# MAKING IT MATTER

## CHAPTER 1

## THREE KINGS

Larry Franklin nearly spilled his Starbucks when he angled his body between the fast closing elevator doors and slipped inside.  Not only did this tack place him on an elevator heading in the wrong direction – up to the top floors of the building that his fellow techs had nicknamed “Valhalla” because they were populated by senior corporate executives and their administrative assistants – it also very nearly resulted in a messy collision with the Chief Financial Officer, Edmund Bloom.

With an awkward smile, Franklin realized he had averted the disaster just in time.  However, even as he whispered a sigh of relief, he also registered a flicker of anger. The CFO had been oblivious to near miss with fate.

He just cleared his throat and flipped over his folded copy of the *Wall Street Journal* to read the next page of the story.

Of course, the thought of saturating the very starched white shirt of Mr. Bloom with a *Café American* had its points, Franklin mused.  Doing so might have made him a hero with everyone in the “Swamp” -- what the denizens of E&D Corporation’s Information and Communications Technology Department called their basement data center.  Like most of his co-workers, Franklin held the CFO in disdain.

Not only did Bloom wield control over technology budgets, which he loved to cut, he tended to make deals with technology vendors without consulting his own ICT staff regarding the fit of the hardware or software with business requirements.  As a result, a lot of bad gear had found its way onto E&D’s computer room floor, earning Bloom and other managers in Valhalla a reputation as “Flashing 12’s” – so technologically inept that they couldn’t even program the clock on their home VCR, which subsequently flashed 12:00 for all eternity.

The situation had become so bad, with the front office overriding the technical expertise of the back office and buying directly from vendors, that E&D might as well have put a revolving door on the Chief Information Officer's office.  The CIO post, previously known as the Management Information Services Director, had been established a few years back to "better align business requirements and ICT investments."  That was shorthand for the management view of information technology as an overhead expense that delivered no real measurable business value. So, the idea of creating the CIO position was to put an ICT guy in the front office with the business leaders to facilitate an on-going dialog about business needs and appropriate technology support initiatives.

It sounded like a good idea, and the CIO position was greeted by just about everyone at first with enthusiastic support.  However, the average lifespan of a CIO proved to be a short one:  13 to 17 months.

There had been three CIOs so far:  the first CIO was promoted to the job from within the ICT department, but she quickly discovered that the new role amounted to a reduction in authority with an increase in responsibility.

She was basically told to cut staff and budget and, at the same time, to improve service levels.  She didn’t get to identify the targets for the cuts, but was simply the “axe man” – eh, “person.”

Within eight months, she was replaced by a fellow who was brought in from the outside. He was a crony of one of the other C-level guys, part of the same country club, a bureaucrat who was pretty clueless about technology.  He quit within a year’s time, accepting a lucrative position in a venture finance firm.

The third guy, Franklin recalled, seemed to have a clue about technology.  In a past life, he had successfully built up a systems integration company, then sold it for a small fortune.  He had experience in financials like E&D and made sense when he talked about the importance of “strategic investing” rather than “tactical fire-fighting.” He had a vision that made sense and reinvigorated the hopes of the mavens of the Swamp: putting the screws to vendors to get technology that fit the company, rather than adjusting the company’s processes to fit the budgetary requirements of the vendor.  Making IT matter, he said, meant purpose-building technology infrastructure with business objectives and requirements clearly in mind.

Just as he finished articulating his view of the future to the staff, word came down that an exclusive deal had been inked with a leading storage technology vendor. Going forward, strategies would need to adapt to use only that vendor’s gear.  So, CIO number three left the company a few weeks later, stating “You should only need to endure stupidity for so long.”

Since that time, for nearly six months, the CIO’s office had remained empty.  Directives to ICT were coming straight out of the CFO’s office.  To hear Bloom talk, auditors and lawyers were now calling the shots in ICT. Regulatory compliance requirements were driving everything. And he was taking all of his cues for how to deal with the new legal regime from a couple of vendors with whom he had struck up “business relationships.”

Franklin and his fellow Swamp-dwellers found the situation professionally intolerable.  He remembered his reasons for getting into information technology in the first place.  In college, a professor had kept a poster on the wall of his office and promised extra points to anyone in the class who could tell him what the image represented. Recalling a mythology class he had taken in high school for an easy credit, it was undergraduate Franklin who recognized that the poster was of Prometheus, who angered the Gods by bringing fire down from the heavens and bestowing it upon human kind.

