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Insight Report:

Six Steps to Drive B2B eBusiness Adoption

There are three common truths to most eBusiness initiatives in a business-to-business (B2B) environment.

1. Nearly every eBusiness initiative has one of two core objectives: make money or save money. Ranging from reducing staff to improving customer satisfaction, nearly all objectives tie back to one of those two core objectives.

2. Nearly every eBusiness initiative starts with a promise to executives, committees or boards. The initiative will either make or save a certain amount of money within a certain amount of time, providing a return on their investment.

3. Nearly every eBusiness initiative falls short of generating that return. The overwhelming reason for that shortcoming is lack of adoption by the target audience.

Companies do not have to settle for missed targets or poorer-than-expected returns. By understanding and addressing key adoption factors, companies can actually accelerate their returns. More importantly, effective and predictable adoption can lead to:

- Stronger competitive advantage
- Greater switching costs
- Increased sales and profits

This report outlines six key steps to avoid or overcome typical adoption hurdles, clearing the way to generate substantial returns.

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Overview

"Build it and they will come is bull@!#*. Build it, sell the hell out of it, and they will come."

The above quote is attributed to Willard Rouse, a tremendously successful and respected Philadelphia developer. This quote is very appropriate for the challenge of driving eBusiness adoption as well. Success requires that you **sell** your customers on the benefits of using your eBusiness tools.

Why do we have to sell eBusiness more so than traditional IT projects? The reason is that IT projects are typically focused inside an organization, where control can be exerted and fear is a viable motivator. ("If you don't use these new tools, you'll be fired.")

eBusiness initiatives are focused on your customer, a geographically dispersed group over which you have no control. In addition to the huge communications challenges that presents, any attempt to force your eBusiness tools on your customers cannot only squash adoption, it also can alienate perfectly good buyers.

Like it or not, rolling out eBusiness tools means that you must now act like a commercial software business—selling your audience on the value of using your tools. There's a key difference, though.

If a commercial software company doesn't make a sale, they lose the revenue from that sale. If a company deploying an eBusiness solution doesn't make a sale, they, too, lose the potential savings or earnings. However, poor eBusiness deployment may also damage product sales. (If eBusiness tools make it harder or more frustrating to buy from a company, those buyers may well turn to a competitor.)

Sound adoption tactics are necessary, first of all, to ensure that the initiative is helping, not hurting, product sales. Secondly, the ability to effectively drive adoption of eBusiness solutions opens up new opportunities, not the least of which is increased sales and profits.

The following six steps will provide a solid understanding of the work necessary to effectively and predictably drive eBusiness adoption. Doing them well is not easy and will require considerable focus, but the rewards can be substantial.

(NOTE: There are many terms used to describe eBusiness, including Supply Chain Management (SCM), Portals, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and so on. For the purpose of this paper, the term eBusiness refers to all seller-to-buyer-focused tools, whether they are to generate leads or facilitate transactions.)

Step 1: Define the Objectives

Clearly defined, quantifiable objectives are crucial to success. There really are only two viable options: to make money or save money. Some may argue that a third is to improve customer satisfaction, but we believe customer satisfaction goes hand-in-hand with making money.

Most organizations require a return on significant technology investments, such as eBusiness. In that case, somebody is going to ask "How much money will you make or save, and how soon?" They want to know when the project will have paid for itself.

Clearly defined objectives are the foundation that will allow you provide realistic, fact-based answers to those tough questions. They will also help ensure that throughout the project, everyone is pulling in the same direction at the same time. Some examples of clearly defined objectives may be:

- We will reduce our sales transaction costs by 2%.
- We will reduce the volume of calls to inside sales by 35%.
- We will generate 20 qualified sales leads in the next quarter.
- We will increase customer satisfaction by 10%.

Once the objectives are determined, you'll need to set the strategy to achieve those objectives. (There may be one or more objectives, and multiple objectives may be staggered over time.) The three primary strategies for meeting most objectives are:

- Get existing customers to use the tools.
- Get existing customers to use more tools more often.
- Get new customers to use the tools.

