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**Short Description:** Our research has identified the top technology priorities for industry leading organizations. During this investigation we found common trends, business priorities, and technology priorities across all industries.

Most industries have seen hard times the past few years. The slow economy, steady stream of layoffs, war on terrorism, and the threat of war with Iraq have left consumers less likely to buy products and services. But, the decline in business has not stopped industry leaders from investing in critical technology initiatives.

Our research has found that in good times like in 1999 and 2000 budgets were as plentiful as the number of different type projects being worked on by the IT departments. Conversely, in troubled times like these, we have seen most IT budgets cut back, but the focus on implementing critical technology is still as hot as ever for industry leading organizations. What has changed, is the focus of these technology initiatives.

In these troubled times, industry leading organizations are focusing their time and money on a handful of initiatives. What we have found different from past research, is the fact that these initiatives cross almost all industries. It doesn't matter if you are working in retail, telecommunications, manufacturing, construction, etc., these initiatives are most likely part of your business and IT strategy. If they are not, maybe you should go back and review your business objectives for the next six months.

## *Most Common Trends*

- Spending time and money on technology initiatives that add value to the business.
- Small projects and quick return on investment.

## *Business Priorities*

- Better customer service
- Luring new customers
- Cut operating costs
- Improve efficiencies
- Increase market share

## *Top 9 – Technology Priorities*

- Web based collaboration as conduits to customers, partners, and suppliers. Information sharing, collaboration and customer self service via the internet.
- Use the internet to educate potential customers, market new products and build customer loyalty.
- Streamline business transactions with partners to provide new services to suppliers and improve the supply chain.
- Cutting down on paperwork by tying back-end systems to web portals that provide customers with self service tools, which improves customer service and cuts costly phone time in call centers.
- Organizations sensitive to terrorist attacks are concentrating on business continuity, disaster recovery, and document management systems.
- Leveraging data stored within each business unit. Data mining to collect and analyze information on customer buying patterns, targeted marketing, and behaviors. Identify patterns among customers so that they can develop programs to keep those customers.
- Simplifying the technology architecture to trim unnecessary costs and create better IT environments for the future.
- While business units remain de-centralized, IT departments are moving toward a centralized operation to better utilize equipment and cut operating costs.
- Paring down the list of vendors IT buys from, centralizing IT buying, and cutting better deals with its best suppliers to reduce costs.

