IT Revolutionaries
- driving the agenda for business change

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Process Used

This report references previous AIIM survey findings, each of which is referenced within the document.

About AIIM

AIIM has been an advocate and supporter of information professionals for nearly 70 years. The association mission is to ensure that information professionals understand the current and future challenges of managing information assets in an era of social, mobile, cloud and big data. AIIM builds on a strong heritage of research and member service. Today, AIIM is a global, non-profit organization that provides independent research, education and certification programs to information professionals. AIIM represents the entire information management community: practitioners, technology suppliers, integrators and consultants. AIIM runs a series of training programs, including the Certified Information Professional (CIP) course. http://www.aiim.org/Training/Certification

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White Paper

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Introduction

Leadership and the strategic direction of an organization are expected to come from the highest powers within the business – but how can IT make sure that their voices are heard at this level?

The top-down approach to business[1] is well understood: the board and senior executives decide which way the organizational boat needs to head, and specific instructions are passed down via the business hierarchy until eventually the ship's wheel is turned around and the boat heads off in the direction the management want. Yet in today's fast changing and dynamic business landscape how does the top-down approach embrace trends such as collaboration, social media or big data? Incorporating feedback from customers, refocusing efforts based on the latest market data or developing new marketing strategies via company-wide brainstorming: all of these new influences need to be accommodated into existing operations, and this new exposure to customer pressure will require business processes and their management to be flexible, responsive and co-ordinated.

The big question of course, is how does IT ensure it is included in the discussion fulfilling that strategic direction? How does IT move from simply driving the bus to influencing much more - which bus to drive, what route to take, how many stops to make and how many passengers can join per trip.

This "process revolution" needs clear decision-making and will involve carefully managing changes throughout the organization, both within and across departments. Technical architects and IT analysts are well positioned to promote the organization-wide benefits that IT can deliver in areas such as process automation, big data, mobile and social. So how can they best make their voices heard?

In this paper, based on AIIM's research, we discuss the effects of monolithic departmental decision-making and the benefits of taking a more holistic view. We look at how the IT professional can become a "champion for change", and provide 8 steps for influencing decisions at the strategic level through the introduction of the ground-breaking technologies already mentioned.

Decision Making

Having established that strategic direction typically comes from the very top level of an organization it is important to understand where the associated *implementation decisions* regarding IT are actually taken. AIIM research (Fig 1) shows that just 25% either have a joint planning committee from different departments, or the CEO and Board take a central role, and that 23% of organizations' budgets are not centralized, allowing Line-of-Business to make their own decisions.

The research also shows that for 46% Central IT "pick up the technology and co-ordinate the departmental needs". While this appears to show strong leadership and input from IT the worry is that in many cases IT are simply being used as builders of a solution, with the individual departments acting as architects. We should be moving towards a situation where the department will be the consumers of the solution and IT both the architect and builder.

Figure 1: Which of these best describes the decision-making process in your organization for key enterprise systems (ERP, Finance, CRM, HR, etc.)? (N=305)
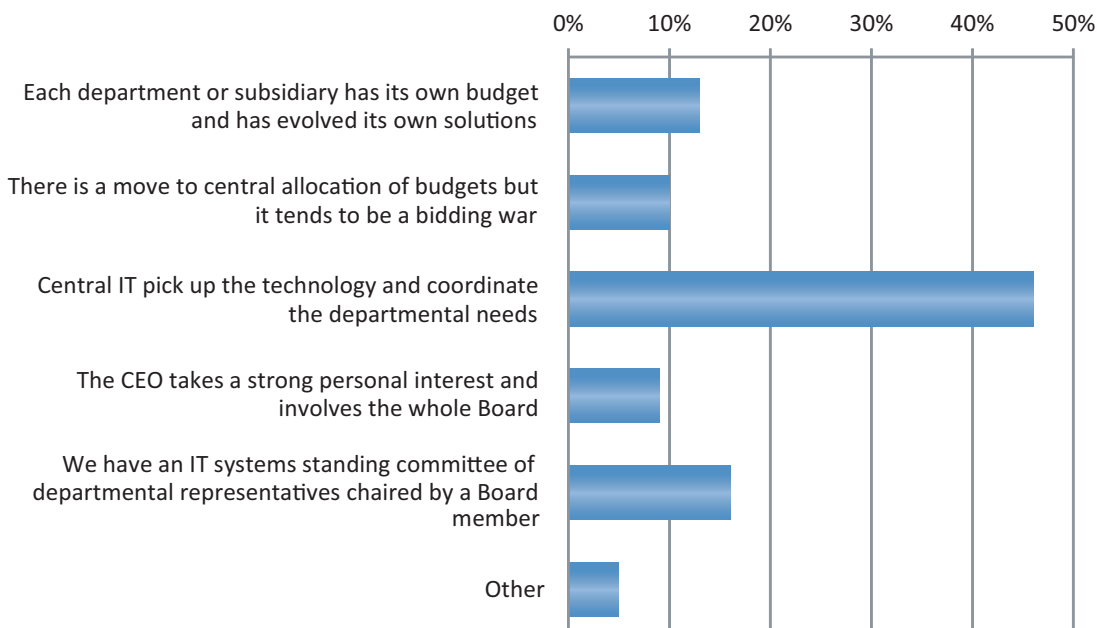
Departmental, line-of-business decision making will likely be aware of the new, ground-breaking paradigms of cloud, mobile and social, but unfortunately not understand how to apply it.

