

# PRESS KIT

## **Solucom,** 12 ideas for 2012

The power of simplicity  
*«Ce qui est simple est fort»*

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# Solucom proposes 12 ideas as a guide for the year ahead

2012 will be another year full of challenges. Enterprises want to know what drivers they can harness to help them address the crisis and keep them moving forward. Anticipation and innovation remain watchwords for successful adjustment to the market. Whatever strategies are adopted, it is essential to focus on the future, consolidate forces and win employee support for transformation projects. In a series of articles published in SolucomINSIGHT ([www.solucominsight.fr](http://www.solucominsight.fr)), its online magazine, Solucom proposes 12 key ideas as a guide for the year ahead.

## **Anticipation**

Anticipate for a successful recovery from the crisis!

## **Cohesion**

Collective intelligence: a key factor for cohesion and performance in an enterprise?

## **Commitment**

« Les forêts précèdent les peuples, les déserts les suivent », Chateaubriand

## **Innovation**

Goodbye 2011, crisis year. Hello 2012... crisis year!

## **Mobility**

2012, the all-mobile year?

## **Opening up**

The key to growth for large organisations

## **Performance**

Relativistic concept or vehicle of excellence?

## **Customer relationship**

A key differentiator for enterprises

## **Network**

Collaborative working for better communication in 2012?

## **Simplicity**

“Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication”, Leonardo de Vinci

## **Synergy**

Between business line and information system: a winning strategy

## **Transformation**

“There can be no transforming of darkness into light and of apathy into movement without emotions”, Carl Gustav Jung

## ANTICIPATION

Anticipate for a successful recovery from the crisis!



**Yves Charlier,**  
Senior consultant in the IT Governance practice

*Crisis periods are always very revealing of an enterprise's capacity for resistance and innovation and therefore of its capacity to anticipate when managing its priorities, investments and tactical or strategic movements in a period of uncertainty.*

### **Slow down the machinery, but only when necessary**

First, anticipate means detecting the early signs of a slowdown in business as far upstream as possible: delays in performing jobs, difficulties with competitors, drop in the number of successful sales.... The objective is to slow the machinery down just when necessary but not to be over-cautious and act too soon. Now is the time to reinforce the "advance sensors" that an enterprise uses as a guide and to mobilise the teams more extensively into detecting these early signals. Improvements are also required in modes of reporting and decision-making. Collaborative technologies can greatly help put these measures in place.

### **Don't stop the machinery, keep it well-oiled and idling**

Anticipate also means not missing the moment for recovery from the crisis. The advance sensors referred to above also serve for early detection of signs of recovery and available opportunities. As soon as such signs or opportunities are detected, an enterprise must quickly bring the machinery back up to speed in order to be among the first to benefit from the upturn. Experience shows that slowing down an enterprise that is fully up and running is a long and complex process, even if the need for budget cuts soon gets the message across. On the other hand, getting everyone back into gear is a lot more difficult and much more laborious. We can draw a parallel with factories in the chemical, metallurgical or oil refining sector. Shutting down a factory takes several days, even several weeks, and the same goes for restarting. It's often better to let it continue operating, at a reduced rate admittedly but operating all the same, in order to be ready for a rapid restart when necessary.

### **And take the opportunity to improve the performance of the machinery**

Finally, anticipate also means taking advantage of slacker business periods to improve the performance of the machinery. One idea is to carry out some basic overhauling that tends to get postponed during boom times but that will help the enterprise perform better tomorrow. Get rid of overly complex ways of doing things, simplify processes, do away with needless layers of organisation, transform management modes by strengthening autonomy and improving ways of liaising with management... these actions will all help an enterprise emerge lighter and more agile from the period of uncertainty.

