



# Creative Strategy

*BTQ* discusses business alignment with IT and how to achieve successful strategic planning with **DR. KHALID MANSOUR**, Vice President, CIBER Strategic Practices

**Business Trends Quarterly** What are the emerging issues for CIBER's business clients as they begin strategic planning for 2010?

**KHALID MANSOUR** I think the top issues are definitely cost reduction and business alignment — that is, the alignment between the business and IT. Not every CIO has a business strategy with quantifiable KPI's (key performance indicators). But a number of CIOs are ahead of the game and have their own IT vision and some form of a strategic plan. Typically, the CIO is asking himself/herself: "How do I take my assets, cut costs and

leverage what I have and also move the business forward?" This plays out in a number of trends. First is the alignment of the IT strategy with the company's business strategy, and enabling the business with an agile infrastructure, including software, hardware, resources and processes. Another emerging trend that we are witnessing is vendor consolidation — a number of CIOs are going from hundreds or even thousands of vendors to four to 10. Often, this is a cost pressure that is coming down from the CEO to the CFO and is being dictated to the CIO. Lastly is the investment that we are seeing in innovation. A number



of CIOs are paying a lot of attention to the area of innovation and how they can deliver in creative ways or in newer ways.

The bottom line is, no matter how constrained resources are, the organizations need to keep the business moving forward and growing to keep that competitive advantage. So it's not just the obvious of "how to do more with less"; it's more about containment, creativity and collaboration.

**BTQ** What are the major areas of collaboration between business and IT?

**KM** The most important areas in our experience is that it is a must-have to have a modern foundation — that is, newer business capabilities that are mapped to the business architecture, where IT can drive agility into the business. That is important. Also, IT can capitalize on the things it does best to align with the business, specifically in two areas: standardization and integration. In the area of standardization, you're looking at the business architecture, business processes and the enterprise architecture. In the area of integration, you're looking at enterprise integration, the data integration, the service oriented architecture (SOA) and business intelligence.

The other areas of collaboration are in the areas of organizational change management, business process re-engineering and enterprise architecture. These are all important areas for right-sizing the organization and making sure the business and IT have the right policies and procedures to enable the collaboration. The last area that we have been participating in is in the area of Portfolio Analysis and Optimization, which can help shape the foundation — which has a positive impact on the business.

**BTQ** What disciplines will be important for CIOs in the coming years?

**KM** The positive impact of practical approaches to enterprise architecture, business intelligence and SOA are just beginning to be exploited by a number of forward-thinking companies. There are many benefits that can be realized. The hype has died down and these areas have become mature, and a number of these areas have been around for a number of years — some for 30 years or more. However, the products are more mature and have a level of sophistication. Smart

organizations are leveraging these technologies at the right price point.

CIBER's approach to enterprise integration and architecture emphasizes, for example, Data Governance and master data management (MDM) approaches that have an enterprise-wide business benefit. CIBER is working with a large utility to provide innovative solutions that will be a major portion of the growth of this company over the next three to five years, and these solutions provide speed-to-market and innovation. In the same vein, CIBER is working with a large global telecommunications company to provide innovative solutions also in the area of SOA as well as MDM, and that is driven by speed-to-market, innovation and focus on the lifetime value of the customer.

**BTQ** What impact has the current economic trend had on IT services and thinking?

**KM** There are a number of trends that are going on. First and foremost, it is about cutting costs without impacting existing levels of service. That means that you really have to do cost containment and optimization. So some of the impacts that we have seen — as it's a "cause and effect" — have been the following:

- reducing the variable nature of the cost to deliver services;
- reducing the complexity of service delivery;
- delivering new services with existing infrastructure;
- scaling to demand without new investments.

Let's not forget the disruptive trends that will influence IT services for years to come. Organizations are looking hard at software as a service (SaaS), Cloud Computing and shifts to SOA — all of which have been accelerated as a way to fully take advantage of opportunities to deliver more value to the business, while containing cost. That is why you hear about Cloud Computing, SaaS and platform as a service (PaaS) not purely in the context of the other important disciplines to IT — like pure infrastructure, customer relationship management (CRM), ETL (extract-transform-load), and so on.

There are multiple risks associated with these service delivery models; for example in the areas

of security, privacy, compliance, legal rights and the overall corporate governance. Some of these issues need to be worked out upfront before you see this mass adoption. CIBER is working with a large entertainment company to provide a proof-of-concept on a private cloud providing internal SaaS as a business model, driven again by speed-to-market and innovation.

**BTQ** How does CIBER help realize business solutions?

**KM** I have been at CIBER for the past 10 years and I believe this is the best time for us in the marketplace despite the economy. CIBER achieves the delivery of quality business solutions by being relevant and in context. That means the following:

- industry experience
- technology experience
- process experience
- local intimacy, and
- global reach

CIBER's unique Local Accountability Model — where we have client relationships at a local market level — combined with global delivery has made us an intelligent alternative to Tier 1, offshore, boutique or staffing firms. CIBER's vision is to deliver practical development and support services for complex and mission-critical business applications utilizing the best resources and at the best possible value to achieve the desired results reliably each and every time. CIBER provides scale and value from all our global delivery capabilities seamlessly to our customers in a reliable and predictable way. We've proven to our clients that innovation can be practical and flexible. **BTQ**



**DR. KHALID MANSOUR** serves as Vice President for CIBER's Strategic Practices, which includes Enterprise Integration, BIDW, Architecture, Security and IT Strategy. As Vice President, Dr. Mansour leads the Strategic Practices teams in designing and integrating data and applications for clients to deliver fully functional, secure and integrated business solutions that provide a maximum return on investment. Prior to joining CIBER, Dr. Mansour led the field Business Intelligence efforts for Silicon Graphics Federal (SGI), as the national programs architect/technology manager, as well as for benchmarking and optimization.



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