Organizations that make decisions at the departmental level also run the risk of deploying point-solutions - systems and solutions that satisfy just that individual department. This has a number of issues:

1. Delivering point-solutions per department puts IT firmly in a *reactive* position. In order to be able to move IT to a strategic level it needs to be able to act in a **proactive** manner.

2. These departments need to share information with other departments and if each has a different software system this becomes a major challenge and an additional project.

3. Training needs to be delivered for each new system – numerous systems lead to numerous training plans and little ability to consolidate resources.

4. The process of analysis requirements, purchasing or developing associated software and rolling this out is repeated for each department, placing significant pressure on resources.

5. Each new system deployed needs to be supported – with multiple IT resources needing to be trained and available to provide such support.

Fig 2 shows a more detailed breakdown of who within an organization makes the decisions for a range of system types.

Figure 2: In summary, who are the key decision makers in your organization for the following? *(N=302)*

	CEO/ COO/ CFO	Head of IM/RM/ Compliance	Head of IT	Head of Facilities/ Doc- Production	Line of Business Heads	No Identifiable decision maker
Scanning & Capture	9%	16%	19%	12%	29%	10%
ECM/DM/RM	9%	28%	29%	6%	15%	9%
Workflow & BPM	8%	9%	28%	7%	31%	12%
SharePoint	4%	9%	47%	2%	13%	5%
ERP/Finance/Core system	51%	4%	23%	3%	15%	3%
Other LOB systems	9%	3%	16%	3%	53%	6%

We can see that ERP, Finance and "core" systems include C level executives at decision level whereas key business process areas such as Scanning & Capture and Workflow & BPM are selected by line of business (LOB) heads – further strengthening the argument that decisions are being made at departmental level.

Given that these areas of IT can provide significant business benefit if deployed correctly it becomes even more important that the decisions made are strategic, organization-wide and IT-led. So how can this be achieved?

The Holistic Approach

Holistic management is a phrase coined by Allan Savory[2] in the 60s to describe an approach to managing resources that improves production, generates financial strength, and encourages participants to be aware of how their actions have an impact on the whole environment. This approach can be applied to IT decision making, using the environment as a metaphor for the IT infrastructure within an organization.

Departmental decision making focuses on a specific area with little regard for how any decisions made impact the wider environment, namely the other departments and the rest of the organization.
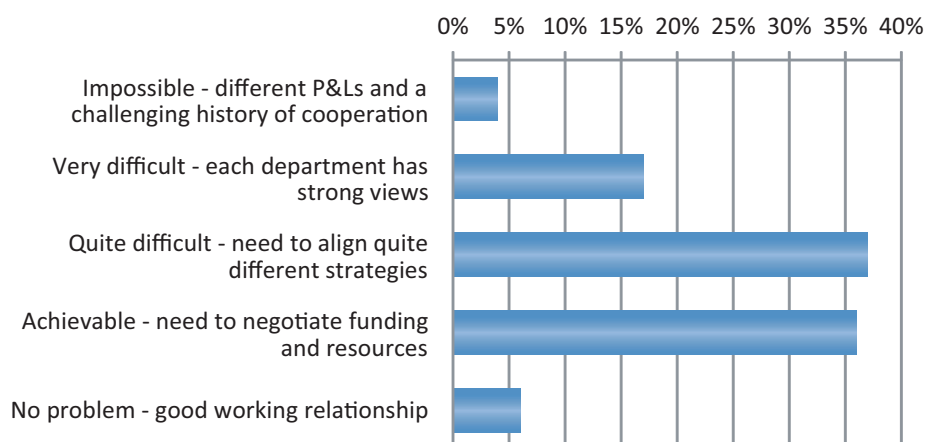
Holistic decision making expands the decision-making process to include and encourage the awareness of the impact of systems deployment – it forces participants to understand the effect of their decisions and consequently widens the focus of the decision-making process, which in turn allows for greater collaboration, understanding of common issues and possible deployment of solutions that cross departmental borders, as opposed to reinforcing them.