## COHESION

### Collective intelligence: a key factor for cohesion and performance in an enterprise?



**Damien Mermet,**  
Associate director in the Strategy & management practice

*As all the signs suggest that 2012 will be a very difficult year, most enterprises, in an attempt to grapple with ecosystems that are both complex and in a permanent state of flux, will try to improve their capacity to understand and act by strengthening intimacy with customers and partners. Areas for action to achieve this goal include employee mobilisation and collective team spirit.*

#### **Collective as a source of accountability**

In a changing environment, and even in times of crisis, one of the keys to success lies in mobilising employees into a tight-knit collective to which everyone is committed and where everyone assumes their responsibilities. In the services sector, for example, a current concern for many enterprises is how to allow service advisors more room for manoeuvre to help them meet customer requirements more easily. To achieve the required level of commitment, enterprises must address both the culture (beliefs, representations, values, principles, desires and behaviours) and the “tools” and “systems” structuring behaviours (contracting, evaluation, career management, accessing data and sharing information).

#### **Building collective intelligence**

Only by going beyond individual commitment and mobilising a team’s “collective intelligence” can an enterprise maximise its capacity for innovation and boost its performance. Collective intelligence relies both on the ability of each individual to think in terms of the collective interest and on the ability of the collective to marshal available competences and enhance them in a “1+1=3” logic (see focus “collective intelligence: how to develop the collective performance of your employees?”).

The development of business practice communities and enterprise social networks is totally in step with this idea (see article). Besides this specific type of project, fostering of collective intelligence involves addressing group behaviours and working methods in very concrete ways on a daily basis in order to facilitate expression, listening, creativity, analysis, decision-making and assimilation (see focus “collective Intelligence: play to work better”).

#### **Cohesion: an alliance of differences**

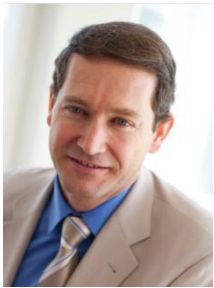
To develop the capacity of a collective to work efficiently together, time must be taken to gradually build confidence and help people learn to work, and enjoy working, with others who are very different from themselves. To be efficient, cohesion does not imply cloning but requires the coming together of diverse and complementary talents.

The development of cohesion and collective intelligence can take a variety of forms, from management of an overall “cultural transformation” project to one-off actions at the level of a team.

The benefits of this approach in terms of innovation, development and performance are huge. So why is it so difficult to implement? With no pretence at providing a definitive answer, one possible reply would seem to lie in the immense amount of personal work that corporate executives must do in order to “let go”.

# COMMITMENT

« Les forêts précèdent les peuples, les déserts les suivent »,  
Chateaubriand



**Guillaume Chassard,**  
Associate director in the IT Architecture practice

*More and more enterprises are treading the path of CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility. Whether spurred on by collective pressure, growing awareness among corporate executives, a wish to make a name for themselves, or all these reasons at once, enterprises hope this move will help them address sustainable development issues more effectively by limiting the social, economic and environmental impact of their activity.*

*In matters of environmental protection, the “all digital” approach that has been gaining ground in our companies over the past several years has revealed the impact that information technologies are having on the environment and drawn attention to the need for a more responsible use of IT. In its Smart 2020 report, the Climate Group considers it possible to reduce CO2 emissions from all sectors of the economy by approximately 15 % by 2020 through acting on information and communication technologies. Enterprises’ information systems have a key role to play in achieving this objective.*

## **Commitment of IT departments to environmental protection**

The IT industry has taken up the issue and is offering enterprises a variety of mature technological solutions and developments, including optimising electrical consumption of IT infrastructures, systematising recycling in production cycles, and facilitating remote working and thus limiting travel.

Enterprises are following suit. As they gradually undergo transformation, they are increasingly taking the green IT route and, for example, investing in datacenters to reduce their carbon footprint.

## **Green IT budgets**

Yet this approach within IT departments is still too often the result of enlightened opportunism and rarely stems from any deep-seated conviction about the need to act to preserve the environment. It is also true that in these times of crisis, it is difficult to find the budgets necessary to “invest more to be greener”, even with the added promise of savings on the enterprise’s energy bill. However, when investments cannot be deferred, it would be a mistake to ignore their green dimension. Enterprises would then have to wait several years for the next cycle of investments before having another opportunity to limit their impact on the environment by implementing green IT solutions.

