



CONNECTED ARTICLE

October 05, 2009

Aligning Technology With Business Strategy

By special guest contributor Pradeep Henry

Founder, Process Innovation Center

Recipient, Certificate in Business Excellence

from Columbia Business School Executive Education

"Injecting technology into a company without process and organizational change creates waste and chaos," George Colony, founder and CEO of Forrester Research, has famously said.

It's true. Despite good intentions, software teams typically end up using a technology-centric approach to application development, with technology and project management metrics driving most of the decisions. This approach too often results in technology silos and poor business and IT alignment.



Professor Rita McGrath awards Pradeep Henry the Certificate in Business Excellence

Sometime around the year 2000, I introduced a process-centric method at my former employer, Cognizant Technology Solutions. That method is driven primarily by enterprise-business strategy and processes, and it is based on these principles: (a) application is business process; (b) the application's user interface is a business process, too; and (c) unified process architecture is a must. In about seven years, the method was used in 175-plus software projects.

I left Cognizant at the end of December 2007 and came to Columbia Business School, where I enrolled in the Executive Education program and took the courses Columbia Essentials of Management and Leading Strategic Growth and Change. During and after the courses, I had the opportunity to test my process-centric method (which is now the basis for my consulting business) with Columbia faculty, including Felix Oberholzer-Gee and Cliff Schorer; Ron Pierantozzi of PPT Research; and my classmates.

They came back with questions and comments that helped me advance my ideas. For example, Felix made a suggestion about how better to use value curves to compare the new approach with existing approaches. While this suggestion was not meant to improve the method per se, it helped me better communicate my process. This is important when you are trying to "sell" a

new idea. In another helpful feedback session, Ron told me, "I think the idea of having a single-process interface makes sense from the work you have done" and confirmed the direction I was headed.

Based on the feedback I received in the Executive Education programs, and my own research, I was able to refine and advance the method. Their global perspectives and sharp questions triggered thought and improvements. I believe the advanced version better addresses George Colony's concerns about IT investments.

For enterprises today, the process-centric method delivers key value in improving business and productivity and aligning business and IT goals. Improving processes is number one on Gartner's Top 10 CIO Business Priorities for 2009 and better alignment is number two on Gartner's Top 10 CIO Strategies for 2009.

Program Note:

There is still time to enroll in the fall session of **Leading Strategic Growth and Change**, taking place Nov. 1-6, 2009. The next two sessions of **Columbia Essentials of Management** are Oct. 25-Nov. 6, 2009, and April 11-23, 2010.

For more information and for 2010 dates, visit our Web site, or contact our Learning Solutions Specialists for a personal conversation: execed@columbia.edu or (212)-854-3395.