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A slow year ahead

2009 will see a slowdown in IT outsourcing **Page 8**

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WEEKLY INSIGHT FOR TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS

Building a resilient IT infrastructure



DR/ BC planning is something that most enterprises have been doing. However, with the increasing terrorist threats, companies need to rework their DR plans to ensure a resilient environment, writes **Varun Aggarwal Page 5**



Dealing with the slowdown

The global recession has made the job of CIOs tougher. **Renuka Vembu** looks at how they are coping up with the challenging times and what strategies they are formulating to deal with it **Page 13**

Connecting people, data and diverse systems

Vijay Kapur, National Technology Officer, Microsoft India talked about interoperability and Microsoft's initiatives in this regard **Page 10**



Gaming for Product Development



Serious gaming can help solve some of the complex problems related to product development like understanding customer requirements **Page 23**

Training the HR personnel

Effective training of HR personnel is of prime importance for the success of any organization as good employees are the reflection of a good HR, writes **Nivedan Prakash Page 29**





ERP Considerations for Mid-sized Businesses

Lenley Hensarling lays down some considerations for mid-sized companies buying an ERP solution

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Hot this week

Transcend's JetFlash V90C and V90P, Sahara NB846137-M002, Epson Perfection V30 scanner, GN Jabra BT4010, Sharp MX-3100N

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LEAD

Gaming for Product Development

Serious gaming can help solve some of the complex problems related to product development like understanding customer requirements, writes **Varun Aggarwal**



One of the biggest challenges in software product development is to understand customer requirements. Though it may sound simple the fact is that most customers are not aware themselves as to what they want from a product—this entails re-engineering, re-designing and re-architecting the entire product to ensure that it meets the customer's 'actual' requirements. Think about the time and money that is wasted in this entire process.

Product development companies have been looking out for tools to simplify this process of determining product requirements and what came to their rescue were some simple concepts derived from gaming.

According to Forrester Research, serious gaming provides an alternate way to collect and analyze product requirements. An increasing number of companies are using serious games to inform product decisions. At the same time, a small number of serious gaming vendors have emerged, providing both training and tools. Serious games can circumvent many of the traditional problems with figuring out product requirements, including col-

lecting sufficient information from customers, partners, and internal stakeholders to make product decisions. Not only are the games relatively lightweight exercises, but they also offer a lighter touch to resolve many debates over product decisions.

In 2007, Luke Hohman, Founder and CEO, Enthiosys, published 'Innovation Games: Creating Breakthrough Products Through Collaborative Play', a book outlining a series of games that product planners or managers could leverage to understand customer needs, requirements, product use, and what they want going forward. One of those games—Buy a Feature—was released as an online application in 2008. Designed to understand customer needs and requirements, the game is simple enough: Customers or internal teams receive some money and a list of potential features for a product, and they must negotiate among themselves to purchase the features that they collectively deem important.

The gaming philosophy

In the complex-systems model, market research has a qualitative bias

because each customer constitutes a market reality unto itself. For example, the commercial airline businesses at Airbus and Boeing have perhaps two hundred or so primary customers worldwide to consider. Statistically averaging insights across such a modest customer population makes no sense. Instead, you want to delve deeply into the specific circumstances of each account, seeking out unique patterns, not mathematical correlations. This is where war stories and hypothetical scenarios, even just the occasional apt metaphor, can prove so insightful.

Game playing provides a relaxed, less rigid environment and increases creativity in such scenarios. It leverages research from cognitive psychology and organizational behavior. The games utilize verbal, written, visual and non-verbal forms of communication thereby providing greater volumes of information. Some games provide wonderful player artwork, which you can retain and share with others. The games have many uses, including strategic planning, sales effectiveness, product road mapping and customer relationship building.

Success galore

Innovation Games are fun ways to collaborate with customers and understand their needs better. Companies have used them to improve thinking about holistic design, discover new business opportunities, drive strategy and product road map decisions, improve the effectiveness of sales and service organizations, fine tune marketing messages, and create more intimate, durable relationships with your customers. Here is how some companies have used Innovation Games.

