

# Global IT Strategy

## *The Client*

Corporate Executive Board (CEB, <http://www.executiveboard.com/>) is a best practice research and advisory firm that offers Fortune 500 companies guidance in areas from Finance and HR to IT. CEB's membership includes 70% of the Fortune 100 and 80% of the Fortune 500, and spans over 50 countries with approximately 4,700 members.

## *Business Challenge:*

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>
<b>Challenge</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rapid growth</li><li>• Disparate IT platforms</li><li>• Unstable environment</li><li>• Sensitive data repository</li><li>• Corporate consolidation &amp; relocation</li><li>• Global expansion</li></ul>
<b>The Cavan Solution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess existing IT environment &amp; resources</li><li>• Develop global IT strategy and framework</li><li>• Design &amp; specify new IT architecture and systems</li><li>• Develop Data Center strategy</li><li>• Project Manage deployment and IT initiatives</li></ul>
<b>Benefits &amp; Results</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• IT Strategy aligned with business goals and objectives</li><li>• Stable flexible and scalable IT infrastructure</li><li>• Standardize architecture &amp; platforms</li><li>• Secure, high-availability data center</li><li>• Successful corporate relocation with zero business impact</li></ul>

CEB rapidly grew in between 2001 and 2005, during which it expanded into several global markets, had five office locations in the DC area alone, was supporting three data center spaces, and was struggling to maintain availability in a widely disparate telecommunications and networking environment.

In addition, CEB is believed to have the largest single, private repository of confidential corporate information in the World. Information of this nature is extremely valuable and sensitive, and must be secured, backed up and made highly-available.

In 2005, CEB made a decision to consolidate all offices in the Washington D.C. area into a single headquarters facility in Arlington, Virginia. The new 22 story tower had over 600,000 square feet of space and would be home to 2500 employees. The new facility would also house the corporate data center.

The Cavan Group was selected by CEB to provide consulting and advisory expertise to conduct a holistic assessment of the existing IT environment, develop a global IT strategy and manage the implementation of all IT initiatives.

## ***The Cavan Solution***

Our first objective was to clearly identify the scope, schedule and resources required to complete such a major undertaking that spanned a dozen locations across four continents.

We determined that, at a minimum, we needed to address:

- Strategy (Global IT and Data Center)
- Infrastructure for the new headquarters
- Telecommunications systems and services
- Converged Technologies - Local Area Network (LAN), Wide Area Network (WAN), Telephony, Security
- Servers & Storage architecture

Within those disciplines (or Technology Towers, as they became known) we structured our analysis using a reference framework known as ITIL (IT Infrastructure Library). Cavan Group developed a hybrid version of ITIL in which we refer to a project structure under headings of People, Process and Tools. Within each of the above Technology Towers, we applied the People, Process and Tools framework to provide a clear and concise project scope outline and strategy.

### ***Strategy Development:***

We first developed and outlined an IT Strategy and Budget that would provide an IT roadmap for the new headquarters/data center project and a global strategy serving as a framework for the subsequent 5 to 7 years. We began by engaging a broad Cavan Group team of subject matter experts and project managers to be responsible for each of the IT towers. We then evaluated the CEB resources and assigned them to tasks based on their competencies and skill sets. The team's directive was to develop a complete assessment of the existing conditions, and document issues the client has been experiencing - objectives they would like pursue as part of the migration and preferences for vendors and technology. Based on that analysis, we would provide recommendations, strategy, direction and budget for project approval and execution.

Our guiding principle strategy development is SWOT - Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Being able to recognize these values within the organization, from the individual to the Business and Industry as a whole, and understand the implications of decisions made is what ultimately makes a project successful.

The end result of the strategy process was a 150 page document that outlined in detail the immediate steps the client needed to follow to stabilize the current environment,

put the requisite IT framework in place, and prepare for the corporate relocation project.

***Data Center Migration:***

A stable Server & Storage environment is a critical component of IT and, in particular, for CEB's business.

CEB's sever and storage environment had evolved in a reactionary fashion to meet immediate business needs but not within the framework of a defined architecture. It became apparent that a complete overhaul of the environment was required.

The Cavan Group worked closely with IT and the business to re-architect the entire environment and to consolidate the individual arrays into a single, manageable environment that could be easily migrated. Such an environment could be virtualized to achieve the same goals as previously desired and ultimately be more efficient.

Our role here was to ensure the overall migration would be successfully executed and therefore transparent to the business. It involved significant preparation further complicated by the interim move to a Co-Lo facility due to construction delays.

***Project Management:***

Cavan Group's responsibility was to ensure all of the Technology Towers and scope outlined above were executed in a timely and efficient manner. With a 3 year program that included opening the new headquarters building, new data center, DR facility and multiple offices around the world, the Project Management process was complex, to say the least.

Cavan provided a team of on-site resources responsible for the management of each IT initiative, under the umbrella of a senior resources (????) acting as overall Program Manager. Our Project management tools and process ensured timely completion of all objectives with real-time status updates to the executive team and project sponsors.

***Results***

CEB successfully relocated their corporate operations to a new 600,000 sq ft building with stable, high-performance converged LAN/VoIP technology; consolidated their three data centers to a single high-availability facility with a secondary DR location; implemented a new SAN with full data mirroring at the DR site; rolled out six new remote offices around the globe.