Building SMAC Strategies for Futuristic Organizations
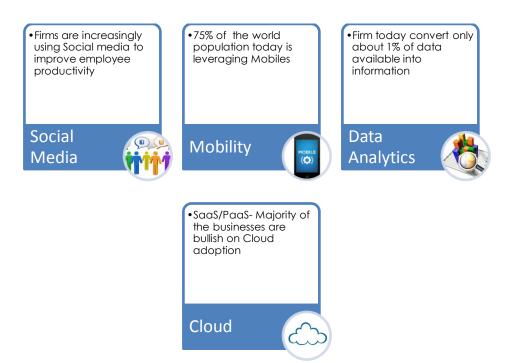
The New Technology Foundation

Disruptive technologies like social, mobile, analytics and cloud (SMAC) are ushering in revolutionary changes into how organizations compete and engage with stakeholders. Organizations are embracing SMAC as enablers for next generation business models that are simplistic and yet impactful for the world around us. In lieu of the same, it has become necessary for organizations to strategize SMAC adoption at the enterprise level and set themselves up for a dynamic transformation that is round the corner

The Digital Shift:

- Firms are increasingly using Social media to improve employee productivity

Social Media

- 75% of the world population today is leveraging Mobiles

Mobility

- Firm today convert only about 1% of data available into information

Data Analytics

- SaaS/PaaS- Majority of the businesses are bullish on Cloud adoption

Cloud

The current day market place has undergone a tremendous digital shift. The disruptive change brought forth by SMAC is at the forefront driving this shift. These drivers are influential enough to be touted as the next wave for the technology industry. This wave however is considered different in comparison to its predecessors. The previous IT waves were isolated and needed disruptions for setting in the new waves. SMAC technologies, however, plays the dual role of a disruptor as well as an enablers for the next generation. SMAC today represents the opportunity to revamp business processes enabling organizations to be more innovative in how they engage with customers and employees alike.

SMAC technologies are now monitoring the effectiveness of sales force, enabling HR department with employee engagement and retention, enabling greater collaboration in manufacturing in areas such as supply chain and inventory management.

A case in point being Netflix, a pioneer in utilizing the power of SMAC in creating a disruptive innovation in customer experience. The movie/entertainment game-changer uses advanced analytics and elaborate algorithms to recommend films tailored to its audience. It then streams media from the cloud and allows consumers to view it seamlessly on multiple platforms such as television, tablets, mobiles etc. Post watching the movie, one has the option to share thoughts and reviews on the social graph amply demonstrating the power of integration of the SMAC technologies in transforming the customer experience.

The unique factor herein is that all of the SMAC components work together as an ecosystem. The collaborative features do not appear to be force fitted or "bolted on." Instead, mobile capabilities drive even richer data collection that can be used to delve deeper into the cloud,
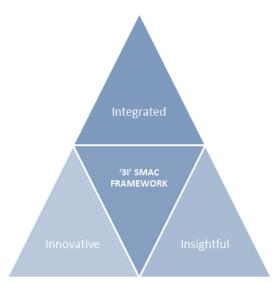
engage social channels, and give customers increasingly integrated and personalized experiences.

The uptick of SMAC in the market place has been phenomenal with projections of 2 billion mobile handsets and 5 billion social media accounts by 2016. In addition, by 2020, it is estimated to have 450 billion business transactions per day and 35 zettabytes of data stored on the internet. Per Gartner estimates, the global public cloud services market is about $130 billion. The explosive growth numbers suggest the ready adoption of SMAC technologies by organizations worldwide. New age companies are better poised to leverage opportunities since they are less burdened by Legacy systems.   However, the synergistic value of interplay between these technologies is yet to be harnessed to its full potential across the value chain. While it is crucial to appreciate the different levels of maturity where each technology is currently at, it is also imperative to draw concerted strategies around SMAC to explore the possibilities considered non-existent until this time.

Framework to Build an Organization-Wide SMAC Strategy:

Building SMAC strategies for organizations is well summed up by the 3I (Integrated, Innovative and Insightful) framework.

Integrated - Organizations need to realize the futility of following a siloed approach to technology innovation and business transformation. They need to draw up an integrated approach for capturing the synergy offered by complementing SMAC technologies. The principle of "sum of whole is greater than its parts" holds true here with each function enabling another to maximize its effect as one integrated stack. This multiplier effect facilitates a productive organization that is integrated and collaborative in real time. It is therefore important for organizations to implement well-rounded strategies for wider adoption of SMAC across the organization.

A case in point regarding the 'integrating' capability of SMAC is demonstrated by the services provided by Cap Gemini to one of their global biotechnology customers. After an acquisition, the customer was challenged with cultural alignment issues that stemmed from enterprise

software discrepancies. Cap Gemini leveraged SMAC to implement a uniform cloud based email, calendar, document creation and storage system. The client benefitted significantly through increased collaboration, higher efficiency, lowered TCO, and long term saving due to reduction in license costs and operating expenses.

