

# Yasser Zeineldin



## Changing conversations

CIOs are espousing a philosophy of innovation to their staff, but they aren't necessarily fulfilling their end of the bargain, argues CEO of eHosting DataFort, Yasser Zeineldin.

**C**onversations in the boardroom have changed context today; CEOs and CIOs discuss and debate less on figures related to IT investments and are more focused on enabling optimum innovation. The buzz word, innovation, is not related to the physical IT infrastructure, but on transforming IT into an integral part of the business and aligning it to the future growth of the organisation.

IT innovation is a phrase that was over-used during the economic recession of 2008-2009 and is now back in vogue with a different flavour among CIOs. Typically, conversations on IT are centred on introducing a new technology or service that will transform IT and revamp the complete environment in the next few years.

According to Gartner, rather than building a better mousetrap to do the same with less, CIOs should look for ways to 'disrupt the mouse cycle so they don't ever have to catch mice again'. This means raising productivity by doing things differently with the same resources and opening doors for innovation rather than just cutting costs.

'Lightweight technologies' that do not

command much of an up-front capital investment, such as cloud computing, software as a service and Web 2.0 will be the focus for IT departments in the coming future, assert experts at Gartner.

This is true as urgency for innovation will grow, as indicated in a periodic survey conducted on approximately 1,000 CIOs worldwide. Half of the CIOs participating in the survey told Gartner that innovation will be the top issue for 2013.

By emphasising on innovation, CIOs need to implement this philosophy in their departments. The most popular and successful IT heads will focus on 'What's the next big thing?' rather than 'What's next on the to-do list?' Most IT employees are focused on bottom-line results; however, the attention should be on identifying 'new problem spaces' to find out innovative solutions. Another key success factor is to ensure that these IT innovations implemented within the organisation are relevant to the business.

The role of an IT service provider gains relevance in such a scenario where they bring in knowledge, technical expertise and

readily available technological innovations. This helps reduce costs, improve performance levels and lower financial risks. Service providers are continuously investing in the latest technologies in order to provide different routes to deliver this value to clients. CIOs can then allocate their IT resources to innovation and developing business applications rather than spending time on mundane operational activities. Today, even at eHosting DataFort, we see our customers demanding not only cost-cutting measures but also deriving long term benefits. They see a service provider as an extension of their IT department.

Though clients are still focusing on converting capital expenditures to operating expenditures by using a service provider, the perspective is shifting. Clients today are increasingly looking at using their own resources in a more effective manner with the expertise of a service provider that understands their requirements and can support the organisation on a long-term basis, thereby enabling them to implement innovations. At eHDF, we see that this trend is here to stay for the long term and this will have a positive impact on the industry across all major verticals. **ACN**

**By emphasising on innovation, CIOs need to implement this philosophy throughout their department."**

*Yasser Zeineldin is the chief executive officer of Dubai-based eHosting DataFort.*