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Innovation and IT services: client perspectives
 Author: [Angel Dobardziev](#)
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Report

Many IT services vendors have spent a great deal of time focusing on innovation over the last year. However, what is innovation to client organisations? Are they interested in buying 'innovation' from their IT services vendors? How are they approaching the innovation sourcing process with their vendors? What are the key issues and best practices in terms of risk, intellectual property, relationship management and measuring innovation from a client perspective?

These are some of the key questions we explored with CIOs, COOs and CFOs from 11 client organisations, which included BT (telecoms), Banca Carige, Cetrel, Helvetia Patria and Norwich Union (financial services), Honda and SKF (manufacturers), LexisNexis (information services), Max Bahr (retailer), Stockholm City Council (SCC) and the UK Department of Work and Pensions – DWP (public organisations). In addition, we studied the innovation approaches of around 12 other organisations from other sources of information, including airlines, financial services organisations and retailers.

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Key findings

Messages to client organisations

- Clarity on business outcomes the key first step
- Guard against the 'not invented here' syndrome
- Keep an open mind about partners versus suppliers
- Partnerships need investment
- Measure and reward business outcomes
- Balance risk and IP among partners and suppliers

Messages to vendors

- You need a broad innovation strategy...
- ...and a specific strategy for select clients
- Balance technical and industry expertise
- Innovation will mean new business...
- ...but not necessarily higher-margin business

What is innovation to client organisations?

Clients' innovation needs

- Sourcing innovation is not for all
- The role of vendors in client innovation
- A snapshot of vertical industry innovation needs

Clients' innovation sourcing criteria

- Size, presence and reach
- Breadth and depth of knowledge/skills
- Quality of people
- Innovation track record
- Innovation value chain
- Demonstrable business case
- Ability to listen and explore client needs
- Ability to deliver rapid results
- Willingness to support knowledge transfer
- Trust, flexibility and positive approach
- A bar too high?
- Business consulting and innovation

Client/vendor relationship and innovation

- Suppliers versus partners
- Implications

Clients' rating of IT vendor innovation

- In need of improvement
- Implications

Clients' approaches to measuring innovation

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Innovation and IT services: client persp...

- Client perspectives on rewarding innovation
- Existing or new budgets for innovation?
- Is innovation higher-value activity?
- Commercial models for innovative engagements
- What gets measured and rewarded gets delivered

Clients perspective on risk and IP in innovation

- Risk and innovation
- Intellectual property and innovation

Innovation: client perspective cases

- BT Global Services
- Banca Carige
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