Once the objective and overall strategies are set, use them as a reference point for each of the following steps. If something you're working on doesn't tie directly back to the objective, there's a good chance that you're being pulled off-focus.

Step 2: Define Audience Attributes

The first question is "Who is your target audience?" The answer lies in determining which companies will help you best achieve your objective the fastest. While this may seem obvious, it isn't always.

For instance, assume your objective is to reduce the volume of calls to inside sales by 35%. Most of these calls are often to simply get information, such as pricing, availability and order status. A common assumption is that the biggest customers place the most calls, but that's not always the case.

In many situations, companies have already worked with their largest customers to streamline or even automate the flow of information. The bulk of incoming calls may actually be coming from less sophisticated small- and medium-sized customers.

You'll need to do some homework and look at call logs or email inboxes to build a profile of the companies and people needing the most help. The better the profiles, the better the return on your eBusiness investment will be.

Once you have a handle on the target companies, you'll need to determine what position(s) within those companies will be targeted. There are two elements to consider—who will decide to use your eBusiness tools, and who will actually use them.

While this is often the same person, it isn't always. Consider a VP of purchasing that likes your eBusiness tools because they help him keep costs down. He or she may dictate to the buyers that they use your purchasing tool.

The reason this is important is because you may well develop different messages for different positions. The value that your eBusiness tools create for a VP of purchasing may be different than the value for a buyer.

INSIGHT: When compiling the list of target companies, prioritize that list based on the likely return they provide. For instance, the companies that would yield the highest return are "A" list. Companies yielding the next highest returns are "B" list, and everyone else is "C" list.

Use these lists to differentiate the methods and frequency of communications as well as any incentives. Those that can give you the greatest return deserve the most attention. Communicate with them often and by phone or in person whenever possible.

Now that you know who your audience is based on your objectives, you must figure out one of the most critical elements to your success. What are their needs or points of pain?

The reason this is so critical is that your eBusiness solution **must solve one of their problems in order to be adopted**. Otherwise, you are relegated to asking them for a favor: "Would you mind using my eBusiness tools?"

Their needs or points of pain could revolve around costs, effort or a variety of other issues. The greater their pain and the better your solution solves their pain, the more motivated they will be to adopt your solution.

Greater motivation drives greater adoption.

Once you know what will motivate the target audience to use your tools, you need to figure out what challenges might keep them from following through. Unfortunately, there are many potential challenges, each able to trip up adoption efforts.

Certainly, there are adoption challenges that are common to all software initiatives. The ease of installation and use, along with the availability of support, are some of the more obvious. However, eBusiness adoption presents a number of less-obvious challenges. Some examples include:

Procedural

Your solution must mesh well with the target audience's tasks, tools and processes. Poorer fit results in less adoption.

Behavioral

There are many different behavioral issues, not the least of which is the buyer's relationship with your salesperson. Their social interaction and perks (i.e., lunches, dinners or tickets to the game) present powerful challenges.

Identifying all the adoption challenges so that they may be addressed and overcome is crucial. Unfortunately, getting those insights isn't easy.

The first issue is that the only real source for that insight is the target audience themselves. Relying on someone to speak for the audience, regardless of how long they've been in the industry, typically leads to information that is misleading or just plain wrong.

Secondly, there is the issue that this information is difficult to learn even when you talk directly to the target audience. Following are four major reasons for that difficulty.

1. Relationship — The stronger the relationship is between your salesperson and the buyer, the less likely the buyer will be to say anything that might be harmful or reduce their perks.
2. Integrity — Many buyers won't want to share inside information with one supplier and not the others. They also may want to keep you at arm's length just to preserve negotiating power.
3. Technique — The interviewer must know how to interview, relying on open-ended questions and not leading the subject.
4. Objectivity — Internal resources face the challenge of inherent biases that are essentially forced by job responsibilities and measurements.

Overcoming these issues and getting the best insights will most always come from relying on an outside organization trained in these matters. In addition to being well versed in the techniques and methodologies, there are several other reasons why their results will yield greater returns.

Anonymity

By assuring the subject that their name and their company's name will not be directly associated with any of the input, subjects feel much freer to share their true feelings. The insights and findings from all interviews are then presented to the client in aggregate.

