Blue Saffron
Managed IT

IT Strategy and Roadmap

Typical engagements

Many of the best performing companies have something in common: clear, concise, and stakeholder-focused roadmaps articulating vision for building value in the organization.

The better of these roadmaps drive benefits by saving time, reducing complexity and cost, and ensuring new capabilities drive business value.

Why should this not be the case for IT investment and management!!

Who and When?

But when do companies typically embark on a production of a roadmap and what circumstances might trigger or justify the effort?

Best practice suggests something should be in place now!! Our experience has demonstrated that the decision to undertake an exercise of this type is more-often-than-not external event driven. Some of the more typical circumstances we meet include:

- Organic growth or rightsizing activity
- Support for improvement of service delivery
- Demonstrating transparency and service delivery efficiency to key stakeholders
- Assisting organisations when considering to merging or working in a collaborative arrangement.

- Meeting data security challenges and mitigating the risk of data loss or corruption.
- Helping support flexible working for staff and other stakeholders.
- To optimise IT expenditure to help meet corporate objectives and KPI's.

Blue Saffron Roadmap

Vision

An aspirational description of what an organisation would like to achieve in the mid-term or long-term future.

Strategy

A plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim.

wRoadmap

A detailed to guide progress toward a goal.

Output	Purpose	Content	Audience
IT Strategic Planning	Prioritize and sequence new technology	Timelines, risk, value, and cost	Business sponsors, IT governance, and project management office
Technology Inventory	Document the current state of the IT portfolio.	Hardware and software details	IT managers and enterprise architects
Technology Lifecycle Management	Reduce technology complexity and risk.	Lifecycle status and planned changes	Technology owners and IT managers
IT Consolidation	Remove aging systems from the environment.	Risk, cost, and technology support	IT executives and IT management
Capability	Align IT assets to business capabilities.	Capabilities, processes, people, technologies & information	Business partners, business liaisons, and enterprise architects
Service	Coordinate initiatives across the service portfolio.	Service categories, individual services, and dependencies	Service managers, portfolio managers, and IT architects

Where

The role that flexibility plays in the approach cannot be stressed enough. It is absolutely key. We routinely adapt the approach to specific circumstances and use a variety of approaches including workshops. A fuller description of the separate roadmaps components is described here.
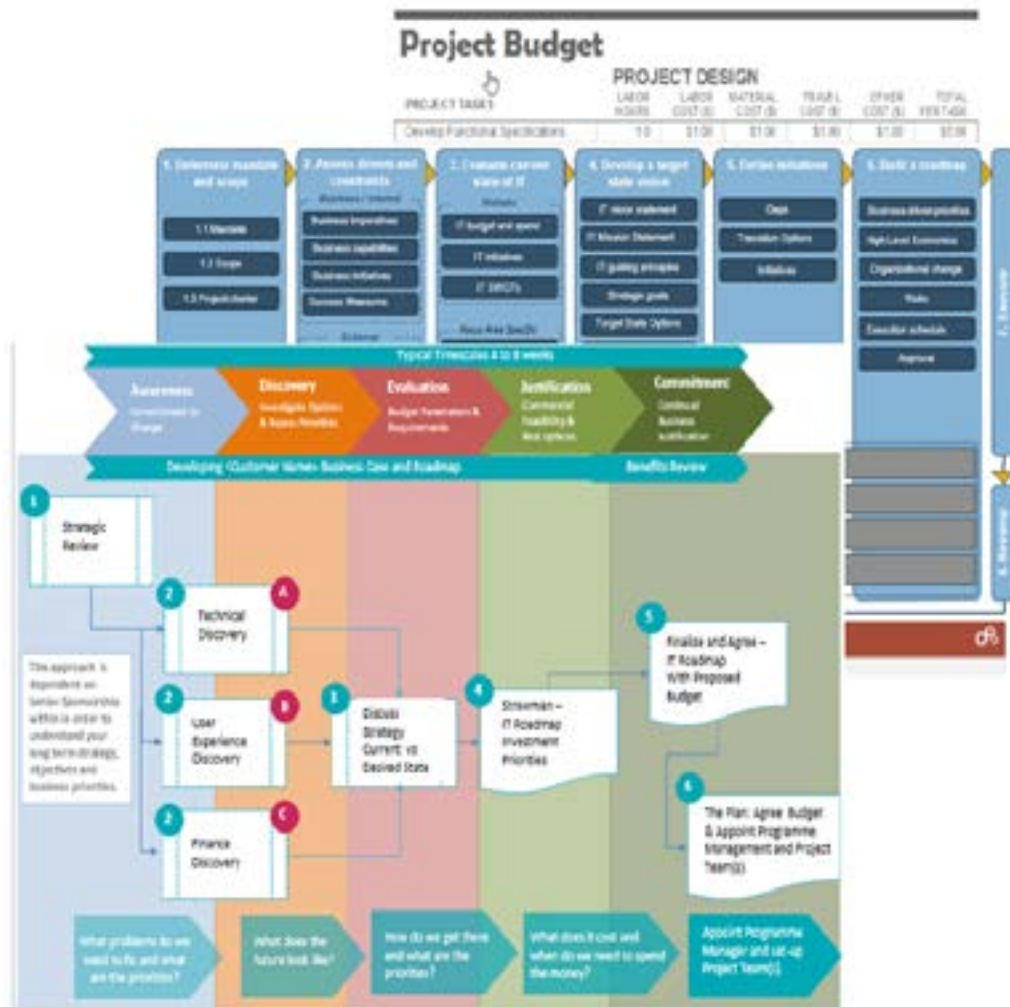
Focussed execution from an IT roadmap can have a profound impact

 IT Roadmap can have a very profound impact as a few of our select case studies clearly demonstrate.