## **Towards a necessary change in mentalities**

Drivers other than financial incentives can be applied to help point IT departments in the direction of more responsible IT. One example is green sourcing, where preference is given to suppliers who themselves are active in preserving the environment. Another example is the introduction of indicators to measure the environmental performance of the IT department and its portfolio of projects, along the same lines as the economic performance indicators and service quality indicators with which we are already familiar. So, let’s all hope that 2012 will be a year of cultural change that will see environmental concerns at the heart of all IT department activities. And let’s all be players in this change!

# INNOVATION

Goodbye 2011, crisis year. Hello 2012... crisis year!



**Isabelle Chapis,**  
Associate director in the Telecom & innovation practice

*Crises have always been cyclical. But 2011 has set a whole new agenda. From now on cycles will get shorter and shorter. Given the changing economic realities, shouldn't we now simply get used to living in a "permanent state of crisis"?*

*There will be no shortage of causes fuelling a general economic climate of doubt and uncertainty with its attendant wait-and-see attitude. The lack of visibility over market conditions is now making enterprises more cautious. Operational pressures are forcing actions to be rushed through and leading to relatively short-term decisions. New projects are being put on hold and their launches postponed until brighter days ahead. But what if no brighter days ever come? We are going to have to look at things from a different perspective. Learn to live with the situation? No. Innovate? Yes! Innovation should be thought of as a means to recover from the crisis or at least as a way of softening its effects.*

## **Innovation as a tool for differentiation**

Differentiation is one of the most sought-after goals of innovation. It is wrong to think that in times of crisis customers are not responsive to innovative products and services. When innovation makes sense, it will find a market. Two examples come to mind. The 1993/94 crisis in the European Monetary System was followed in 1995 by launching of the GSM in Europe. The major economic crisis of 2008 was followed in 2009 by massive growth in sales of the i-Phone. What is more, an innovating enterprise is a pioneer on the market and so has a substantial competitive edge and strong value-creating image.

## **Innovation to improve an enterprise's competitiveness**

Innovation can also be used as a tool to rationalise and optimise costs and processes. Many enterprises have launched specific programmes to stimulate innovative thinking on ways to reduce production costs for goods or services.

One example is value analysis in industry, where multidisciplinary innovation groups meet in creativity sessions to analyse an individual cost item and imagine all possible solutions to reduce it.

## **Innovation as a pillar of team facilitation**

Last but not least, innovation is a major component of policies to promote inter-team work. The exchange of information within an enterprise can be greatly assisted by such valuable catalysts as initiatives to foster collective intelligence along with a whole array of collaborative processes and tools. Such measures also strengthen ties between different managements where tensions can be more acute in times of crisis (e.g. between IT departments whose budgets have been cut and business lines looking for maximum responsiveness in their search for new areas for development).

To conclude, we should bear in mind that innovation is not an incantation. It is primarily a state of mind. It is pragmatic and progressive and does not necessarily entail major investments or unrealistic costs.

Innovation is not invention. Innovation is a concrete means of helping an enterprise find its way out of the economic slump or at least get more easily through the present difficulties. My thoughts for 2012 are summed up in this quote from Titus Livy "In difficult situations, when hope seems feeble, the boldest plans are safest". So in 2012, LET'S MAKE BOLD PLANS FOR INNOVATION!!

# MOBILITY

## 2012, the all-mobile year?



**Loïc Michel,**  
Senior consultant in the Telecom & innovation practice

*Mobility is now part and parcel of our personal and professional lives. The growing success of mobile terminals – with smartphones in the lead – and of their multitude of applications is transforming the daily existence of many of us. The internet, multimedia and electronic commerce (m-commerce) are now “mobile” and a growing number of our commercial, social and financial interactions are conducted using mobile devices.*

*Our connected environment is fast becoming wholly mobile, matching our own innate mobility. Information, content and connectivity are the same in all places at all times. 2012 therefore looks set – even more so than 2011 – to become the “all-mobile year”, with a double challenge for enterprises.*

### **Adapt to a mobile clientele**

First of all, enterprises will have to adapt to their customers’ mobile behaviour and offer a multi-channel customer relationship in line with their customers’ mobility expectations. Any customer relationship strategy must treat the mobile channel (smartphone or tablet) as a fully fledged customer relationship channel. It is particularly important to maintain the consistency and continuity of customer patterns of behaviour between channels.

