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CASE STUDY: IT Transformation at The Campbell Soup Company

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The IBIT Report

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This IBIT report details the three year effort undertaken by the Campbell Soup Company's information technology organization (CSC IT) to transform itself from "order takers" to business partners with a role in the strategic direction of the company. Prior to this program, the IT organization was project oriented and not empowered to challenge the IT investment decisions of business units. New IT leadership recognized the need to better align the IT organization with the business to ensure that those activities critical to business success were being addressed. The report describes the process of designing the new IT operating model, communicating the vision and changing the mindset of IT, making the change by phasing in new roles and responsibilities, assessing success, and identifying opportunities for continued evolution. The report concludes with several Key Takeaways based on CSC IT's experience which should be of interest to all readers.

Bruce Fadem
Editor-in-chief
October 6, 2014

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Strategy is important, but cost was the driver. However, after costs have been cut, attention shifts to value added.
- Close the “perception gap” – the business units often view IT differently than IT views itself.
- Determining good outcome metrics seems obvious in practice, but can be a source of controversy.
- A change in strategic focus must be accompanied by support for reskilling.
- Ingenuity and innovation should be framed in terms of business outcomes, but this can be challenging.

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the case of Campbell Soup Company's (CSC) IT-driven organizational transformation at a key inflection point – the successful transition to a new service management operating model. Like similar transformations at other well-established organizations, this effort required an ambitious reinvention of its operating model. There were various drivers for the change, including lower cost and higher service quality, but a key result was the Information Technology function's emergence as a critical strategic partner for the business. This is reflected in IT's emerging role as a demand-shaping, instead of an order-taking, operation.

This report reflects on the success of the initiative, as well as identifies areas for further gains with key lessons for other IT organizations facing similar internal and external pressures.

Our data collection was based on two primary sources of evidence. First, we had access to documentation from the organization, including internally-focused presentations explaining the new operating model, project evaluation criteria, and aggregate IT budget data. Second, we conducted 19 in-depth, structured interviews with senior personnel across the organization. These interviews included the entire CSC IT leadership team, four service managers (SM's), three business

engagement team members (BE's) and four service owners. The questions were designed to elicit opinions on a range of topics relating to the change in operating models at CSC, namely:

- The need for the change
- The design and implementation of the new operating model
- How the new model works in practice
- The limitations of the new operating model
- How the implementation of Service Management will affect the new model

THE STORY: TRANSFORMING THE IT FUNCTION

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

Joe Spagnoletti was appointed Chief Information Officer of CSC in 2008. He had already spent 11 years at CSC at the time of his appointment, a distinct point of difference in comparison to his three immediate predecessors. Spagnoletti inherited an organization that was focused on implementing the final stages of its SAP Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. Following this multi-year implementation, the IT function was fundamentally project-oriented and not empowered to challenge the decisions of business units. As a result, IT served what was termed an “order-taking” function at the company.

The interviewees were unanimous in their agreement that a change was necessary for the IT function at CSC. They believed that the performance of the function was not optimal, holding only a tenuous relationship with the business. Further, the industry was trending toward greater scrutiny of IT investments; to keep pace with this trend, the IT function would have to implement a new way of doing business.

Spagnoletti, recognizing these shifts, began to design a new operating model for IT. His aim was to move the function from order-taking to demand-shaping, where IT had a role in the strategic direction of the organization. He began to assemble his IT Leadership Team (ITLT), choosing respected, long-term employees of CSC. In 2010, the design of the new operating model was beginning to take shape and the efforts were given a significant boost as newly appointed CEO Denise Morrison urged CSC to “think differently” if they wanted to remain a leader in the Consumer Packaged Goods industry. This aligned perfectly with, and inspired the ideals of, the new IT operating model, creating the opportunity for IT to be at the forefront of the changing culture of CSC.

The new operating model drew widespread praise throughout the interview process, characterized by responses such as “the design and intent were good,” from Brandon Halbert, IT Director, Supply Chain and Business Engagement.

