

Consulting conundrum and credibility opportunity

While every hardware and software vendor touts its abilities to provide consulting and implementation services to enterprises, most C-level officials are not sure about the objectivity and expertise the vendors offer. While that is not news, the important point of new research is guidance on how vendors can **gain the trust** of CEOs, COOs, CIOs and other top executives.

That's one of many important conclusions I've made after reviewing a survey of 350 C-level executives—almost 50% CEOs—conducted by the BusinessWeek Research Services unit of the BusinessWeek Group earlier this year. The report is called “Wave V Results: C-Team Sheds Light On What Type of IT Recovery Might be In store.” Hardware and software vendors that **focus on business concepts** and ideas, and not their products, have a better chance of success with their enterprise customers. You should be selling revenue enhancers, cost reducers and productivity boosters, not operating systems, applications, processors or switches.

First, look at these data points in response to the question whether hardware and software vendors make good business consultants:

Yes: 23%
No: 31%
Not sure: 46%

Notice that **half of your market** isn't sure of your abilities. What an opportunity!

Second, consider the data points in response to the question asking which type of vendor plays the most important role in the development of new business applications:

Hardware vendors: 8%
Software vendors: 21%
IT consultants: 36%
Non IT consultants (i.e., business consultants) 32%
Other: 3%

Clearly, software vendors that offer a breadth and **depth of business savvy** can succeed in selling their services and products at the C-level executive. And how do they do that?

Understand the mindset of C-level officials. When thinking about a new business application, they consider **what they would like** the software and hardware to do, not what it actually can do. In fact, 81% said that vendors should focus on business ideas and concepts, not hardware and software.

This approach needs to be **imprinted in the mind** of every account representative at your company selling strategic products and services to enterprise buyers.

Providing a depth of business ideas and concepts requires verticalization of the sales process. If you have in depth knowledge of your customers' businesses, you'll make the short list and get the business. The C-Team survey clearly shows that IT Partners that focus on their customers' business will **rank higher** than those that tout their technology, have a vision, etc. See the attached slide for some real eye openers.

Here's an opportunity

Demonstrating your knowledge of specific markets, and how you can improve your customers performance, is the heart of a special advertising section on business intelligence that we're doing for *BusinessWeek* in November. You should be in touch with our writers and advertising representatives to **participate in this upcoming section**. It will provide a showcase for you to demonstrate your expertise in understanding and solving business problems.

For more information about the special ad section, just ask and I will send you a one-page data sheet. Call (617-244-0698) or send me an email if you want more information.

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