By moving to a holistic approach IT decisions can make use of concepts such as standardization and automation: words that have long been mentioned in lowered tones in IT, hallowed ground slightly beyond reach. However, with decisions being made across the whole organization IT can focus on delivering solutions that **do** provide standard interfaces, **do** integrate with each other, **are** cost effective and **do** genuinely deliver benefit.

Fig 3 shows that for 21% of organizations, with current practices, it is either impossible or very difficult to align the needs of different groups, and for a further 37% it is quite difficult. Therefore in over half of companies the decision making process is far from optimized to benefit the business, highlighting the need for a holistic approach even more.

Despite this, achieving the holistic approach **is** within the reach of organizations with 41% already feeling that this is achievable or "no problem".

Figure 3: How hard is it for your organization to align the business departments? *(N=309)*

Enabling Technologies

Holistic decision making has been around since the 60s. So why is this only now becoming relevant to IT?

The arrival of technologies and concepts such as social computing, cloud and mobile devices finally allow IT professionals to be able to deliver the cross-department, cross-organization infrastructure and solutions that are required.

Communicating across departments, offices and even countries is wholly achievable by using social tools. The cloud allows organizations to store content in a geographically-agnostic manner, allowing it to be gathered by and delivered to any device, be it traditional, "desktops" or the latest tablet or mobile device. And Big Data is taking the explosion of information and data generated by these tools then slicing, dicing and analysing it to provide valuable insight into all areas of the business.

It is the convergence of these technologies and the management of the associated business applications and information, collectively known as Business Process Management (BPM), which is resulting in true enterprise-class business systems. These systems that encompass technologies, applications and business departments become much more than the sum of the individual parts and allows IT to raise its head above the parapet and to finally have an important voice in the strategic direction of organizations.

BPM is also a holistic management approach and an empirical study by Vera & Kuntz[4] (2007) conducted in the German hospital sector indicates that BPM has a positive impact on organizational efficiency. Effective BPM can radically reduce costs and improve productivity as shown by a recent AIIM[5] survey that found that 52% of

respondents report that administrative staff in their organization would be a third or more productive if their processes were work-flowed using scanned forms and documents, with automated data capture

Business Process Management is the glue that joins together and enables these business applications, and the use of BPM by IT professionals is a key factor in positioning IT as a solution provider. It is also a key skill that anyone working in IT should be keen to acquire.

However, mention BPM to most IT-aware people and the word SharePoint will crop up. Microsoft's Swiss Army Knife of collaboration, document management and web portal is indeed heavily used by many to deploy BPM within organizations, potentially a decision again made by Central IT. However, AIIM research[6] in Fig 4 shows that to use SharePoint as an effective BPM tool many look to deploy add-ons: workflow management and design, document approvals and forms processing are already extensively used and more plan to deploy in these areas in the next 12 months.

