

Information Command & Control™ a different approach to managing information

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The most pronounced differentiator in business today is information. The ability to quickly access, absorb, and process information into tangible market value is paramount in almost every industry. In many ways, information is no longer there to just support the business, it has become the business. This is true for both service and product-based businesses.

To determine how well your business is managing its information, you need to answer this question. Are you getting the right information to the right people, at the right time, and in the right place? The art of achieving this goal is something we call Information Command & Control™.

When you consider command and control it is easy to think about huge data warehouses, business reporting engines and the traditional tools that have powered corporate IT departments for decades. What we are talking about is something different.

It's all about Context

Information Command & Control™ is about CONTEXT. If you can provide the right information at the right time, in the right place, to the right person and in the correct format – you have provided that information in context. Hence, the delivery mechanisms are as important as the information itself.

As an example, let's take a look at a simple piece of information that is stored in almost every legacy business system – customer past due aging.

Traditionally, a report is generated from your back-office system that lists customer past due status with past due amounts in several aging buckets. This report is generated weekly or monthly. Typically, folks in accounting and accounts receivable look at these reports shortly after they are run. As the information flows further away from the accounting department the chances that these reports are utilized in a timely fashion is remote.

How often will the customer service or sales representative actually see this information before they field a question, generate a quote or negotiate a concession based on late delivery?

That is why Information Command and Control™ is not about data warehouses and reports, it is about providing information in context. Making sure that business rules flag past due accounts and visibly alert an estimator during the quoting process makes for more profitable decisions.

Likewise, providing key real-time customer metrics such as past due status, on-time delivery and order tracking via Blackberry to a sales person sitting in the parking lot of their next appointment enables them to negotiate the best outcome for their firm.

Time Travel

So we know that getting information to people where they are and when they need it is important. But the biggest opportunity enabled by contextual communications is related to the

time-axis – providing information at the right time.

If you take a look at the early days of IT, departments were called data processing. As we got smarter, we realized data had far less value than information. Therefore, we changed our names to Information Systems. Regardless of what we call our departments now, we learned the lesson that enhancing raw data adds value. Where do we go next?

In order to answer this question, we came up with the Content Progression Model™.

By staging information and delivering it at the right time we can create knowledge; and by combining information about our environment/situation we create wisdom.

The process of developing wisdom takes time, but if we focus on compressing that time-frame we can see where we are going with

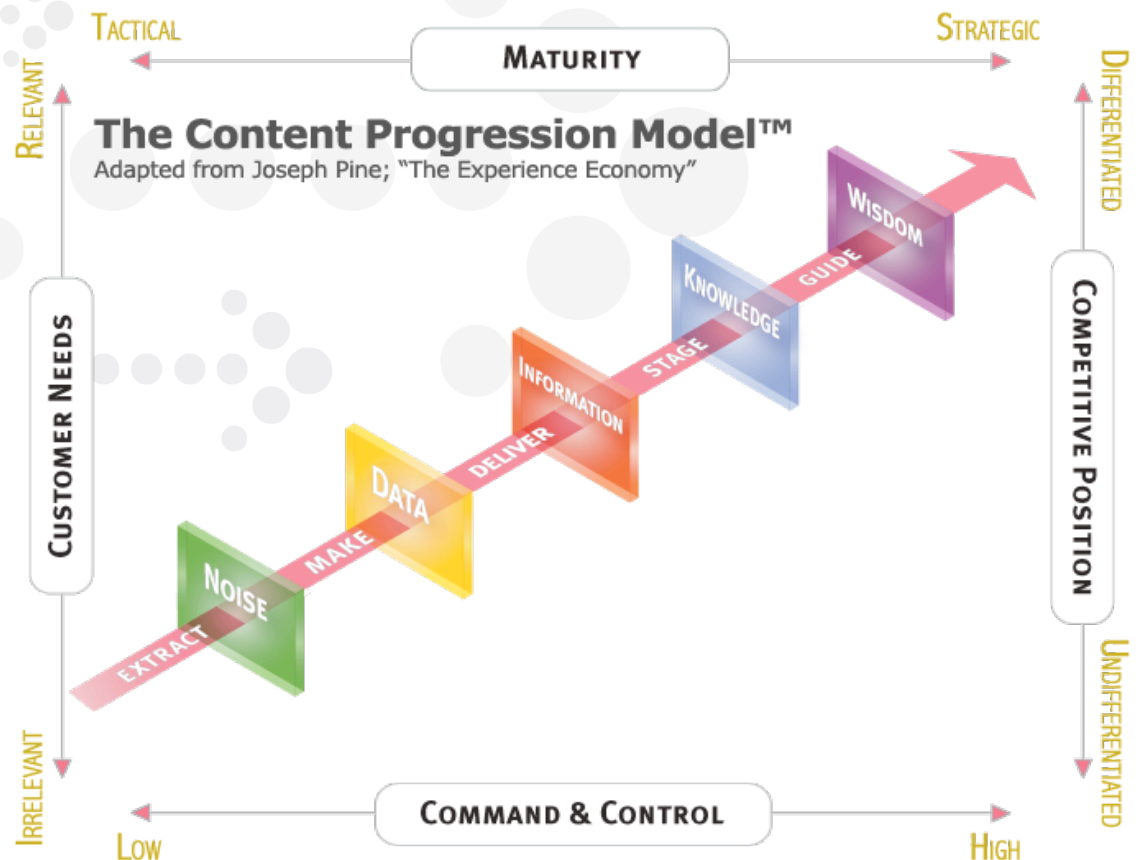
greater clarity. This approach can take business performance to a new level where we anticipate rather than react.

With this in mind, if you really want to get context awareness right, it is not just the delivery of information, but the delivery of knowledge and wisdom.

How do you do it?

New standards and technologies are making it easier to move data, integrate systems and produce composite views of disparate information sources. Collaborative technologies such as web browsers, mobile devices, instant messaging, geo-location, wireless networks and near 100% connectivity are enabling remarkable solutions.

All you have to do is look at the hundreds of Google Maps mashups that plot real-estate value, crime statistics, etc. to understand the



power new technology has unleashed. On the enterprise side, similar advances in SOA, Web Services and ESB are lowering the burden of previously intractable integration projects.

What is most interesting, however, is that technology alone does not provide full context awareness. Technology may assist with the timely delivery and correct format, but it is business analysis that identifies conditions, rules and workflows that help us compress the time it takes to generate wisdom.

In the end, achieving Information Command and Control™ does not require you to rebuild your infrastructure. You must, however, lead your efforts with knowledgeable and creative business analysts, team them up with willing technologists, and provide access to enabling technologies.

If you do this, you will find that you can create exceptionally compelling business solutions.

Return on Investment

To be in command of your business is to be in control of your information; and when you accomplish this, you will be more relevant to your customer's needs, more strategic in your actions and greatly differentiated in your marketplace.

It's all in the way we listen.™



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Jim Vaselopulos is a seasoned business executive with domain expertise in Financial Services, Marketing, Manufacturing and Service Industries. Jim works closely with many firms to help align business needs and technology for competitive advantage.

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