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# The New Role of the IT Partner

## How to Measure Up

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The IT industry has undergone many changes as organizations adapt to shifting consumer trends, talent shortages, rising social responsibilities, etc. The role of the CIO is changing, and IT leaders increasingly rely on their IT partners to help them navigate this complex landscape.

But engaging vendors for one-off projects can only take you so far. The lack of continuity and long-term commitment could keep you stuck in a reactive mode instead of proactively anticipating changes in consumer trends and market demands.

We need to reimagine the IT partnership—your provider should be more than a technology gatekeeper. It needs to understand your business requirements and objectives, create a roadmap to support your long-term success, and be there with you every step of the way.

This white paper explores what an ideal IT partnership should look like in today's business environment. We'll discuss the state of the IT industry, how the trends impact the role of IT, what to look for in an IT partner, and how your IT partnership can help you stay relevant and competitive while maximizing your ROI.



# THE STATE OF THE IT INDUSTRY

It's important to understand recent shifts in customer needs and market expectations to choose an IT partner that can help your organization leverage the latest technologies for long-term success.

## 1. Adapt to Changing Consumer Expectations

Customers are used to self-service features and 24/7 online customer service. They want to interact with brands seamlessly across multiple channels. They expect to communicate and conduct transactions securely online and offline.

## 2. Add Convenience To the Customer Experience

Amazon delivers almost everything you can imagine to your doorstep. Telemedicine makes healthcare more accessible and convenient. Brands must implement the latest technologies to make customer interactions fast, easy, and seamless.

## 3. Use Automation To Free Up Resources

We can solve a lot more in much less time by combining human talents and technology. Automating repetitive, tedious, and administrative tasks frees up your employees' time so they can tap into their creativity, foster a growth mindset, and focus on strategic initiatives.

## 4. Attract and Retain Top Talents

Using technologies is more than delivering a great customer experience (CX). It's also critical for attracting fresh talents in today's labor market where people seek positions at companies that give them the right tools to perform productive, engaging, and inspiring work.

## 5. Meet Environmental and Social Responsibility Goals

More consumers are aware of the social and environmental impact of the products they buy. Companies must minimize their environmental footprints by using energy-efficient equipment, switching to clean energy, and [recycling old hardware.](#)

## 6. Embark on Your Digital Transformation Journey

Digital transformation (DX) is table stakes. Companies must adopt technologies, such as AI, machine learning, automation, etc., to stay ahead of their competitors. But DX isn't about bright shiny objects—you must start with a solid IT infrastructure as the foundation.



# WHAT INDUSTRY TRENDS MEAN FOR YOUR IT PARTNERSHIP

The shifts in the IT industry have upped the stakes. You need reliable IT partners to ensure that every part of your technology ecosystem delivers the best results for your business.

You may wonder, “Do I still need an IT partner?” You do, even though many software applications advertise themselves as “plug and play.”

You can go online and subscribe to a slew of cloud software. But you don’t get the knowledge and expertise to put all the pieces together to optimize your ROI. Additionally, when you cobble together disparate tools, you can’t be certain that all the workflows and connections are secure.

As business processes move to the cloud, you need a new way to orchestrate your solutions. Today’s IT partners aren’t simply vendors who come in, install some software, and leave. Your IT partner should build your DX journey with you—aligning your IT strategy and investment with business objectives through strategic consultation and practical implementation.

Another reason that organizations need an IT partner now more than ever is to shift capital expense (CapEx) to operating expense (OpEx) and gain financial agility while having the ability to scale up or switch tools on a dime without incurring a substantial upfront cost.

A modern IT partner provides as-a-Service offerings at a fixed monthly fee. It manages procurement and maintains all the software and hardware—it delivers them to you, sets them up, and takes them back. You don’t have to hire a large IT team or worry about unexpected capital expenses (e.g., when a server breaks.)

The as-a-Service model and ongoing relationship help IT establish a consistent presence in the organization. When your IT provider steps up to help you meet market trends, you gain a partner who can help you advance DX in a meaningful way.





