

### Top Technologies: 2009 & Beyond

As economic uncertainty reaps havoc on corporate budgets, IT leaders are under increasing pressure to ensure the IT function and its activities are consistent with corporate strategic objectives. CIOs must carefully guard IT budget dollars, wisely choosing technology investments that will make the greatest strategic impact and increase revenue.

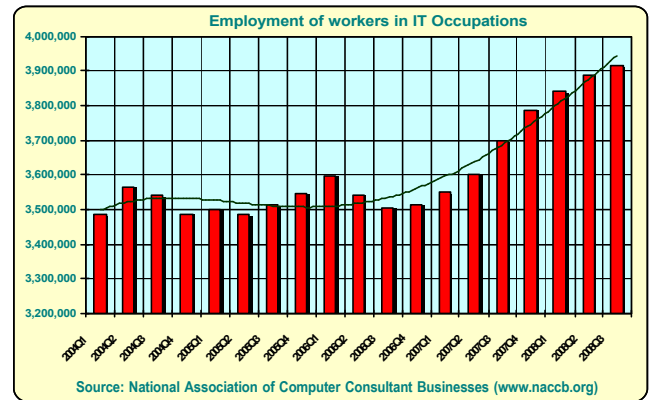
Recently, several lists and surveys have sought to predict the tools and strategies that will play the critical dual role of supporting business strategy while boosting company revenue. These lists offer a "sneak peek" at which technologies many CIOs and top IT executives will be implementing and/or expanding over the next three years.

According to technology research firm Gartner, Inc., its 2009 list focuses on technologies that "... impact the organization's long-term plans, programs and initiatives."

Gartner's Top 10 Strategic Technologies for 2009	Top 10 Technologies that Drive Revenue - <i>CIO Insight</i>
1. Virtualization	1. Service-oriented Architecture
2. Cloud Computing	2. Rich Internet Applications
3. Servers – Beyond Blades	3. Unified Communications
4. Web-oriented Architectures	4. Smart Phones and Mobile Clients
5. Enterprise Mashups	5. AJAX
6. Specialized Systems	6. Application Virtualization
7. Social Software and Social Networking	7. Storage Virtualization
8. Unified Communications	8. Wikis
9. Business Intelligence	9. RFID/Wireless Sensors
10. Green IT	10. Social Networking
<i>Source: Gartner, Inc</i>	<i>Source: cioinsight.com</i>

Although they may be labeled differently, several technologies appear on both notable lists above, which is a strong indication they should be given serious implementation consideration. Here are the technologies that overlap:

- ◆ **Virtualization:** Though definitions vary depending upon the type of virtualization, essentially this technology allows one computer or application to do the work of several.
- ◆ **Web/Internet Apps and Architectures:** As the need for the interoperability of applications increases, so will the need to build Web-centric applications to meet global needs.
- ◆ **Social Networking:** When it comes to this technology, Gartner says the "risk lies in failure to engage and thereby, being left mute in a dialogue where your voice must be heard."
- ◆ **Unified Communications:** As consolidation continues in the communications industry, so will a company's reliance on fewer vendors.



### Battening Down the Hatches IT & the Economic Storm

IT executives may feel their departments are especially vulnerable in an era of shrinking corporate budgets. The good news is that there are several actions executives and hiring authorities can take to demonstrate IT's strategic value and help their companies weather the economic storm.

Many IT organizations are working to identify discretionary spending and activities versus non-discretionary spending and activities. This effort does not just focus on hardware and applications, but on staffing levels as well. As they identify what aspects of a project are 'nice-to-haves' compared to 'must haves,' some companies may be trimming a project's cost by eliminating the 'nice-to-haves.' When that approach is not possible, they often outsource projects to IT staffing and solutions companies in order to keep the key project on target and on budget.

Managing through an economic downturn isn't just about reducing current overhead, but also reducing future costs. Companies are expanding outsourcing contracts in order to conserve internal resources and reduce future costs.

**Ways Companies Manage IT in a Recession**

- ⇒ Demonstrating how IT is an asset and not an expense;
- ⇒ Knowing what is discretionary spending (and what isn't);
- ⇒ Outsourcing to reduce overhead;
- ⇒ Instituting green initiatives to save power (and expenses).

