

Enterprise Management Lab: A roadmap for emerging technology integration

Adapting to technological change. Emerging technologies are profoundly changing the business models of the diverse clients of SAP, a leading multinational provider of enterprise software for business operations and customer relations. A team of four first-year MBA students in the Enterprise Management Lab was tasked by Colleen Walsh, SAP's director of strategic business for North America, with developing a framework to help clients consider adopting new technologies.

Gathering expert insight. SAP arranged for the students to talk with the chief information officers at several of their Fortune 100 clients to learn about their diverse technology challenges. The team also visited SAP's North American headquarters in Philadelphia to meet with key internal executives. The students consulted with their faculty mentor and other MIT Sloan experts in strategy, operations, and marketing, and ultimately developed a dynamic framework companies can use to determine whether to adopt either mature or newer technologies to meet their immediate and longer-term business needs.

Employing thought leadership. The project was an unequivocal success, with concepts quickly employed by SAP in a pitch to Pepsi regarding a product launch. SAP also expressed interest in developing the thought leadership shown in the students' work into a white paper, and all four students were offered summer internships with SAP. Most importantly, the students were invited to present their work to executives at the highest level of SAP. As Walsh noted, "The students made quite an impression on the president of SAP North America, Jen Morgan! She would love to open a broader relationship of collaboration between the MIT MBA program and SAP. ... MIT's faculty and students add an informed and innovative energy to our innovation community."