



SUCCESSFULLY SCALING YOUR BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY

Scaling your IT systems doesn't have to be painful

Your business is growing. Can your business technology scale to support it? Or are you facing an IT nightmare? Designing your technology systems for scalability means you'll be able to take advantage of growth opportunities while limiting technology growing pains.



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 successfully scale your business technology to support your company's growth.

NEXLEVEL CASE STUDY *Capturing \$1 billion of qualified leads*

An international manufacturer of capital medical equipment faced eroding market share and rising operational costs. Their outdated IT systems were spread over four separate, autonomous businesses and were incapable of supporting the business strategy.

To remain competitive, the company needed to close more sales while providing a single face to the customer. This would require integrating sales, service and distribution for the four businesses into a unified environment—a significant challenge.

The VP, Corporate Information Systems (CIO), who is now a NextLevel partner, first established an “umbrella” strategy that would maintain four separate manufacturing environments while integrating sales, service and distribution.

Next, the IT department addressed several *(more)*

NEXLEVEL INSIGHTS

Clearly communicate your IT need

Make sure the need for change in your IT infrastructure is communicated clearly to the rest of the company. You should be able to articulate the benefits in less than five minutes. People won't be willing to put the time and effort into delivering the system or supporting it once the system goes live if they can't relate to the need for the change.

Design your system with customer perspective in mind

In today's competitive world, your IT system must be designed with a focus on how it will support your customers and not just on internal measures of productivity. When you focus on customer needs, internal metrics will improve as well.

Avoid over-customizing

Companies often spend considerable time and resources customizing already well-developed software to fit their legacy conventions. The result is a proprietary product that requires special training, and costs more to operate and maintain. Instead, clearly understand strategic needs vs. legacy conventions, make sure the product supports these needs before purchase, and only customize where strategically necessary.

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immediate opportunities to deliver value and build credibility. This resulted in a \$25 million reduction in service inventories, record high fill rates, and \$13 million in IT cost reductions.

The company then implemented comprehensive sales, service, production, materials management and financial applications. In doing so, they were able to restructure business operations and close more sales while providing a single face to the customer.

The NextLevel executive also implemented a leading-edge sales automation system that was fundamental to consolidating the four separate sales organizations into one and establishing a new sales methodology. This enabled the company to capture over \$1 billion of qualified sales leads, at least a 30 percent increase over the prior year. This led to a significant increase in sales and market share, and the company is now the market leader.

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Scale incrementally

A major mistake that companies make is implementing across-the-board deployment of a new solution. This often ends up being too much for the organization to absorb all at once. Instead, opt for pilot deployment in certain areas, adding more licenses as you go. This will give you a smoother install capability than trying to implement it all at once.

Look for cloud solutions

Many cloud-based solutions exist for human resources, CRM, sales force automation, collaboration, and forecasting. They make IT scaling much easier than previous software solutions. If a cloud solution that fits your needs doesn't exist, ask your enterprise vendor for a hosted solution that will scale gradually and seamlessly.

Consider industry-specific solutions

While some all-purpose software solutions can be used across multiple industries, the trade-off is complexity and increased maintenance costs. Consider using an industry-specific solution if it makes sense strategically. They are less flexible, but also less complex, with lower maintenance costs. Evaluate your current and future needs from all perspectives to see what works best for your specific requirements.

“A GOOD, SCALABLE IT SOLUTION RELIES AS MUCH ON GOOD COMMUNICATION ABOUT THE REQUIREMENTS AND TRADE-OFFS AS IT DOES ON THE TECHNOLOGY ITSELF.”

What makes a good IT solution is having very good communication between the people responsible at the board and senior executive level and the people accountable at the tactical level.

KEYS TO SUCCESSFULLY SCALING YOUR BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY

- **Your communication:** Can you articulate the benefits of an IT infrastructure change in less than five minutes?
- **Your customers:** Are you designing your IT system to support them?
- **Your customization:** Are you keeping costly, proprietary customizations to a minimum?
- **Your timeline:** Can you deploy with pilot programs instead of across the board?
- **Your cloud:** Are you taking advantage of inherent scalability of cloud-based solutions?
- **Your industry:** Can you use an industry-based solution with lower maintenance costs?

More Information

To learn more about how NextLevel can help you successfully scale your business technology, call us at (800) 833-NEXT or email info@nlbev.com.

