

The world of software is evolving from applications to platforms

By [Philip Meyer](#)

24 Jun 2015

The consumerisation of IT and the rise of social media and mobile apps are changing employees' expectations of the software that they must use to do their jobs every day. That means that payroll and HR software vendors and the enterprises that use their products must look to provide end-users with software as intuitive, attractive, and social as the personal tools people use daily on their smartphones.



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What the end-user wants

That's according to Phillip Meyer, central R&D director at Sage AAMEA (Australia, Asia, Middle East and Africa). "One of the trends we're seeing is that end-users want applications that resemble tools they use all the time in their personal lives, such as Facebook. People want to interact with their employers as simply as they do with consumer services and apps," says Meyer.

"They want an interface that is as attractive and simple when they need to apply for leave, log their work hours or file an expense claim. Indeed, it could even be possible that something like Facebook could one day become the portal for companies' interactions with their employees."

For now, however, most enterprises are still tied to time-consuming, often paper-based interactions with their employees, says Meyer. Instead, it should be as simple for an employee to, for example, let the line manager and the HR department know that he or she will be on sick leave as it is to update a Facebook status. "We still are stuck in our old ways of doing things - HR and payroll processes are still not as easy as they should be," he adds.

Shift from apps to platforms

Meyer says that even though many enterprises have embraced mobility and the cloud to give employees access to company applications and data wherever they are, this has brought its own challenges. Most companies have seen the number of mobile apps they must support multiply at a frightening rate; from the end-user's perspective, it also becomes annoying to have dozens of apps on his or her smartphone or tablet.

As a result, the software industry is seeing a gradual shift away from discrete applications to socially connected, cloud-based platforms that simplify life for IT administrators and business users alike. "An average small business has up to eight software systems to run the company," says Meyer. "It's complex to support, creates training issues, and hinders employees' productivity because they need to switch between so many different tools throughout the day. We're hearing demands for mobile and social platforms that empower end-users to connect customer, accounting, payroll and finance data from one system, accessible from any device, anywhere."

"In future, business software will no longer represent different systems or layers of complexity - it'll be simple, collaborative, and real time," says Meyer. "This will allow companies and employees to focus on their core business without worrying about the underlying technology."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Philip Meyer, central R&D director for Sage AAMEA

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