In addition to the customer loyalty aspect, mobility also opens up a whole raft of growth opportunities by enabling customers on the move to find out about an enterprise’s service offering, communicate with the enterprise and purchase products wherever they may be. To enjoy the benefits of these opportunities, the enterprise must develop an ambitious mobile internet strategy or run the risk of being outpaced by its competitors.

Furthermore, these new mobile customer relationship channels offer a new opportunity, after the web, to dematerialise parts of the customer relationship (primarily lower-value-added management acts such as changes to personal data), with the added attraction of making substantial savings.

### **Integrate employee mobility into the organisation**

Enterprises must also prepare and integrate their employees’ mobility into their activity, organisation and business processes. The boundary between digital uses in the private and public spheres is getting slimmer every day and employees’ experience of mobility in their daily lives necessarily impinges on their professional environment. Moreover, this trend is apparent among all employees, whether blue collar workers, white collar workers or VIPs.

Enterprises must either provide their employees with suitable professional solutions for combined professional / personal use or else accept tools from the private sphere in the professional environment (Bring Your Own Device or BYOD).

Once the security, HR and legal obstacles have been overcome, an enterprise will have a set of solutions enabling its employees to access its resources and carry on its business activities anywhere at any time. With a view to both simplification and optimisation, the enterprise may also open up these solutions to its partners and suppliers. By putting in place an extended mobile information system, it will enjoy significantly improved productivity and overall performance.

### **Accompaniment needed on the mobility front**

New mobile uses will provide many opportunities for development and growth.

To take full advantage of these opportunities, an enterprise must be able to anticipate new mobile uses and drive innovation so that it can stay ahead. Before introducing any mobile-related measures (rollout of a mobile internet customer relationship channel, launching of an m-commerce platform or integration of a fleet of tablets into the enterprise), an enterprise must fully understand these uses and must drive innovation internally from emergence of the idea to its implementation on the market or among its employees. Enterprises must also rethink their multichannel customer relationship strategy and adapt it to mobile channels in order to derive full benefit in terms of customer loyalty, expansion of activity and cost optimisation.

Finally, it is essential for enterprises to approach employee mobility as a full component of major transformation projects and examine what mobility can do for them in terms of productivity and performance.

# OPENING UP

## The key to growth for large organisations



**Gérôme Billois,**  
Manager in the Security & risk management practice

*Opening up is synonymous with innovation and growth for large organisations. Opening up was one of the challenges of 2011 and will remain a priority in 2012 to provide the agility required in economically troubled times.*

### **Opening up in all its forms**

First, opening up to new business lines and new partners is essential for success in a world now keen on alliances – sometimes improbable – between sectors (who would have thought that banks would one day be selling “telephony packages”?).

Opening up is also a step towards new expansion horizons, possibly international, or towards the new emerging markets destined to become essential players in driving growth.

Opening up also means promoting new uses and new ways of doing things. The arrival in force of smartphones and tablets is a good illustration. Cloud computing, a vehicle not only for cost reduction but also for the creation of more flexible information systems, has begun to prove its worth.

Opening up is increasingly being demanded by users themselves. Social networks, both public and enterprise, and employee pressure to use personal equipment (the famous BYOD “Bring Your Own Device”) will undoubtedly be topical issues in 2012.

### **Control the opening up of information systems**

Recent events and various major security incidents both abroad and in France are a stark reminder that opening up must be properly thought through. There can be no question of uncontrolled opening up of an information system critical to the performance of an enterprise to allow free access to confidential data.

It is crucial in this respect to have a full grasp of the fundamentals of information protection. Knowing where the sensitive data is, who can access it and how it is used are key elements! This knowledge will enable the most sensitive data to be suitably protected while authorising new uses in the rest of the system where information is less sensitive.

### **Transform your information system and work towards opening up**

To authorise opening up, movements of capital in the information system will be necessary. Priorities for 2012 will certainly include creation of “sanctuaries” for advanced protection of the most sensitive information. They will also include strengthening of application security (both during statement of requirements and also, and especially, during development and acceptance testing). Likewise, they will include creation of identity and access management systems capable of interacting with cloud services to guarantee continuity of protection. Surveillance of the information system and adaptation of crisis and incident management processes to new threats will also be key elements.