SMAC strategies need to be innovative in nature. The innovation of the strategy should ensure their seamless adoption by organizations of all types and sizes, specifically large firms that have complex hierarchies and set organizational procedures. Innovation should also catapult organizations to set them up as organizations of the future.

Retail Major Home Depot is also an example of an early innovator in the mobile space having launched their mobile site in 2010. Staying ahead of the innovation curve, the company launched a significant mobile redesign, adding user localization, which allows users to access real-time inventory, pricing and aisle location for any given store, and more. The Home Depot's cost per online conversion has decreased by 75 percent since the mobile site was launched, and between 2011 and 2012, visits originating from a mobile device is said to have tripled.

Insightful – The SMAC strategy should clearly articulate and provide insights into the benefits that accrue to organizations because of SMAC adoption. The strategy should provide insights into competitive advantages that SMAC offers to organizations.

As an illustration, insights derived by using SMAC technologies are used by Orlando Health to transform patient care. Using SMAC, neurologists are allowed to remotely examine patients from any location using tablets that can control a camera at the patient's bedside.
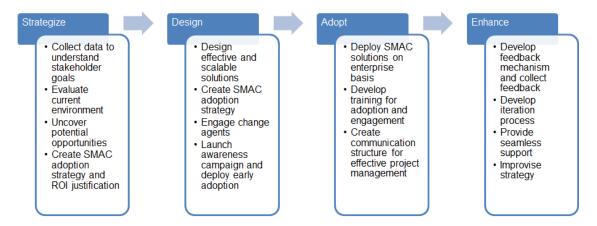
Similarly, Redbus, an online travel portal leverages Google's BigQuery to analyze and derive insights regarding booking and inventory data for capacity planning involving hundreds of bus operators that serve more than 10,000 routes.

Steps in Building a SMAC Strategy:

SMAC is still considered a novel concept by many organizations. Hence, a concerted effort is necessary towards ensuring that SMAC strategies are easily understood and comprehended by people within the organization. The approach should be simple and phased with definite steps and deliverables associated with each phase. The phases and steps could be different for each organization. However, the essence of the strategy needs to be centered on the end-user experience with people at the center of IT strategy and systems integration.

The figure below demonstrates a possible approach for enterprise-wide SMAC adoption.

Strategize	Design	Adopt	Enhance
• Collect data to understand stakeholder goals • Evaluate current environment • Uncover potential opportunities • Create SMAC adoption strategy and ROI justification	• Design effective and scalable solutions • Create SMAC adoption strategy • Engage change agents • Launch awareness campaign and deploy early adoption	• Deploy SMAC solutions on enterprise basis • Develop training for adoption and engagement • Create communication structure for effective project management	• Develop feedback mechanism and collect feedback • Develop iteration process • Provide seamless support • Improvise strategy

The 'strategy' phase examines the enterprise wide technology maturity and takes stock of an organization's current readiness to adopt SMAC. By accounting for the 'as-is' state, it attempts to draw the 'to-be' future state while justifying returns on any SMAC investments. A sound SMAC strategy is based on first-hand information collected from the stakeholders. Information from stakeholders helps uncover potential opportunities for business growth. This phase also draws a plan for roll out and adoption of the strategy at the enterprise level. Needless to say, the strategic phase justifies any investments due to SMAC adoption and also lays an 'exit-strategy' for the less-likely event of failure in SMAC adoption.

The 'design' phase creates the custom-tailored SMAC strategy for an organization and lays down the mechanism for adoption of the strategy in select groups within the organization. Per the strategic imperative to adopt SMAC, this phase engineers effective and scalable business solutions that rapidly erode the challenges of traditional business models. Not just that, the 'design' phase also implants and engages change agents at specific levels of the enterprise hierarchy. This not only helps in expediting the adoption cycle, but also raises awareness among selected groups regarding the benefits of the new business model.

The 'adopt' phase evangelizes the SMAC solutions at the enterprise level. It ensures widespread enablement and effective communication throughout multiple layers of the organization for seamless adoption. Training modules are developed for educating people at various levels of the organization and increase their participation levels. A key to success of the 'adopt' phase is to ensure effective project management for deployment of the strategy. This is best done through setting up a project management office (PMO) for overseeing the organization-wide deployment of the SMAC strategy.

The 'enhance' phase tracks the success of the SMAC deployment programs while providing support at all levels of the organization. The main objective of this phase is to provide continuous feedback about the implementation progress of the SMAC strategy. This phase helps to keep a tab on the return on investments that organizations have made on SMAC. This phase enables organizations to objectively evaluate progress on the envisioned plan for a clear view on implementation. Any deviations would be captured and improved upon for course correction.

Changing market conditions incessantly challenge existing business models. Businesses need enabling platforms to live up to the changing market needs. Thanks to SMAC, enterprise IT has

lived up to the demands of businesses. A well thought through SMAC strategy is paramount for any organization's unprecedented success in this digitally transformed world.

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