The good news is that many companies are planning for the "bounce-back." They realize that if they cut too deeply now, they will be unable to fully exploit the eventual upturn.

## Demand for IT Workers Still High *IT Workers Defy the Market*

Although IT job growth has slowed, it reached an all-time high in 3Q2008 of more than 3.9 million. The unemployment rate for most IT occupations remained significantly below the national overall unemployment rate of 4.7 percent in 3Q2008.

Occupation	3Q2008 Unemployment rate
Computer hardware engineers	2.7 %
Computer and information systems managers	1.9 %
Computer programmers	2.2 %
Computer scientists and systems analysts	2.2 %
Computer software engineers	1.6 %
Computer support specialists	4.4 %
Network and computer systems administrators	2.4 %
Network systems and data communications analysts	3.4 %
<i>Sources: NACCB based on unpublished U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data</i>	

By looking at the correlation between year-over-year hourly and weekly wage changes, demand among different IT and computer sectors can be assessed.

The year-over-year hourly wage increase for all workers in September was 3.2 percent, but weekly wages were only up 1.4 percent—a strong indication that workers' hours across the U.S. have been cut back.

The reverse situation (weekly wages rose faster than hourly wages) occurred in some IT/high-tech sectors, which indicates high demand in those technology categories. For example, hourly wages for workers in the Internet Publishing and Broadcasting and Web Search Portals sector rose 8.9 percent while their weekly wages rose 17.6 percent.

On the other hand, the relationship in other IT/computer sectors seems to indicate falling demand due to the fact that weekly wage increases did not keep up with hourly raises. For example, workers in Computer Systems Design Services received, on average, a 10.5 percent raise in hourly wages in September 2008 from one year earlier. However, their weekly wages did not keep up: they were 7.1 percent higher over the previous year.

The relatively high hourly wage gain indicates high demand and low supply of workers. The lesser weekly wage growth indicates that those workers did not work as much.

## How to Get a Raise

Here are several strategies from *CIO Insight Research* that IT professionals can use to raise their salaries, even in a tough economic climate.

- \$ Find a job or assignment at a larger company (use an IT staffing/solutions company to find a position).
- \$ Take on more responsibilities and ensure part of your work is outside of IT.
- \$ Participate in the creation of overall business strategies and focus on revenue-building activities.
- \$ Get additional training and/or a degree (Note: IT professionals with an MBA earn 15% more).

## Critical Communication Skills

*Soft skills are a critical asset in IT. Make sure your abilities in the following four areas are topnotch:*

1. **Diplomacy** – Yes, customers can be wrong. Instead of simply dismissing their ideas, try, "That's a good point, *but*..."
2. **Knowledge Sharing** – Knowledge is an advantage and a talent—not an excuse to be arrogant. Try sharing and teaching as opposed to preaching and scolding.
3. **Listening** – Asking questions and giving colleagues time to talk is a sign of flexibility and willingness to learn.
4. **Expectation Management** – Remember that your customers/audience may not have a great impression of IT. Find out what you are up against and work to change negative sentiments with positive communications and professional work.

## E-mail Addiction: A Real Problem

E-mail is a valuable work tool, but also an addiction risk. It can become a serious detriment to one's workplace productivity and personal life, so learn the warning signs.

### Warning Signs of Addiction:

- Checking e-mail every 15 minutes or less.
- Going through e-mail religiously when not at work.
- Interrupting in-person activities on a regular basis to look at and respond to e-mail.
- Interrupting non-professional life, such as sleep, family time, etc., to check e-mail.
- Needing to respond to an e-mail immediately.
- Feeling compelled to look at every e-mail.

If you fit the e-mail addiction profile, here are some steps to help regain your control over e-mail.

- Adjust your e-mail client to check e-mail every couple of hours.
- If you check office e-mail from home, make a commitment not to look at it after a certain hour. Your family will thank you.
- If possible, decide on certain times of the day to deal with e-mail and commit to that schedule. You may be surprised how much time opens up in your day.
- Remember that there is no such thing as an "emergency e-mail." If it's a true emergency, the method of communication should be a phone call, maybe a text message, but certainly not an e-mail.