Opening up is essential if we are to assist and develop our organisations and make them competitive while preserving their resources! 2012 will without doubt be the year of opening up as a driver for cost-cutting and emergence of new services. A vital step for the growth of large organisations!

# PERFORMANCE

## Relativistic concept or vehicle of excellence?



**Louis-Marie Lafont,**  
Manager in the IT Governance practice

*Whatever name they go under, performance improvement programmes are all the fashion in IT departments. The mysteries of performance being what they are, virtually all these programmes end up succeeding on paper and the results are announced to the world to the general self-satisfaction of the teams concerned. Yet this often conceals a highly relativistic concept of performance. In the field of information systems it is all too easy to present positive results to non-specialist decision makers and business lines. Here are a few ideas to make your IT department's 2012 performance plan a vehicle of excellence capable of delivering a sustainable performance that can be objectively measured by everyone.*

### **Target the right performance driver**

There are many performance drivers, including cost reduction, cloud, development of relationship between Business Project Manager and IT Project Manager, enhancement of economic know-how in IT departments, further development of offshore, changing uses, and many others. One of the keys to a successful performance plan is choosing the right drivers. They must be limited in number and apply to areas of operation of average maturity for the IT department. Areas that have already been optimised several times will only generate small gains. Immature areas will not produce any short-term gains since actions in that case are more complicated to implement than when the area is more mature.

### **Make all players accountable**

Accountability of players in a performance plan is a not an easy matter to address, as in the short term the actions proposed will conflict with the players' interests: cutbacks in resources, changes to operating modes, identification of malfunctions, etc. It is therefore necessary to make sure that players are made accountable for achieving overall performance plan objectives and not just objectives relating to subsidiary areas, where local actions might be initiated that could ultimately run counter to the overall objectives.

### **Choose simple, scientifically valid measuring criteria**

Many performance plans are analysed by the yardstick of criteria that are not truly scientifically valid as they are not correlated with the criteria used for tracking IT department activity. The bias is clear and perfectly human, as players in charge of measurement will spend more time in getting the indicator to progress positively than in carrying out the identified performance actions. Typically, measurement of economic gains that are not correlated with the IT department's results – auditable in the accounts – is rarely relevant as it depends directly on the method of calculating the gains (inclusion of avoided costs, euros not adjusted for inflation or interest rates versus euros at current rate, etc.). This type of approach can lead to the presentation – in perfectly good faith – of substantial theoretical gains along with an increase in the customer's bill! In contrast, a conventional objective of reducing costs in relation to budgeted costs is a simple, measurable and scientifically valid objective.

The key factor for a successful performance plan is therefore simplicity: a limited area of operation together with accountability for a scientifically valid, measurable overall objective. This simplicity is a sure way to turn a performance plan into a vehicle of excellence for customers and for all the teams involved. Why not try it in 2012?

# CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP

## A key differentiator for enterprises



**Emmanuel Guillaumeau,**  
Consultant manager in the IT Transformation practice

*Over the past fifteen years customer relationship has gradually been adopting digital technology, but enterprises still see it as a potential area for differentiation and innovation. Matters currently under scrutiny include new online services, customer-dedicated websites and links with social networks... But is this enough?*

### **Employees, the poor relations in customer relationship**

In recent years investments in customer relationship information systems have predominantly targeted “self service” developments. Retail websites, personal accounts for customers and online services have all been introduced and are continuing to help shape a service- and performance-oriented customer relationship. It is sometimes almost possible to forget that the primary functions of customer relationship, i.e. “intermediated” sales or after-sales services (performed by enterprise employees), still broadly remain to be optimised.

Employees have now often become the poor relations in customer relationship, since customers may well be able to find out more or do more on their own via the internet than through an adviser on the telephone. The customer soon becomes aware of the discrepancy and the situation must then be rectified as a matter of urgency by endowing employees with greater value added, along the lines of the resource optimisation strategies implemented in customer contact centres.

