Prudent Technology Investment

The most expensive technology decisions are made in the demo, not the negotiation.

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Organisations rarely lose money on technology because the technology was bad. They lose it because they bought a demo and inherited an operating model. The demo lasts an hour. The operating model — integration, migration, support, training, upgrade cycles, and the slow gravity of lock-in — lasts a decade. Prudence is the discipline of pricing the decade.

The questions that price the decade

Four questions do most of the work. What does this cost **in total** — not the licence, but the integration, the people, and the processes it forces to change? What must be true of our organisation for this to deliver — and is it true? What is the exit — if this fails or the vendor falters, what does leaving cost, and did we preserve the right to leave? And who owns the outcome — a named executive accountable for the value case, not a committee accountable for the rollout?

> *Every technology purchase is two purchases: the system, and the future flexibility you sold to get it.*

Prudence is not slowness

None of this argues for buying less or deciding slowly. Under-investment quietly compounds just as over-purchase does — legacy risk is a cost line too, even if no invoice carries it. The discipline argues for something more precise: matching the size of the diligence to the size of the irreversibility. A reversible tool deserves a fast yes. A platform that will hold your data, shape your processes, and take years to leave deserves the full interrogation — however good the demo felt.

Boards feel this instinctively about factories and acquisitions. The shift is to treat significant technology commitments with the same seriousness: as capital allocation with a governance obligation attached, reviewed against the value case that justified it — not as procurement events that end when the contract is signed.

If the technology spend is rising and the confidence in it is not, that is the conversation to have.

Integral advises boards and leadership teams on technology investment decisions — before the contract, not after it.
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