

From The Corner Office

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Greetings friends, and welcome to the new year! Many people I talk to express similar sentiments striking a delicate balance of relief and cautious optimism leaving 2023 behind. It was a hard, transformative year, transitioning from the COVID-19 pandemic to post-pandemic life – trying to work out what the “new normal” looks like. It is yet to be seen how many of the changes made during lockdowns will become permanent. 2024 is likely to prove every bit as interesting. And weird. We in business are still dealing with the effects of severe, if predictable, inflation.

As Groucho Marx said, "Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong remedies." We must adjust our businesses accordingly. Uncomfortable and irritating? Yes. Feasible? Absolutely. We are also heading into an election year. While business is America's 12-cylinder engine, politics are the kids arguing in the backseat of the car. A friend of mine who runs an IT Support company asked whether it's possible to “unplug America and plug it back in.” Alas, not likely, and we'll need to deal with an erratically behaving national Operating System (I thought Windows XP was buggy) with black cats glitching in the Matrix. Sadly, no one bothered to do a 20th-century backup disk that we can reboot.

That said, I'm very optimistic. Despite the external circumstances of an unstable business and regulatory environment, we work every day to serve our clients as best as we can. Enterprise Iron is proud to contribute to our economy, employing a vast team and producing work that benefits others. We chose to enter the new year with enthusiasm especially as we expand our footprint into **Latin America**. To that end, we're kicking off the first newsletter of 2024 with three insightful pieces centered around fixing the old, optimizing the current, and adapting to the new:

Mark Kalafsky talks about modernization (despite not updating his golf clubs in a decade) as surprising amounts of our modern world still run on very old code (over 80% of ATMs still use COBOL despite how the generation capable of maintaining it is retiring). It is a slow-motion Y2K crisis. Modernization is required, and he'll cover how to plan for it, from the perspective of a guy that programmed in COBOL and has extensive experience in his field.

Alan Clay, a long-time Project Manager, is prone to what fighter pilots call target fixation and provides strong leadership to complex programs and projects. Stick him in the middle of a hurricane and within a day he'll have it mapped, organized, shoved into a Gantt Chart with dependencies, and operating smoothly. "Program and Project Management" may sound like an antiquated topic, but it's shocking how many resources are wasted due to poorly managed initiatives (any examples come to mind?).

Sergio DuBois, one of our best Solutions Architects, thinks big picture, but at a micro level of detail. He's one of several team members who have been exploring AI as it impacts our industry. There are powerful advantages to be gained from realistic applications, and Sergio writes about how generative AI (GPT) is revolutionizing customer experience and contact center operations.

We are excited by the opportunities that lie ahead this year and beyond as we continue to improve our effectiveness at client service, taking an honest and at times humorous approach to our outlook. We can all knock it out of the park if we work together. Feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

Keep Stompin' the Terra!

John Crocker, Co-Founder & EVP
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Starting Your Modernization Program: Assessment of Critical Applications as a Primary Step

By **Mark Kalafsky**, *SVP of Solutions & Delivery*

As part of an overall migration program, Enterprise Iron has successfully shared with clients that certain mission-critical applications need to be handled with top-priority care as they are modernized. Typically, there is a shortage of requisite Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in place to perform the **modernization**, which can stifle even the best of plans, as Business and Technology Stakeholders are unlikely to disassemble and recast their applications. The surrounding, less critical applications are often categorized as modernization targets, but the ROI for such endeavors often fails to meet an organization's standard for investment.

Recently, a client came to us with a question on how to best start their much needed, fully-funded modernization effort as they were hamstrung. Their critical business applications were running in production on a high-priced mainframe and updated regularly with new legal and compliance functionality, but there were few in-house application SMEs.

Even worse, the only resources who could read the legacy COBOL code were busy performing updates. No one had bothered over the 30+ years that the applications were running to document processes from either a macro or micro level. The data stores were old-school indexed files ("VSAM") and were never mapped properly. As is the trend, the maintenance budget was being slashed at the same time machine costs were on a steep, upward trend. An answer on how to spend the modernization dollars was due to the Technology Board in short order. What to do?



Enterprise Iron has invested heavily in modernization since the dawn of the decade. One of our strengths has always been to provide effective Technology Roadmaps to clients. We "modernized" our own Business/Technology Assessment process to include application modernization as a primary area of expertise. We invested in and implemented automation tools, along with building up a cadre of business and technology SMEs to meet the challenges our clients and industries require.

