

## **IT management in 2010: Complex, costly and confounding**

By: Thomas Wailgum On: 30 Nov 2009 For: CIO

No one ever claimed that managing corporate IT systems was easy, or without its fair share of tumult, or for the faint of heart. But during the past decade, as better IT tools emerged in the high-tech industry—such as application integration software, Web-based software delivery methods, project implementation strategies and virtualization techniques - it would be reasonable to think that the overall management of IT might have become less arduous and risky.

As 2010 rolls around, that appears not to be the case. The cluttered and ever-expanding technological jungle that IT ecosystems now resemble seems, in many respects, to be much harder and more expensive to manage than it did a decade ago, when CIOs and their staffs were fresh off their Y2K victory celebrations (remember that?).

Consider a couple of data points from a 2009 survey of 353 software buyers and sellers, as reported in "Achieving Enterprise Software Success," a research initiative of Neochange, SandHill.com and the Technology Services Industry Association.

**Complexity Hinders Software Success.** "Two-thirds of survey respondents say the enterprise IT environment is more complex than it was five years ago," notes the report. "The proliferation of technology combined with intricate organizational dynamics has raised the level of business IT complexity to the point of holding back software success."

**"Financial Upside" Is Left on the Table.** Fifty-three percent of respondents said that, on average, "fewer than half of users are effectively using installed software in the enterprise," states the report. "That means most companies are leaving benefits such as reduced costs, increased revenues and improved competitive differentiation on the table - benefits that were cited as the rationale behind the software investment in the first place."

**IT Still Gets Blamed for Failures.** Nearly 60 percent of respondents claim that the CEO still holds IT responsible for a "lack of success," adds the report. (For more on how CIOs deal with this hot topic, see [What a CIO Says, and What He's Really Thinking.](#))

And then there's the tidal wave of corporate data barreling down on organizations: Gartner predicts that the amount of enterprise data will grow 650 percent during the next five years. Yet according to a Forbes Insights survey of 206 executives and decision makers at top global enterprises, one of the top barriers to aligning strategy and operations today is the availability of timely data, cited by nearly one-quarter of the respondents.

In other words, CIOs face a type of "information paradox": Businesses want data to flow cheaply and easily throughout organizations, but data and information management is absurdly expensive and complex. (For more on this challenge, see [Information Wants to Be Free, But at What Cost?](#))

Of course, just because IT can be difficult, messy and expensive doesn't mean that companies are going to throw the baby out with the bath water. But when IT's top priority for 2009—**for 2009!**—is "modernizing key legacy applications," as detailed in a [Forrester survey](#) of more than 2,200 IT executives and technology decision-makers in North America and Europe, then companies might have a sizable problem on their hands as we forge into a new decade.

One can't help but wonder if executives are lamenting about IT - just like the kids in the back seat driving on long highway stretches during this holiday season - "When are we going to get there?"