A long long time ago in a Data Centre not too far away….

….Mainframes and Personal Computers changed the way we do business…

…not insignificant investments both financially and culturally that were driven by business leaders taking ownership of new solutions and embracing the technological shift from manual to automated processing of business processes led to quick adoption and belief in IT based solutions to business problems..

***Q: ‘So who remembers Mainframes, Dumb Terminals and Green Screens?’***

***Q: ‘What about the ability to talk to an analyst programmer and have changes made to those screens ‘overnight’ to reflect new demand or requirements from your business function or activity?’***

**S: We lived in a world where IT on the face of it appeared to respond to and support business demand – also known as the ‘Craftsmanship Era’**

Once the business had succeeded and could see the benefits it wanted more and more and we quickly moved from mainframes to Open Systems, Out Of the Box or Commercial Of The Shelf software solutions and our ability to solve business problems with IT became more and more the norm…

…this led to business leaders being able to make decisions more quickly and accurately eventually leading to the prevalence of IT we see in business today.

**S: We had solved the business problems and had moved on from Craftsmanship to the era of ‘IT Industrialisation’ – we could repeat and we could repeat easily, quickly and to some extent economically.**

But this initial gold rush and the often deeply integrated solutions built into pre-existing business models then began to become constrained by capital investments, cumbersome organisational structures and the direction of large independent software vendors, which is impeding further change.

**S: Where as we were once able to walk a request for information between the Sales Ledge and Purchase Ledger departments, we now rely on an interface, which is described as ‘closely coupled’ and will hinder any attempt to improve, modernise or improve agility within the business.**

***Q: ‘Does this sound familiar to people, are you seeing and meeting these obstacles in your businesses today?’***

**S: Gartner calls this ‘Mode 1’ or traditional IT**

***Q: ‘So how are business leaders and innovative business solutions being solved today?’***

Due to these constraints imposed on the business today by rigid, legacy IT with a high level of technical debt the once reliable, consistent and business aligned IT departments of today are struggling to keep pace.

Business leaders are looking elsewhere for solutions to their problems, small boutique SaaS providers and relatively low cost cloud service providers are dangling what would appear to be a ‘silver bullet’ to solve these problems.

***Q: ‘How may of you are using ‘shadow IT’ services, consuming software or compute resources from service providers in a desperate attempt to bridge the gap between business demand and IT supply?’***

**S: Business Leaders have become dissatisfied with their IT departments and the desire to control their own destiny and their growing confidence in technology or the ‘Digital Era’ is driving them to consume IT from non-conventional sources.**

This divide is widening, almost every industry I see now leverages IT solutions from external providers as well as their conventional IT departments. It is without doubt that smaller more agile and ‘digitally born’ competitors who are using this new ‘Digital Era’ to their advantage are disrupting your industry.

***Q: ‘But how does your business succeed or even compete with these challengers given your reliance on ‘Industrialised IT’?’***

***Q: ‘How do you maintain and protect your as-is business models whilst winning in new markets and competing with digital competitors?’***

**S: Gartner calls this ‘Mode 2’ or exploratory IT**

**S: We can be confident in our analysis that most if not all of you are operating in these 2 modes;**

**Mode1: Traditional IT**

**Mode2 : Exploratory IT**

**Which like it or not defines your current IT as being Bi-Modal and is not necessarily the best place to be - ‘Timid Middle’ neither traditional nor digital.**

***Q: ‘So what are you going to do about it?’***

***Q: ‘How do you transform your business and IT to be fit for purpose in this new ‘Digital Era?’***

**S: Big questions**

Questions that are facing most if not all organisations today and I am seeing a plethora of transformation programmes, virtualisation initiatives, consolidation efforts and next generation digital strategies either being put in place or in flight that are attempting to address these burning questions.

I also see deadlines being missed, promises being broken and budgets being increased.

**S: Business leaders are having their doubts and concerns around the ‘Industrialised or Traditional IT’ model reinforced while at the same time watching their once robust revenue streams be squeezed and re-imagined by new digital focused businesses.**

***Q: ‘Why is this?’***

In-House IT departments have evolved to protect their business and more importantly the data that enables them to make decisions. Global regulation, compliance and security demands have shackled core IT applications and platforms. This has stifled innovation and chocked innovative business solutions before they ever really started.

**S: Many organisations now survive in ‘The Timid Middle’**

Stuck in-between the 2nd Platform (Traditional / Industrialised IT) and the 3rd Platform (Digital)

**S: This provides neither agility nor stability (David Norton – Gartner)**

So how can we bridge this gap given the continued requirement to deliver a stable, performant and secure service to our businesses whilst our budgets are coming under continual pressure to be reduced and deliver increased value.

It is clear that investment decisions need to be scrutinised to ensure that they are steering a course that meets the business demand for the ‘Digital Era’ whilst ensuring continued service level agreements are met and compliance/regulatory frameworks are adhered to.

So if we could help to identify the functions of the ‘Traditional/Industrialised IT’ that are in most need of investment and understand the demand of the business to ensure funds were not being spent on non-strategic or out dated applications we could develop a fact based roadmap for transformation to the ‘Digital Era’

**S: Easier said than done!**

***Q: What if I told you that EMC have a framework and proven methodologies that can help you navigate this path?***

**S: You’d think that this was turning into a sales pitch and either stop listening or reading – but please don’t**

I could tell you how easy this all is, how we have automated tooling and experienced consultants who would come into your organisation and within 4-weeks provide you a full transformation roadmap for you entire Application Portfolio, Infrastructure Estate and Operation Model – but you know I’d be being economical with the truth.

Moving between Mode1 (Traditional / Industrialised IT) and Mode 2 (Digital Era) is difficult – I can’t be more open than that.

It will require an investment in both time and money from your organisation, business demand needs to be understood, existing IT supply needs to be base lined and the relevant value of each application mapped against this framework so you can make informed decisions regarding its to-be state.

Couple this with the need to identify next generation infrastructure platform architectures and overarching to-be operating models and the likelihood of someone coming into your organisation and being able to provide this roadmap in such a short time is – as I think you’ll agree – unlikely.

However, as the old proverb goes;

**S: How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.**

So we should start with something easy yet something that moves us in the right direction.

The IT Transformation Workshop from EMC Global Services is a great starting point and can be completed and providing you and your business insight and direction within a couple of weeks – all for a half-day investment of your time.

Moving on from this quick analysis we can provide application disposition assessment and cloud suitability analysis with our unique Adaptivity toolset that combines business demand with IT supply and some unique analytics to help you shape transformation roadmaps and application rationalisation efforts.

There is a way forward and it can be taken in small bite sized steps ☺