



# Move fast or be left behind

*By Mark Miller, IT Manager*

In IT, the next five years will move faster than the last 10 to 15 years. While it may seem like a lifetime ago now, the mobile revolution began not so long ago. Also consider virtualization or the rise of cloud: These massive technologies were adopted and changed business radically over just a few years. They went from scoffed-at buzzwords, or solutions that only the biggest companies with the deepest pockets could afford to invest in, to today, where these elements are absolutely essential to the way businesses operate.

In manufacturing environments driven by automation and computer systems, errors can mean downtime in production—which means major dollar signs. In the financial world, if your core system goes down, you no longer have a paper fallback. To business today, technology is absolutely critical—even more than it was two or three years ago—and it's up to IT to keep those technologies running and to keep an eye on what's ahead.

## Assessing the dangers of slow adoption

With any company I work with, I always try to look ahead with technology. We can't predict the future or know what tech investments will prove the most worthwhile, but there's one thing about tomorrow we can be certain of: If you fall behind the curve—or behind your competitors—your company may find itself stuck with yesterday's technology in a dead spot that you can't afford to get out of.

In IT, we have to look beyond the challenges of this month or this year and think ahead five or ten years and beyond. How is the technology we're investing in today going to form the foundation for the technology we invest in tomorrow?

## Staying ahead of the curve

This might sound like a great deal of pressure to put on IT pros, who already have more than enough on their plates, but in IT we must advocate for technology. This can prove difficult in some organizations where it may seem like management isn't really interested in new technology. But if they appear uninterested or brush it off when you mention a new solution in casual conversation, perhaps you could present it in a different way...

In my experience, IT is typically more watched—and its opinion more valued—than IT pros might think, and if we're willing to use that influence and make our case in a way that resonates with management, we can help ensure our organizations keep up with the latest technologies. A big part of selling an emerging technology to management is presenting it the right way. The more excitement you show for that new technology, and the more research you can do to make the case for benefits your organization could realize, the more you may find yourself on the same page with management.

## Looking up to look ahead

In my experience as an IT pro, both in managed services and working in-house across a variety of industries, the best way to sell a business on a new technology or solution is to present a use case from another business that's comparable or in a related field. Even when working with smaller companies, it's important to keep an eye on trends from larger organizations and technologies adopted by big solution providers.

Let's say you're a midsized community bank. You could look at a bigger bank, like Bank of America, and see how it's implementing emerging technology. Even though its technology spend may dwarf your own, you may be surprised at what you can learn.

This is a good entry point for management to prove there's a value that maybe management can't see on their own—or that you might have trouble selling on your own. If these industry giants are doing this, you can be sure there's a reason why.

In other instances, just giving management and decision-makers some hands-on time with a technology can make a huge difference.

If you're part of a future-facing organization that tends to lead the way rather than follow what others are doing, I think it's important to watch what other big players and solution providers are focusing on. Look at a company like Microsoft or Google and see what they're investing in and where they're putting their focus. Watch their keynotes and their presentations: Where do they see technology going? This can give you a good indicator of where technology will be going for your organization and industry in the near future.

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**Mark Miller** is an IT professional, managed services provider, and technology consultant with 16 years of experience in both large enterprises and SMB. His experience covers a wide range of industries, including manufacturing, healthcare, finance, and retail. Mark has multiple security and IT platform certifications and is a specialist in the application of augmented and virtual reality, internet of things, and other technology innovations. He is a featured author and blogger and has been a speaker and panelist for multiple video series.