



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

“Technology Spending: A Time To Make Do And Mend?”

Joanna Perry, Retail Week, 31st Oct. 2008

To The Editor:

Certainly, following the “make do and mend” approach is always an option. But is it the best option right now? Chances are, it’s not. In these times of economic difficulty, retailers will actually achieve greater ROI out of a future-proof IT investment such as SAP or Oracle – and not just for the obvious reason that tough times allow retailers to negotiate hard on prices with suppliers.

Now is the time for retailers to demand the very best service from their IT suppliers, and to seek out the most cost-effective propositions the market has to offer. In our experience, successful IT projects are those that are run as a tight ship: tight budgets, tight timelines, and tight resources. The focus must shift away from lengthy workshops that seldom achieve any tangible results. Instead, the spotlight should be firmly on hard and fast delivery of systems and benefits, with a view towards achieving results that directly affect retailers’ bottom lines.

And it’s easier to pull off than most think. Retailers can embrace this mindset and combine it cleverly with the best use of technology and SOA principles. This allows retailers to target the delivery on those areas that promise the biggest and fastest returns now, and extend their solution later to achieve greater returns. This can all be done without the fear of being cornered into one particular solution, since an SOA enabled foundation allows retailers to extend their IT landscape step by step at a pace that suits the business.

Beyond the potential cost savings and internal efficiencies, companies investing in new technologies now have the opportunity to widen the gap on weaker competitors. The financial crisis will be a great opportunity to stand out, and technology gives retailers big and small the chance to adapt and better understand this changing world.

Now is the time for retailers to act, when the pressure’s on. As it is, they stand to spend the least and profit the most – and that’s an opportunity that anyone would be foolish to ignore.

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