THE NEW OPERATING MODEL

After focusing on a lengthy SAP implementation, the IT function at CSC needed to re-align itself with the business to ensure they were driving towards the right outcomes. This would require a shift in thinking for the IT function, but for this to work the organization first had to put an appropriate structure in place. CSC's five guiding principles for the restructuring of the organization (highlighted in a 2011 report from the Corporate Executive Board) were:

- 1. Avoid Powerless Intermediaries:** ensure all participants in project evaluation have the power to influence the decision, with only two primary decision makers.
- 2. Make decisions closer to the point of value delivery:** prioritization should be undertaken by executives closest to the service or project.
- 3. Reduce overlapping responsibilities:** increase accountability by focusing personnel on a set of narrower, more focused activities.
- 4. Follow the roadmap:** all projects to follow the same steps with a BE to take ownership of the entire process.
- 5. Continually remove waste:** identify and eliminate redundant and non-value adding steps in the process.

With these goals in mind, the ITLT built an execution model to streamline the IT function and encourage interaction between IT and the business units. This

model consists of three main functional responsibilities: business engagement, solution delivery, and service delivery. Figure 1 depicts how the different groups within IT interact under the new model. This design allowed IT to first work with the business to design robust services that aligned with the desired business outcomes. This is the aim of the Business Engagement team. Once a project has been refined to a point where it will meet ROI requirements, the solution delivery team will work to implement the initiative. The role of Service Delivery is to ensure that all projects were achieving their goals with regard to affecting business outcomes. This allows IT to manage the entire life cycle of its initiatives, from ideation to retirement.

This required a significant shift in the mindset of IT. Prior to the transformation, the IT function was characterized as a department that undertook technology projects for the business. The new model positions the IT function as a strategic partner, working with the business units to enable growth through the delivery of technology-based services. A Senior Director of IT, Donna Braunschweig, surmised that “Leadership courage and business engagement skills were a make or break in the success of the transition.” These skills would prove essential in gaining the support of both IT staff and the business at large. Together, the new operating model and focus on business skills allowed the IT organization to address the most commonly cited needs for the change, as outlined in Figure 2. It moved the IT function closer to the business, enabling them to improve their

own performance and make decisions that would shape CSC's strategy.

MAKING THE CHANGES

By 2011, the design of the new operating model was complete and the ITLT began the process of communicating the vision to the rest of the IT function. The majority of interviewees reported that the initial communication was thorough and that they recognized the model could redefine the relationship between IT and the business units. However, this was a massive change. Vice President of IT Governance, Strategy and Administration, Tony Messina, noted that “Joe [Spagnoletti] is known to be very quick with vision but in contrast is considerably slower and more deliberate with organizational change.”

Interviewees mentioned that many staff in the IT function had already experienced many changes in the operating model and had no reason to believe that this latest initiative would be any more impactful. As such, it was important to impress upon them the significance of the change. Vice President of IT Enterprise Application Services, Mark Engle, explained the process:

“I started by presenting the proposed operating model changes to a group of 89 people. No-one wanted to be the first one asking questions, so I didn't get any. When I broke it down to groups of 20, then the questions started. With groups of five, the questions started to flow, and we got very valuable feedback.”

