Brexit – IT implications for Irish firms

Speculation is rife about the impact of Brexit but one area to consider is the implications for IT. The following are five elements that you need to think about and recommendations on immediate actions.

1. Your applications

If your key IT applications are produced by a UK firm, find out what impact Brexit has on their road map for evolving their products. Some UK firms, particularly those with an EU customer base, may put plans on hold until the future implications of Brexit **for them** become clear. However, **you** need to know **now** if their plans are on hold.

Invest in analytics to model 'what-if' scenarios to identify opportunities and risks in the UK market:
• what if the UK economy grows or recedes?
• what if tariffs are introduced?
• what if a customs border with Northern Ireland is implemented?

Audit your applications portfolio and consider the following:
• can you simplify it?
• are there legacy applications that are impacted by Brexit, requiring costly modification?
• do you really need these applications? You might never have a better chance to retire them.
• are your financial and e-commerce systems able to handle different VAT management requirements?

2. Your IT suppliers/vendors

Take this opportunity to generally evaluate and risk-assess your IT suppliers:
• how have they been performing?
• are they able to help you through the challenges that Brexit brings?
• are they based in the UK?
• are they based elsewhere but reliant on the UK for talent, support and funding?

Review your supplier contracts and Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for new exposures and/or opportunities, including:
• are there specific references to UK regulation that assume alignment with the EU?
• are maintenance and support renewals based on UK Consumer Price Index (CPI)?

Find potential alternative suppliers and consider establishing multi-supplier frameworks.

Are your key applications supported from a UK support centre? Will that continue? Will they be able to keep their talent? Ask your supplier for their plans.

3. Your and your customers' data

If your production, pre-production or disaster recovery data is stored in the UK you need to make a contingency plan for the scenario where the UK data protection, retention, recovery, privacy regulations are different from the EU's. The UK may keep aligned with the EU at the outset, or even for the long term, but you should develop an exit plan should you need to move. You need to be in control.

4. Your talent

Be prepared for an escalation in the war for IT talent if UK firms relocate to Ireland. On the other hand, prepare for a possible influx of new EU talent to Ireland who might otherwise have gone to the UK.

5. Your costs

Does your firm export to the UK? If so, expect your Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to ask you to reduce costs until things become clearer. Don't wait, start planning now.

While it might seem obvious, don't just think about all this from your own point of view – your customers and suppliers will have the same questions.

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