Inventory

One of the interview tasks is to inventory the items used by the subject to get their work done. This ranges from "cheat-sheets" to manuals to computer programs and more. Obtaining copies of these tools helps not only with understanding the subject's tasks, but also in ensuring the eBusiness tools better mesh with the existing tools. Subjects are more open to providing copies or samples of these tools when they're being collected by an independent source.

Imposing less change drives greater adoption.

Once the external audience needs are identified, then it's time to work on the internal audience—your sales force. You'll need to identify what will motivate them to use and promote the eBusiness tools as well. This internal audience is critical, because they can make or break your effort.

Your inside and outside salespeople are key stakeholders in this process. This is how they make their living, so they will naturally have some questions that, if not addressed, could tank your entire effort. Some examples include:

- Will eBusiness reduce my sales or commissions?
- Will it make me work harder?
- Will this reduce my customer relationships and accompanying perks?

The result of this step is a very clear definition of who you are targeting, how to create the greatest value for them and how to overcome key adoption challenges. The more robust your insights are, the better you'll be able to drive adoption.

INSIGHT: We have seen how easily salespeople can sabotage eBusiness efforts. In several cases, salespeople warned customers that the eBusiness systems weren't 100% reliable. They suggested that the buyer contact them directly for important things, like placing orders.

To help avoid those issues, we make sure to include the salespeople. In one case, we learned that the salespeople spend 40% of their time answering routine questions about pricing, availability and order status.

When launching the eBusiness solution, we explained to the salespeople that these tools would help offload that burden. They could then spend more meaningful time with customers, strengthening existing relationships or building new ones.

The position was that we didn't want to reduce their interaction with customers—we wanted to enhance and expand it. We didn't want them to spend less time playing golf or having lunch. We wanted to give them more time for activities that would build deeper relationships.

The sales force became prime advocates for the eBusiness tools. They had demos loaded on their laptops and explained to the buyers how they would all benefit. Consequently, a high rate of adoption was achieved quickly.

Step 3: Develop eBusiness Offering

An important distinction in the development of eBusiness tools is that the technology is only a component. The "offering"—what you are delivering to your audience that will solve one or more of their problems—is a combination of technology and services.

Your offering must address issues such as registration, training and support. These services that you wrap around your technology will be extremely important to successfully driving adoption. With that in mind, development of your offering must consider each of these three elements.

Your objectives	Whether your firm is expecting to make money or save money, and the strategy to get there.
Audience pain	The target audience’s pain or needs that your offering will help address.
Adoption hurdles	The issues that could stymie adoption once you’ve drawn the audience to your site.

Properly balancing these elements will go a long way toward driving adoption. (See Figure 1.) While the first two elements are relatively straightforward, it is addressing the adoption hurdles where organizations miss key opportunities.

For instance, most software developers recognize the importance of making the tools easy to implement and use. However, they often overlook several key issues that could eliminate even more of the adoption hurdles.

Figure 1

Fit the way they work

Consider an order status form. There is typically a single layout for the form, usually based on the layout that the developer is most familiar with. Unfortunately, that isn’t always the layout that your customers use or prefer. (See Figure 2.)

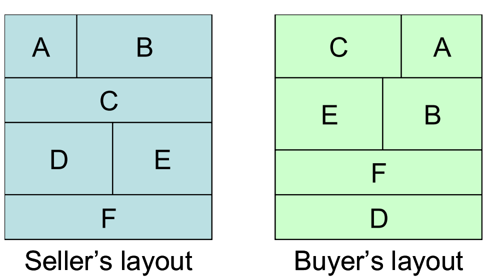


Figure 2

We have seen cases where customers will print out an order status report and then either re-key it or even cut-and-paste it to put it in a format that fits the way they work. The challenge, of course, is that each customer would likely want a different layout.

With today’s technologies, there’s no reason that customers can’t each create their own layout template with easy-to-use online tools. The data is the same; it’s just a matter of where it is presented on the form. Allowing each user to create and save a template of their own layout provides tremendous value to the audience.