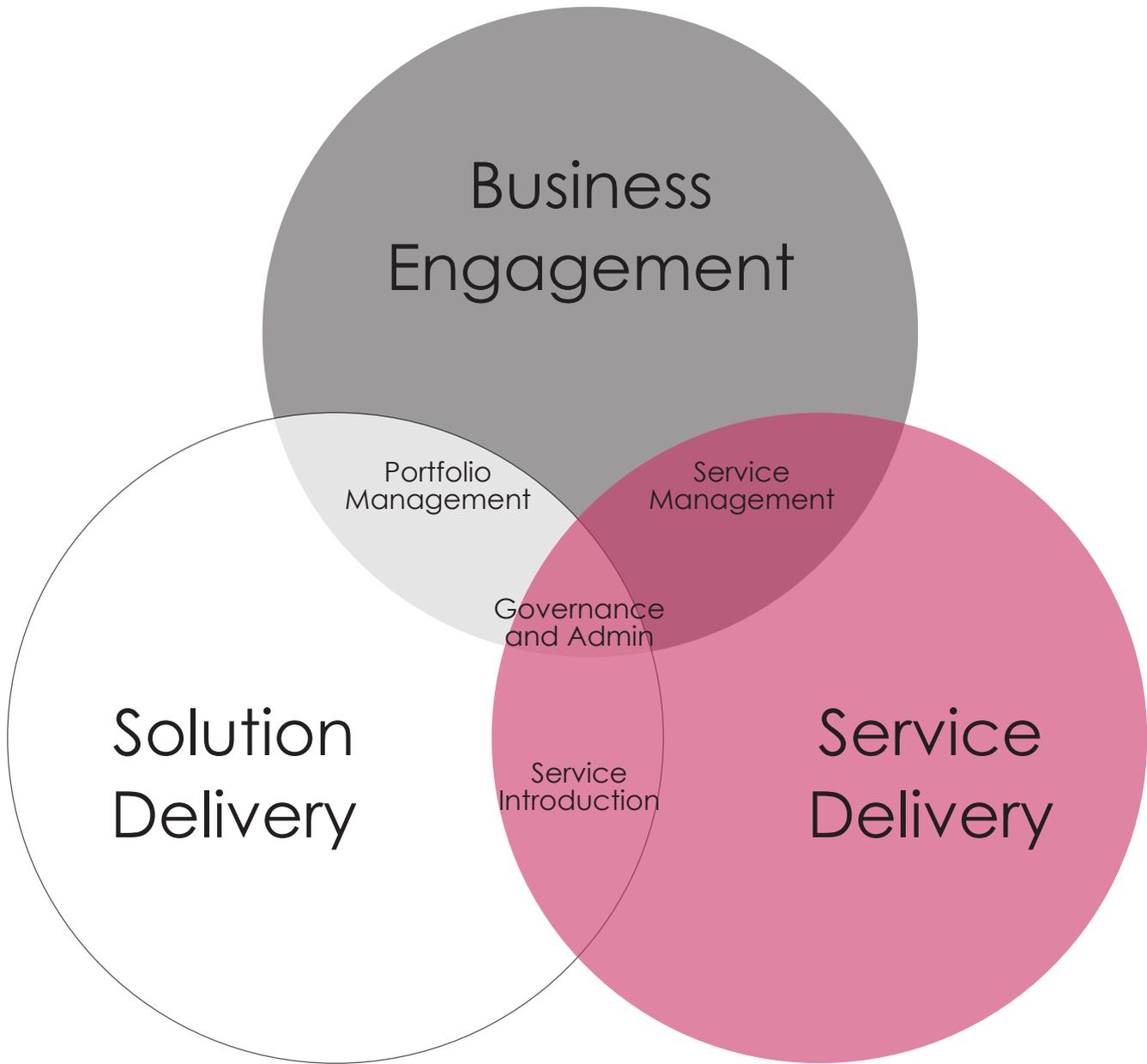
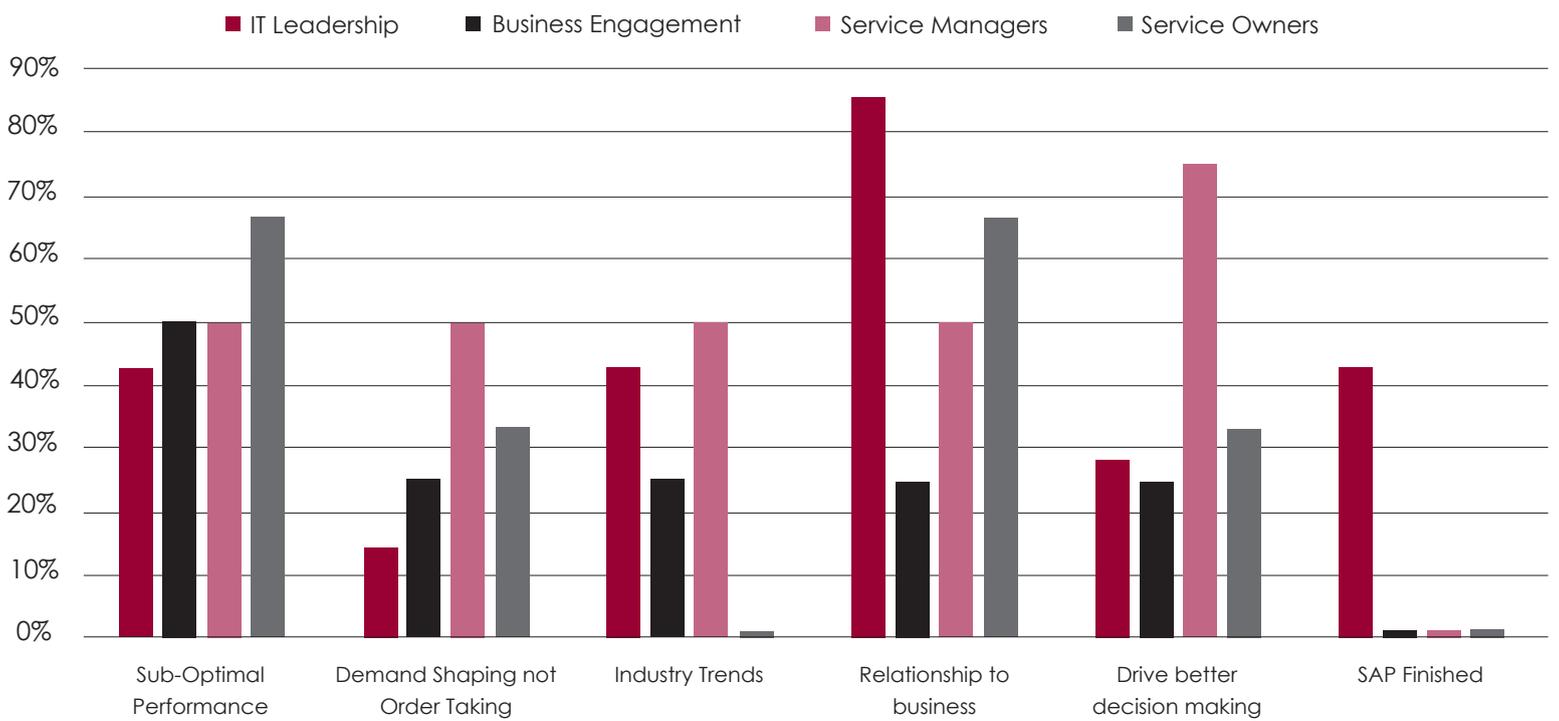


