

The Chief Information Officer's role in enabling innovation

Despite the clear need for UK companies to innovate, the term “innovation” has become over-used. Indeed, as the economic performance of the UK went down, so it seems the use of the word “innovation” went up – almost as if it is some kind of rescue remedy that can be taken as and when needed.

Some CIOs have built a career on playing a leading role in their organisation's innovation programmes; others remain cynical about what it is or indeed how useful it is. Despite the undoubted, and sometimes justified, cynicism, CIOs do need to take innovation seriously.

Importantly, CIOs need to understand how their organisation operates in order to maximise engagement and collaboration among employees. For example, how resistant are staff to inter-departmental ideas exchange? How comfortable are staff with using different types of collaboration tools? After all, there is no point making investments and setting off in one direction if neither of these support what your organisation is ultimately capable of achieving.

One of the most valuable things you bring to your organisation is your ability to understand which/how technologies can solve business problems, help create new products/services/business models, improve business processes and so on.

This research study makes suggestions for how CIOs could work more effectively in enabling innovation in their organisations. Particular attention is given understanding the role of innovation in the public sector and why innovation doesn't have to be costly. It also assesses the approaches of some of the key IT suppliers in the UK, with a view to ascertaining which vendors make the most complementary partners.

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