The professor credited him for his familiarity with the liberal arts. In this context, explained the prof, the meaning was metaphor: the job of information technologists was to harness the computer, the network and the storage and to bestow the blessings of automation upon the organization that they served.

The educator went on to recall his own experience, short as it was, in a commercial data center in the 1970s. He recounted how he and his lab-coated peers rolled out some of the earliest mainframes, harnessing their awesome power (despite the fact that they had less processing power, memory or storage than a contemporary cell phone or MP3 player) to the needs of the business. They became, he noted, the modern equivalent of the Greek Oracles of ancient times. They lived in their own isolated cave, the data center, separate and apart from the business. They were paid good wages to read the entrails of corporate data and to predict outcomes of business decisions. They had the freedom and the authority to choose what technologies they wanted without interference from the non technical outsiders. That was their job, and for doing it well, they received money and other forms of appreciation, if only through a slot in the wall where service requests were sent in and reports were sent out.

The professor made it sound like Franklin and his fellow classmen were being groomed to become the next generation of corporate oracles -- a special brotherhood that would take their corporate charges kicking and screaming into the 21st Century.

He sipped his coffee, with its acrid aftertaste of over roasted beans, and reflected sourly that those days of youthful idealism had long since passed. No one had expected the implosion of the DotCom bubble in 2000. Almost as a punishment for the suspension of disbelief that fueled the overvaluation of tech stocks, corporate was choking what was once a free running river of money into a mere trickle, controlled by a clueless executive or a committee of end users.

At this point, he had pretty much decided to leave IT. It was the right time to make the move -- now, while he was still young enough to find a new career.  One of his first to-do’s, once the elevator dropped off Bloom in Valhalla and descended to his cubicle farm in the basement, was to check on the progress of his job search at Monster.com.  He knew many of his comrades were doing the same.

He had recently read that enrollments in information technology programs at colleges and universities were significantly down and that a trend was developing that would see a significant and growing portion of IT jobs going unfilled over the next decade.  It came as no surprise to him, though it did amuse him that the analysts and scholars studying the “alarming IT skills shortage gap” were keen to attribute it all to the increasing proportion of women pursuing university degrees.  Right or wrong, everyone was suggesting that the drop in IT careerists reflected the fact that women weren’t interested in IT, seeing it as a bloke culture.

While that might be part of it, Franklin wondered whether the real explanation for the phenomenon might not be right under everyone's nose. Corporate world no longer respected IT world. Those who were once respected professionals, corporate oracles, were now being treated like, well, janitors and maintenance workers. Business guys were reading books like "Does IT Matter?" by that Harvard Business Review droid, Nicholas Carr. He was saying that IT didn't matter because everyone had the same hardware and software today. There was no competitive advantage anymore.

*IT doesn't matter?* Franklin frowned. *That is a laugh.* He wondered if anyone appreciated the fact that absolutely nothing that E&D managers or employees did today could be done without technology. The users – from Valhalla on down – didn't seem to recognize the trillions of machine operations that processed without error on a daily basis to complete calls, take orders, manage inventory, update accounts, process payroll, generate reports or do the myriad other tasks that kept the company on a paying basis. From Franklin's position, these were a trillion tiny miracles just taken for granted.

As if the technical challenges of building and maintaining systems to meet business requirements and to serve business objectives (in the face of constant business and technology change, nonetheless) were not enough, there was the politics of the business to deal with. Every business turf captain thought his stuff was more important than anyone else’s, so managing expectations and priorities was a major hurdle that consumed way too much of everyone’s time. If anything went wrong, it was always ICT’s fault.

Add to that, the Valhalla folks were going over the heads of their technology advisers within the company. They were listening to vendors tell them what to buy, lacking the intelligence to know whether they were getting the right technology or even the right price. Most of the guys in the Swamp had pretty much given up hope of having any influence over platform decisions anymore, and no one bothered to question the decisions handed down from the top floor -- even though they knew that they would get the blame when equipment didn’t perform per vendor promises or when the costs for software kicked in a year after the equipment was purchased, creating an obvious spike in IT costs that put the bean counters in the front office on edge.

