

The Bridge™



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an Executive Brief from Agile Northwest

February 2010

Welcome!

Welcome to The Bridge, a bi-monthly Executive Brief from Agile Northwest! Each month you'll receive information about the latest in how to leverage technology to bridge the Innovation Opportunity Gap™ (IOg™) so that your organization can achieve more, run more efficiently and realize a greater return on your investment in people, information and the systems that empower them to run your business. Thanks so much for your consideration!



Regards,

Wende Jones
President, Agile Northwest

What You Can't See May Be Hurting You

The Innovation Opportunity Gap™ – What Is It and How Big Is Yours?

by Wende Jones, CMC
February 2010

Are there opportunities within your organization for you to reduce costs, improve operations or to realize ROI in a shorter period of time? Because of the rapid evolution of technology and the light speed of information, it's highly likely. The good news is that you're not alone if you answered yes. The better news is that there's a way to identify and close the gap between innovation and opportunity.



Innovation is defined as something new or different. What can you introduce into your organization to significantly improve your condition? Alternate work schedules? Different skill sets to round out your staff and deepen your abilities in your weaker areas? Or maybe you need

innovative, web-based tools to streamline processes and increase efficiency? What if all it took to increase productivity was to move the shred bin closer to the mail sorting area?

Opportunity is defined as a situation or condition favorable for the attainment of a goal. So what we are really saying is that opportunity is where timing and preparedness meet! If we are talking about your innovation opportunities we are considering those new things that can be introduced when you are prepared and the timing is right – the sweet spot.

Your Innovation Opportunity Gap™ (IOg™) represents that space in your organization where opportunities for innovation exist. When your IOg™ is open, improvements can be achieved to reduce costs, improve operations and realize ROI within a short period of time. Innovation can happen in many ways within an organization but if it is not actively pursued it is often overlooked. We used to talk about continuous quality improvement but now we need to be talking about continuous innovation. Your IOg™ provides a way to assess your innovation based on your "gap score," and be proactive at narrowing the gap by capitalizing on your opportunities for innovation. When you know your gap score, you can easily identify the "sweet spot" where innovation can bring marked improvement with a significant ROI.

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Upcoming Events

What: Agile President to Speak at IMC Regional Annual Conference
Topic: Enhancing Client Relationships through Innovation
When: Feb 16, 2010

What : Agile Executive Briefing
Where : Webinar
When: April 14, 2010
Topic: Innovation Opportunity Gap™ – Assessment Tool
Contact Agile Northwest to Register!

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The idea of the IOg™ is to identify the gap and what is causing it. IOg™ allows you to look at new ideas and be prepared so as the timing is right you can capitalize on that opportunity by applying innovation and narrowing the gap.

So, how do you narrow your gap? It starts with keeping innovation at the forefront of your thinking so you are tuned in to the potential opportunities for improvement. This starts with practice as most things do! Start small but start now. Today as you move through your day look for an opportunity to make one change that will improve your organization's condition. It doesn't have to be big and cause more disruption than good. Just look for something. Innovation comes as you begin to train your eye and conditioning yourself to be aware of it. Practice this and in our next briefing we will discuss how to measure your gap.

Maintenance vs. Innovation

Technology is ever changing and always improving, driving business needs to maintain existing technology as well as to innovate and create new ways of doing things with the latest technologies. How do companies balance these needs?

How can IT departments and Executive teams work together to achieve both the day-to-day needs of keeping the business running with the ongoing needs for innovation?

It is common to hear from IT teams that they have too much to do and management doesn't understand the demands on their time. It is also common to hear from management that IT is too slow at delivering the new projects that they need to push the business forward and meet the demands of their business strategy.

While IT has its associated costs, it produces improvements and efficiencies that are unmeasured. The day-to-day support and maintenance may seem like a cost center but consider the impact if it doesn't work, if computers shut down, if servers are inaccessible? In addition today's technology should help the business grow not just maintain the status quo. Technology can and should increase productivity, decrease costs, and improve customer service and overall operations, thus providing a significant measurable ROI. Technology innovation should support the overall business strategy and direction the company is headed not hinder it or slow it down. But how do you get there?

How can businesses overcome the challenges of keeping day-to-day operations running and creating an environment for successful innovation as well?

Look carefully at your IT department. Is their primary job maintenance or innovation? Or do they handle both? Are they frustrated because they need to travel back and forth between these two objectives? Should they split into separate teams? Should you consider outsourcing?

Innovation projects require a different approach, different skill sets and different environments to breed success than do the day to day support and maintenance projects.

Instead of one large team trying to handle both and cross over skill sets and styles, two smaller teams with more targeted skill sets and environments may be more successful and provide for greater efficiencies for both teams. These teams can be internal and external as long as they understand the business strategy and overall objectives of the company.

Let's look at some comparisons between IT day-to-day support and maintenance needs versus IT innovation needs:

Do you have the right teams in place? Are there efficiencies to be gained by reorganizing your team or teams? Is your technology aligned with your business strategy?

Wende Jones has held top level management positions for over 20 years and started technology consulting in order to meet executive management's strategy to double their annual revenues from \$7M to \$14M within 8 months. Wende has helped many companies across several industries meet their business strategies with technology innovation and improvements.

Closing the Gap - Case Study

IOg™ Reduction Leads to Doubled Sales and 900% ROI on Technology Investment

Insight Worldwide, Inc. is a pre-employment screening company that provides online integrity testing to help organizations hire the best employees. They were experiencing significant costs in supporting a small number of mobile devices in the field and needed a more cost effective solution or they would have to stop offering the handheld solution that clients were asking for. Insight left their original programming organization and came to Agile seeking a better way to develop and save the handheld project. Agile identified the critical components and provided an innovative solution that solved the support issues and allowed Insight to maximize this opportunity. *Insight was not only able to continue providing this delivery method and recoup their return on investment in the first year but after two years had doubled their total sales because of the innovation and experienced a 900% return on their initial technology investment.*

Visit Insight Worldwide online at www.insightww.com.

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