Figure 4: Which of the following types of BPM add-on package or system are you using/are you planning to use with your SharePoint implementation?
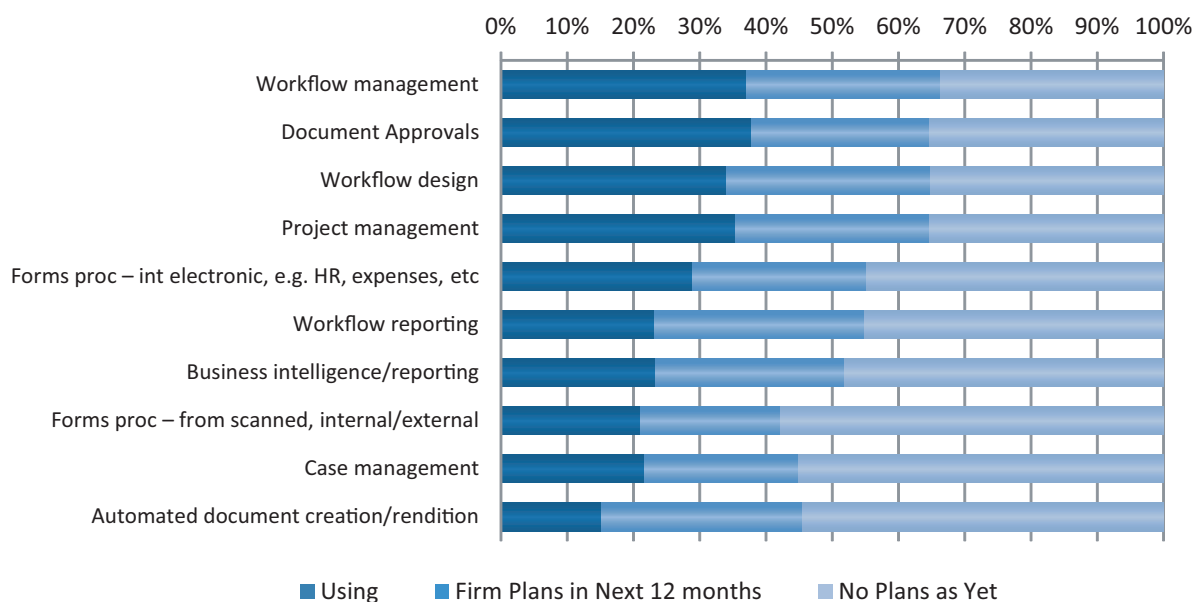

So, the technologies exist, organizations believe that decisions can be made holistically, and BPM solutions exist to join the two together – but how can IT communicate this to the rest of the organization and more importantly, be heard at board level and start setting the business agenda for change?

Helping IT Drive the Decision

The key is to challenge the existing fiefdom and present **solutions** to problems that exist in the business. And these solutions need to be phrased in the language of the C-level executive, in terms of efficiencies, costs and benefits, just as if you were selling into the organization from outside.

The Challenger[3] sales methodology promotes a staged approach to sales which starts by provoking the business with a specific in-sight. This in-sight is typically not directly related to the organization but a positioning statement, for example, "Were you aware that recent AIIM research shows that over half of organizations feel that they would become 50% more productive with enhanced workflow, search, information reporting and automated document capture tools"[6] – as shown in Fig 5, page 8. This is followed by an inflection which focuses on the user's organization – "how much more effective would our organization be if we had better workflow?"

Fig 5: How much more effective/productive do you think your processes would be if you had access to enhanced versions of the following (i.e. how much better than provided by SharePoint out of the box)?
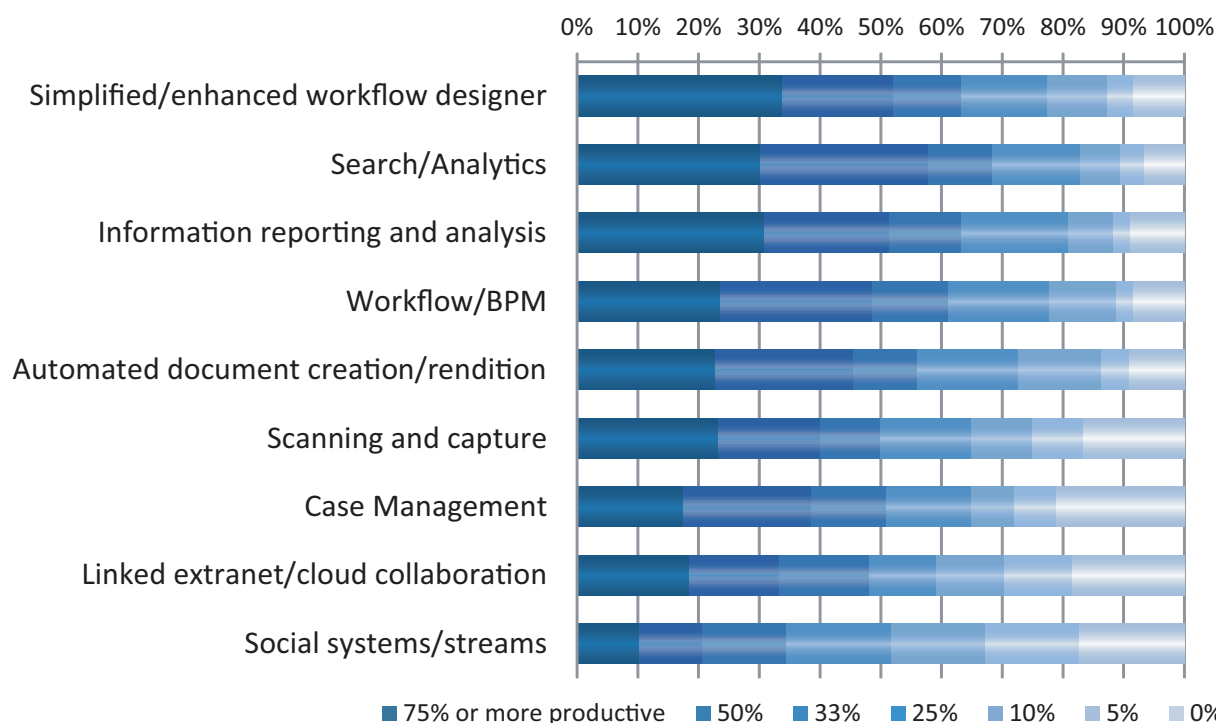
Using this methodology for internal business decisions, IT can start driving decisions - having already identified the associated implications and issues, and having prepared a potential solution which will deliver the benefits that all parties have identified throughout the exercise.