FIGURE 2 – WHY THE CHANGE WAS NEEDED



There was also a level of concern from people who could not understand their own role in the new model. While this concern was noted, there was generally overwhelming support for the new model and few practical suggestions were received as to how the initial communications could have been approached differently or more effectively. Spagnoletti's methodical approach to the implementation saw measured change take place over the two-year period from 2011 to 2013. The next challenge for the ITLT is the implementation of Service Management, which will further enable IT to align its portfolio with CSC's main growth areas.

THE MODEL IN PRACTICE

The next aspect of the implementation was the phasing in of new roles and responsibilities. Two main areas would be the focus of the new operating model: business engagement and Service Management. Business engagement, the creation of a direct point of interaction between IT and the business unit, was seen as the most appropriate first stage. The business engagement function assigned IT personnel ("BEs") to each business unit to assess their needs and map out solutions. Interviewees noted that this shift required more of a behavioral change and a focus on the business skillset of the IT function. Braunschweig summed it up by explaining that "they really focused on the business engagement side to re-conceptualize the business units as strategic partners." The

change required the IT team to think about the business impact of everything they do. For example, if a web server failed, then the focus should be on how many hits the website missed out on and how many fewer cans of soup were sold as a result. Likewise, if a SaaS solution was implemented, they would ask: did it require 24/7 service, or a more limited guaranteed uptime of 8:00 am to 5:00 pm?