Recently, dear Mr. Bloom had bought about a hundred Terabytes of “compliance certified” storage from one of his vendor buddies.  The stuff was junk, pure and simple:  a roach motel where data checked in, but it couldn’t check out.  Moreover, the product was pure lock-in technology, built to limit the exit strategy of the customer to just a couple of expensive options should they decide to switch to someone else’s product.  From everything that Franklin had read, the gear was poorly designed and very prone to failure:  basically, one of the worst pieces of gear that anyone in the Swamp had ever seen.

The vendor had told Bloom that the gear was “certified compliant,” though this was an exaggeration – if not a downright lie.  There are no “certification entities” within the federal agencies, departments or other regulatory bodies that certify any hardware or software for compliance with legal or regulatory mandates.  The vendor had simply sent a letter describing the operational theory of its product, which had probably ended up in a dead letter office at the SEC, and made the decision that no response connoted approval – though this is not a legally defensible position in any court.

Despite all of these sound reasons to reject the equipment, no one in ICT had questioned or cautioned Bloom on the buy.  Some shrugged it off, stating aloud, “Well, it’s not our money…”  Others suggested that Bloom had probably gotten some kickback on the deal, or at least a few dinners at pricey restaurants and maybe a complimentary first class trip to a PGA golf course somewhere.

Surveying the short man standing before him in the expensive suit pouring over the *WSJ*, Franklin just wrote the whole thing off to a combination of executive stupidity and effective marketing by a vendor who could sell ice machines to Eskimos.

Of course dealing with senior management idiots was just one part of his problem with E&D.  While Franklin was proud to work among some very bright people at the company, and had learned a lot from the platforms they had cobbled together over the years, he was turned off by the increasingly political games he had to play to get anything done.

Thinking back on his twelve years with the company, he realized that he had learned some important lessons about how technologies really work in the business world. He knew enough to see through the hype and sensationalism that seemed to pour out in a never ending stream today from the vendor marketing machines.  The denizens of the Swamp listened, of course, when the sales droids came around to pitch their wares and even marveled at their ingenuity as they tried to tie their products into a broader story that defined their stuff as “strategic solutions.”

Many times, Franklin and his team enjoyed a good belly laugh after the sales droid left.  These guys were often so clueless about what it really takes to run a data center that it made him wonder whether vendor engineers sat around in the ivory towers of Silicon Valley just dreaming up fixes to problems that no one has while ignoring the issues that everyone shares.

One thing was sure: there was no way in the world that he and his team had the time or inclination to try and adopt every half baked story and product that fell in their lap.  Sure, the technology side of the story always sounded good.  But, in an environment where Bloom and his boys want to cut budgets – “to get more done with less” – nobody was willing to put his neck on the line to try out new toys…at least not without Bloom taking responsibility for the outcome.

He had as much as said so at the last staff meeting. If Bloom wanted to deploy XYZ technology, he was going to have to make some other significant changes to the infrastructure to support it.  For all the new “compliance certified” storage arrays he wanted to dump into the Swamp, he was going to have to revisit the current backup architecture that protected the data against an array failure.  That meant, quite possibly, dumping another couple of million dollars into refitting the virtual tape subsystem and probably the tape libraries themselves as a hedge against the possibility that the vendor’s bullet proof array proved somewhat less bullet proof.  When Bloom said that the new arrays eliminated the need for tape altogether, according to the vendor, he realized he was fighting a losing battle.  The guy had already drank the vendor Kool-Aide.

*So much for innovation.*  Franklin reminded himself that he and his team were already overstretched just trying to manage what they already had on the floor.  It made no sense adding a load of unknowns, especially if ICT was going to have to fall on its sword if the stuff failed.

Hopefully within a few weeks, he consoled himself, it wouldn’t matter anyway.

The elevator stopped with a smooth bounce and a low toned “ding.”   The doors opened to the smell of varnish and cherry wood revealing a receptionist console backed by floor to ceiling smoke glass windows and a beautiful cityscape beyond.  Franklin wondered momentarily how many IT guys had taken the wrong elevator this morning in the skyscrapers he saw in the panoramic vista.  How many others were preparing to leave the insanity of corporate IT and return to some semblance of a normal life?  He barely noticed as Bloom walked by him and the elevator doors closed to begin the long descent to the Swamp.

“Good morning, Mr. Bloom,” Nancy chirped with her always beaming smile.  She followed him to his office, placed his coffee on the metal coaster on his desk, helped him take his jacket off, and placed it carefully on the hanger. This was a ritual that elicited the usual litany of thankful nods and appreciative smiles.