### **How can information systems be improved?**

Several possibilities have already been extensively examined: web call back, access to management data, product propensity score and customer attrition score. But customer experience is built on continuity (from pre-sales to after-sales) and requires an approach modelled on the customer life cycle and designed to develop a service offering that is consistent – between channels – and continuous.

The information system must therefore offer a full package of support both to customers and to customer relationship employees in order to contribute effectively to building this customer “experience” without calling into question the whole of the current information system.

The winning approach must be entirely pragmatic and define a long-term target for information systems:

- Continue to develop the service offering to online customers,
- Optimise the customer relationship tools offered to employees,
- Develop an overall strategic and functional view of customer relationship,
- Implement conditions for operational maintenance and permanent upgrading of these tools and practices,
- Gradually adjust business line practices and organisation to the new situation of dematerialised customer relationship.

At the same time, a whole area of customer relationship is gradually developing outside the enterprise’s sphere of control via social networks. Tools are increasingly opening up to social networks but are still largely composite and require forward projection efforts on issues of practice and integration that enterprises are still having difficulty in making.

Finally, the information system offering in SaaS mode available on the market is still providing business lines with a potential for agility that IT departments are finding difficult to cope with. So much so that IT departments may eventually be overwhelmed or even dispossessed.

Such issues as composite but consistent target information system, value added generated over the long term when a full customer relationship has developed, and investments in customer relationship tools and practices clearly raise the question of return on investment from customer relationship information system programmes.

## **What drivers should be applied in 2012?**

The role of the IT department remains decisive. The IT department is the only player able to meet business line requirements both in the short term and with respect to future developments of the service offering for assistance with strategic transformations in enterprises.

In 2012, the drivers available for improving customer relationship information systems will be:

- Better coordination of business lines and greater convergence of information system investments both to meet short-term requirements and to build an information system ecosystem that is scalable and agile in the long term,
- Permanent monitoring and assessment of customer relationship information systems to anticipate requests from business lines and promote the emergence of realistic and pragmatic target information systems,
- Support to business lines and top management in assessing the economic conditions for implementing these new services and tools (business case, ROI) and in determining the means to measure their performance.

In 2012, the “relationship” is both the objective (a more efficient customer relationship to secure greater loyalty) and the means (both through a pragmatic, constructive IT department / business line relationship and through the tools available to customer relationship employees).

# NETWORK

## Collaborative working for better communication in 2012?



**Raymond Scilson,**  
Senior consultant in the IT Transformation practice

*Over the past 20 years collaborative work solutions have entered the workplace. Often accompanied by lofty promises, they have frequently raised false hopes, though have also at times undeniably proved a valuable tool for knowledge capitalisation. Those who use them every day, however, know that the distance separating a “knowledge base” from a simple shared network drive is shrinking with time and use.*

### **Social networks: to go or not to go?**

The latest trends in collaborative working are inverting conventional problem-tackling logic. “Classic” platforms encourage asset-based logic with the promise that amassing knowledge and attempting to organise it will create value and develop ties. Social networks reverse this logic by starting from the interpersonal to make knowledge accessible. When social networks are accompanied by a high-performance indexing engine, they can also create knowledge.

Does this mean that popularity will guarantee success and productivity for an enterprise? Many enterprises are still hesitating. After all, isn't the time spent on an enterprise social network more of an entertainment than anything else? Should enterprise social networks be organised and, if so, how? Can their efficiency be measured? These are some of the many questions requiring answers, as it is far from being a trivial matter to change over from personal use of a social network to enterprise use.

All these questions undoubtedly also represent an opportunity for 2012 and subsequent years. An opportunity for your enterprise to tap into sources of creativity and efficiency that may ultimately prove more profitable than striking an oil deposit! Social networks focus on the base “material” underlying creativity, on the foundational energy forged by human relations.

### **Put social networks to good use rather than just tolerating them**

A few years ago, John Husband invented the concept of “wirearchy” to describe a new mode of organisation based on the exchange of information between “interconnected” individuals. This mode of organisation is more spontaneous, sometimes in conflict with the hierarchical chain of command but inevitably destined to spread. It's well-known that when caught in a strong current, it's better to go with the flow and turn it to your advantage rather than use up all your strength fighting it. The challenge for enterprises is therefore to find strategies for making use of this current. But don't imagine there's one formula that fits all! Each enterprise must find its own way by acting on a human relations structure that is strongly dependent on that enterprise's individual business, history and environment. The right way to put these uses and new collaborative tools in place in your enterprise is consequently a highly personalised matter.