SAP has used multiple games from Innovation Games over the past several years to manage the evolution of its technical platform, typically in a multi-step process. In the first step, it uses in-person, open-ended games such as Spider Web and Prune the Product Tree to identify new opportunities and

Innovation Games at a glance

Speed Boat	Draw a boat on a whiteboard or sheet of butcher paper. You would like the boat to move fast. Unfortunately, the boat has a few anchors holding it back. The boat is your system, and the features that your customers do not like are its anchors. Customers write what they do not like on an anchor. They can also estimate how much faster the boat would go when that anchor was cut. Estimates of speed are really estimates of pain. When customers are finished posting their anchors, review each one, carefully confirming your understanding of what they want to see changed in the system.
Product Box	Ask your customers to imagine that they are selling your product at a tradeshow, retail outlet, or public market. Give them a few cardboard boxes and ask them to design a product box that they would buy. The box should have the key marketing slogans that they find interesting. When finished, pretend that you are a skeptical prospect and ask your customer to use their box to sell your product back to you.
Spider Web	Put the name of your product or service in the center of a circle. Ask your customers to draw other products and services that they think are related to your product. As they draw these products and services, ask them to tell you when, how, and why these are used. Ask them to draw lines between the different products and services. Encourage them to use different colors, weights, or styles to capture important relationships (e.g., you can use a thicker line or a different color pen to draw extra important relationships). The Spider Web game works well with the Start Your Day game: as your customer reviews when and where they use your offering, you can also capture the various relationships that exist between the different products and services that they use throughout the day.
Show and Tell	Ask your customers to bring examples of artifacts created or modified by your product or service. Ask them to tell you why these artifacts are important, and when and how they are used. For example, if your product is a software system to manage invoices, ask them to show you the invoices, reports, or spreadsheets that they have created through the use of your product. Pay careful attention to anything that surprises you - artifacts you expected them to create or modify that they have ignored, artifacts that are not used, or artifacts used in unexpected ways. What do these tell you?

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potential changes to its platform. They it uses the online prioritization Buy a Feature to leverage its global community to rank these ideas.

Another instance is of VeriSign's Global Customer Support leadership team that wanted to include its entire worldwide employee organization in the prioritization of a project portfolio backlog consisting of 46 potential projects. Unfortunately, traditional telepresence or survey-based market research did not provide for the kind of collaboration desired by the VeriSign leadership



Manish Rathi

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Customers do not have a concise view of what they really want. Moreover, this becomes even more complex when you have to get inputs from thousands of customers and pull off this into the requirements part or manage the requirements part in a certain way. This is where we felt we could use some of the techniques or methodologies, which are projected across in the Innovation Games

team. To resolve the problem, Enthiosys worked with the VeriSign team to leverage the online version of Buy a Feature to create a multi-round tournament structure that enabled the Global Customer Support (GCS) organization to collaborate and prioritize the 46 candidate projects into the top seven projects. These results were subsequently organized into a roadmap through the use of the Innovation Game Prune the Product Tree and Enthiosys' agile product and portfolio road mapping processes.

Now in India

GlobalLogic and Enthiosys have collaborated to offer technology firms full product development life-cycle services including customer need analysis, software development and support, business model design and strategic roadmaps. The partnership combines GlobalLogic's award-winning expertise in distributed Agile development with Enthiosys' extensive knowledge of Agile product management and training. Their integrated services will enable both early stage and established companies to accelerate their product development cycles to bring innovative software products to market more quickly.

Talking about the need for incorporating Enthiosys' Innovation Gaming concepts into GlobalLogic, Manish Rathi, Head - Delivery Management, Version 1.0/ New Venture Services, GlobalLogic,

explained, "Our key business is helping our customers evolve and build products. The process starts from collecting requirements, managing requirements, putting up a plan, building a product, developing, testing, rolling it out etc. Many different processes have evolved and there are many different things out there. We were always looking for newer techniques to really help us understand our customer requirements and their end users' requirements in a much better way."

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GlobalLogic is working with Enthiosys to come up with online Innovation Games, enabling thousands of customers to play the game simultaneously. They are also helping their customers fully understand these games and are working on building new games to help them serve better. Many Indian customers including MakeMytrip.com are already showing interest in Innovation Gaming. ■

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