IBM

Web 2.0 @ work: how CIOs can help drive business returns by improving organizational effectiveness

Without access to historical information, organizations today would be severely limited in their ability to make informed, appropriate decisions regarding even the most basic aspects of their business. However, the challenges encountered during attempts to gather, codify and distribute this knowledge can be daunting. The answer for many organizations and their CIOs is Web 2.0 adapted for business—a rich social networking environment that provides secure and integrated collaboration tools which allow employees to harness the total knowledge of the extended enterprise.

Jim, a sales rep, is updating the company's customer relationship management (CRM) application with the successful results of his recent meeting. The customer wants to move quickly and receive a proposal within the week. As Jim completes the update, something unusual happens. A screen pops up, displaying a list of people at his company who have experience with customers that are in the same industry or have similar product and service needs. When he moves his mouse over the name of one particular colleague, Barb, he sees a listing of previously created proposals similar to the one he needs to create, along with documents describing win plans and Barb's blog entries on successful strategies and services for similar customers. Jim clicks on Barb's picture to call her or, if she is online, send her an instant message.

Enabling innovation

According to CEOs around the world, innovation is a crucial component of today's adaptable enterprise. A recent IBM CEO study revealed innovation, along with global integration and a disruptive business model, to be among the key traits of the Enterprise of the Future.[1] As to how that innovation will take place—CEOs include collaboration and the use of Web 2.0 tools at the top of the list.[2]

The four keys to success

IBM has uncovered four keys to a successful, sustainable Web 2.0 initiative for business growth.

1. Put business first

To be valuable to the people who will be using them, an organization's Web 2.0 tools need to work in ways that users already work, in situations users are likely to find themselves.

2. Embed the tools

A strategy of embedding Web 2.0 tools into existing applications and processes solves two key challenges to social networking initiatives in many organizations: adoption resistance and the realization of measurable benefits.

3. Focus on roles

Role-based tools can break down traditional organization barriers of department, geography and procedure to allow users unfettered access to sources of expertise and information that would otherwise not be discovered as quickly, if at all.

4. Foster a collaborative culture

To encourage employees to adopt social networking, key behaviors—such as sharing of expertise and reuse of existing corporate assets—need to be incented by the organization.

The result: a more adaptable enterprise

According to the IBM Global Human Capital Study 2008, the following are characteristics of companies that are "very capable of adapting to changing business conditions":

- Able to predict future skills

- Effective in locating experts

- Effective in collaboration.[3]

As has been illustrated, a thoughtful, business-oriented Web 2.0 implementation is highly capable of helping organizations realize these characteristics of adaptability. Other potential benefits include shortened time-to-market horizons, facilitation of successful change and improved operating efficiency.

The ROI of Web 2.0

Based on both extensive internal experience and experience implementing Web 2.0 strategies for clients, IBM has uncovered four dimensions to the ROI of Web 2.0:

- Improved growth through innovation

- Faster task execution

- Improved efficiency

- Increased empowerment of key resources.

With these components as a framework, IBM has created a first-of-a-kind ROI model for collaboration, showing the benefits of Web 2.0 that result from the interactions of roles in the organization.

For more information

To obtain a copy of the full white paper Web 2.0 @ work: how CIOs can help drive business returns by improving organizational effectiveness—or to learn more about Web 2.0, IBM's Web 2.0 Goes to Work initiative, or IBM's products and services for social networking, please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following Web site:

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Additionally, IBM Global Financing can tailor financing solutions to your specific IT needs. For more information on great rates, flexible payment plans and loans, and asset buyback and disposal, visit:

ibm.com/financing

[1, 2] IBM Global CEO Study 2008, http://www-935.ibm.com/services/us/gbs/bus/html/ceostudy2008.html.

[3] IBM Global Human Capital Study 2008, http://www-935.ibm.com/services/us/gbs/bus/html/2008ghcs.html.

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