A clear picture must first be had of the various families of strategies. These may include restriction to receptive, culturally acclimatised communities or, in contrast, involve a broad but functionally restricted rollout. There are many different strategies and many different tools. But no one tool will spontaneously create the right conditions to bring the strategy to maturity in the context of your enterprise.

I have no doubt that 2012 will also be a year when ever more relevant assistance offerings will be developed. Some methodological principles are already emerging to help diagnose the collaborative operation of an enterprise and measure the contribution of this new generation of collaborative tool.

Finally, how is it possible not to see the revival of collaborative working centred on human interactions as an inspiring, significant sign at this time of good wishes? It provides a counterbalance to an all-pervading cynicism and, above all, an excellent justification for hoping that everyone will have a successful, collaborative and creative year ahead.

# SIMPLICITY

“Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication”, Leonardo de Vinci



**Laurent Bellefin,**

Associate director in charge of major transformation projects

*This well-known quote is not only worthy of reflection but almost deserves to be elevated to the status of a management principle. How many organisations are slowly grinding to a halt because of increasing complexity in their operation, meticulous attention to detail in each individual case or a wish to be systematically exhaustive...? This trend produces complex organisations with a multitude of fiefdoms each jealously guarding its responsibility for a small part of the system, whereas everything could reasonably be simplified and made more agile.*

*Apart from the inertia it engenders, complexity is also synonymous with rising costs. Periods of crisis and “budgetary selectivity” are therefore often suitable occasions for enterprises to “tidy up” their mode of operation and choose simplicity wherever possible. In the information systems world, this principle can be broken down into a number of levels.*

## **Simplicity in an IT department’s operational processes**

Simplifying IT department processes always generates substantial gains, whether the measures implemented are based on lean methods steamrolled into place or on more progressive, more participatory approaches. One case in point is project management, where the conventional V-model could be gradually adapted to shorten the circuits between IT Project Manager and Business Project Manager, even if organisational transformation entails breaking down the boundaries between these players.

## **Simplicity in relations between IT department and its business line customers**

The time has come to reappraise the pattern of relations between IT department and business lines. The strict customer / supplier model should be discarded. It will then be possible to truly share cost control objectives, mutually examine the project portfolio and decide on trade-offs on the basis of simple prioritisation criteria. It will be easier to define rules for managing application developments, thus reducing the workload involved in creating and releasing these developments. It will also be possible to build an action plan to simplify the fleet by “decommissioning” applications that are no longer of any use...

## **Simplicity in IT department service offerings**

Everything encourages IT departments to include multiple alternatives and service levels in each of its offers in response to individual requests. Needless options and functionalities must be weeded out in partnership with users.

## **Simplicity in sourcing IT services**

Making bulk purchases of services and demanding more supplier commitment will clearly reduce costs but will also provide greater clarity and simplicity in managing purchases and services. Sourcing is an area where life can be made simpler by focusing only on what is essential...

Paradoxically, simplicity is not the easiest choice to make. It requires a major overhaul of modes of operation and a well-conducted change management process.

This will be a good project around which to mobilise your teams in 2012!

# SYNERGY

## Between business line and information system: a winning strategy



**Emmanuel Arnaud,**  
Manager in the IT Architecture practice

2011 has been marked by the re-emergence of the crisis and the imprint it has left on all sectors of the economy. Large companies have been especially affected by these conditions:

- Markets are continuing to demand high profitability;
- Funding sources are drying up and thus reducing capacities for financing large projects (business line or information system);
- Increasingly concerned customers are limiting or even postponing their purchases.

This new crisis period, like its predecessors, will change the ecosystem, the positioning of enterprises and future modes of consumption.

Enterprises are therefore having to fund investments to enable them to weather the crisis with minimum impact while at the same time conducting major transformations.

Although funding is of paramount importance in these times of crisis, it does not necessarily guarantee results. Only enterprises that are able to get business lines and information system to work together will be in a position to manage their transformations smoothly.