"The business engagement piece was critical because it gave IT a seat at the table," noted Scott Winkles, a Process Lead and Business Engagement Manager at CSC. The idea of a strategic partnership with the business relied on the IT function demonstrating a new level of business acumen. Without doing so, they would never be able to move beyond an order-taking role. This required making the shift from IT metrics to business metrics. Interestingly, this was difficult for both IT and the business, with few people on either side of the transaction experienced in making these determinations. This has been an important but slow process, as it requires significant rethinking of how to quantify CSC's goals. Figure 3 shows how IT interacts with the business units under the new operating model. BEs are responsible for aligning IT's portfolio with that of the business, while SM's ensure that services are functioning optimally.

With significant progress made towards measuring the business performance of services owned by IT, the focus shifted to

the implementation of Service Management. The majority of interviewees saw Service Management as the larger and more important part of the transformation. This process started early in 2013, with the creation of the Service Catalog, listing all end-to-end business services provided by the IT function and their costs. Once complete, the catalog will facilitate rigorous assessment of costs and the discipline to implement a strategy for continuous improvement to improve service and reduce waste.

The crucial role in this process is that of Service Manager. The Service Manager comes from the IT function and is the representative of that service to the business. They interact with the Service Owner, who is responsible for that relationship from the business side. The Service Owner works with the Service Manager and the BE to communicate functionality and costs of IT services to the rest of the business unit. This allows CSC and individual business units to take control of their IT costs while maintaining service levels. They do this by putting a price tag on each IT service they consume and assess whether that technology is driving the growth of the organization.

This deliberate accounting of the financial impact of services is the last step in implementing the new operating model and requires IT to “take the risk of transparency,” as Spagnoletti puts it. The idea of transparency as a “risk” strikes at a major

fear of many organizations – it raises fears that their contributions are not adding (or perceived to add) sufficient value. However, Spagnoletti believes this operating model will allow CSC IT to align their goals with that of the entire organization, with Service Management providing the transparency necessary to measure its benefit and contribute to the overall growth of the company.

ASSESSING SUCCESS

The ability to directly quantify the success of a complex and far-reaching IT initiative is often challenging. However, the CSC IT Leadership Team identified three main measures of success during the process.

REDUCING COSTS

The most directly quantifiable measure of success is CSC's steady reduction of their costs to serve the business. They set out with a zero-based costing strategy, but did not have a specific financial target. However, in the five years between 2008 and 2014, the overall cost of providing IT services at CSC fell by 27% (after adjusting for inflation). There is also qualitative evidence the search for cost savings has influenced decision-making in the company. One interviewee noted that this has “changed the way projects are evaluated, creating a shift in the overall culture of decision making” and that now analysis of investment decisions included “impact on base service cost

instead of merely differential change to cost (zero based costing).”

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Again, while CSC did not have a particular goal in mind when it set out to get employees more involved in their processes, there was an observable change in engagement. Interviewees from business units and IT alike noted that these “metrics will be mostly anecdotal.” Qualitative evidence suggests that this has been successful, with interviewees noting that the “attitude and pulse of steering committee meetings” was indicative of greater engagement from both the business units and IT. Multiple interviewees also noted that it now appeared as though they had a “seat at the table,” indicating that IT was more involved in decision making.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

This is perhaps the most difficult performance indicator to measure. CSC had been successful in achieving greater alignment with the business, but acknowledged that there was still some work to do. They defined alignment with the business as undertaking as many projects as possible in growth areas of the business and steering time and money away from support functions like finance. They noted that “conversations were more likely to be framed in terms of ‘we’ rather than ‘us/ them’.” However, there was little tangible evidence of any change in spending

patterns. In depth analysis of the projects undertaken under the new and old models was restricted by a lack of data. While this has been remedied, it also makes the performance of the function in this area difficult to quantify. Interviewees also noted that they did not believe there had been a significant change in the portfolio of projects they had to undertake, largely because this metric was difficult to track. Achieving this strategic alignment is the next major hurdle for the IT transformation.