Our distressed client was thrilled with the results we delivered via a fixed-price assessment. A 15-week engagement was agreed upon and our team broke down the time into the following phases:

- **Agree Upon Assessment Goals:** At the on-site Project Kickoff, we collected on hand (although minimal) Business/Technology documentation that was available. Together, the teams defined enhanced assessment requirements including ranking, rating application criticality, and identifying any time constraints and data dependencies.
- **Initial Assessment:** Performed initial analysis of the source to determine the completeness of the code base. Provided our initial feedback including early warning around any exceptional areas of discovery concerns. Begin assessment feedback loop.
- **Deep Dive:** Accelerated the assessment and performed tool-driven analysis (augmented by our SMEs) to meet the criteria of the enhancements requested by the client. Provided a continuous feedback loop to ensure that findings matched the necessary production business processes and suggest/gain consensus on enhancements during migration. Performed a POC to demonstrate migration capabilities with the modernization tools that the client had previously selected.
- **Provide Iterative Results Through Customer Approved Completion:** Continuously drove the analysis through project completion ensuring all critical business functions were documented, a roadmap to platform conversion could be determined, and a high-level cost model provided. Results were presented to the Technology Board and updated to be integrated into the client's budget and workplan process.

We delivered an actionable plan to the client which could now be used as a model throughout other areas of their

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business. Our team has continued working within the organization to provide other modernization assessments and work with the Technology Delivery teams to implement the strategy outlined in the roadmap. The Assessment Roadmap is not a panacea; however, it is the first step to incorporating the goal many of our customers crave – critical applications recast utilizing modern languages, running on a cost-effective platform or in the Cloud.

If this project sounds similar to your current modernization needs, or you have any questions about Enterprise Iron's solutions, email info@enterpriseiron.com today to speak with our team!

Mastering the Art of Program and Project Management: Keys to Success and Governance

By **Alan Clay**, Senior Program Manager

Achieving success in the complex world of **Program and Project Management** requires a careful balance of strategic involvement and strict adherence to processes. Enterprise Iron has over 20 years of experience expertly managing projects and programs for a wide variety of clientele ([explore our case studies](#)).

At the program level, introducing a structured Program Management Office (PMO) is vital. A PMO grounded in well-defined policies, standards, and procedures along with easily accessible reference guides and project management expertise to support the day-to-day operations are instrumental in driving sustainable organizational success.

This framework should include aspects of governance, training, mentoring, and accountability, ensuring both consistent execution and management flexibility – and Enterprise Iron routinely manages these types of efforts for clients. Frequent and thorough project reviews, ideally on a bi-weekly basis, provide a comprehensive overview of the project portfolio, facilitating timely interventions and strategic decisions.

Despite the presence of PMOs in numerous organizations, challenges such as missed deadlines, budget overruns, and abrupt changes in project task statuses persist. These problems often originate from qualitative factors, including misalignment between business and

IT goals, vague project roles, underestimation of the impact of organizational change, or inadequate project management skills. Additionally, a preference for quick market access over the best solutions often aggravates these challenges. Addressing these issues involves accurately defining project requirements or user stories. Errors in this initial phase can result in expensive and time-consuming corrections later in the project.



Tackling these shortcomings demands a comprehensive approach, and a trusted partner, that includes a fully-committed project team, clear communication, effective execution of the project plan, and a robust PMO framework. This framework should encompass detailed measurement, monitoring, auditing, and accountability processes, ensuring that project execution is not only efficient but also strategically aligned with the organization's broader goals.

At the project level, the key to success lies in engaging dedicated sponsors and stakeholders who possess the authority and responsibility to make crucial decisions. These pivotal players must not only chart a clear course but also stay deeply involved, asking probing questions to ensure the project's well-being.

A team that includes Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) is essential for accurately defining business and technical requirements to establish a thorough project scope. Simultaneously, the development and communication of a well-thought-out execution plan, alongside accurate measurement, and monitoring practices like earned versus burned value analysis, are crucial for success.

Enterprise Iron has been providing professional management, technology, and operational services to the public and private sectors since our inception in 2002. Our



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expertise lies in developing tailored solutions with proper governance through clear communication and effective management strategies before implementing streamlined processes that deliver tangible results and customer satisfaction. Contact us at info@enterpriseiron.com to uncover all the ways we can help your business thrive!

How Generative AI is Revolutionizing Customer Experience and Contact Centers

By **Sergio DuBois**, Director of Solutions Architecture

In an era where customer experience is the battleground for businesses, generative Artificial Intelligence is emerging as a critical ally. This revolutionary technology is redefining how contact centers operate, bringing unprecedented efficiency and personalization. As Enterprise Iron's *Contact Centers Practice Lead*, I'll be covering three cutting-edge use cases for generative AI in customer experience and contact centers, illustrating the transformative power of this technology and the role it plays as part of our **Contact Center Solutions**.

Auto-Generating Customer Replies

The first significant breakthrough is the ability of AI to auto-generate customer replies. Platforms like **Salesforce's Service GPT** represent a leap forward in understanding and responding to customer queries. Here's how it works: the AI analyzes incoming queries, sifts through vast databases, and crafts responses that are not just relevant, but personalized.

This technology doesn't replace human agents; instead, it augments their capabilities by reducing response times and enhancing customer satisfaction. The implications are vast – from improved customer engagement to higher efficiency in handling queries.