# HOW TO CHOOSE A MODERN IT PARTNER

What should you look for when seeking an IT partner that can help you stay relevant as an IT leader? Here are the critical selection criteria:

## 1. Provide Strategic Account Planning

Your IT partner must invest in your success by taking the time to understand your organization's mission, vision, and values. It should provide insightful recommendations, align its strategy with your business and IT priorities, understand your customers and market positioning, and help you stay competitive on a global scale.

## 2. Foster a Long-term Relationship

Your IT partner should be there for you in good times and bad, responding to your needs in times of stress and pressure and doing what needs to be done. Building trust is more than going out for a golf game in today's business environment. Your partner must understand your business, align with your culture, and see the world through your lens.

## 3. Be Responsive To Changing Needs

IT leaders must respond to organizational changes quickly. For example, integrating different systems within weeks after a merger, spinning up a cloud instance at a moment's notice, or adding SaaS applications to prevent shadow IT. Your partner must have the agility and capabilities to deliver the services you need when you need them.

## 4. Offer a Broad Portfolio of Capabilities

Your IT partner should have a broad portfolio of services, help you integrate all the capabilities, and ensure that they work together seamlessly with your current infrastructure. This means you don't have to spend internal resources coordinating vendors and specialists to handle different aspects of your technology requirements.

## 5. Take an Outcome-oriented Approach

When you work with an IT partner, you don't have to worry about what goes on behind the curtain. For instance, if your objective is to support a modern workplace and remote working, it should handle everything—from shipping laptops and orchestrating Microsoft 365 migration to setting up secure broadband connectivity to deliver the intended outcome.



## 6. Build a Foundation of Security

Data security is critical in today's business environment to help you earn customers' trust, protect your reputation, and avoid violating privacy laws (e.g., GDPR, CCPA, HIPPA, DCI-PSS, etc.) Your IT partner must ensure that everything from endpoint devices to network connections is secure and help you generate the required audit log for reporting

## 7. Conduct Quarterly Business Reviews (QBR)

A QBR with your IT partner gives you the transparency and visibility to know what works well and what needs improvements. It allows you to communicate your priorities, gain insight into industry trends, and fine-tune your IT strategy to meet evolving business requirements and optimize your ROI.

## 8. Adopt an Agile Project Management Approach

Putting together an IT infrastructure is a complex undertaking. Your IT partner should take an iterative approach to ensure that you're meeting milestones, addressing departmental goals, and driving cost-efficiency. It should also create a technology roadmap to help you optimize and innovate as your business evolves.

## 9. Stay Current with Workforce Trends

Your IT partner should keep track of what's important for the workforce and help you leverage technologies to deliver an outstanding employee experience. Examples include spinning up collaborative tools at the start of the pandemic and helping you support mental wellness as people adjust to a hybrid workplace arrangement.

## 10. Optimize Value and Measure Success

As an IT leader, you need to demonstrate how your department delivers value to various business units. Your IT partner should lay out a roadmap, help you drive usage, measure progress and results, and provide reporting on tangible outcomes through adoption services, customer roadmaps, and QBRs.



“IT partners like CSI are servicing customers with changing demands and expectations. Every part of the technology ecosystem needs to deliver, and in many cases, your partner is your conduit. We're focused on giving our customers the tools they need to do their best work; work that is productive, engaging, and inspiring.

**Terry Mirza**

President, Compugen Systems, Inc. (CSI)



# WHAT YOUR IT PARTNER SHOULD ADDRESS

While every organization has unique requirements, these IT trends apply to most businesses. You should expect your IT partner to address them when crafting a strategy and roadmap for your organization:

## 1. Shifts in Modern Procurement Strategies

Cloud computing and as-a-service offerings make it possible to turn IT operations from capital expense (CapEx) to operational expense (OpEx) by replacing high upfront investments with predictable monthly fees. Besides software- and platform-as-a-service, you can also get desktop-, [device](#)-, and infrastructure-as-a-service.

