

Keep in mind your Strategic partners goals when using an Outsourcing Operating Model

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One thing that is often overlooked in a partner driven outsourcing operating model are the specific alignment of the goals between the parent business / IT owners and the outsource partners themselves.

In the working model where core IT resource is supported by partners, such as IBM, Accenture and HP there is a large focus on the integration and working practices of the multiple teams involved. Each partner brings its own working practices and nuances of design and Architecture. Overcoming or adapting to these working practices often takes centre stage as this can consume the most amount of time and effort.

One key element of the outsource partner model, that's often overlooked, is understanding the partners goals and managing the differences in alignment to yours.

Your IT / business goals may be very open to the organisation. You could be driving towards your business goals by following a set up principles like:

1. Create a generic IT capability to allow greater market flexibility and adaptiveness, responsiveness to change
2. Follow principles of re-use and optimisation where possible, efficient cost management and resource management
3. Strict governance to industry wide standards to such frameworks as TOGAF, eTom and SOA.

Just as examples. There are likely a lot more than these, all lined up to point at the company vision.

Let's take a look at a partners goals now, I'm sure they are aware of the industry frameworks listed above, but are they a goal? No, they aren't. They are a way of integrating with the parent company. If I, as a

governing body in the parent company, dictate that HP have to follow eTom category modelling then they will, but not because it brings them any benefit but because there is little to no chance of getting through the owning companies governance process without it.

This is quite a basic example but the idea is fundamental. Examine your outsource partners motivations when you look at their output. Does their design or implementation meet your requirements or does it meet their resourcing targets? Does something really take that long to deliver or have design decisions been affected by the fact that August is a slow month and the partner needs to place more people?

This is particularly relevant when you may be working in a fixed pricing model. If a release phase has an allocation of N thousand days a simple increase of 20% design and implementation time across the board from a partner can drastically reduce the amount of functionality you will receive, and the amount of design they have to complete.

I've found that there are an amazing variety of reasons that designs are influenced, or potentially deviated from their 'ideal' state. Just make sure that the financial goals of your partners aren't the primary reason that your company is saddled with a bizarre technical workaround for years to come.