

Cheeseburger cheese: How customer awareness is shaping the IT and cloud marketplace

Recently I attended a SQL User Group here in Toronto and one of the fun parts of the event is that everyone was asked to speak. I opted for a lightning talk which was five minutes, and my presentation was created to chat about change, virtualization, SQL servers, and the new ways of IT. I put this presentation together as a quick set of slides to chat on how virtualization admins need to change in order to answer the needs of SQL administrators in order to find the balance and deliver the best performance.

One of the slides I put together was this one:



So you are probably wondering what exactly this means, and what this post is about. Here it goes!

Cheeseburger cheese versus Quarter Pounder Cheese

When I used to go to McDonald's I noticed at one point that there was an oddity on the menu. A Cheeseburger was 10 cents more than a Hamburger, but a Quarter Pounder with cheese was 25 cents more than a Quarter Pounder. So, I used to twist things up all the time when I would order and I would ask for a Quarter Pounder with cheese, but I wanted "Cheeseburger cheese" instead of "Quarter Pounder cheese" because it was 15 cents cheaper. Yes, this is nutty, but it was done out of fun more than anything.

In a world where we are surrounded by "secret menus" at restaurants, and custom orders at different shops in every variety. What I realized with this is that consumers have learned that they can order In-N-Out burgers "Animal Style", so why wouldn't they expect the same sort of secret menu from every other service they can purchase?

Shadow IT for the right reasons

We hear about the pains of dealing with Shadow IT where people in an organization shop out public cloud options and SaaS applications outside of their accepted IT practices. What is interesting about this is why it happens. It isn't because of a deep desire to go outside of the boundaries. This practice takes place because customers, even those within big enterprise organizations, have figured out that they can get their IT with Cheeseburger cheese to save money.

With an acute awareness of real capital service cost, the customer is now able to assess their own best-of-breed combination of IT services to use to achieve their business needs. Now is where we come into the picture.

✘ This is a good thing. Now let's get ahead of it!

As administrators, architects and designers, we have a requirement to answer to the business needs of our customers. That can be internal business customers, or external consumers of our products or

services. The theme that we are seeing here is that the reason that consumers are going outside the lines on buying IT services is that we have missed the mark on providing what they require.

These are exciting times when we have an engaged consumer who is willing to be active in the planning of their technology portfolio in the same way that they manage their other resources. If anything, this is a positive move towards a more DevOps method of managing IT services, and we need to embrace it as IT staffers and promote this as a part of our overall planning.

Many traditional IT organizations are deeply embedded in ITIL and legacy change management practices, and there is often a misunderstanding of the value that is gotten from enabling cloud-based service consumption in the enterprise. This does not necessarily need to be all public cloud resources, and I am a firm believer in private and hybrid cloud deployments as an effective way to provide the best service to our business partners.

Become your organization's Shadow IT

As the saying goes: "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em!"

Take a look at your IT practices, and despite any trepidation that you may have about the effectiveness of cloud services (public or private) on how you deliver to your business consumers, you can find surprisingly simple steps to increase your customer value. If you read the news on public cloud services, you will see that the race to lowest cost is truly on (<http://venturebeat.com/2014/03/26/amazon-goes-on-a-price-slashing-spree-maxing-out-at-a-61-cut/>).

Regardless of the platform or product you host on, the key will be taking a transformative approach. If you need help along your journey, feel free to reach out and either myself, or a pool of great community cloud advocates will be able to coach you through some winning steps to get you on the road to being a better IT organization.

There is a reason that I send so many people to read about Gene Kim's post on The Three Ways (<http://itrevolution.com/the-three-ways-principles-underpinning-devops/>) and that is because the customer and solution focus will drive you towards great efficiencies and happier business consumers!

Then you can proudly say that you serve all your burgers with Cheeseburger cheese ☐