Don’t overwhelm with functionality

Another common challenge to adoption is the volume of features offered. When developing software solutions for internal use, most IT departments shoot for the 100% solution. That’s somewhat more manageable when you’re dealing with a captive internal audience. It’s formidable when deploying the solution to geographically-dispersed customers in a multitude of environments.

Development efforts for eBusiness tools must be undertaken with the mindset of a commercial software company. That means basing each release on the best compromise between a minimum and maximum offering.

Minimum	What is the least amount of functionality that can be offered that will still create significant value for the audience?
Maximum	What is the most amount of functionality that the audience can readily absorb without feeling overwhelmed?

Somewhere between those two is the happy medium where your audience will find value, but they won't be overwhelmed. Thinking like a commercial software company, you'll now plan regular releases where each release must meet this criterion while building on the existing foundation.

Your solution must be "easier to use than not to."

The final consideration in developing your offering is that it must be easier to use than not to. If it now takes your audience two minutes to call and check on order status, and you implement a system that takes seven minutes to log in, find the right screen, enter information and get the results—which do you think they'll use?

Step 4: Create Marketing/Sales Plans

Marketing plan

One of the most commonly overlooked steps in deploying eBusiness is developing the marketing and communications effort. A common assumption is that since the customers are being given these tools at no cost, there's no need to market. That is wrong.

First off, there is a cost. Using your tools will cost your audience in time, effort, money, or maybe even ego or political capital. You have to convince them that the value your tools provide is worth that cost, and that's where marketing will help.

In this case, marketing is the process of raising awareness and educating an audience on the benefits of your offering to get them to try your tools. You have to remind them of their needs and challenges (garnered from customer insight) and then make it clear how your solution helps address those needs and challenges.

This requires developing a marketing plan that will define just how you intend to lead the horse to water, so to speak. The plan also must define effective messaging and positioning of your offering so that those selling it can get the horse to drink.

The first step is to define the value of your offering. The simplest way is to list the major needs or points of pain that you learned from the target audience. Next you identify which of those needs or pains your offering solves and to what extent. The better your offering addresses their need and the more obvious it is, the more impact your marketing program can have.

The next step is to review the adoption challenges that were identified by customer insight. Which of those challenges is addressed by the offering itself? (Remember that the offering is both technology and services.) Of the remaining challenges, which can be addressed by communications and education? Some examples might include overcoming fear or battling misperceptions.

The results of those two steps will establish the foundation for how you position and communicate the value of your eBusiness offering. Because your customer insight likely varies by industry and job, you may well have different positioning and communications for various audiences. The more targeted your marketing efforts become, the more effective they'll be and the faster you'll drive adoption.

> Positioning is always about benefits, not features.

When developing communications, an important aspect to keep in mind is that the message must always be about the benefits of your solution—not the features. Features describe how something works, while benefits describe how those features help your audience. Here are several examples.

Feature: We allow users to create and save their own report formats.
Benefit: You can reduce the time necessary to reformat information.

Feature: We provide proactive notification when shipments are delayed.
Benefit: You can improve operations efficiency (targeted toward operations). OR You can reduce your material handling costs (targeted toward purchasing).

By focusing on the benefits, you will deliver messages that better resonate with your audience, increasing their interest in trying your tools.

Once you've determined what messages will best motivate the audience to try your tools, the next step is to determine the method and frequency of delivering those messages. One thing to keep in mind is that this is an ongoing process, not a one-time event. If you aren't alerting your audience to new features and benefits, you should be reminding them about why the tools they're using are important to their jobs. (People tend to forget those things quickly, often leading to a decline in adoption.)

The frequency of communications must be a balancing act. You'll want to communicate often enough to reinforce your key messages and to educate the audience on the benefits of your tools, particularly where the benefits aren't that obvious. On the other hand, you don't want to pester them so often that they begin to ignore your materials or view your efforts as an intrusion.

The final question is how to best deliver these marketing messages. Below are several very effective means to do this, but the key is that the messaging must be consistent across these channels. The more consistent your messages and the more you can reinforce three to five key messages, the greater results you'll achieve.