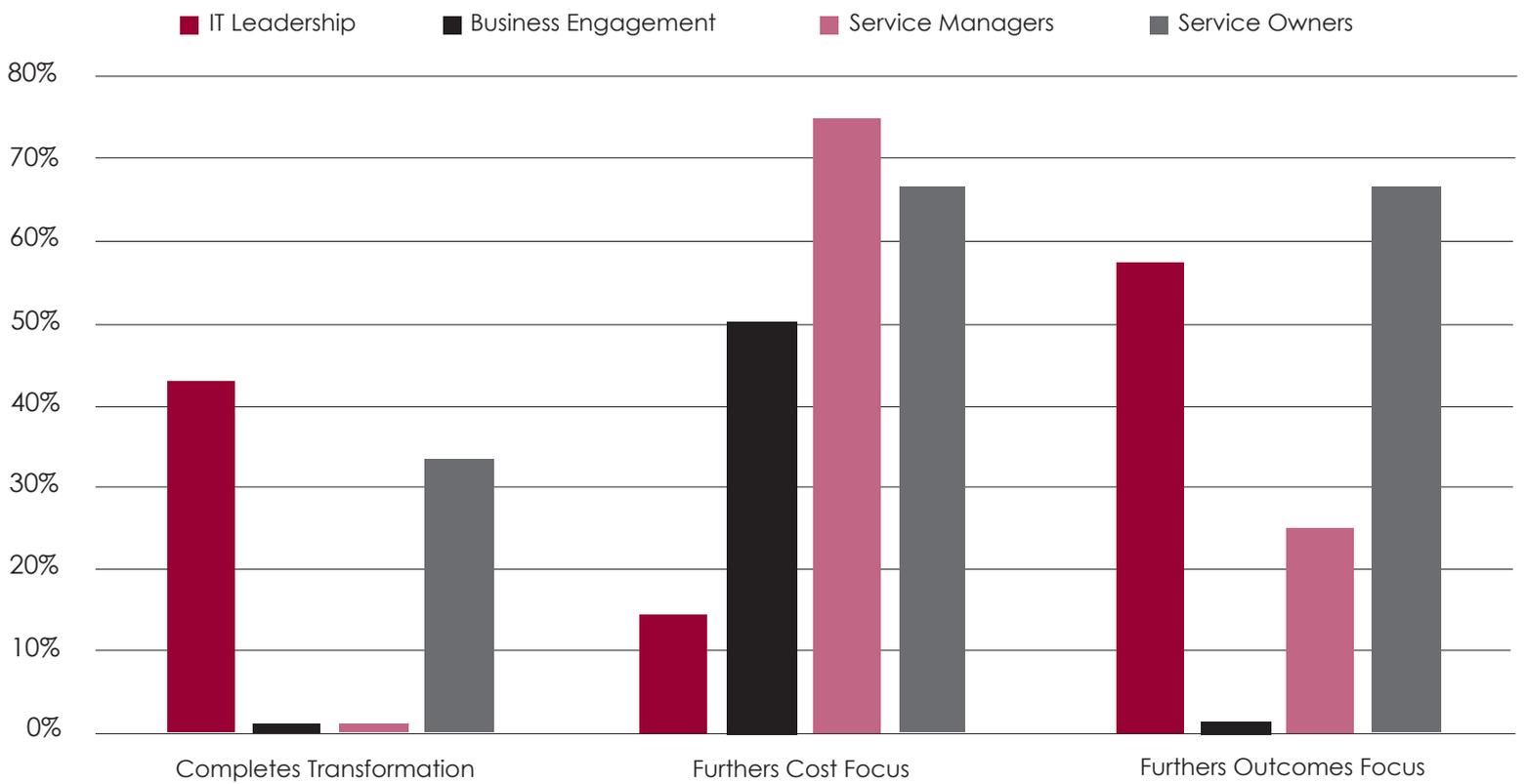
LOOKING AHEAD: OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONTINUED EVOLUTION AND SERVICE MANAGEMENT

There was universal agreement that Service Management was the logical and necessary next step to maintain the momentum of change for the IT function at CSC. Interviewees cited a series of factors that Service Management brings to the new operating model, specifically the role it has in the process of transforming the IT function, the increased focus it will bring to the cost of IT services, and the greater attention to business outcomes (see Figure 4).

