



ENHANCING YOUR COMPANY'S PERFORMANCE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Are you using technology as a strategic enabler?

How do you know if your investment in new technology is really going to deliver business benefits? Strong technology leaders seek alignment with strategic goals first, rather than satisfying a desire to have the latest thing. True performance enhancement comes when people, processes, and technology serve



the same underlying goals.

In this edition of *Executive Issues & Insights*, we explore key insights drawn from the extensive

C-suite and Board experiences of the NextLevel team on how to enhance your company's performance through technology.

NEXLEVEL CASE STUDY

ERP implementation enables strategic success for multinational company

A large multinational company struggled to generate valuable management information from its existing disjointed information systems. Leadership determined that the company needed a comprehensive ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) solution. The new system would need to meet current financial reporting and operational needs, as well as keep pace with anticipated growth. It would also need to provide KPI metrics and other management information that could be compared with targets established in the strategic plan.

A new CFO, now a NextLevel team member, was hired to lead the implementation of an improved, companywide ERP system. He first developed policies and procedures to ensure that the unified ERP became the single source for all financial, operational, and management information. He spent time with financial and operational managers to ensure that the information delivered to them would be both easy to access and actionable.

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NEXLEVEL INSIGHTS

Technology must follow the needs of the business

A common problem in IT is initiatives and programs that aren't aligned to overall business strategy. Every technology initiative should map to strategy and key goals. Opportunities to apply technology will naturally arise when you analyze the business processes related to your company's goals and challenges. Outside expertise can often help identify the best candidates for applying technology, as well as the most cost effective and least risky solutions.

Treat technology like other capital investments re: ROI and risk

Investments in IT systems often come at high cost with many potential risks. Application failure, early obsolescence, loss of support, cyber security, and compatibility with future systems are just a few. A primary responsibility of a strong CTO or CIO is to drive the discussion on ROI and risk and evaluate technology investments and expenses to ensure they maximize the value to the business and perform within acceptable risk.

Use technology to improve the customer experience

Strategically using technology to improve the customer experience can have a big impact. For example, for employees handling customer issues, mitigate negative customer experiences by ensuring that representatives can rapidly access all the information they need to quickly solve problems. Applying information flow technology in such cases can create customer satisfaction that builds your brand and increases customer referrals.

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The NextLevel team member assisted the company in deploying the ERP system across 17 entities in five countries. The new system facilitated the process of consolidating activities and eliminating redundancies. By providing a single source of accurate, timely information, it became the central information point for operational and management decision-making.

The ERP implementation resulted in more consistent transparency to the operating margins of the various lines of businesses in different locations. This was a key metric for driving the company forward. Company leaders could now get real-time visibility of key strategic metrics. This played a significant role in the execution of the company's strategy, and therefore its subsequent success. Since implementation of the new system, company revenues have more than doubled.

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Improve workflows through automation

Constantly putting out fires is often a symptom of a lack of automated workflows. Too often companies want to solve problems by "buying a bigger fire extinguisher," rather than by looking for the source. But when you're running day-to-day operations, sometimes it's hard to see opportunities for automation. Someone who can understand your business and analyze your methods can provide that overarching, clear vision of where to apply technology most effectively to automate workflow processes.

Implement a cyber risk resilience plan

The odds that your company will experience a cyber security breach are ever increasing. The consequences can be severe, especially if you hold a significant amount of customer data. Proactive resilience planning can lessen the impacts. Audit your security vulnerabilities, identify gaps, develop a roadmap for closing them, and then continuously monitor the process, all the while reviewing with the board.

Establish an IT steering committee

To be most effective, such a committee should consist of decision makers from each business unit, and be chaired by the CTO or CIO. Its purpose should be to make sure that IT is fulfilling the needs of the business, and that strategy is driving technology goals. The committee's charter should be to ensure that technology is used as an enabler of strategy by the way it sets IT project priorities and schedules, solves problems, and plans for the future.

KEYS TO ENHANCING YOUR COMPANY'S PERFORMANCE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

- **Your IT initiatives:** Are each of them aligned with your company strategy?
- **Your technology investments:** Are you evaluating their ROI and risk the same as with other capital investments?
- **Your customer experience:** Are you applying technology strategically to improve it?
- **Your business workflows:** Are you looking for opportunities to automate them?
- **Your cyber risk resiliency:** Have you established a plan for mitigating the likelihood and impact of a security breach?
- **Your IT governance:** Have you established a steering committee as a strategy enabler?

**"THE FIRST QUESTION TO
ASK ABOUT ANY SIGNIFICANT
INVESTMENT IN TECHNOLOGY
IS DO WE NEED IT TO MEET
OUR STRATEGIC GOALS?"**

**Technology investments
must be intrinsically
linked to the needs of
the business.**

More Information

To learn more about how NextLevel can help you enhance your company's performance through technology, call us at (800) 833-NEXT or email info@nlbev.com.