Existing product materials

If your eBusiness tools are really helping solve some of your customers' problems, that is a key differentiator that should help product sales as well. All product marketing materials should reference the eBusiness tools and tout at least one major benefit. Your firm's website in particular should not only explain your eBusiness tools, it also should provide online demos to help prospective users overcome any concerns and see just how easy it is to use.

Your people

Whether it is your sales force, customer service reps or even executives, everyone that interfaces with your customers should be singing the praise of your eBusiness tools. They should all be provided with a Q&A document that identifies 10 to 20 of the most common questions along with succinct answers. By learning those answers, their responses will be much more consistent and effective.

Dedicated efforts

Dedicated marketing programs, such as direct mail (email or traditional) or even advertising, are a great way to raise awareness and accelerate adoption. The key is in knowing how much of a return your eBusiness tools will provide your company. The greater the return, the more you'll want to accelerate it, and these programs are an excellent tool to do that.

Sales plan

Effectively selling your eBusiness solutions is the greatest means of driving adoption. In this sense, making a sale means getting the customer to begin using your tools. (Note that just registering with your site is typically not considered a sale.)

The first question is who will sell your eBusiness offering? Will it be your product sales force? Will you have a dedicated eBusiness sales team? The answer is different from company to company, but one of the most typical answers is that it should be your product sales force.

In situations where you're trying to get existing customers to use your tools, your inside and outside salespeople already have the relationships with the target audience. When you're targeting new customers, great eBusiness tools become a key differentiator and a good discussion alternative to the typical product pitch.

In either case, the key is their ability to establish rapport with the audience. It doesn't matter if they're computer experts or not—in fact, it's often better if they're not. (If most users in your target audience aren't computer experts, it's comforting for them to see someone else who may be as tech-challenged as they are working through these tools.)

Once you've determined who will sell, the next question is how. What tools will you give them? The first answer is that you should provide a Q&A document, as discussed earlier. Everyone with customer contact must speak the same language and deliver the same messages to be truly effective.

Beyond that, every salesperson should have a demo of the eBusiness tools loaded on their laptop. (Don't count on always being able to connect to the Internet at a client site.) They should also have the means to register and configure users right then and there.

For companies that are on your targeted "A" list (those that will yield the greatest returns), you'll likely want to conduct personal onsite sales calls. Sales to companies on the "B" and "C" lists can often be made cost effectively with road shows in areas with high customer concentrations. Your inside sales force (customer service reps) are often a good match to reach the remaining targets by phone.

Effective selling is the best means to drive adoption.

Finally, your sales plan should define how you will measure sales and how the salespeople will be rewarded. If your eBusiness tools are going to generate a return for you, you'll want to provide incentive for behavior that's going to grow and accelerate that return. (Remember that sales and adoption are the same in this sense.)

There are typically two approaches to measuring the results of eBusiness sales. The first is by the number of users and their depth of use. Indicators of depth of use can range from number and length of visits to number of queries or transactions. Your eBusiness systems and web monitoring tools should provide a number of meaningful statistics against which you can measure progress.

The other approach to measuring sales (adoption) is tracking the actual growth in product sales or reduction in costs. Metrics related directly to product sales include leads generated, new companies registered and online transactions. An example of measuring cost reductions may be a reduction in the number of calls to inside sales.

Importance of the plans

Developing formal marketing and sales plans is an important step for those serious about driving adoption. Just as these plans help an organization improve sales of products or services, they will help you increase the sales of your eBusiness tools. Some of the benefits include:

- Ensuring that everyone is on the same page.
- Delineating tasks and responsibilities.
- Defining timeframes and quantifiable metrics to track progress.
- Identifying key measurements that will demonstrate ROI.

Step 5: Sell the Heck Out of It

Once the plans are in place and everyone knows what they're doing, it's time to begin. Launching the marketing first will lay the foundation for sales efforts. The early adopters will contact you even before your sales efforts begin, giving your people a chance to break in with a "friendly" audience. That also will provide some input for final tweaking of the sales materials and process.

You'll want to make sure all salespeople have been trained on the eBusiness tools—not to provide training, but so they can speak about them knowingly. They should also have been trained on the sales pitch and been given any relevant marketing materials, including having a demo loaded on their laptops.