### **Synergy in the emergence of new services**

Services are increasingly adapting to uses (consumption situations) and to the media able to support them (means for consuming or accessing services). Although it falls to the business line to define uses, it is perfectly within the IT department's remit to introduce innovation to business lines by working on the media. With mobile internet, social networks or – in the near future – tablets, information system and business line become complementary key players. The IT department offers business lines the means to support new uses and then helps develop new services.

### **Synergy in project implementation**

Many multi-annual programmes require mid-course adjustments to incorporate lessons learnt from work already carried out. In multichannel programmes, the level of sales process automation as required by an enterprise often takes second place to the "intimacy" expected by the customer. The IT department then becomes a value creator when implementing solutions allowing such a paradigm shift. At the same time, the business line, by demanding shorter delivery cycles for its distribution programmes, compels the IT department to make its core information system more readily accessible and to implement decoupling measures (producer, distributor) for the whole information system.

### **Synergy in the definition and management of large transformation projects**

Nowadays major changes to the business line have an impact on the information system, and vice versa. However, an enterprise's history combined with rapid technological development often leads to the emergence of information systems that are poorly aligned with the business line. This reduces the enterprise's capacity to conduct programmes within a short time span. IT departments must view each project as a potential source of synergy in order to correct this alignment and put themselves in a position to transform the information system "on demand".

IT departments are adopting a more professional stance with a "customer / supplier" vision and are developing service offerings. However, the information system must not regard the business line as a mere customer but rather as a partner. To set actions in train on the information system side, only the business line view can define and prioritise projects. This capacity to reconcile views (business line and information system) and develop synergies will produce the performance drivers of tomorrow.

# TRANSFORMATION

“There can be no transforming of darkness into light and of apathy into movement without emotions”, Carl Gustav Jung



**Philippe Dajeau,**  
Director

*In a recent publication, the Institut de l'entreprise sets out the groundwork for a value creation model for enterprises and describes the notion of “transformational value”. This publication defines the process of transformational value creation as one where a new value creation norm is established in an organisation and is subject to continual review – a process which the Institut characterises as encompassing the general issue of change management. This outline of a theory neatly summarises recent thinking among Solucom teams.*

## **Know how to change to stay in business**

No one nowadays would dispute the fact that change is an inherent part of the life of an enterprise. To continue to exist, an enterprise must know how to change, rethink its structure and acquire efficient, innovative tools. Transformations may be chosen (mergers & acquisitions, development of new markets, internal optimisation) or undergone (crisis, declining business, emergence of new uses, web, etc.). In view of the current economic context, there is every likelihood that there will be many more transformations in 2012. Nevertheless, transformations are still often poorly managed and results do not always live up to expectations. They leave over 40% of corporate executives unhappy, which is a disturbing finding now that transformations are becoming ever more frequent and results are expected ever more quickly - all the more disturbing as the primary cause of transformation project failure, far ahead of any other cause, is the feeling that changes are being made too hurriedly.

## **Reconcile business pace with “human” pace**

This paradox highlights the apparent incompatibility between business pace (where everything has to be done in double-quick time) and the “human” pace for assimilating, challenging, adapting and learning. How can these two visions be reconciled? The key is to control the pace, control changes to the pace and control the variations in dynamics. It must be possible to speed things up when appropriate, slow them down at the right time, anticipate when circumstances permit and know when and where to invest energies and resources.

To control the pace, certain favourable conditions are required. There are at least two. The first is to develop a shared desire for transformation. This desire will develop out of an awareness of the vital need for change in the enterprise. To create a sufficient degree of awareness, the reasons behind the transformation must be explained, but this in itself will not be enough. Shock treatment will be necessary to overcome any denial of reality. The second condition for success is to ensure that adequate responsiveness is built into the process. Reviewing the main aims of development, speeding things up, easing off, etc. will require the creation of a powerful coalition to guide the transformation (project team, sponsors) and the development of tools to manage performance and stakeholder commitment.

Transformation is a fascinating, long-term adventure. To manage it well demands flexibility and pragmatism as well as commitment and the will to do things together...challenges that many people will doubtless have to take up in 2012!