Responses regarding what they thought success would actually look like varied; however, common elements included **creating a more rigorous model** for how IT

FIGURE 4 – REASONS TO INTRODUCE SERVICE MANAGEMENT ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●



costs are allocated and **how services would be scored** to measure their overall success. There was also a degree of **wariness about declaring Service Management a success too soon** – this was a fundamental, organization-wide change that had to spread throughout the company.

Interviewees communicated several factors that will be critical in Service Management's successful implementation. There was an interesting contrast in the responses of the ITLT as compared to BEs and Service Managers. The BEs and Service Managers were far more likely to suggest that **further communication with the business was necessary** for the goals of Service Management to be reached. In contrast to the ITLT, BEs suggested that the level of "communication with the business could have been better" to assist with the introduction of the new operating model. Additionally, feedback from Service Managers suggested that the level of communication about Service Management so far in the process had been sub-optimal. The communications breakdown appeared to be a symptom of the use of Campbell's Leadership Team (CLT) as a main method of communicating with the business. As the dissemination of information down through the organization appears to have been inconsistent, IT staff should take further control of communications between itself and the business. This way, the IT function will be able to fill in the gaps in communication left by the CLT and encourage a new level of accountability and transparency.

This will also give IT a greater chance of understanding how the organization views the strategic partnership.

Service Managers were also insistent on the need for **careful selection of service owners**. They believe that this is an essential step in helping to engage the business units. Perhaps more importantly, however, service owners need to be capable of looking at the bigger picture, beyond that of their own business unit. This will ensure IT is aligned to the business as a whole, instead of having an overwhelming demand for the scarce resources.

Service Management also completes **the transformation of IT budgeting**. IT now operates under a zero operating growth (ZOG) model; any new investment will have to be funded through savings from other services. An internal review of the IT portfolio prior to the operating changes revealed that it was in fact dilutive. With the new operating model, ZOG should force IT investments toward accretive technology services. Interviewees see this as a key benefit of Service Management.

THE PERCEPTION GAP

The interviews revealed a notable gap in the how gains from the new operating model were perceived by IT and service owners. While IT tended to focus on the solutions on which they were currently working, **the business was still looking at legacy projects** that had been developed and approved

under the old operating model. The business units also tended to view services that were performing sub-optimally as a problem with the IT function, whether or not IT was the underlying cause.

The perception gap appears to be largely a challenge in **managing communications with the business**. As mentioned previously, feedback indicated that the ITLT was doing a great job of communicating changes to the CLT at CSC, but that this message was not always filtering down from the business unit leadership to the level where the most frequent interactions with IT occur. As IT increases their communication they can begin to address the perception gap by understanding what the business wants from projects and services.

THE DIFFICULTY IN DEVELOPING METRICS

Interviewees from the BE team expressed frustration about who has responsibility for **determining outcome metrics** - IT or the business units. The claim that "it's not that difficult to find metrics" from one source was met with the claim that it is "difficult to get quality data" from another. The underlying cause of this issue appears to be the sheer difficulty of determining business metrics for IT services. This is an interesting contrast with the opinion that was heard through members of the ITLT (but not necessarily the rest of the IT organization) that defining metrics "should be the easy part." Figure 5 shows the focus on metrics is already

beginning to progress, with IT shifting more of its focus onto cost and margin management and moving away from simply supporting and enabling the business.

Indeed, we observed that often the success of CSC's initiative was qualitatively apparent but quantitatively difficult to measure. Using "Employee Engagement" as an example, Table 1 lists several sample survey questions that could be used to measure changes in engagement. Monthly or quarterly data collection could allow the organization to track their progress and enable the organization to back up anecdotes with quantitative data.

