

The background is a dark, textured surface with numerous small, bright pink and white specks, resembling a starry night sky or a microscopic view of a material. A white rectangular box with a thin black border is positioned in the lower half of the image, containing the main text.

3 TECHNOLOGY TRENDS

Top Businesses Are Embracing in 2019

The logo for 'entara' features a series of small pink dots forming a curved line above the word 'entara' in a lowercase, serif font.

entara



“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent. It is the one that is most adaptable to change.” This well-known quote has been linked to Charles Darwin for years, but the first known publication was by a Louisiana State University business professor named Leon C. Megginson. Whether talking about the evolution of a species or the probability of a business flourishing in a changing industry, it is true: those who survive know how to change.

It cannot be denied that technology is rapidly changing how every industry functions. This has been a difficult pill to swallow for some businesses over the years, with many taking a reactive rather than proactive approach to their technological infrastructure. Even in 2019, many businesses continue to view

their IT department as a reactive cost center responsible for fixing what breaks, rather than a proactive force that can differentiate their company from ever-increasing competition.

However, this may be the year that more widespread change is coming. Studies show that there is a **high correlation between those companies who have significantly invested in technology and top-ranking companies in general.** Additionally, more and more companies are realizing that **better technology means happier associates and better served clients.**

With this in mind, we have compiled the 3 technology trends that top businesses, regardless of size, are embracing to help them drive efficiencies and competitive edge in 2019.

1) The Days of “Break/Fix” Are Over

There will always be systems that break, and most companies these days have either an internal staff or a Managed Service Provider who will quickly react, but your IT service levels must go farther. Much farther.

All companies, in every industry, need to be aware of what’s coming in the technological world, know how to leverage emerging technologies to gain competitive advantages, and then have a thoughtful progression of logical steps to get to their best future.

Companies need a fully-baked IT strategy that is ever-evolving to move them into the future at a steady pace. Most top-performing companies already have their technology projects planned out in detail for the coming quarter, and they also have a full roadmap of IT projects and timelines planned for the coming year if not beyond. It should be the accountability of the Managed Services Provider or internal IT department to be driving this roadmap with an ROI mindset to the bottom line, both today and into the future.

At Entara our client IT roadmaps are separated into four swimlanes based on the Gartner model of Run, Grow, Transform. We also add Secure. However, you categorize your roadmap, it is essential to have one that will ensure you don’t get left behind.

2) A “Red Team, Blue Team” Approach to IT Security

All the hype about security is, unfortunately, grounded. We have seen an exponential uptick in cybercrime even in 2018. Security is obviously becoming an increasingly visible issue for all organizations and need good answers to the questions that clients are asking around the security of their data. However, “How secure are we?” is a question that still rightfully lurks in the minds of many executives, and **simply authorizing a pen test is NOT the answer.**

Despite an increased focus on security projects, many companies lack confidence in the security of their overarching technology infrastructure, as well as in their ability to quickly and practically restore operations after a crippling problem. **Simply “checking compliance boxes” for security and risk management is not enough to protect companies from the day to day realities that are ever-evolving.**

On average, companies with less than 350 employees have an average of one full-time employee focused on information security. However, the world of cybersecurity is as broad as technology itself. **No one person should ever be expected to “protect” the company. It is an ever-evolving, complex, critical, and 24x7 requirement. It takes a team with clear accountabilities and well-defined processes.**

At Entara we are one of the few vendors saying that one vendor is not enough. In an era of ubiquitous security firms, with managed security firms popping up at a rapid clip, **many advertise a**

“complete” cybersecurity offering. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Nobody, including us, should be able to grade their own homework. Instead, we are staunch adopters of the tried and true principle of “red team, blue team.”

As the military has long known, and as breached enterprises figured out, **it is not smart to have the same people who manage systems also audit them for cybersecurity holes.** That’s why companies are turning to multiple partners to provide a fully transparent breakdown of the areas they need to address to stay secure.

Originally, the “red team, blue team” approach was employed by the military to test force-readiness. The red team would attack something, and the blue team would defend it. In the 1990s, this tactic began to be used by security companies to test IT security systems. The aim of this exercise is to understand a business’ ability to detect and respond to a cyberattack. It is also a way to determine the level of security maturity the business has reached.

Companies are finally realizing that to truly protect their employees and clients, they need to invest in this approach to their IT security. **It is also not a one-time thing: It is a new way of life.** Bringing in a red team and doing the subsequent remediation is not a project. It’s unfortunately a new requirement in businesses today who wish to remain secure.



