

INTRODUCTION

One bright spot in the globe's recent economic woes is the role today's technology can play in retooling companies for success in the new world of global asset finance. Just a few years ago, technology would have fallen short. Healthy margins accommodated costly, less-than-efficient processes. Businesses had no choice but to wait for legacy solution vendors and IT to deliver system changes. Now, advances in technology and its innovative application bring new opportunities for addressing the specific needs of this new environment. Today's leasing software can and should play an active role in helping companies not only survive, but prosper.

BUSINESS & IT - SHARED PRIORITIES

More than ever, business and IT are on the same side. They face many of the same problems as before, but the stakes are higher. Operations and systems managers agree that ERP solutions for asset finance must deliver:

- Higher-order efficiencies
- Rapid assimilation of business changes
- Transparency
- Innovation
- A sensible approach for replacing legacy systems

HIGHER-ORDER EFFICIENCIES - ONE SYSTEM FOR ALL

New economy businesses must significantly increase efficiency. For many companies, core systems are 10+ years old. This translates into highly complex application workarounds, side systems, data redundancy, and high maintenance costs. Companies that have grown through mergers and acquisitions have multiple systems managing multiple products with multiple workarounds, side systems, redundancies, and related costs.

Leasing systems in the new environment need to deliver higher-order efficiencies. Not only the streamlining of one or two processes, but the implementation of a single system that serves as the central hub for all front-to-back operations, for all types of

leasing products and hard assets. The technology is already available to deliver this model along with a new level of workflow automation and data consistency control.

RAPID ASSIMILATION OF REGULATORY AND BUSINESS CHANGES

Leasing companies must be able to rapidly and cost-effectively accommodate the inevitable regulatory and business changes ahead. The global financial crisis will lead to new regulations by industry, country, and region. To address these complexities, leasing software needs to have been architected from the start for a global environment. That means multi-currency, multi-lingual, multi-product regulatory reporting all from a single database.

New solutions must also enable banks and captives to seize consolidation opportunities by product, sales channel, or country. These business changes will become more frequent and more complex. The cost for making the incremental system changes to address them must fall within the company's aggressive new goals for its bottom line. For the new economy, leasing systems must be highly-configurable with unparalleled flexibility for delivering software changes in days and weeks instead of months and years. This technology is available today and delivering bottom-line benefits for many of the world's leading finance companies.

TRANSPARENCY

To mitigate and manage risk, lenders need access to comprehensive, accurate information and audit trails. Today's leasing software must capture detailed, even global information on highly complex big ticket and high volume low-ticket transactions. For transparency, this information cannot reside separately on Excel spreadsheets, front office, middle office, back office, and one-off systems. It's critical for leasing software to capture the right information through seamless management of the entire lease lifecycle in order for operations to improve CRM and lower the overall enterprise risk.

INNOVATION

At the same time lenders are focused on achieving new, unprecedented efficiencies, they must also innovate. They must use technology to get closer to customers and to speed user acceptance of new ways of doing business. Web 2.0 enabled solutions are at the forefront. Combined with a highly-configurable, object-oriented architecture, leasing software can now help companies broaden their reach and raise revenue from existing customers. Anytime, anywhere access for brokers, analysts, vendors, clients, partners, or customer service representatives is available for new-economy oriented companies. Easy integration with partner websites and user-specific interfaces make possible the rapid, cost-efficient introduction of new products to local or global markets.

A SENSIBLE APPROACH FOR REPLACING LEGACY SYSTEMS

Addressing new economic pressures puts added strain on old systems. Solutions that take years to change can hardly keep pace with an environment that's asking for them to be change-ready. But replacing core systems is expensive. Any new solution must not only offer the latest innovations, but must easily integrate into existing IT environments and be highly scalable to quickly accommodate new products or markets. Most importantly, for the current environment, they must enable a new implementation approach that lowers risk and business disruption.

Leasing software technology has advanced so that it's now possible to phase in a new system. Companies can start with a set of leases that may be managed outside of the current system. They can implement those leases on industry-standard hardware and software that already exists in their infrastructure, unwind the custom-systems that have grown around their legacy system, build required interfaces and then slowly move over other portfolios.

CONCLUSION

Technology can play a significant role in the evolution of new-economy businesses. Lenders can realize new cost savings and efficiencies. They can lower risk and deliver new, innovative solutions more quickly with

systems that can change in time to make a bottom-line impact. Solutions can be phased in over time to deliver benefits sooner and more cost-effectively.

AUTHOR BIO

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