Fix the Right Problem

A recent article in *Harvard Business Review* argues that most companies are not solving the right problems because they don’t spend adequate time defining the problems they are attempting to solve and then articulating why this is important. As a result, their lack of due diligence is impacting their innovation efforts. The author, Dwayne Spradlin, proposes a fourfold problem-definition process that organizations can employ to avoid solving the wrong problems:

> **Establish the need for a solution.** It is important to ask questions such as: What is the basic need? What is the desired outcome? Who stands to benefit and why?

> **Justify the need.** The point here is to explain to the organization why a solution to the problem should be attempted.

> **Contextualize the problem.** If past efforts to find a solution have occurred, analyze those and ascertain what worked and didn’t work. If the issue is a broader industry issue, previous attempts by other companies need to be understood.

> **Write the problem statement.** The problem statement establishes a consensus on what a viable solution looks like and what resources are required to solve it. The problem statement must meet the twin goals of being extremely specific but not unnecessarily technical.

While the article addresses broader business issues, the same principles also apply to IT initiatives. Too often, IT projects and programs are launched without an adequate understanding of the problem, and they languish and, when completed, fail to deliver as promised.

Albert Einstein once said that if given time he would spend **99% of his time defining a problem** and the other one percent solving it.

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**Attacks Turn to Small Businesses**

Based on data from the past six months, the June 2012 Symantec Intelligence Report found that more than a third of global targeted attacks are aimed at small businesses. Attackers appear to be diverting their resources to exploit the vulnerabilities of small businesses, which often have fewer security tools and processes than larger businesses. The report identified the defense industry as the targeted industry of choice, with an average of 7.3 attacks per day.

Spam continues to decrease since a high in late 2011, falling one percentage point since May to 66.8 percent. Hungary is the most spammed country, with a 74.3 percent rate. One in 467.6 emails comprises some form of phishing attack, while one email in 316.5 contain viruses—and 27.4 percent of those contain links to malicious websites—a 1.2 percent drop from May. Overall, though still a threat, Web-based malware threats diminished, with an average of 2,106 websites each day harboring malware and other unwanted programs such as spyware and adware—a 51.7 percent drop from May. Get the full June report at [go.symantec.com/ir-june-2012](http://go.symantec.com/ir-june-2012).

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**SYMANTEC CHRONICLES**

**[Move to Linux with Confidence]**

Symantec and Red Hat extended collaboration to deliver solutions that enable the deployment of agile private and hybrid clouds and creation of highly resilient data centers. With many organizations quickly adopting Linux as their platform of choice in order to remain competitive in a market seeing costs increase and IT budgets flatline, the expanded relationship combines Red Hat Enterprise Linux with storage and availability management solutions from Symantec.

For more information, visit [go.symantec.com/redhat-symantec](http://go.symantec.com/redhat-symantec).

**[Deeply Integrated, Highly Protected]**

At VMworld 2012, Symantec announced new solutions and technical integrations with VMware across its product portfolio to ensure higher levels of protection for virtualized environments. The new developments serve IT administrators who seek flexible solutions to help accelerate virtualization as a first step in moving towards a cloud service delivery model.

For more on the announcement, visit [go.symantec.com/vmworld-symantec](http://go.symantec.com/vmworld-symantec).

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The Cost of Digital Information

I n its first State of Information Survey, released in late June, Symantec found that information costs businesses worldwide $1.1 trillion annually. The survey also uncovered that digital information makes up 49 percent of an organization’s total value. Businesses of all sizes, from all types of industries, are dealing with enormous amounts of data. Specifically, small and medium sized businesses (SMBs) have an average of 563 terabytes, while enterprises possess an average of 100,000 terabytes.

And these numbers continue to grow according to the survey: data will grow 67 percent over the next year for enterprises and 178 percent for SMBs. This information explosion is not free. Enterprises spend a whopping $38 million annually on information, while SMBs spend $332,000 or a cost per employee of $3,670.

