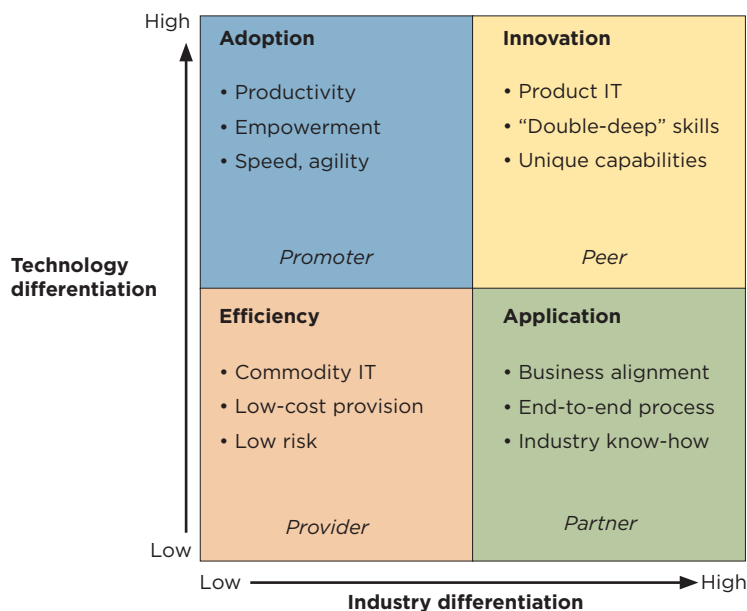


## Aligning Consumerization with Business/IT Relationship Management

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Over the last few years, two of our research domains have been of particularly high interest across our client base: Consumerization and Business Relationship Management (BRM). The former helps clients understand how today's ever-rising wave of new consumer-driven technologies – mobility, Software-as-a-Service, cloud computing, social networking etc. – is re-shaping the large modern organization. The latter has been examining the changing business/IT relationship at a time when information technology is becoming pervasive across the firm.

Thus far, these two streams of research have been integrated mostly at a thematic level. Clearly, consumerization (and related issues of employee empowerment) is one of the main reasons why business/IT relationship dynamics are changing. But until now, we haven't formally linked specific consumerization possibilities into our core BRM models, and their associated roles and skills. This will be one of the goals of our 2010 research, and our initial thinking in this area is presented below. Let's start with our basic BRM positioning framework.



**Business IT Relationship Positioning**

This '4P' framework will be familiar to many clients and has been discussed in numerous LEF reports and presentations.<sup>1</sup> The basic premise is that Enterprise IT organizations can add differentiated value along two main dimensions – the deployment of technology and/or the ability to apply IT to the challenges of the firm's particular industry. The figure above should be largely self-explanatory, but let's take a look at how the various aspects of the consumerization movement might affect each quadrant.

1. See *Developing an IT Strategy for Your Industry*, CSC LEF, August 2008.

- **Provider.** In this role, Enterprise IT seeks to deliver the services the business needs in an efficient and professional manner. Thus, IT organizations that are Providers should adopt consumer-style services when, in their professional opinion, these can reliably deliver business services more efficiently than traditional approaches. Possible candidates include all manner of Software-as-a-Service (especially email and CRM), cloud-based server virtualization, and personal computer and mobile device provisioning policies. Improvements in these and other areas will help define the IT Provider of the future, and IT Providers should continually monitor and experiment with various possibilities.
- **Promoter.** Here, the Enterprise IT organization is an advocate for the early adoption of IT to bring new capabilities to the firm, with the goal of improving the business's speed, agility and productivity. The emphasis is less on efficiency and more on new services and value. Consumerization applications in this quadrant could include understanding what new value the iPhone or Google Android might enable; or, at the high end, demonstrating how Amazon and other consumer cloud computing vendors can be used to better handle large data sets through technologies such as Hadoop clusters.<sup>2</sup> In this sense, the CTO in a Promoter IT organization should be a major advocate of consumerization across the firm.
- **Partner.** The core focus of this quadrant is to make sure that Enterprise IT is aligned with the goals and change agenda of the firm. This alignment requires deep knowledge of and involvement with key business leaders, applications and processes. For example, while one could view the early adoption of social media tools such as Facebook and LinkedIn as primarily a *Promoter* activity, our research shows that the choice of tool is less important than being aligned with the change agenda of the firm. A true business Partner IT organization would position social media as a way to address specific company goals such as improving employee skills, knowledge, engagement, participation, trust and related cultural issues.
- **Peer.** Knowledge of the wide-ranging effects of consumerization can help the CIO get a real seat at the management table as a Peer of business colleagues. This goes far beyond just understanding how the Internet will affect the future of Enterprise IT. Consumerization will ultimately be a major force for business change in areas as diverse as innovation, smart products, co-creation, education, support, marketing, security, privacy, trust and compliance. For example, in our future research we will track what we expect to be the increasingly integrated evolution of consumerization and *customer-centricity*<sup>3</sup>, a long term goal for many firms. All CIOs should be fluent in what consumerization will mean for the development of their firm's strategy.

One of the things we have learned in our ongoing BRM research is that most firms will have a complex mix of all of these '4P' roles, with the balance often changing over time. Nevertheless, there is typically a centre of gravity, a dominant Enterprise IT culture, and a primary way that the IT organization is seen by the firm. From this perspective, most Enterprise IT organizations operate as Providers, often with a goal of moving toward the Partnership model. Almost by definition, only a small percentage of firms can consistently be early technology Promoters, and, as we have often noted, relatively few CIOs are seen as true business Peers. In April, we will publish our latest BRM research which will examine all of these issues in detail.

Until then, we will conclude with this message. Ever since we began our consumerization research in 2003, many firms have tended to view this topic as a somewhat alien world – fascinating, possibly threatening, and often not immediately relevant. But increasingly, consumerization is becoming inseparable from the IT mainstream, and as such it will directly affect all four of our core Enterprise IT roles. It won't make any of the '4P's any less valid or necessary. Instead, it will become an essential part of the IT organization's BRM toolbox. We encourage clients to work with us to explore how consumerization can be best integrated with the strategy, tactics and culture appropriate to their firm.

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2. See *Doing Business in the Cloud*, CSC LEF, August 2009.

3. See *Customer-centricity and the Role of IT*, CSC LEF, September, 2008.

### Leading Edge Forum

*CSC's Leading Edge Forum (LEF) is a global thought leadership community that assesses the growing intersection between business and IT.*

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