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## A Global Equipment Manufacturer IT Strategy: Just a List of Systems?

### **Business Situation:**

The captive finance arm for a global equipment manufacturer was struggling with the notion of IT strategy. The business executives saw IT strategy as a simple list of systems that need to be replaced, with corresponding dates of replacement. But just below the surface was a deep sense of frustration that the IT department could never seem to make those dates, and even when they did, they were significantly over budget. The company tried several versions of IT strategies in close succession, but none seemed resolve this problem. IT was either late or over budget or both, and the business executives were becoming exasperated over the inability to move quickly enough to address changing market needs. Nothing they tried seemed to work, and they turned to Ambassador for assistance.

### **Benefits/Results:**

The breakthrough came when the business and IT executives realized that IT strategy is much more than a schedule of systems to be replaced. When they recognized that three fundamental issues needed to be addressed, then progress began to happen. What three issues did the executives come to understand and embrace? Operating principles, enterprise architecture, and organizational dynamics.

**Operating principles** are the “rules of engagement,” sometimes unspoken and unwritten, that govern expectations and behaviors between groups. In this company’s case, these operating principles were developed over several workshops at the highest levels of the company . . . and new insights and understandings were developed that dramatically changed the direction of the IT conversation, from basic responsibilities in IT system acquisition to process for responding to support calls.

**Enterprise architecture** was moved from the domain of the technologist to the responsibility of business management. Recognizing that enterprise architecture forms the foundation for executing a business strategy, executives were able to take ownership for architecture, including the data and systems that worked together to enable them to make good on their market promises.

**Organizational dynamics** rose from passive acceptance to active planning. Skill sets, culture, leadership, and decision-making structures all were examined, diagnosed, and re-engineered to meet the new needs and expectations of the business.

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Case Study  
Strategic Impact Services