Protecting that information becomes increasingly important as it expands. Loss of data—malicious or accidental—resulted in lost customers (49 percent), damage to reputation and brand (47 percent), reduced revenue (41 percent), increased expenses (39 percent), and lower stock prices (20 percent). With so much at stake, businesses should be focused on protecting their information. However, 69 percent experienced some form of data loss within the past year, while 31 percent reported compliance failures related to information.

Cost is also a pressing concern. Storage is vastly underutilized—31 percent inside the firewall and 18 percent outside it—and data is duplicate—an average of 42 percent. Simply finding information is becoming a problem for many businesses due to data center sprawl; 30 percent note it is difficult to find and use information that is often unorganized and difficult to access.

To address these information explosion challenges, Symantec pinpoints five recommendations:

> Focus on the information, not the device or data center
> Not all information is equal
> Be efficient in storing and managing data
> Maintain consistent policies—and enforce them
> Remain agile by deploying a flexible infrastructure

For the entire State of Information Survey from Symantec, visit go.symantec.com/information-survey-2012.

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A landmark study from Forrester Consulting revealed that leaders of small businesses launched during the Great Recession are dramatically different than those who launched their companies before 2008. The recent recession put millions out of work and ravaged the home equity and retirement accounts of countless retired professionals. These economic shockwaves spawned a new breed of entrepreneur: the accidental entrepreneur—defined as a company founder who started her or his business out of pure necessity rather than a lifelong dream of being his or her own boss.

These accidental entrepreneurs are agile, highly educated, tech-savvy, and battle-tested business professionals, and the companies they founded are poised for explosive growth. Get the full results of the study at go.symantec.com/accidental-entrepreneur.

Symantec recently announced that it adopted the Certification Authority Browser (CA/B) Forum Baseline Requirements. The largest issuer of SSL certificates worldwide and an active member of the CA/B Forum, Symantec has driven and adopted the Baseline Requirements to further strengthen security around SSL operations and authentication processes. The Baseline Requirements represent the first time Organizational Validation (OV) and Domain Validated (DV) certificates have a defined standard. Find more...
The Value of Information Explosion

Today’s businesses are awash in data. Average data growth ranges between 35 percent and 50 percent annually, with the typical business processing over 60 terabytes of information each year—1,000 times more than a decade ago. The initial reaction is that this is a huge challenge—and it is. However, a recent article in the MIT Sloan Management Review posits that while it is a challenge, it is also an opportunity—a paradigm upon which many enterprises are discovering how to capitalize. The authors of the article contend that while the IT unit is competent at storing and protecting the data, at least in most cases, it is not equipped to turn that data into increased business value.

The rapid growth in unstructured data generates information that can aid in strategic decision making. But realizing value from unstructured data requires reorganizing and indexing. And structured data is a two-edged sword: increased granularity creates opportunities for analytics that improve business processes and better customer service; but duplicate data creates conflicts over whose data is more accurate.

Many line managers believe that their IT departments should take the lead in managing data and using it to drive business success. And while the authors argue that the responsibility for data stewardship should, to a large extent, be assigned to the IT unit (from ensuring safe, reliable, cost-effective data storage and access to helping to interpret the analytics), they also contend that business leaders need to take responsibility for defining the data value proposition and delivering on it.

Based on their research, the authors propose several IT practices that can lead to success:

> **Use tiered storage to manage costs.** One size doesn’t fit all. Storage should be allocated based on business requirements and policies for retention and expiration need to be implemented in accordance with regulations and laws down to individual countries and industries.

> **Tap into vendor expertise.** Maturation in the storage market means there are a number of technology providers that possess specific skill sets and knowledge, from architecting and building to managing and supporting storage solutions.

> **Make storage transparent to the business.** Until recently, data storage costs were a small fraction of total IT costs and few IT departments charged for storage. This is no longer the case, as the information explosion means CAPEX and OPEX costs are dramatically higher. These costs need to be visible to business owners, with archiving, retention, and expiration policies developed in concert with IT and the business. This may include rethinking the “storage is free” approach and cross-charging each business unit for the storage—and type—they use.