After a moment, Bloom set down his paper. Nancy, waiting attentively, locked eyes, then stepped forward, “Here is the schedule for today, plus the reports from operations that you wanted, and the latest on the Chinese deal.”

Bloom nodded, “What’s up first this morning?”

“Well, first is your meeting with the representative from…”

“Oh yes…” he cut her off, “I remember. The salesman from that tech company that says he has a solution that will make all of our Gramm Leach Bliley exposure go away for just a million five…” He grimaced, and his assistant provided her stock supportive smile, then exited the room.

Bloom glanced out the window, which gave him a view of the sprawling parking lot in front of the building. Very soon, one of the little “ant sized” vehicles scurrying around the roads would come to light in a visitor’s space, depositing one or two or more persons (however many make up an “account team”) who would then pass security and take the elevator up to the $14^{th}$ floor to join him in the Arcadia conference room.  Their mission would be to sell their products, ostensibly to address the problem of encrypting data “so that E&D can demonstrate that it is doing its best to safeguard sensitive customer financial information from accidental or deliberate disclosure.”  He knew the pitch by heart, having received no less than a dozen similar pitches over the past six months.

His stomach burned and he called out to Nancy to bring him a Zantac to deal with what would likely become another day-long battle with acid reflux.

He sipped the fresh brew, noting the aroma and body. It was most certainly not that pedestrian swill he had smelled in the elevator ride this morning, these beans were every bit as flavorful as the best cups of coffee he had sampled in Lisbon last month.  Of course, coffee didn’t help matters with the reflux, but he admitted to himself that he was an addict, and had been since his days at business school.

He hated having to meet with these technology pitchmen, a job that had been assigned to him by the old man when Thompson, the last CIO, quit six months ago.  He already had his hands full, managing internal audits and preparing quarterly financial reports, not to mention staying on top of new market initiatives in China.

Of course, he could see the CEO’s position. Regulatory compliance, at least the mandates contained in Sarbanes-Oxley and the SEC rules, required someone to combine the domains of corporate financial expertise and information technology.

Thompson, in his view, had done a patently incompetent job on the tech side of the house.  He paid a boat load of cash to the consulting arm of E&D’s external auditor to put into place some audit points and controls that would ensure the *retention* of SOX/SEC required data for the amount of time required by law, ranging from five to ten years, depending on the specific requirement and type of information.  He had totally forgotten about the need for another set of policies -- and the machinery to operationalize them -- that would enable E&D to *delete* the same information once it had outlived its useful life.

Re-hiring consultants to come up with a deletion program was more money down the toilet that he would have to find in his tight *opex* budget. Either he would have to spend it, or risk the company looking like it was engaging in "midnight shredding" – a damning perception that took down Arthur Anderson, despite the fact that its shredding practices conformed entirely with pre-established policies at ENRON. By the time that this was clarified, Anderson was already out of business.

*The ICT folks are not going to be very helpful*, the CEO had warned him when he unofficially gave Bloom the interim CIO job atop his other duties. And he was right, Bloom considered. You ask them for simple things, like statistics on how fast data is growing so you can anticipate scaling requirements for the data retention/deletion program you need to deploy, and they give you a blank stare. They know how much more storage capacity they are adding every year, but they know nothing about the information that they are supposedly managing.

ICT had told him that compliance would require more equipment, more personnel. They were going to need a *technology refresh*: new backup technology, new server technology, new storage technology. Basically, for any business requirement you mentioned, it was as though they saw it as an opportunity to rip and replace all of the infrastructure that was already in place – irrespective of the cost. The ICT boys liked their toys.

Bloom wondered how anyone in the company could be so clueless about business. The technologists had no concept of the basic pillars of business: cost-savings, risk reduction and process improvement. Would it have killed them to take even just one business management course as part of the required studies for a technical degree? Couldn't they at least read the *Journal* or *Harvard Business Review* and pick up some important skills along the way?

So, now it fell to him to also become expert in both the business and technology domains; to take on the role of the CIO as well as CFO. Initially, he troubled over whether he had the skills to do both jobs.

Surprisingly, technology management proved significantly less challenging than he thought. After getting doublespeak from his own technology department at just about every turn, he found greater sensibility from vendors.  A fellow CFO who worked for a tech vendor, and who shared his disdain for the tendency of technologists to overcomplicate just about every solution to a business problem, introduced him to a drop-in solution for data retention.  It was an all-in-one box that took your data, tagged it with a content address, and held onto it in a certified compliant manner until it reached the end of its useful life.

