



# Aligning Business Goals with Tech Lifecycles to Accelerate Innovation

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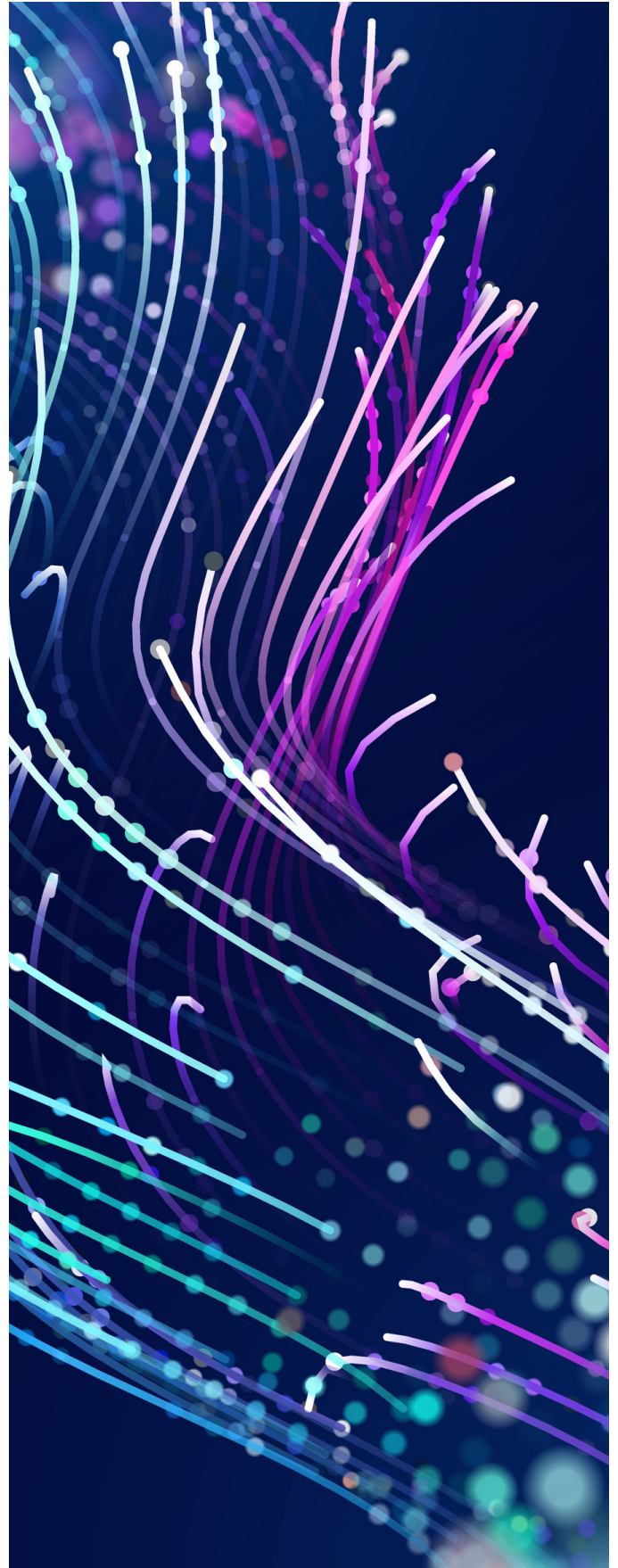
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## Introduction

