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Abstract:
The article reports on the agreement between Computer Sciences Corp. (CSC) and Atalos Corp. to resell its Business Productivity Online Suits (BPOS) offerings. Industry analysts asserted that the agreement will forecast an acceptance of Microsoft Corp.’s software plus services plan which was disregarded by competitor cloud computing vendors. It is noted that BPOS includes hosted version of Microsoft Exchange, SharePoint, Office Communicator and Live Meeting.
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Services Firms Boost Microsoft’s SaaS Plans

CSC and Azaleos agree to resell the vendor’s hosted BPOS offerings. By Eric Lai

Microsoft Corp’s late move into the hosted software business gained some headway this month when two outsourcers — Computer Sciences Corp. and Azaleos Corp. — agreed to resell its Business Productivity Online Suite (BPOS).

Analysts said the agreements could portend a gradual acceptance of Microsoft’s “software plus services” plan, which has long been dismissed by rival cloud computing vendors as the rear-guard strategy of a doomed incumbent.

BPOS, which includes hosted versions of Microsoft’s Office suite, Outlook, Exchange and Lync, will be available Oct. 1 at a price of $15 per user per month. CSC and Azaleos will resell the BPOS services, allowing its customers to mix and match on-site and online messaging services.

Nothing fancy: BPOS is clearly picking up steam, and I think we’ll see more hybrid messaging vendors in the fairly near future,” Osterman said. While most large organizations may be hesitant to “migrate tens of thousands of on-premises users to a hosted model, [many also have] lots of users at smaller locations” where hosted services could make sense, he said. “This would apply to just about every insurance company, retail company, bank, brokerage, retailer — we see lots of them moving toward a hybrid model.”

EXPANDED OFFERINGS

Brian Boruff, vice president

much every RFP we’re involved in, Microsoft is in there with BPOS,” Godd said. “All of the CIOs are considering and looking at it, but they are unsure about jumping in with both feet.”

Bill Pray, an analyst at Midvale, Utah-based Burton Group, said moving to support hosted services presents challenges to services companies like CSC and Azaleos. “Azaleos’ competency has been the management of on-premises systems,” Pray said. “This offering is management of a different kind and requires brokering a relationship and technology needs between the customer and Microsoft. It takes a different set of skills and practices that Azaleos will need to develop.”

Nonetheless, Boruff, a longtime Microsoft executive who joined CSC earlier this year, said he expects the addition of BPOS to the CSC product line to help the firm better compete with rivals like Electronic Data Systems Corp., Northrop Grumman Corp. and IBM in the large-enterprise and government markets.
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MacCormack, Alan; Iansiti, Marco

1. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Sloan School of Management
2. Harvard Business School

Many studies highlight the challenges facing incumbent firms in responding effectively to major technological transitions. Though some authors argue that these challenges can be overcome by firms possessing what have been called dynamic capabilities, little work has described in detail the critical resources that these capabilities leverage or the processes through which these resources accumulate and evolve. This paper explores these issues through an in-depth exploratory case study of one firm that has demonstrated consistently strong performance in an industry that is highly dynamic and uncertain. The focus for the present study is Microsoft, the leading firm in the software industry. The focus on Microsoft is motivated by providing evidence that the firm's product performance has been consistently strong over a period of time in which there have been several major technological transitions—one indicator that a firm possesses dynamic capabilities. This argument is supported by showing that Microsoft's performance when developing new products in response to one of these transitions—the growth of the World Wide Web—was superior to a sample of both incumbents and new entrants. Qualitative data are presented on the roots of Microsoft's dynamic capabilities, focusing on the way that the firm develops, stores, and evolves its intellectual property. Specifically, Microsoft codifies knowledge in the form of software “components,” which can be leveraged across multiple product lines over time and accessed by firms developing complementary products. The present paper argues that the process of componentization, the component “libraries” that result, the architectural frameworks that define how these components interact, and the processes through which these components are evolved to address environmental changes represent critical resources that enable the firm to respond to major technological transitions. These arguments are illustrated by describing Microsoft's response to two major technological transitions.

Cited References


Alan MacCormack and Marco Iansiti

Many studies highlight the challenges facing incumbent firms in responding effectively to major technological transitions. Though some authors argue that these challenges can be overcome by firms possessing what have been called dynamic capabilities, little work has described in detail the critical resources that these capabilities leverage or the processes through which these resources accumulate and evolve. This paper explores these issues through an in-depth exploratory case study of one firm that has demonstrated consistently strong performance in an industry that is highly dynamic and uncertain. The focus for the present study is Microsoft, the leading firm in the software industry. The focus on Microsoft is motivated by providing evidence that the firm's product performance has been consistently strong over a period of time in which there have been several major technological transitions—one indicator that a firm possesses dynamic capabilities. This argument is supported by showing that Microsoft's performance when developing new products in response to one of these transitions—the growth of the World Wide Web—was superior to a sample of both incumbents and new entrants. Qualitative data are presented on the roots of Microsoft's dynamic capabilities, focusing on the way that the firm develops, stores, and evolves its intellectual property. Specifically, Microsoft codifies knowledge in the form of software "components," which can be leveraged across multiple product lines over time and accessed by firms developing complementary products. The present paper argues that the process of componentization, the component "libraries" that result, the architectural frameworks that define how
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Microsoft Corporation

Company Profile

Publication Date: 7 Oct 2008
Microsoft Corporation

SWOT Analysis

Microsoft Corporation (Microsoft) develops, manufactures, licenses, and supports software products for many computing devices. Microsoft has shown a strong performance through its operations. Strong operating performance lends financial stability to the company, which could be leveraged to seek more growth avenues in the future. However, intensifying competition could affect Microsoft's margins and market share.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong brand image</td>
<td>MSN's low search engine market share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent financial performance and strong balance sheet</td>
<td>Slow adoption of Windows Vista</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing research and development investments</td>
<td>EU penalty on Microsoft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Threats</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion into consumer technology business</td>
<td>Intense competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing importance of virtualization</td>
<td>Open source model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software plus services</td>
<td>Threat of piracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strengths**

- Strong brand image
- Microsoft has developed a strong brand image since its inception in 1975. Since 1988, the company has appeared regularly in the Harris Interactive annual Best Brands poll. According to the...
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