The salespeople and anyone with customer contact should have become very familiar with the Q&A document prepared as part of the marketing effort. (We often conduct role-playing exercises before the really important calls just to make sure that answers are crisp and correct.)

INSIGHT: Watch for declining use. Since adoption is not a one-time event, you must continually monitor key statistics for both growth and decline in adoption. Failure to do so could undo your adoption efforts.

Decline in use by one company is typically related to an issue with an individual (training, behavior, etc.) or the company (policies, procedures, etc.). These situations are best addressed by reaching out to that company or person to identify the issues and how can they be resolved.

Decline in use by more than one company signals a larger problem with your offering, requiring immediate attention. You will need to gather insight from a representative number of users and make changes to your offering as quickly as possible. Clearly communicating to your entire audience the issues and how you plan to address them is crucial to keeping them engaged through the adjustment.

Once sales efforts commence, you'll want to track those efforts to manage the process and drive results. As with most any sales effort, contacts drive sales. Common metrics to track are the number of calls, face-to-face meetings, demos and so on. These contacts are the beginning of filling your sales funnel.

The great thing about sales is that it is quantifiable and can clearly demonstrate your progress and success. Some organizations use sales and adoption metrics to increase competition among salespeople or even divisions. Quantifiable results also provide the means to reward performance to better motivate desired behavior.

Step 6: Ensure a Positive Experience

You've invested some amount of time, money and effort in getting your target audience to begin using your tools. To protect that investment, it is imperative that the audience has a positive experience. If they don't, getting them to come back and give you a second chance will cost you significantly more.

Enrollment

The audience's first impression will come from the enrollment process—getting them registered and familiar with the tools. Since first impressions are crucial, we suggest special attention be paid to enrollment.

Your targeted "A" list should receive the most personal attention. If the projected returns are significant, you'll want to walk them through the process by phone or in person. The targeted "B" and "C" lists then can be handled by road shows, phone or email.

The key is that your interaction and communications must be perceived as being helpful, not intrusive. This means walking a fine line between coaching and pestering.

Support

The beauty of eBusiness is that it can be done at all hours of the day and often is. Imagine that you've been successful in getting an important customer to use your tools, only to learn that they gave up when they couldn't get support at 2 a.m.

INSIGHT: Staff enrollment and support teams with people who have retired from the industry. They know the lingo, the processes and all the problems. Plus, your audience will relate to them better than to a young computer jockey or trainer.

Whenever possible, support should be provided around the clock. At a minimum, extended-hours support should be provided, starting early in the morning and ending late at night for the time zones you cover.

Obviously, you'll need to do an analysis of the expenses related to extended support vs. the projected return. However, keep in mind that in many industries, you won't achieve the projected return if a significant number of the audience can't get help after hours.

Input

Your audience will provide you with a considerable amount of input, telling you exactly what you need to do to improve their experience. Be sure to not only listen to this input, but also document and pass it along to the development group. This will help in prioritizing changes or new features for subsequent releases. (Don't forget that you're now a commercial software organization.)

Less frustration
drives greater adoption.

Want to really delight your customers? Track their input, and whenever there is a new release, match up any new features with the users that requested them. Send those users an email (or call them if they're on your "A" list) and let them know.

Remind them of their call making the suggestion or request for this feature and tell them it's in the new release. Ask them to let you know what they think. "Did it address their issue?" "How helpful is it?" Not only does that demonstrate that you listen and respond, it also builds great loyalty and can even help your product sales as well.

Outcome

Following the preceding six steps will help your organization better drive adoption of your eBusiness tools. Just how much depends largely on three factors.

