A Seat at the Table: The Role of ITAM in Supporting Business Transformation

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"The last ten years of IT have been about changing the way people work. The next ten years of IT will be about transforming your business." Aaron Levie, CEO of Box

The ability to successfully design, implement and sustain a business transformation program is a critical competency and, arguably, a determinant of long-term business viability. Whether transforming operationally, digitally or as the result of a merger and acquisition, making decisions and effecting the changes required to transform at scale requires a single critical element – data.
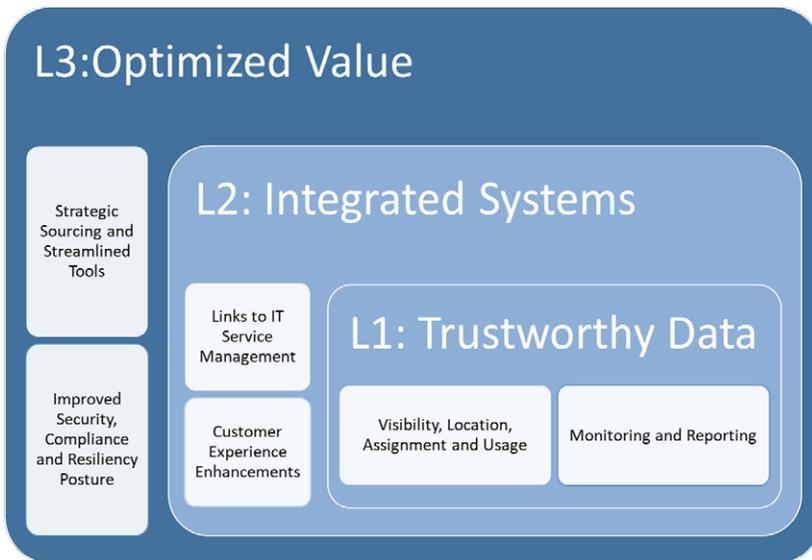
ITAM, as a practice, is built on collecting, analyzing and reporting on massive amounts of data and its detailed attributes, with a focus on maintaining accuracy, currency, consistency and comprehensiveness. While it seems obvious that this vast dataset would be useful – and dare I say critical – to a successful transformation, IT asset leaders and their teams are frequently overlooked as key contributors to successful data-driven strategy and transformation efforts.

How does ITAM get a seat at the boardroom table? What types of business decisions can be informed by accurate and timely data? What benefits can ITAM data (including technical, financial, contractual and regulatory attributes) bring to a business during, and post, transformation? What areas of the business are most likely to benefit from the data?

In my work with dozens of organizations ranging in size from a few hundred to tens of thousands of employees, I have observed the five most common business outcomes that incentivize organizations to start managing their IT asset estate. By working towards realizing these outcomes, ITAM is uniquely positioned to support transformative success no matter the size or maturity of the business.

As companies move from Level 1 through Level 3 maturity, new business outcomes and benefits are enabled.

Figure 1 represents the ISO 3-tier maturity model.

1. Financial Efficiency:

Without question, this is the single biggest driver for ITAM. Every organization, under all market conditions, is looking to reduce IT costs. The types of costs that can be impacted will vary depending on your ITAM program's maturity level. The great news is that even at Level 1 maturity (Trustworthy Data), the risk of unplanned spend can begin to be mitigated – for example, license true ups and vendor audits.

In progressing through the levels of maturity, planning and decision making can be undertaken for IT spend priorities and right sizing the IT asset estate. This has the power to reduce costs on a case-by-case basis and truly, and meaningfully, impact ongoing costs, increasing available funds for strategic and/or transformative programs.

2. Compliance

Contractual terms, industry regulations and legal compliance are growing areas of concern, giving rise to larger spends on security, resiliency, and data protection programs.

While not always part of transformative program design, credibility and trust are important elements

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of reputation that should be considered when transformation goals include increasing and maintaining consumer market share.

3. Visibility

What assets do I have? Where are they, and who is accessing them? At Level 1 maturity (Trustworthy Data), answering these questions with 95% confidence is achievable. However, as any experienced ITAM professional will tell you, confidence and credibility in your data set is not a quick win in today's expansive IT environments with multiple vendors and combinations of on-premise, virtual and hybrid infrastructure with a multitude of commercial and homegrown software and applications in use. But it is achievable and invaluable as organizations seek to transform.

4. Governance

Corporate governance answers the question of how the changes brought about by transformation are maintained and is normally achieved through policy. By integrating a trustworthy data set with lifecycle management processes across business platforms (such as procurement and finance), ITAM data can inform policy and processes and aid transformative changes to the way employees access and work with IT systems.

5. Agility

With IT evolving at an ever-increasing pace, the need for agility has never been greater; however, agility within the bounds of strategic transformation is dependent on having reliable data to support decisions. By regularly discovering, validating, and maintaining currency and expanding the scope of IT asset data, a mature ITAM

program will provide the necessary baseline data to support agility in strategic and tactical decision making.

With all this to offer, why is ITAM and its data set so often overlooked at the executive and board level? Perhaps, it's because it's not known that the data is there or perhaps it's not understood how it can be leveraged to unleash the organization's transformational power.

While ITAM data is routinely used to save money, how would your executive team respond to the opportunities for increased compliance, greater agility in decision making/ strategy execution, more effective organizational governance and sustained transformative changes?

By showing organizations how to unleash their transformational power by leveraging ITAM data, that seat at the table may well be awarded, at long last.
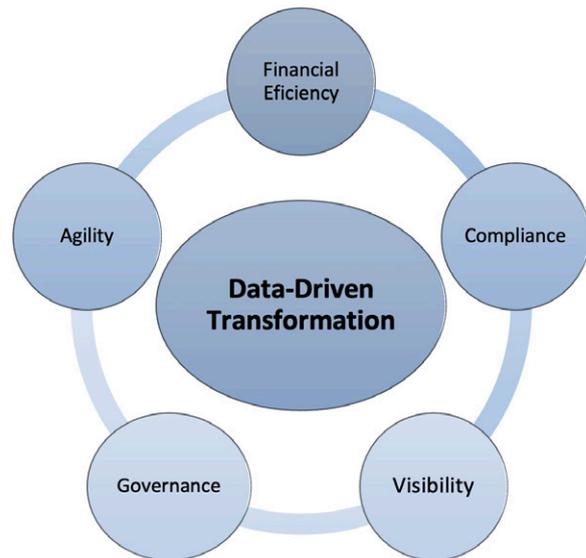

Figure 2 represents common categories of benefits enabled through ITAM programs built on solid data foundations.

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A seasoned business and IT leader, Dale has become an impassioned ITAM enthusiast, on a mission to elevate ITAM from the server room to the boardroom.