order to achieve the profitable, enterprise-wide deals. This is a two-sided coin with more pressure being put on Shadow IT vendors and those running hybrid enterprises alike.

And although the CIO may not be the initiator for these 'shadow applications', they still will have the responsibility to provide governance. Therefore, it is crucial that they have holistic visibility all that is IT, even those elements that are outside their ownership.

### **Managing the hybrid enterprise leads to a healthy, happy business**

At the end of the day, most CEOs and CFOs might not know or care about the hybrid enterprise until it becomes a problem. Having control of your technology investments is harder in this environment and losing control means you lose money due to website downtime, lost productivity, hidden costs or inefficiency.

These are all things management at every level cares about, so understanding the challenges of the hybrid enterprise means understanding your business and where it can run smoother. Because the hybrid enterprise causes blind spots for management, employee productivity, security and costs, it should be acknowledged as a health indicator for the business.

Organisations that are mature, will be able to transform IT performance into a competitive advantage, because they will be maximizing employee productivity and leveraging IT to create new forms of operational agility. Ultimately, it's about managing and embracing the hybrid environment because that is something that is here to stay in the business world.