3) Process Automation that Drives ROI

In the first trend of moving past break-fix and driving technology from a well-thought-out roadmap, this trend of moving towards automation is certainly one of the most transformational projects that companies are undertaking right now.

If you have not already begun the journey towards automation, then 2019 may be your year!

Before you can start handling your cases with Artificial Intelligence, **the first step is to identify your most basic repeatable business processes.** Simplifying and streamlining these tasks and supporting processes will drive efficiency for your company and allows your staff to focus on the tasks at hand that require attorney-level thinking, rather than rote business tasks. Examples of processes where automation can begin include new employee onboarding or offboarding, approving billing adjustments, getting a new laptop, or preparing for a standard new client meeting.

So how do you begin automating these processes? And what platform is best? These are key questions that we hear regularly. There is a plethora of software out there that does “business process automation.” Be careful! Many of these platforms will help you create some initial automation, but then that investment will lead into either a dead end or a costly integration project when you try to introduce subsequent automation, AI, and integration with your IT operations. The key is that you can’t fully automate what is not organized into a proper database of information assets. All of the data elements used in an automated process must be captured and continually updated in what we call a “CMDB,” or Configuration Management Data Base. Once you have this database organized, you need automated electronic processes to keep it current and accurate in real time. And then, and only then, can you start thinking about automation.

The truth is that most platforms that provide for this level of process automation are very expensive, and the costs of hiring and retaining talent to maintain these systems is even more expensive. ServiceNow remains the clear leader in these types of platforms, but the ROI of undertaking a ServiceNow implementation just isn’t there for most mid-sized companies in any vertical market.

However, for a sophisticated managed services provider, it’s their bread and butter. At Entara, all of our managed services are provided through a ServiceNow-based platform, EntaraWorks. It’s a requirement for us to have all of our clients’ assets organized and continually updated.

We have started providing the ability for our clients to begin automating their business processes by leveraging their ready-made and fully-managed underlying platform without ever incurring the six-figure and year-long minimal investment in standing up a system like this. **That is when the ROI on process automation inside a company becomes really compelling.**

From there, the possibilities are endless. Task-based activities become workflow-driven, automated and ultimately reportable in real-time. And once you are on this type of a platform, tomorrow’s Artificial Intelligence “plug-ins” will be just that: elements that we can plug right into your already-organized, already-accurate, already-automated technology environment.



Key Takeaways: Tomorrow, Today, and Beyond

Today, we are challenging clients to demand more from their IT firm. Rather than simply hiring a firm to keep your team up and running and checking that task off your list, ask yourself: How is your company using technology to transform your business? Grow your business? Secure your data? Prepare you for the inevitable sweeping changes of technology, including AI?

Your tomorrow is closer than you think. **This year can be the year that you nail down your security strategy with an enterprise grade solution**, which needs to include a partnership of internal and multiple external resources. This can also be the year that you begin your journey towards automation by starting with your common, repeatable business processes and integrating them into your IT operational database.

And once those building blocks are in place, then looking beyond becomes pretty exciting for any company. The efficiencies that

can be quickly gained by leveraging AI solutions, client portals, and customized automations are there for the taking.

While change may not come easily, whether it is establishing a new habit or preparing your business for the coming wave of automation – **change is inevitable and often presents opportunities for growth**. And ready or not, if we don't embrace change, we run the risk of being left behind by a small or mighty disruption that often happens fast.

We refer to the brightly colored dots in our new logo as “the horizon,” representing the journey from today through beyond. As we embark upon this journey together with our clients, we are fueled by a clear vision and a relentless drive to create the best path forward from today into an extraordinarily efficient and brilliant future.



In 2001, Linda Maclachlan started her own top-tier technology support service, YJT Solutions. After 17 years of growing as a managed service provider, the company evolved into Entara.

Linda recognizes the responsibility of discovering and deploying the latest technologies and solutions that, working together with clients, will create successful futures. She is also responsible for guiding Entara's services strategy and developing partnerships with other tech leaders as we help our clients plan for the IT complexities of the future.

Widely recognized as a leader in the Chicago IT community, Linda serves on the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. An avid promoter of Chicago business, she was a finalist and then judge for the annual City of Chicago's James Tyree Emerging Leadership Award.

A sought-after speaker among the IT community, Linda has a bachelor's degree in Computer Science from Iowa

State University and her Masters of Management degree from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, graduating cum laude from both programs. She began her career at Accenture as a Financial Services practice manager.

Linda Maclachlan | CEO/Owner at Entara



If you are looking for the right partner to prepare your law firm for the today, tomorrow, and beyond of technological innovation, contact Entara.

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