Your IT partner should help you leverage this trend to control IT costs, improve financial health, shorten time to value and time to market, streamline deployment and administration, and offload infrastructure to third parties to increase cost-efficiency.

The OpEx model also enables you to achieve a higher level of agility in meeting market demands. For example, you can provision and de-provision resources instantly to scale up or down without investing in excess capacity while maximizing utilization rates.

## 2. Migration of Data To the Cloud

Organizations are shifting from on-premise storage to cloud or hybrid solutions to reduce data storage costs while enhancing scalability, accessibility, and security. IT must support this transition by ensuring trust in data with the appropriate governance policies and that the right people can access the right data at the right time to support accurate decision-making.

Your IT partner should perform key activities, including integrating data silos created by the proliferation of cloud-based applications, ensuring data hygiene, and providing analytics tools to business users and proper access to stakeholders.

[Data security](#) should be part of the conversation. Your IT partner must have the knowledge and capability to help you foster a security culture and ensure adherence to various privacy laws by baking information security and data governance into your IT infrastructure and workflows.





### 3. The Rise of Co-management and Co-innovation

An IT partner must do more than coming into your office, completing a project, and leaving when it's done. It should become a seamless extension of your internal IT team and an effective liaison between your IT department and solution providers (e.g., ERP and e-commerce platforms.)

Co-managed IT is a partnership model where your provider works hand in hand with the in-house team to achieve your business objectives. Your IT partner would deliver services under long-term contracts and provide strategic input to help your organization achieve digital transformation at the foundational level.

In co-innovation, also called generative partnering, your IT partner collaborates with a technology vendor to create a custom offering for your organization (e.g., a niche application built on a public cloud platform.) It can help you launch a product or service faster, shorten time to value, and become more responsive to market demands.



“As an IT partner, we first want to understand the mission, vision, and values of our customers' business. What are the priorities? We do our homework and look at the world through your lens. That part hasn't changed. At the end of the day, it's all about those relationships and the trust you have built together.”

Terry Mirza

## WHY CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE DRIVES THE FUTURE OF IT PARTNERSHIP

Customer experience (CX) is a driving force for any industry now and in the future. Any successful business must deliver an outstanding CX to stay relevant and competitive. [Customer experience is the new IT imperative](#) and the differentiating factor that sets industry leaders apart.

[Forrester](#) notes that even minor improvements in CX can help organizations increase tens of millions of dollars of revenue. For instance, [86% of customers](#) are willing to pay more for a superior customer experience, while improving CX can [reduce support costs by 33%](#).



Your IT partner must go above and beyond implementing the latest tools and technologies. It should become your strategic ally in executing digital transformation strategies to help your organization deliver a modern CX to delight your customers.

It should help you redefine your company's CX requirements and design the customer experience from a digital perspective, for example, by identifying the CX trends in your industry and recommending the right technologies to meet customer demands.

## The New Deal: Your IT Partner Must Solve CX Challenges

CIOs can no longer just focus on technology availability, efficiency gains, and infrastructure modernization. They must also leverage these elements to deliver a modern CX that consumers expect.

While handling the technical components isn't the biggest issue for most IT leaders, the challenge lies in truly understanding customer demands and identifying the right solutions.

Yet, many CIOs operate with one hand tied behind the back because they don't have enough insights into what a modern CX entails and how customer expectations are shifting so they can adjust their tech stacks and processes to keep pace.

Even more concerning is that IT is still considered a cost center in some traditional organizations and is left out of strategic conversations that involve customer interactions.

IT leaders must stay relevant by guiding their companies to deliver outstanding CX through technology. An IT partner with experience and expertise in customer experience can help you navigate the choppy water and create successful outcomes.

Your solutions should meet core customer needs while delivering an emotionally pleasing experience to build trust and brand affinity. They should also help your team resolve issues quickly and demonstrate empathy. In short, as you implement technology, don't lose sight of the human element.

Your IT partner should not operate in a silo. Instead, it must proactively collaborate with other departments and C-suite decision-makers to help you build an IT infrastructure that supports your company's business objectives and CX goals.