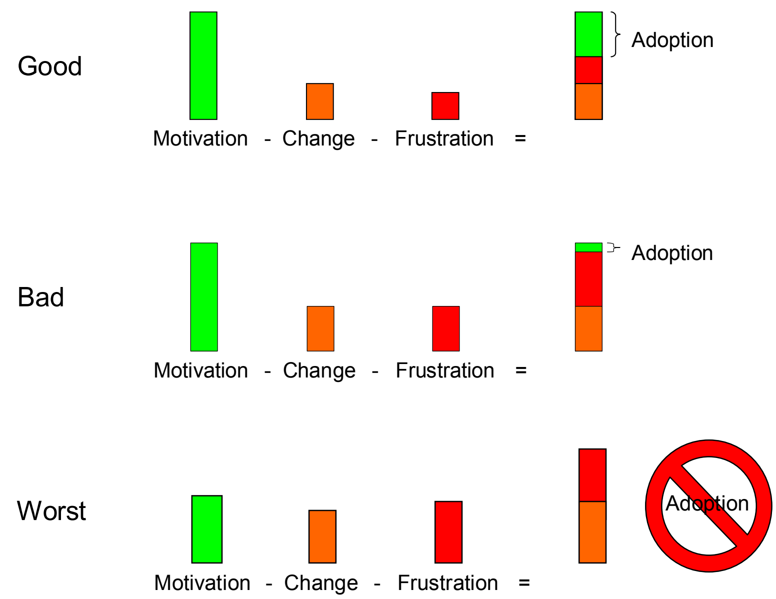
1. The audience's motivation to use your tools.
2. How much change you impose.
3. A positive experience relatively free of frustrations.

When looking for problems with your adoption efforts, start by looking at each of these three factors to make sure they're properly balanced. Too little motivation or too much change or frustration can easily stymie the best efforts.

Predicting Adoption

These charts show how the three key factors combine to create different levels of adoption. (Or none at all.)

Best practices quantify and qualify these factors, increasing the ability to both drive and accurately project adoption rates. The better adoption rates can be predicted, the greater the return.



Adoption Benefits

The most obvious benefit of successfully driving adoption is a faster and greater return on your investment in eBusiness. However, there are several other benefits that may yield even greater results.

Stronger competitive advantage

Sound eBusiness tools that solve a problem for your customers can become a key factor in their buying decision. This benefit increases the more that products are perceived to be a commodity. As the difference in price, quality and delivery of a product diminishes, service becomes a key differentiator. eBusiness tools that solve a problem for your buyers can become that key differentiator.

Greater switching costs

The more your customers are able to modify or tailor your eBusiness tools to meet their needs, the greater their investment in your tools and the more satisfied they are. (See Step 3: Develop the Offering.) As competitors try to match your eBusiness offering, buyers already using your tools would have to make a similar investment in your competitors' tools. The greater the investment your users have made and the more satisfied they are, the greater the switching costs.

Increased sales and profits

Making more money is the unfulfilled promise of B2B eBusiness. Since most efforts are focused on cost savings, increasing sales and profits seems to be an ever elusive goal. The good news is the ability to effectively drive adoption of eBusiness tools puts firms in a much better position to achieve that goal.

There are a number of companies using eBusiness to significantly increase sales and profits. In most cases, it involved very strategic thinking and required buy-in at the top. One of the reasons for the senior-level sign off is many of these initiatives carry a risk of negatively impacting areas ranging from product sales to the distribution channel.

However, the ability to drive adoption—to get your customers to happily use your tools—substantially reduces those risks. Effective and predictable eBusiness adoption lowers the risks and creates an opportunity to pursue highly-rewarding strategic initiatives.

You could say that the ability to drive adoption puts the elusive goal of eBusiness sales and profits well within reach.

The Author

Christopher Peters has a track record of generating substantial returns for his clients, ranging from Fortune 500 companies to start-ups. His work has been documented in several books and in publications ranging from *The Wall Street Journal* to *Nikkei Business.*

Mr. Peters created the online strategy and offering for Weirton Steel back in 1996, the first steel producer to sell steel online. The site exceeded all adoption projections, doubling the customer base within six months. More importantly, Weirton increased profits by about $8 million a year.

He went on to develop the strategies and offering for MetalSite, the world's first industry-backed online marketplace. MetalSite also exceeded all adoption projections in its first six months, earning considerable recognition from the analysts and media.

Since then, Mr. Peters has worked with companies in more than 30 industries throughout the U.S., Europe and Asia. While the objectives and strategies vary widely, the common element to success among all of them is the ability to drive adoption.