From where Bloom was sitting, the product described by the vendor CFO was simplicity itself, which is probably why the ICT guys rejected it when the vendor pitched them on the platform while Thompson was CIO.  They were too busy building custom solutions to consider buying something in a one-stop-shop, with a one-throat-to-choke warranty and maintenance agreement and an ironclad compliance guarantee.

The vendor had said it best, “They just have a bad case of *not invented here*.”  Maybe he was right.  Maybe IT was just trying to build complexity to assure their own jobs babysitting the Rube Goldberg contraptions they were building on company money.

But, the IT management job had its challenges nonetheless. Playing CIO meant dealing with the bother and a distraction of having to manage the technology supporting the business as well as its financial strategy, an all consuming passion that Bloom believed his was born to do. He didn't want to give short shrift to the CFO role because he was spending too much time on technology decision-making. Vendor meetings like the one that would happen in the next hour were becoming too frequent and too great a demand on his CFO calendar. He was taking a lot of work home with him again and his wife was growing less and less tolerant of his lack of participation in her charity and social functions.

About the only consolation he could find was that, just maybe, this was the old man's way of grooming him for the leadership role at E&D. There was already speculation that he might step down within the next year, perhaps once the deal was signed with the Chinese distributors and he could exit on a high note. That would make Bloom the youngest CEO in E&D's industry segment…

His reverie was broken when he looked out of his window to see the Lincoln Town Car pulling into the visitor slot. It was almost time for his meeting.

Pulling into the visitor space, Jack Rapier, took a deep breath. The ride over from the airport had gone without incident and the GPS he had rented with the car paid for itself by getting him to the meeting without delays or directional snafu.

He opened his briefcase in the passenger seat and perused the client *G2* that had been provided to him by account research. They were thorough as always.

It made his job so much easier. Past companies he worked for weren't as organized or as focused on success. They didn't research clients, and they also didn't sell as much. However, this company wanted results, and they made the necessary investments to make that happen.

He was often reminded by his sales leadership, that his comfortable life style was not guaranteed. Every quarter he could count on an exhaustive review of his productivity. He might escape one quarter and not make his target quota, but he probably wouldn’t survive two. Just as Wall Street held tech companies to a higher performance standard than other industries, his managers argued, they were holding their sales teams to a higher standard of sales productivity.

*Deliver or die*. He had to close this deal.

He continued to look at the file. There was personal information about Bloom, the CFO-qua-CIO with whom he would be meeting, as well as Wall Street intel on what E&D was up to these days. His research team had worked out the details of their latest annual report, and how that was reflected into the programs that were prioritized for current funding. They even knew what the individual metrics of success or failure were for key executives in the management chain.

The documents in the folder provided him with specific language to use to describe how the proposal he was bringing today would help each stakeholder with their individual goals. The preparation team had done an extraordinary job of mapping out the political landscape, spending days working out who the influencers and decision makers were, and what each needed to hear to make this deal close.  The homework was done, and it was on the money.

Fortunately, the competitive analysis group reported that the only potential rival vendor, was not making any progress in catching up with the momentum his company was enjoying - at least for the present. He had a playbook of prepared responses that would answer any value proposition about their own products, or any dirty laundry about his, that a competitor might have left in the mind of the customer.

The ace in the hole, however, were the meeting notes carefully crafted by his CFO following a couple of dinners with Bloom both here and at corporate headquarters back home, where they had flown him in on the company jet for dinner, drinks and 18 holes of world class golf.

Rapier had read the report so many times, it was almost committed to memory.  In a stroke of genius, the first contact team had determined that Bloom was the primary decision maker, that he was unhappy with his IT organization and looking for a friend who could speak the language of corporate finance – hence, the CFO of his firm would be the best person to build the relationship. They carefully planned a "coincidental meeting" of the two CFOs: "Mr. Bloom, it turns out that our chief financial officer will be in town on business Tuesday night, and we wondered whether you might be available to have dinner with him. No sales guys in attendance, no pitches. Just two finance guys breaking bread."

Who would turn down a great meal with a fellow CFO of a several hundred million dollar company? Bloom certainly wouldn't. It would fly in the face of everything he had learned in the Ivy Leagues about peer networking.

By the end of that dinner, without mentioning any technology, any product, or using any sales materials, Bloom was already a done deal. Shortly thereafter, the contract was inked for the compliance platform that the former CIO of the company had rejected. More importantly, Bloom was left with the impression that he was doing business not with a technology vendor but with a trusted partner.