> On the flip side of the equation, the authors identify three practices business units should follow when collaborating with their IT counterparts:

> **Define the workflows that will use unstructured data.** To derive value, businesses need to define the workflows that create, retrieve, change, and reuse documents, images, messages, and other unstructured data types.

> **Use data to refine business processes.** Ongoing analysis of data must happen to enable continuous improvement of business processes. This should be an iterative process; one improvement creates additional data that feeds into the next process improvement.

> **Identify your “sacred data.”** As companies grow and become more complex, their data begins to assume different meanings. It is important that they identify their most critical data and ensure its integrity.


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**Symantec Chronicles**

[**Hadoop Enterprise Ready**](http://go.symantec.com/cab-fbr)

An add-on solution for Veritas Cluster File System enables enterprises to run Big Data analytics on their existing infrastructure by making it highly available and manageable. Apache Hadoop is used to analyze data for business insights; however, many existing data solutions lack the data management capabilities and built-in resilience to overcome the cost and complexity of increasing storage and server sprawl. The new Symantec Enterprise Solution for Hadoop provides a scalable, resilient data management solution for handling Big Data workloads that make Apache Hadoop ready for enterprise deployment. For more information, visit [go.symantec.com/hadoop](http://go.symantec.com/hadoop).
talent acquisition and retention remains one of the biggest hurdles facing CIOs today, according to a recent article in the *McKinsey Quarterly*. And outsourcing doesn’t solve the problem; the authors point out that companies that heavily outsource wrestle with the same talent challenges as those that do not.

To address this issue, authors list the following as important principles to follow:

> **Rotate high performers.** Avoid narrow specialization tracks that lock IT staff into one career domain. Look for opportunities to rotate high performers across technology functions and groom them as future IT leaders.

> **Make training less technical.** Too often, IT training is very technical and doesn’t provide a broader perspective on the business. IT staff who understand business requirements, products, customers, market position, and operations are more productive and equipped to move into roles with broader responsibilities.

> **Ensure senior exposure.** Give high performers “face time” with senior leaders across the organization. The CIO should not be the only liaison with his or her peers.

> **Support technology passions.** Cost and business requirements often limit the time IT staff can spend on individual innovation and experimentation. The best people in IT often have a passion for technology and need allocated time working on new ideas.

> **Facilitate outside exposure.** Ensure that high performers have a chance to attend and participate in industry or functional groups. This should be part of their development plan.

Getting the internal components right is one aspect of human capital management. Augmenting and building the team is just as important. The authors list four recommendations:

> **Buy whole teams where feasible.** M&A is one access point to new talent. IT leaders can acquire entire teams within new functions through an acquisition.

> **Rethink location strategies when necessary.** Simply moving to locations that are the least expensive is not always the right answer. Rather, many IT organizations have learned that different locations are better fits for certain portfolios of service (e.g., offshore for transactional activities but near a university or city center for leading-edge development initiatives).

> **Draft the best athlete.** Technology requirements change rapidly. This year’s most pressing problem may not be next year. Talented IT professionals can learn new skills quickly; recruit the best problem solvers and communicators, and you’ll have a team for the long haul.

> **Leverage the network.** Talent attracts talent. Investing in high-profile, highly skilled hires will attract others of the same ilk.

> **Talent acquisition and retention remains one of the biggest challenges facing CIOs today.**

How to go about implementing and employing each of these internal and external levers depends on a company’s needs, existing capabilities, and constraints. The authors propose several things to consider when developing an action plan:

> **Get an unvarnished picture of future needs and current capabilities.** An IT leader needs to understand the future direction of her or his organization to determine where to focus.

> **Develop a heat map of priorities.** Pinpoint gaps between business needs and current skill, as well as risks related to those gaps.

> **Map levers to needs, taking constraints into account.** Not everything is appropriate in every situation. One size doesn’t fit all talent gaps and risks; each situation is different.

> **Ruthlessly track and reinforce progress.** A set of metrics for tracking progress needs to be established up front and communicated to senior leaders inside and outside the IT organization.