These example metrics can be used by CSC to establish a platform to **encourage organizational learning**. Feedback on current training methods was positive, however the frustration expressed around the difficulties in implementing useful metrics suggests that further advances are necessary. As CSC is largely a relationship-based organization, informal and interpersonal methods are most likely to be effective in developing metrics. Whatever the process, this level of organizational learning is essential for continuous improvement and removing waste.

NURTURING APPROPRIATE SKILLSETS

The ITLT were cognizant of the need to update the competency model to better reflect the increased emphasis of business acumen as well. The data reveals two major

conflicts. The first centers on whether the new operating model requires a completely **new set of skills** or if it is **largely a behavioral change**. Interviewees were split on this issue, depending on their role within Service Management. The ITLT and Service Managers overwhelmingly (81%) noted that this was a behavioral change, while the majority of BEs and Service Owners (57%) thought a new set of skills was needed. Interestingly, 75% of Service Managers cited the need for both, perhaps indicating the crossroads at which the IT function finds itself.

Another area of debate was that of **project management skills**. While no one from the ITLT mentioned that a lack of project management skills was an issue, 20% of interviewees (primarily Service Managers) identified that project management skills were either lacking or being spread too thin. Further discussion with the ITLT revealed that this is another possible area where a perception gap exists. This could reflect stresses on the capacity of this aspect of the IT function. It could be useful to define what is expected of project managers and making sure projects are adequately covered by people with these skills.

There was also a perceived need for **support for employees on a very technical career path**. A number of interviewed agreed with the sentiment of one source that the new model was perceived to place an “elevated value on business engagement.”

The new operating model increases the emphasis on business skills and particularly on the business engagement team in the first stage of implementation. Coupled with the increasing dependence on SaaS solutions, some felt that technical skills are losing their value within the IT function. Opinions varied about exactly where these skills fit in to the operating model in the medium-to-long term, but it was clear that in the short term they were still strongly needed. While the contribution of technical skills to innovation should be considered, technical skills and business acumen are not mutually exclusive. It may be possible to build this dual capability over the next few years.

INGENUITY

Interviews and meetings with the ITLT indicated a strong willingness to incorporate ingenuity into the new operating model. Indeed, interviews often revealed the sentiment that IT “hasn’t historically jumped at new things” and “there wasn’t a lot of room for ingenuity.” Employees are encouraged to find innovative new solutions to existing problems through reward systems, recognition, and encouragement. However, the interviews revealed a **fundamental tension between the drive for ingenuity and competing demands under the new operating model**.

Therefore, it is perhaps useful to view the IT function in the context of competitive strategy. The activities which constitute the new operating model, as outlined above, are largely aimed at cost containment. The next opportunity for Service Management to add value is to enable the IT to deliver sustainable competitive advantage for the organization through services and processes.

Spagnoletti, by using the term “ingenuity” instead of “innovation,” emphasizes that as a company in the consumer packaged goods business, CSC depends on novel applications of IT rather than the creation of innovative technology. In its current form, the emphasis on cost-containment focuses ingenuity efforts to challenge IT and the business to find cost-effective IT-enabled solutions. While this drives some degree of change, there are further opportunities to move beyond incremental improvements to those that drive material impact on the company’s growth.

There were a number of suggestions from interviewees how to encourage a culture of ingenuity at CSC, including **increasing the focus on recruitment** to encourage staff with the skills to implement services based on newer technologies, **easing guidelines on projects that are deemed innovative**, and creating an environment where it is more acceptable to **try things and fail quickly**.

CONCLUSION

The Campbell Soup Company has transformed the way its IT function operates over the course of the last three years. IT staff are rejuvenated and empowered members of a team that has a tangible link to the overall success of the company. With the first stage of the new model now operating effectively, IT has assumed a leadership position after the call from CEO Denise Morrison for the company to “think differently” as they pursue opportunities for growth. IT has built a platform on which they can continuously improve and contribute to growth within the company, establishing themselves as a true strategic partner.

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