



## Henk ten Bos

Henk is Chief Information Officer at Ageas and responsible for the IT strategy and Change Management office of the Life Insurance Company in Hong Kong. He has been active in the Insurance industry for more than 20 years with a continuous focus on business/ICT alignment. He has a vast interest in IT Innovation and has been leading initiatives that involve implementation of mobile and cloud initiatives.

# Take Your Time with Disruptive Technologies

If you are working in IT these are exciting times. There is a lot of focus on new technologies like cloud, mobile, social and big data, and many companies - especially here in Asia - are able to invest in them.

As a CIO I am frequently invited to attend and speak at events. During these events there is usually a good mix of strategy presentations from analysts, a number of vendors presenting their solutions and a few CIOs sharing their practical experience and personal views on IT strategies.

## Is 'disruptive' good?

These events can provide a lot of information about trends, strategies and solutions. However, there's one thing that concerns me. This year especially it seems to be very popular to use the word 'disruptive' in the title of an event. For any of the four IT strategies the message is: 'this disruptive technology will completely change your business. Change today or be out of business tomorrow'.

Such messaging could create a lot of confusion and concern for some attendees. This is especially true for IT managers who are working in a context where they still spend a significant amount of time running the existing business and 'keeping the lights on'. They simply don't have the time, resources or budgets to work on all of these areas. In fact there are very few companies I know who are able to spend a significant amount of their resources on these headline-grabbing new technologies, especially where the immediate business case is not entirely clear.

## Take a step back

It is still very important to look at your own business context and decide if a new technology makes sense. Then it's up to you to focus on using that technology to improve

the business or create a competitive advantage. No matter how promising the opportunity of a new technology might seem, every implementation still requires a proper financial business case and has to be aligned with the strategy and priorities of the business.

The word 'disruptive' also seems to indicate that you should rush into an implementation, otherwise you might be too late and a competitor will have taken your business. It is definitely true that the world is changing fast and that technology is evolving at an enormous rate. Nevertheless, implementing new technology is still a change and needs to be treated as a proper 'Change Project'. It will take time and needs to ensure the changes to people and processes are properly managed.

New technologies are important, very promising and do require attention from IT leaders and their organisation. Nevertheless, it is also important to keep your feet on the ground and not to let analysts and vendors drive you crazy. Determine your own speed and scope and ensure you take one step at a time. 🚶