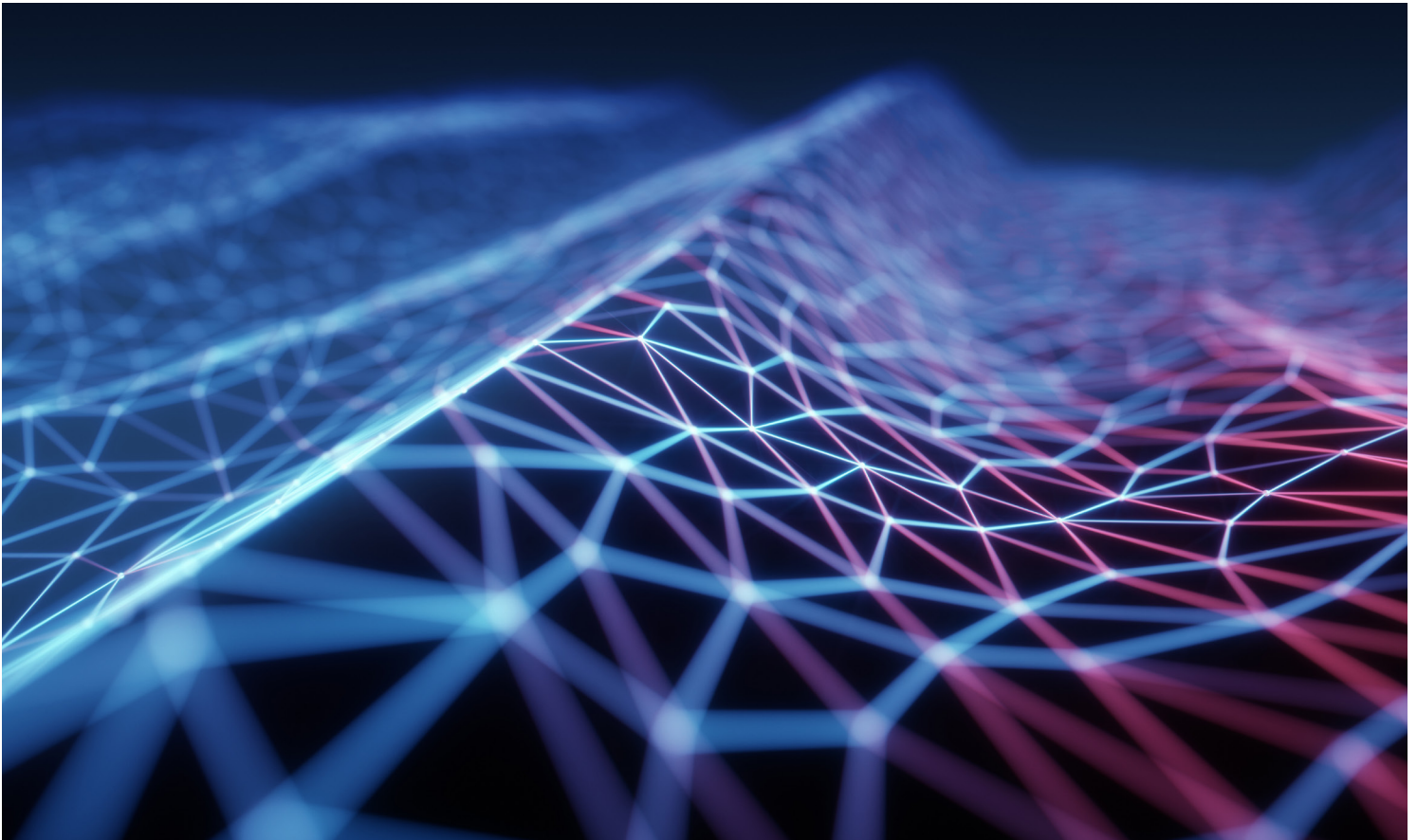
IT decision-makers are increasingly challenged to transform their departments into innovation and value creation centers for the entire enterprise while operating in a perpetually multigenerational infrastructure. A key strategy gaining momentum in IT circles is the focus on building smarter, more sustainable IT lifecycles. This approach focuses on identifying innovative ways to maximize the efficiency, value, and agility of an organization's top-down technology solutions ecosystem. To do so, IT decision-makers map out each stage of the IT lifecycle then explore ways to expand the acquisition and value maximization of solutions, as well as craft consistent, secure, and sustainable end-of-use strategies. But how exactly can this approach help their organizations become more innovative?



The at-scale deployment of disruptive new generations of technology solutions is going to challenge organizations to look more closely at the way they manage and plan their IT lifecycles in the coming years. Among them, artificial intelligence (AI), XR (the full spectrum of augmented, mixed, and virtual reality solutions), smart sensors and devices, as well as autonomous vehicles and robots will broaden the IT mix in cloud, edge, and on-premises environments. There are so many ways IT organizations can innovate, picking one to illustrate the opportunity and considerations will be important. Because PCs are so vital to most business functions, represent a significant slice of IT investment, and fit well into lifecycle planning discussions, the introduction of AI PCs (PCs designed for AI workloads, such as training and inferencing) provides us with a useful and timely example of how IT leaders can leverage the next supercycle of technology disruptions to accelerate innovation across their own organizations. The same points are relevant for any kind of innovation, whether it is in the data center, at the edge, or in a hybrid cloud setting.

One of the first challenges that the introduction of any new innovation in the market will bring to IT organizations is uncertainty: Will new technology be worth the investment? What unexpected challenges will they bring to an organization? Will there be hidden, secondary costs attached to deployments, such as additional user training or system incompatibilities? IT decision-makers will need to think about how to mitigate risks, perhaps through pilot programs and limited deployments before committing to more scalable investments. That said, part of the risk for an organization of not adapting to disruptive technologies faster than its competitors is that it could cost that organization its competitive advantage. In other words, the opportunity cost of not deploying at scale quickly should also be factored into every IT organization's risk mitigation equation.