The irony of this arrangement is that Bloom never saw the train that hit him. Bloom just inked a deal that the big analysts refer to as a ‘vendor lock-in’. It has everything to do with Rapier’s company’s top line, as a contribution from E&D’s bottom line. No matter whether any of it was fair, his bosses told him, business is business.

Today’s meeting was to expand the relationship by introducing Bloom to encryption technology that would prevent E&D from appearing on the front page of the *Journal* for having accidentally dropped an unencrypted backup tape off the back of a delivery truck en route to Iron Mountain or whichever offsite storage company they used.

Thank heaven for Enron and WorldCom and for the subsequent exuberance of legislators and regulators. Their tendency to set the bar too high made for heavy add-on business for his company and would probably be key to making his nut this year. He thought briefly about sending a thank you letter to his congressman.

“Encryption,” Rapier said aloud, wincing.

The wince, he realized, was a patterned response. Encryption sounded like technology. He wanted to come up with a non-technical expression to substitute for it, not because Bloom didn’t understand the term, but because Rapier’s training explicitly cautioned against the use of technical terminology.

He recalled the first time that this strategy – relationship selling -- was taught to him. In a room at a university not far from his corporate headquarters, Rapier (then a new hire to his current employer) was seated across a table from a more seasoned sales manager. It was role play, with Rapier playing the part of the account manager (aka salesman) and the veteran playing the role of a C-level executive he was out to pitch. Standing behind Rapier was a fellow with a length of bamboo cane pole. They began their conversation and each time Rapier used a technical expression, mentioned a product, or started to talk about technology performance, he received a rap on his back with the cane. Those observing the exercise would laugh and throw softee squeeze toys at his head to let him know he had done wrong.

Drilled into him during the exercise was the philosophy of relationship selling. No one was there to discuss products. Products were secondary. Sales collaterals were no where to be seen. Contracts were most certainly not in evidence. The idea was to let the customer feel comfortable about opening his corporate kimono and telling you all about his problems so you could come to his rescue, the good friend that you are, and get him to believe that you could solve his problem.

Encryption sounded too much like one of those techy terms. Better, Rapier thought, to substitute "confidentiality guarantee" or "integrity forward" solutions. Basically, his $1.5 million (never to be mentioned) would reduce the risk of an embarrassing disclosure of sensitive customer information. In a more jocular tone, "it will make E&D's risk of an embarrassing Gramm Leach Bliley remedy go away – not to mention the expense that might accrue to the 32 additional state laws that add liability to a GLB infraction."

Rapier winced again. It wasn't a Pavlovian reaction this time, but came from someplace deeper. Frankly, he didn't much like these games. He wanted to tell Bloom the facts and spell out the whole architecture for him so he could make a rational choice based on the real intrinsic strengths of the solution being presented.

In his previous life, selling tech products for another vendor, he used to have that opportunity.  He was pretty adept at making both a technical and a business value case for products.  He had so stated at his interview with his current job, but was told flat out that his acumen wasn't widely shared across all sales teams.  To fit in, he would have to abide by his employer's playbook.

Sell the relationship, he was instructed, to avoid the protracted due diligence process that most "targets" (prospective customers) would follow if given a choice between more or less equal options.  "This isn't Miracle on 34th Street, where Macy's Santa Claus recommends that customers go to Gimbles to get exactly what they are looking for," said his sales director during training, "This is real life in the world of tech sales where commoditization and standardization are causing differentiators between products from competing vendors to disappear rapidly."

Rapier understood the point, but he couldn't help but feel a bit "smarmy."  He rationalized his job by reiterating a core mantra:  do no harm.  Certainly, the solution that he was out to sell would do no harm to E&D.

In fact, if the consumer could be convinced to embrace his company’s technology from top to bottom, the resulting infrastructure would deliver the business value that was being promised.  As for the price tag, while high, it was certainly what the market was bearing these days.

He glanced in the rear view mirror, straightened his tie and ensured that his appearance was Yankee Doodle. Then, with an exhale, he pushed open the car door, collected his briefcase and headed for the front door.

Do no harm, he remembered again.  Clearing security, he passed a group of fellows with ICT badges.  They seemed to be in good spirits, congratulating one among them for what sounded like a new job.

He remembered the good old days, when deals like these were done in the back office, where information technology lives.