Real-Time Agent Assistance

Zendesk's solution for expanding agent replies illustrates the second use case. By initiating a response, agents allow the AI to take over and flesh out detailed, context-appropriate replies. This integration of AI helps agents

Contact Center Solutions

Seamless customer interactions and optimized operations are the cornerstones of business success. It's vital to understand these needs and have the pertinent expertise to craft tailored solutions that solve any Contact Center problem. Enterprise Iron turns these challenges into opportunities by transforming your business using the many benefits of operating a Contact Center out of Puerto Rico.

UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITIES IN CONTACT CENTER OPERATIONS, TOGETHER:

-  **Optimized Operational Efficiency**
-  **Global Reach & Extended Support**
-  **Enhanced Risk Management**
-  **Innovative Technology & Training**
-  **Agile Scaling & Tailored Integrations**
-  **Focused Business Growth**

Why Outsource to Puerto Rico?

Skilled Bilingual Workforce | Cost-effective Rates | U.S. Law & Time Zone Compatibility
Favorable Business Environment | Cultural Affinity to U.S. Markets | Streamlined BC/DR



State-of-the-Art Facilities & Security

Robust operations and unwavering data protection

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-  Expansion-Ready
-  Remote Work Flexibility
-  Seamless Transition
-  Above Average Agent Retention
-  HIPAA Compliance
-  Commitment to Data Privacy
-  Proactive Breach Response
-  Security Management Expertise
-  Remote Work Security

Cutting-Edge Software & Strategic Partnerships

Dynamic systems and strategies empowered by expertise

-  Versatile Platforms
-  Customization Options
-  Integration Strength
-  Dedicated Support 24/7
-  Remote Management
-  Bright Pattern, NICE CXOne, AWS
-  Connect, Salesforce, and more
-  CRM Integration: Zendesk, Microsoft
-  Dynamics 365, ServiceNow, and Oracle Service Cloud
-  Telecom Excellence

Seamless Communication & Resilient Infrastructure

Unparalleled service uptime and connectivity at every interaction

-  Highly Available, Scalable Solutions
-  Cloud-Based Services
-  Advanced Security Protocols
-  Optimized Server Architecture
-  Uptime Guarantee
-  Omnichannel Engagement
-  Cloud Telecommunications
-  Reliable Call Quality
-  Global Reach

Excellence with Enterprise Iron

A tailored approach for a superior customer experience

-  Discovery & Engagement
-  Needs Assessment
-  Full Outsourcing or Co-Sourcing Engagement Models
-  Value Additions
-  Dedicated Account Management
-  Monthly Analytics Reporting
-  Custom Integrations
-  Pricing & Provisioning
-  Flexible Pricing Models
-  Provisioning Choices: On-Premise, Remote/Nearshore, or a Hybrid
-  Transition & Onboarding
-  Smooth Transition Guarantee
-  Training and Integration

Interested? Email our team to learn more: contactcenters@enterpriseiron.com

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handle a higher volume of queries without compromising the quality of each interaction. The impact? Agents can focus on the more complex aspects of customer service, leaving routine responses to AI, thereby elevating the overall quality of customer interaction. This synergy between human empathy and AI efficiency is setting new standards in customer service.

Enhanced Active Listening

Our third spotlight is on AI-driven note-taking, which is exemplified by **Sprinklr's innovation**. This technology addresses a critical challenge in customer service – the need for comprehensive, accurate note-taking without compromising engagement. By automating the process of recording key details during customer interactions, agents are liberated to focus entirely on the customer, leading to better understanding and resolution of issues. This not only streamlines the process but also significantly enhances the quality of customer interaction.

These use cases are just the tip of the proverbial AI iceberg. Generative AI's implications extend to predictive analytics, enhanced customer profiling, and more dynamic customer journey mapping. Businesses embracing these technologies are witnessing improved customer retention, increased sales, and more efficient operations.

Enterprise Iron: Your Trusted Partner in Contact Center Transformations

As the potential of generative AI is explored, the need for expert guidance and implementation becomes crucial – and Enterprise Iron's Contact Center Solutions delivers that expertise. We can seamlessly integrate pertinent AI technologies into your existing systems, ensuring that your contact center is not just keeping up, but a leader in the AI revolution for customer experience.

Our operations in Puerto Rico offer a unique advantage that benefits our clients. The region's favorable business environment and competitive labor rates, combined with its legal compatibility as a commonwealth of the U.S., make Puerto Rico an ideal location for nearshore contact center services. By partnering with Enterprise Iron, our clients benefit from cost-effective solutions without having to compromise on quality or efficiency.

The journey into the future of contact centers, powered by generative AI, is not just about adopting new technology, but rather reimagining customer engagement as a whole. With Enterprise Iron, your business is not just adapting, it's evolving to meet the needs of the modern customer.

Schedule a call with our team to discuss your needs and learn more about how we can revolutionize your contact center operations!

Email: contactcenters@enterpriseiron.com

We understand that every engagement is one-of-a-kind, just like a snowflake, so we develop and deliver custom solutions that fit the unique needs of each client.

Our team specializes in:

- **Business Assessments**
- **Technology**
- **Support**
- **Compliance**
- **Data**

