

# IT changes

Aligning IT with business objectives **By Gary Grabowski**

In today's highly competitive business environment, one of the biggest challenges businesses face is aligning technologies with business goals and ensuring that IT investments are effective.

Every organization is unique. Some do a much better job than others when it comes to developing business strategies and defining how they expect technologies to help achieve goals and objectives. However, there is more to aligning IT to a business than matching technology initiatives to business strategies.

Begin by having a detailed understanding of the business requirements and priorities. This will help you establish where additional functionality and systems integration can be derived to better deliver on key business objectives.

This type of assessment is typically designed to leverage existing infrastructures to re-engineer, not to reinvent, the existing technical infrastructure of an organization.

It is important to understand how you are going to measure the success of a technology before deciding on the solution. This seems obvious at one level, but it is all too easy to worry about a perceived solution to the problem before fully understanding what it is that you are trying to accomplish. Significant gains in productivity may come from relatively simple changes to underlying processes and techniques.

One of the challenges you may face is keeping your technology aligned with the way you do business and in designing the business in a way that leverages new capabilities. Not too long ago, businesses could afford to experiment with new tools and emerging technologies. In fact, experimentation was almost a necessity.

No one truly knew the implications of Web-based applications and shifting business models. The most successful companies now work to create a strategy that focuses on meshing both business and technology to achieve far greater organizational success.

Some IT departments have become so immersed in the day-to-day activities of running an organization that they haven't had the time or the resources to learn about or even consider implementing new



technologies, while others have a tendency to get caught up in the latest emerging technologies. But IT departments need to know which technologies are the right ones to invest in.

They also need to understand and accept that their success is achieved when they set the stage to accomplish business process change by building an efficient IT infrastructure. However, the IT department must be willing to accept joint responsibility with business executives to actually achieve a change in the business processes that support the enterprise.

If your IT department is considering a new technology strategy, here are some tips for success.

- Understand your organization's short-term and long-term problems and objectives.
- Define integration and support requirements.
- Define performance and scalability objectives.
- Understand both the limitations and

capabilities of the technologies you're considering.

- Focus on workflow automation, not just individual tasks.
- Assume that the requirements of the business will change over time.
- Plan for success.

Companies are under pressure to economize and streamline, and at the same time bring innovation to the market. Knowing how to improve your business processes and knowing which technologies are the best for your company is critical.

One important thing is to do a careful review of your existing infrastructure and applications. You can't plot a course for the future without looking at where you've been. By aligning technology with business objectives, you will be able to realize significant returns on your technology investments.

**GARY GRABOWSKI** is operations manager at TriLogic Corp., a solutions integration company focusing on IT Infrastructure. Reach him at (724) 745-0200 or [info@tri-logic.com](mailto:info@tri-logic.com).

Experts **Technology** is brought to you by TriLogic Corp.