



Looking for a Smart Way to Reduce Costs?

Simply Put, Software Can Help Solve Your Problems

» How can you best leverage the power of software to drive down costs in your organization, automate resource-intensive processes, and improve collaboration? In this issue of Meet the Expert, Product Line Director Kevin O'Connor offers some tips for getting the most value out of your organization's software investment.



Q: How long has software been your focus, and why are you still interested—what's so appealing about it?

A: I first got involved with software back in college when I started to discover the power that it could offer. Back in those days, I was using the standard word processing and analytics packages that most colleges and universities had in place for their student base. But, as I continued to exercise certain packages, my curiosity started to peak, and I began to develop some of my own software. In fact, I played a role in the development of a financial and economic modeling marketing program, which is a technology that I used in my first work experience at Barclays Bank in the UK.

Q: What are some of the trends you have been seeing that are really changing the software market?

A: Currently we see quite an adoption of virtualization within the data center—meaning the server side of virtualization. This is because of the hard and fast ROI that customers are able to gain from it. As they begin to explore desktop migration, we also see quite a bit of uptick in desktop virtualization. Part of the

reason people are upgrading their desktop OS to the latest and greatest is collaboration and social software. This software allows the digital information that continues to be created on a regular basis to be shared and accessed more easily.

Hand-in-hand with both of those are emerging security trends. As more information goes digital, information is being shared and greater care has to be taken as to how that information is secured. Over the past decade we have seen several breaches of information security and safeguarding that have had real and tangible business impacts. As we continue to see more and more businesses move online, it requires that better care be taken with information that is being shared electronically.

Q: Specifically, what do you offer customers in regard to procurement and management of software?

A: First, I would say education about the options that they have—in terms of vendors to choose from, and consumption models both on-premise versus a SaaS or hosted solution. Because of our deep relationships with many vendors, we have visibility into product lines that can really help customers make a

sound decision for their business. Couple that with the level of access we have to their license history—making sure we give them regular updates during review periods when maintenance renewals might be done. All of these things allow for a high engagement model that helps ensure they are well-informed on how to move forward with their software investments.

Q: Can you give us an anecdote about someone you have worked with recently and the benefits that they have realized from a new software solution?

A: Earlier this year we worked with a regional banking customer who employs just over 250 people at multiple sites. As their business changed with the economy, they were faced with some challenges with the size of their IT staff. My team evaluated their needs and developed a solutions plan. It included end-user requirements, an understanding of the IT staffing and cycles needed, as well as what IT systems capacity they had available.

There were other considerations like business backup and disaster recovery strategy. This is key information, and in this case involved a second hot site for disaster recovery.

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The customer went through the Microsoft Exchange 2010 migration process with us and added the Microsoft Systems Center Data Protection Manager components to meet their requirements. The resulting environment has addressed not only their business SLAs in terms of IT cycle and end-user requirements, it has also given them the availability to jump into their next project—applying virtualization to their SQL server and CRM deployment.

Q: Can you give two or three specifics about what you offer at different stages of the IT lifecycle?

A: We first perform software asset management to understand what a customer has in their portfolio. From there we either begin deployment planning around specific projects, much like the previous example, or we focus on the management and

administration of renewals and contracts. We can even set up online purchasing for regular acquisitions that need to be made under contract—to smooth out that process. We take this all the way through the full lifecycle including managing infrastructure services and readiness and migration services.

Q: There are many organizations that have a software project primed and are ready to pull the trigger. What are one or two things that they can do to ensure a positive software rollout this year?

A: I would focus on two things. First, leverage us. We are a resource. And, with our deeply rooted relationships with and access to our vendors, we have great visibility and insight into what is on the market today and what is forthcoming. If you are looking for trends and proven patterns of success before they hit

the blogs, we are likely living them right now with other customers. So, definitely leverage us. Second, don't leave anything behind. Ask us anything and everything. We are here as a resource to help you be successful with your software deployment strategy. Whatever you are going to ask, we have probably seen it several times over. We can help you validate or correct the course of where you are headed with your software portfolio.

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