A second challenge for IT decision-makers, once they greenlight any innovative deployments, particularly at scale, will be finding the money to do so. Fortunately, not all technology solutions need to be owned. Many can also be deployed as usage-based and solutions as a service (SaaS) options to accelerate deployments and complement the existing IT infrastructure. One immediate benefit of expanding the solutions mix toward these models is the low upfront cost and associated risks.





Another way to tackle this challenge is by ensuring that multigenerational infrastructures are deployed and utilized to optimal capacity. One critical feature of AI PCs is that they are capable of handling small to midsize training and inference generative AI workloads right on the device. This means that by investing in AI PCs, organizations should be able to shift a significant percentage of costly AI workloads out of the cloud while continuing to rely on cloud services to handle large and extremely large AI workloads. This fine-tuned approach is not only far more efficient and cost-effective but also frees up legacy infrastructure bandwidth for other functions. The cumulative cost savings and operational efficiency gains of such a shift could be applied to the funding of other deployments. In addition to IT infrastructure improvements, gains in employee productivity and efficiency delivered by on-device AI capabilities, especially at scale, can also produce significant ROI, which can be applied to more tech investments.

Perhaps the most underrated value of this approach is that it allows for legacy applications to be supported and maintained, freeing IT from the worry of compromised business continuity. As mentioned, this model is not limited to disruption by AI PCs. Far from it. AI PCs are merely one of the most current technology disruptions that helps highlight how IT leaders can apply this methodology to their own organizations: By fine-tuning their mix of new and preowned solutions, organizations can extract more value from their legacy systems, augmenting their capabilities and leveraging them to power new types of solutions, such as AI PCs, as well as edge deployment, AI infrastructure, and countless other innovations. With the correct approach, the new or added value created by this model frees up budgets that can then be invested in more solutions, enabling further innovation, and so on. This approach is how IT decision-makers can build more innovation, flexibility, and value into their IT management practices, and on a more predictable, planned, and organized timeline.

A third challenge that IT decision-makers will need to tackle once AI PCs start to prove their value will be to deal with their impact on the lifecycle of their pre-AI "legacy" PCs, and specifically how AI PCs will likely accelerate the obsolescence of legacy PCs.

Fortunately, IT decision-makers now enjoy a growing toolkit of innovative options to effectively deal with the end-of-use phase of the IT lifecycle, even when that lifecycle and the planning that originally went into it finds itself disrupted as well. The value of subscription, usage-based, and SaaS models to an end-of-use scenario is self-explanatory: The technology can be upgraded, decommissioned, or simply phased out with minimal friction. Where things get especially interesting is when organizations look for end-of-use options for their own solutions, which can extend beyond their own IT ecosystem to the products they market.

Decommissioning and warehousing remain options, obviously, but repurposing, upcycling, and refurbishing are increasingly gaining traction across IT departments. Such is partly the case because these types of programs help establish predictable end-of-use asset lifecycle timelines and logistics, to say nothing of their ability to recoup value from older assets to re-invest in innovation. These types of programs can also serve a dual purpose for most organizations with sustainability objectives.

This last point might be easy to overlook, but extending the life of technology solutions, including their components, is also an example of innovative thinking being applied to how IT lifecycle planning can extend the end-of-use phase of solutions to maximize their value. Beyond helping reduce the amount of e-waste piling up in landfills, opting-in to upcycling, refurbishing, repurposing, and recycling programs provides enterprises, equipment OEMs, and third-party service providers with an opportunity to leverage IT lifecycle planning to help extend the life and value of both whole technology solutions and their critical raw materials and components.

The extent to which the next supercycle of technology disruptions will impact efforts to extend the life of legacy PCs remains to be seen: We may see organizations become more granular and deliberate about their PC mix and segmentation, especially if they find that not all PCs need to be AI PCs. We may also notice a shift from extending the life of legacy PCs to extending the life of their components and materials. Whatever the case may be, even in times of technology disruption, IT leaders now have far more opportunities to think more creatively about their technology solutions' lifecycles than they did even a few short years ago, and in ways that will not be hindered by the asymmetries of their multigenerational infrastructure.

PCs are only one vector of change, however. IT leaders are finding themselves dealing with an evolving multigenerational PC ecosystem, an expanding AI solutions stack, the layering of virtual environments and next gen UX to traditional workspaces, the proliferation of conversational voice interfaces, the demands of an increasingly autonomous and electrified logistics ecosystem, a rapidly evolving software landscape, or any dozen other disruptive new technologies gaining momentum in the market this year. With the right mindset and focus, IT leaders can turn every one of the challenges these technologies bring to their door into an opportunity to fast-track innovation across their organizations and inject more resiliency, agility, and velocity to their increasingly more sophisticated IT lifecycles.



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