

Preface: What is Strategic IT Management?

This book is based on many years of experience at A.T. Kearney in the consulting sector for strategic information technology. We see 'strategic IT consulting' as strategy consulting geared towards the senior executives responsible for IT; generally, the CEO or a board member responsible for IT, possibly the CIO, and sometimes a head of unit or the director of a subsidiary. 'Strategic' as opposed to 'operative' means not implementing IT but focusing completely on the issue of how added value can be created for the company by using information technology.

Strategic IT management means stabilizing and increasing the sales of the company through new IT-assisted processes and IT systems. IT also means improving the margin protection of products and services, and enhancing customer attraction and bonding.

To achieve this aim, strategic IT management requires a combination of strategic know-how and a thorough knowledge of the company and relevant sector. From the cost angle for the company, key considerations are finding the right vertical scope and issues such as IT sourcing, IT outsourcing and IT insourcing. Companies giving appropriate consideration to both the sales and cost angles of IT are able to achieve significant added value.

This strategic IT guide incorporates the lessons learned from hundreds of strategic IT projects carried out over the past ten years: it covers virtually every field in which information technology is currently employed from major international conglomerates to successful, sectoral SMEs, from the manufacturing industry (e.g. automobile, processing, engineering, consumer goods, high tech, aerospace and the construction industry) through service providers (e.g. the power industry, logistics/transport, airlines/tourism, retail, telecoms) to the financial services sector, pharmaceuticals/healthcare and the public sector.

This strategic guide provides IT managers with tried and tested solutions for their specific questions and business situations combined with clear practical advice. We also hope that students of computer science, business administration or information management will find it a useful complement to the existing literature and of benefit when entering their chosen careers.

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