

# Utilizing a Bimodal Technology Organization to Bring Digital Solutions to the Entertainment Payroll Industry

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By Alex Godelman

Over the past several years, the benefits and risks of a bimodal technology organization have been extensively debated and written about across several industries. The idea of bifurcating new from old and slow from fast has won fans and critics alike.

The brainchild of the folks at Gartner, Inc., bimodal technology organization is the practice of managing two separate, coherent technology delivery models. Mode 1 is traditional and sequential, emphasizing stability, safety and accuracy. Mode 2 is exploratory and nonlinear, emphasizing agility and speed. The approach enables organizations to capitalize on both approaches while addressing the “digital divide.”

For the entertainment payroll industry, the pros of a bimodal organization significantly outweigh the cons as the concept represents the perfect balance of agility with alignment. That’s because the industry has an interesting blend of legacy deliverables as well as emerging services that almost create the bifurcation by themselves.

Payroll and residuals processing have been paper-intensive, hands-on processing tasks for multiple generations – services that support film and television production, commercials, event venues and even live theater productions. Even more-recent add-ons – such as workers’ compensation insurance and health insurance coverage – have fit the same mold.

But the industry – led by [Cast & Crew Entertainment Services](#) – is digitizing both payroll and production, bringing electronic services to the entire entertainment production lifecycle. And while the changes are welcome and will be revolutionary, the processing needs to continue apace even as the new products are developed.

This, in fact, is the classic definition that companies with older technology environments need to move quickly to stay ahead.

Enter the bimodal technology organization.

“The speed of digital business not only is dictating a new speed for IT, but a new pace for providers’ own internal innovation if they want to remain relevant and competitive,” says Claudio Da Rold, vice president and distinguished analyst at Gartner. “While a few service providers have



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begun to employ bimodal capabilities in some business units, they face substantial cultural and mind-set challenges in scaling this across the organization."

Indeed, success is very much dependent on effectively changing an organization's culture. For instance, there is a huge difference between implementing bimodal on a project-by-project basis and putting it into place across the entire organization.

Greg Davidson, a consultant at AlixPartners, says blending innovation work into operations positions increases the attractiveness of those jobs and causes workers to keep up to date on new developments which, in turn, helps employee morale.

"When staffers work on a mix of operational and innovative tasks, projects tend to be more successful," he says. "The infrastructure people who do the 'keep-it-running' work can plan better, they're aware of the resource requirement," he says. "They may know and often do know about performance issues – something that the other team might not be aware of – and those are the hidden land mines."

Implementing a successful bimodal technology organization also is highly dependent on working hand-in-hand with your customers.

As [Cast & Crew](#) develops and brings to market its suites of digital payroll and production tools, we in fact are working collaboratively with key clients, both in the design phase and in beta testing. Gartner's Da Rold believes this type of approach is essential. "Providers that fail to co-innovate with their customers will not realize the full potential of digital business," he says.

We also are moving to product-focused matrix teams that are autonomous and accountable for a small sub-segment of our technology ecosystem.

Our product vision is clear, our approach is exciting and we are building the right team to help us accomplish our objective. We are at the forefront of some very exciting changes.

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