IT – The Internal Champion

The approach described encourages all involved to identify the issues at play and understand the potential benefits associated with resolving the issues, allowing IT to become the "Internal Champion", rather than the traditional responder or executor role. We have moved from "you tell us what you want and we will procure and deploy it for you" to "we have identified these major benefits across multiple departments if we adapt our systems and methodologies to this" - placing this organizational solution provider at centre stage.

The key point throughout this process is to challenge existing perceptions, identify pain points within the organization and show how IT can provide new **solutions** to that pain. Only by providing practical solutions can IT hope to achieve a strategic voice.

Conclusions

The role of IT within business has never been more important.

The convergence of a series of ground-breaking technologies and techniques such as cloud, social, and mobile, and their related BPM overlay have finally delivered the bricks for IT to lay the foundations of a major change in the way organizations work.

However, it is the maturation of Business Process Management (BPM) as the cement joining the bricks that brings everything together. IT departments can now integrate tools and technologies to business processes, delivering the benefits of IT at an organizational level.

This convergence means that decisions should not be taken at a departmental level with no IT input. IT departments will no longer be completely reactive to calls for new installations or support.

IT can finally have a voice!

That voice **will** challenge the established thinking of the organization with provocative insights into the pain points of the business.

That voice **will** follow up the insights with corporate level solutions to the problems, enabling organization-wide standardized interfaces, training, support and integration.

That voice **will** become the voice that sets the business agenda for change!

Recommendations

- ■ Ensure IT staff have an understanding of business issues and see themselves as business enablers, not mere technicians

- ■ Identify champions for social, cloud, mobile and BPM techniques, and ensure they are aware of the possibilities through training and education.

- ■ Perform a systems audit
  - Explore how many systems operate at departmental vs organizational level.
  - identify where duplication exists between departments and where opportunities exist for integration and consolidation.

- ■ Identify pain points within the organization that IT can potentially solve.
  - Look across the organization at bottlenecks, processes which often go wrong or are frustrating for users (internal or external), or new opportunities.
  - Try and connect these with the challenges identified earlier

- ■ For each pain point identify a relevant "insight."
  - Insights should provoke the business into thinking about how it is relevant to the internal processes and business.
  - The insight should be independently backed up – e.g., with an AIIM statistic.

- ■ Create a solution that builds on that insight.
  - The solution should resolve the pain point, produce cost benefits to the organization and be achievable.

- ■ Prepare an internal sales pitch.
  - A provoking insight followed by an achievable solution

- ■ Become the champion.
  - Deliver the presentation, provoke the organization, implement the solution, show the benefit.
  - Repeat as necessary!

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About K2

The K2 platform is for building business applications that streamline work, save money and reduce risk.

K2 applications can be set up to automate and manage business processes — such as document approval or inventory tracking — or pull together business processes, people, services, information and systems into a single application that helps drive business. Then, what's been built can be used like building blocks to assemble new applications.

With K2, the complexity of traditional software development is eliminated and replaced with easy-to-use, visual tools.

K2 is a division of SourceCode Technology Holdings, Inc. based in Redmond, Washington, and has offices all over the world.

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