“Cogito ergo Sum” - I think, therefore, I am.

Rene Descartes

Renes Descartes (1596-1650) was a man of many talents. He was a mathematician, scholar, traveler, physicist, philosopher and thinker. In his spare time he was a primary contributor to modern philosophy as well as analytic geometry. According to Descartes, the guide to truth is to doubt everything systematically until you arrive at a clear idea that is beyond all doubt (Flexner, 1995). This is sound advice for any enterprise software product. Every day believers surround us. We are passionate about our product and company and we can all benefit from taking a step back and forcing a harder look. Using Descartes philosophy, the preceding five chapters are brought together to form a systematic method to challenge a company’s product from the customer’s viewpoint.

**Plotting Customer-Focus Variables**

In Chapter II, we looked at how to identify and minimize the affects of new technology on humans and their organizations. In Chapter III, we studied the
characteristics that can help our innovation spread through the customer environment. In Chapter IV we saw how implementation affects the customer’s internal IT organization and project resources. In Chapter V we looked at how the business case affects the economics of the firm. And in Chapter VI, we decided how our product would affect the customer’s strategy.

Figure 7.1 provides an easy to use “template” to collectively discuss these effects. Each customer focus dimension can be plotted to assess the strength and weakness of a solution. The further a product is from the center, the stronger it is.

The sample plotting in Figure 7.1 shows a solution with strong prospects for assimilation and a positive affect on the customer’s economics. There are concerns about the amount of behavioral change but there is no overlap with the customer’s core competency. The biggest concern is the strain the product places on a customer’s implementation resources.

**Drilling Down on Assimilation**

Figure 7.2 expands the assessment of assimilation from Figure 7.1. For each characteristic of assimilation it is easy to plot where the target solution is and the likelihood of assimilation in the new environment.
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