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**BOOK REVIEWS**

**Thomas H. Davenport and Brook Manville**

*Judgment Calls: 12 Stories of Big Decisions and the Teams That Got Them Right*

ISBN: 978-1-4221-5811-1  
Price: $30.00

One are the times of the all-knowing leader making solo decisions—the complexity and information density of today’s organizations make it impossible for one executive to have the knowledge, experience, and understanding to continually come to the right conclusions. The savvy leader, however, can still make great decisions with a greater degree of certainty than ever before by exploiting the collective judgement of the entire organization. *Judgment Calls*, by Tom Davenport and Brook Manville, tackles the question of how organizations apply collaboration, participatory decision making, and most importantly, judgment, in their decisions.

Davenport and Manville present their case in the form of 12 compelling stories about different kinds of organizations, and how they confronted a particular problem through building an organizational decision-making competence. Each story starts with a difficult question to be answered, and then describes how the decision was reached by tapping the deeper knowledge and diverse viewpoints of the organization. Individual chapters highlight a different aspect of organizational decision making, and together, the authors create a model for building what they define as “the collective capacity to make good calls and wise moves when the need for them exceeds the scope of any single leader’s direct control.”

The model is described through four parts, each containing three stories:

- Part 1: Participative Problem Solving
- Part 2: Opportunities of Technology and Analytics
- Part 3: The Power of Culture
- Part 4: Leaders Setting the Right Context

Together, these sections paint a full picture of how leaders are benefitting by tapping into the judgment of the entire organization. From McKinsey & Company’s problem of how to find enough high-caliber recruits when business schools alone could no longer provide them, to the ancient Athenians confronting how to defend themselves against life or death invasion, *Judgment Calls* provides a convincing illustration of the concept of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts, laying out a usable model on how to construct that whole in the area of collaborative decision making.

Rebecca Ranninger is executive vice president and chief human resources officer at Symantec.

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**Micah Solomon**

*High-Tech, High-Touch Customer Service: Inspire Timeless Loyalty in the Demanding New World of Social Commerce*

ISBN: 0-8144-1790-6  
Price: $23.00

Imagine that you are a member of Maytag’s customer service team when you read a tweet from an extremely frustrated (and social media connected) customer: “DO NOT EVER BUY A MAYTAG. I repeat. OUR MAYTAG EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN A NIGHTMARE.” How would you respond? This book presents all sorts of practical advice (and real world examples) to organizations on how to adapt to the new balance of power that social media presents. With the likes of LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter (among hundreds of others), customers today are far more likely to amplify a complaint. As a result, organizations must be prepared.

With that in mind, Micah Solomon, in *High-Tech, High-Touch Customer Service*, maps out a strategy that organizations can employ when in this new social media world. The book is broken into three major sections:

- “Timelines and Timelessness” reiterates themes from Solomon’s past works on the basics of excellent customer service and what it looks like to fail.
- “High Tech, High-Touch Anticipatory Service” proposes that true loyalty building service occurs by anticipating customer needs through the right combination of people, culture, and technology.
- “The Rise of Self-Service and Social Media—And Other Seismic Shifts” focuses on the technical detail around the trends of self-service, social media, and electronic customer input. These create loyal customers as well as competitive advantages.

While many of the anecdotes were quite relevant, several stand out:

- Solomon put particular emphasis on the opportunity of serving disabled customers. He even highlights a blog entry on Netflix’s website: “Have you ever thought you might have a HEARING IMPAIRED customer that cannot use a PHONE?” (Netflix evidently listened and quickly added a TTY system.)
- Consider that Amazon.com, which is frequently cited in the book, that suffered a failure by operating hospitalization-inducing heat exposure from warehouse temperatures of up to 114 degrees. Its response was to offer “heat hardening training.” The message according to Solomon: employees are customers too, so make sure to include this in your social media planning.

I liked this book so much that I have already forwarded it to our new CEO, Steve Bennett, as I know many of the concepts and suggestions will resonate with him.

Mark L. Olsen is a senior product marketing manager in Symantec’s Information Intelligence Group and a former CIO of a 3,000 person organization.