Professional Services
Insurance company detailed infrastructure retirement program. Deployed cloud based system to reduce new product launch by 5 months.

Recruitment
London based recruitment agency improved support response and resolution times by 44%.

Third Sector
Reduced desktop procurement budget by 35% by moving to platform based services.

Annex A: Roadmap desc

IT Strategic Planning

Make IT strategy relevant: Translate business strategy into IT goals.

The best organizations align IT resources to business leaders' priorities. However, CEB research shows that nearly 70% of business executives feel that IT strategic planning, as it is currently practiced, is ineffective.

IT planning is often done in isolation, without considering the effect on business strategy. Key stakeholders within IT and the business are often not aware of the links between IT investments and business strategies. Business priorities are constantly evolving, and IT plans often fail to reflect these changes. As consequence, business partners feel disengaged from the IT planning process and don't fully recognize the value of IT investments, particularly those aimed at replacing their familiar but aging systems.

Another element of strategic planning relates to adoption of new technologies. When is the right time? What is the cost of not acting? Sometimes customers report that they have been too risk averse and adopted technologies too late, missing opportunities. Others made costly mistakes by underestimating the risk and adopting too early. Everybody wants to strike that elusive optimum balance: making the right technology decisions at the right time to minimize cost and risk while satisfying business requirements

Technology Inventory

Understand your current technology portfolio to plan more efficiently for the future.

The essential first step in road mapping is to understand what the IT environment looks like today. That sounds simple, but anyone in IT knows the complex reality. Many organizations have grown through mergers and acquisitions, leading to a patchwork architecture of legacy systems from multiple companies. In other organizations, distributed IT ownership and siloed decision making has led to disparate and replicated systems. Information about the IT portfolio is spread across multiple tools—each with its own format—making it difficult

to assemble the information needed for planning

Technology Lifecycle Management

Reduce business risk by developing an optimal technology retirement plan.

Are aging systems putting your company at risk? The answer is invariably yes, but most organizations lack a systematic approach for retiring those legacy systems and applications. Garnering support for technology retirement is difficult to begin with, because business leaders and employees tend to attach to the technologies they know. Complicating matters more, it can be difficult to convey to them the escalating business risk and maintenance costs of older technologies.

Furthermore, interdependencies in the technology portfolio make prioritizing and sequencing retirement decisions a complex task and often result in a fire drill rather than a planned event. You'd like to work more closely with technology owners to improve lifecycle planning, but how?

A Technology Lifecycle Management Roadmap contains detailed lifecycle information for both Infrastructure and Applications. For example, you may be planning to retire old versions of a Database and move to the latest version. The roadmap would show the old version as the current standard, then a declining phase followed by a retired phase. At the same time, the roadmap may

show the latest version going through an emerging phase while it is tested and becomes the new standard. This type of roadmap, intended purely for technical audiences, focuses on avoiding risk by keeping up with current IT standards.

IT Consolidation
Reduce cost in your portfolio by identifying redundant technologies.

Do you have too many technologies supporting similar capabilities in different parts of the organization? Are there capabilities that could be consolidated onto fewer technology platforms, and if so, would there be any impact on other capabilities?

These questions are all too familiar to organizations. When IT plans and portfolio management are fragmented, it is very difficult to identify technologies that support similar capabilities in different parts of the organization. To further complicate matters, there is no common methodology or language to gain an enterprise-wide view

Capability
Ensure your technologies enable business capabilities.

The primary goal for any IT team is to enable business capabilities. However, most IT roadmaps typically focus on technologies rather than capabilities. As consequence, business partners feel disconnected from the process and are unaware of the value of planned changes and unready for implementation. Immature and unstructured road mapping efforts can easily create misalignment between IT plans and business needs, resulting in wasted investments and failing projects.

Organizations struggle with road mapping by capability, partly because business priorities change so fast, and updating the roadmaps requires time-consuming manual rework. Even if one group is successful in this effort, it may not be scalable to the enterprise level

Service
Manage and control end-to-end IT services.

A service is a related set of capabilities that support a business function. An IT service packages all the technologies, processes, and resources needed across IT to deliver a specific business outcome. As such, a service spans traditional boundaries of applications and infrastructure groups.

Good service portfolio governance ensures services are coordinated, implemented in a cost-effective way, managed, and measured based on business outcomes and that IT investment decisions are based on the user and business impact of service performance.

References

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