Agility is another hallmark of organizations that win in CX. They have flexible IT infrastructures that allow business units to pivot quickly as market expectations change. They can also deliver a seamless experience across multiple well-integrated channels using real-time customer data to achieve a high level of personalization.

Your IT partner must guide you to make the right investments in cloud, microservices, automation, and intelligent systems (e.g., chatbots) to achieve flexibility and scalability.

The most critical piece of the puzzle is the ability to connect the dots and bring all the components together because CX involves multiple systems and departments. Your IT partner should support you in these key areas:

- Measure the business impact using in-depth, well-rounded methods (e.g., go beyond survey results to understand customer sentiment.)
- Re-engineer processes using human-centric design principles to bring innovative experiences to your customers and support a customer-first culture.
- Integrate frontline and back-end teams using cloud applications to deliver a seamless customer experience.
- Use cloud-based platforms to synchronize and unify customer engagements across channels and deliver a high-quality, consistent CX.
- Adopt an agile culture that focuses on the fast and continuous delivery of new functions and better services.
- Ensure data security and regulatory compliance as information is shared across multiple platforms and teams.

## WHAT DOES A SUCCESSFUL IT PARTNERSHIP LOOKS LIKE?



“You want an IT partner that has a broad enough portfolio so they can be an integrator for your business. For example, if one of our customers wants to modernize their workspace, CSI can supply the laptops and the video tools; we can then license those devices, migrate them to the cloud, make sure they are secure and running over optimal connectivity. We work with all the singular departments within an organization to deliver an IT solution that aligns all goals and priorities.

Terry Mirza

Here at Compugen, we respond to the shift in the IT industry and what CIOs need from their IT partners by taking a service-led outcome-oriented approach to delivering integrated technology solutions.

Our customers want to achieve specific business outcomes, but they don't need to manage what goes on behind the curtain. It's like buying a house: you don't want the hassle of selecting an architect, finding a contractor, getting a building permit, hiring an electrician, and conducting site visits.

If a client comes to us to modernize its workspace, it doesn't have to coordinate Microsoft 365 migration, implement cybersecurity measures, install a modern network (e.g., SD-WAN and broadband), etc. We pull all the pieces from our broad portfolio and deliver an outcome that meets all the business requirements.

Additionally, we have an Agile Management Office to put these complex purchases together and iterate the deployment to meet phased milestones and ensure that we're delivering value to our customers as their infrastructures evolve.



We integrate various cloud-based subscription services to get our clients up and running on day one. Meanwhile, we design strategy roadmaps and conduct QBRs to meet each customer's changing business needs through an iterative process to optimize outcomes.

For example, at the start of the pandemic, we spun up video conferencing capabilities for many customers. Two years later, the conversation turned to mental wellness amidst the increase of video calls. We adjusted our roadmaps and helped customers leverage technology to address the concern.

We also help our customers navigate the structure of a global organization—with CIO and decision-makers spread across different countries, regional presidents in various time zones, and offshore service desks halfway across the globe.

We continuously listen, learn, and understand each customer's organizational structure. We then design a unique approach to work within its framework and ensure that we align with its culture while bringing new ideas and fresh perspectives to the relationship.



## DOES YOUR IT PARTNER MEASURE UP?

As your IT partner, we offer extensive expertise to help you pull all the pieces together to deliver a modern customer experience while improving operational cost-efficiency, creating an outstanding employee experience, and achieving your security and compliance goals.

We help you leverage the latest cloud-based technologies to shift IT investment from CapEx to OpEx. Our outcome-oriented approach means that we take care of everything from soup to nuts, so you don't have to spend time and resources coordinating the moving parts.

You can tap into our network of trusted partners and vendors, and we'll help you select the right pieces to complete your technology puzzle. We also offer [Green IT programs](#) to help reduce your carbon footprint, minimize electronic waste, and support your ESG goals.

Ready to explore what a modern IT partnership can do for you?

## SEE HOW YOU STACK UP

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