Forrester Consulting Thought Leadership Checklist
Commissioned By Broadcom
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Software Leader Checklist For Great Business Results With Software

For large enterprises, delivering high-quality software — and delivering it quickly — is crucial to digital business success. Yet success is difficult to attain or measure when the C-suite and software leaders are not aligned on software goals, metrics, and strategies. Software leaders that seek to drive the bottom line should start with alignment at the top. Forrester explored this topic in detail in a study commissioned by Broadcom prior to developing this checklist. This checklist is designed to help software leaders ensure they are aligned to business outcomes for better business results.

1. Scale Agile across the entire business.

Honestly evaluate your organization's Agile software practices. "Agile" describes key practices and development processes required to deliver quality software quickly. Agile methods can drive competitive distinction in products and services. Start with software teams and then scale across the full lifecycle, from iterating on minimal requirements to Agile funding to change management. Expand use of insights from customers and users to drive software projects.

Our survey raises a red flag: Although 77% of software leaders claim that Agile is important or critical to achieving business outcomes, only 11% prefer that minimal requirements are compiled prior to project start (to be elaborated during delivery with regular review and reprioritization based on feedback). Traditional requirements are anti-Agile. Advocate adoption by business groups outside of development of Agile practices, helping everyone accept that Agile is a journey with moments of high uncertainty and/or failure, but lower overall risk and higher benefits. And communicate the results achieved by Agile investments.

2. Explore more flexible project budgeting.

Ideally, reprioritize project funding continuously based on value delivered with departmental discretion. Shifting to on-demand models should result in faster software delivery, stronger adoption, and better return on investment. If your budgeting process is completely fixed on an annual cycle, explore adding departmental discretion within spending allocations. This is the first step toward the ideal of reprioritizing project funding continuously based on value delivered with departmental discretion. Work with key business leaders to communicate the value of Agile budgeting and share reports — both good and bad — on project results.

Summary of results from the Broadcom-commissioned Thought Leadership Study, "To Drive Great Business Results With Software, Close The CEO-CIO Gap"

METHODOLOGY

In this study, Forrester conducted a survey to evaluate how effectively the CEOs, CIOs, and software leaders collaborate to drive business results.

The online survey consisted of 316 CEOs and senior business executives, CIOs or equivalent, and software leaders at global enterprises with more than 5,000 employees.

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3. Drive business metrics into software teams.

After determining shared business and software goals, use business metrics to measure progress and success. CEOs and software leaders must agree on these goals. Avoid arcane, indirect measures of success, like meeting project milestones, cost savings, and developer utilization. Instead, simplify by identifying one or two business metrics that are good enough and tying them to higher margins, new revenue, and improved customer experience. Refine your metrics over time. Partner with the C-suite to understand how the business measures value and how software investments can be measured against those standards. Then translate those measures into metrics to run the software organizations. With business metrics in place for software, ongoing funding reprioritization throughout the year based on value delivered becomes much more feasible.

4. Make collaboration between business and technical leadership standard procedure.

Encourage as-needed discussions between the C-suite and software leaders. Most CEOs (57%) crave meaningful visibility into software activities. Meetings between your CEO (or COO) and both CIO and software leadership can provide transparency and foster trust in, and agreement on, software's value. Meet more than once per quarter and hold real discussions. Break the chain of command as needed to promote immediate and continual alignment.

> "If we're just talking technology, we're not . . . having the right conversation. Obviously, we sell solutions around technology, but in the end, it's to enable a business."
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> **- CTO at global IT services and solutions company**

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