The Year's Key Tech Trends, Part 1

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Eval-Source has compiled a list of 12 technology trends and predictions that should play out this year. These predictions and trends are based on what the consulting firm sees with its customers, what their concerns are and what organizations will need to address. This is part one of a two-part piece. Look for part two in tomorrow's editon of the Chemical Equipment Daily *e-newsletter.*

1.) Enterprise resource planning (ERP) software as a service (SaaS) spending will increase. Pointed solutions were bought because of the recession. Companies are starting to realize the implications of doing business globally. They also understand that their existing system(s) must accommodate global factors, ease collaboration issues, reduce administration costs, simplify usage, force greater adoption within the company, manage social aspects of their business, manage content for dissemination and save money.

Since companies have purchased point solutions, they are now looking to unify all the systems. Organizations will try to unify all of their applications in one place using the cloud. Also there are many new SaaS ERP applications with specific functionalities and industry-specific solutions. Software evaluation will become more difficult as hybrid models and SaaS-differentiation pricing models will complicate decisions.

2.) Rise of cloud providers. Cloud vendors will become cloud brokers by providing application, hosting, infrastructure and platform all from one source. Many complementary vendors will partner with other providers and application vendors to

provide an end-to end customer solution. Large software vendors, such as SAP, Lawson, Oracle, etc. will team up with IBM, Tata, CGI, Accenture, Satyam, etc.

The service-based providers of business process outsourcing (BPO) not only resell. They have started to realize, if they team up with vendors to split the implementation management, information technology (IT) failures are becoming reduced. Many other tier-two software resellers are becoming cloud brokers, as they have started to build their practices by looking for cloud architects.

3.) Solution sprawl will complicate software evaluation once specialized vendors have started to include additional and complimentary functionality within their applications. As these apps become larger, customers will have more choice of vendors, which will drive monthly subscription prices down. Vendors will start to diversify their application portfolio to include much more functionality.

A possible problem that consumers will face with this approach is that organizations will have to pay closer attention to software evaluation. This is because the additional features and functions will complicate an already difficult process, and may lead to increased IT failure if the wrong solution is selected.

4.) Startup buying frenzy. Larger vendors will purchase startups with actual sales. They will be purchased by larger companies looking to grow their portfolio. It is often easier for companies to buy an existing vendor with marketshare or customers to increase application portfolio sizes. This will cause applications to become more diverse and larger than ever before.

This has become a trend in software development, as in-house development has taken a back seat to just buying the vendor straight out. The solution sprawl this causes will also complicate software evaluation for organizations. Large industry players will start to acquire smaller and complementary solutions to grow their portfolio — similar to the Google/Hubspot acquisition.

5.) Integration between systems becoming easier and less time-consuming. Once integration was a big part of the software selection and implementation process. This is no longer the case. Open APIs, SDKs, Excel, CSV files and import tools provided by vendors have made implementation simpler. This also includes additional solutions that can be integrated with other point solutions, which are now significantly easier than before.

Many software vendors are now the external links that are providing integration, data aggregation and pushing of data into other systems. These vendors have provided organizations with additional workflow capabilities, which further simplifies integration.

6.) Consumerization of IT in enterprises will differentiate quality employees from one company to another. The younger workers in the workforce are demanding enterprises to adopt familiar technologies. Whether it is gamification, bring your own devices (BYOD) to work or other technology perks,

they will be key factors for employees to select potential employers.

Other options, such as work at home, will also influence these choices. Organizations will have to become more creative as to how to recruit new employees and be able to keep them. Organizations are now starting to realize the cost of employee turnover with having the position open for a length of time, the HR component, the loss of customers due to decreased customer service that the vacant position serviced, ramp up time to bring the new employee up to speed (training from other and senior employees), understanding the position requirements and get comfortable in the role are main reasons that organizations have started realize how turnover is hurting them.

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