



# Is Your Open Source Strategy Serving Your Corporate Strategy?

---

**W**hile today almost 80% of organizations use open source in one way or another, often this use is not governed by an overall corporate strategy.

In many cases, this is simply due to lack of overall forward thinking. People tend to use open source in an ad-hoc way. They will find an open source product that fits the description of what they need to run on their infrastructure at little or zero cost. This may seem to be the case, as one can simply, download open source software for free and run it directly on their infrastructure, it is also a possibly risky thing to do. First this is risky financially, because while the piece of code may be freely downloadable, you will still need to plan for integration costs, training costs, support costs and sometimes, these can be extremely high, in particular if you don't already have all the required skills on-board. Hiring top talent at the last minute, because you realize you don't have the expertise in-house to work with the fancy open source product you selected, is a recipe for failure. It is also risky because when working in

such an ad-hoc way, you risk ending up with all kinds of versions of the same product spread across the organization, some with unfixed bugs or vulnerabilities, and with teams that have gone through redundant training sessions to be able to use them. You also risk ending up using multiple different products that do similar things and could all be replaced by one if you had taken time to put some coherence into your choices.

A proper open source strategy starts by making sure, from an IT perspective that what you do with open source is actually done in an efficient, thought-of way. Consider having in place mechanisms for provisioning open source software in a coherent way throughout the organization, training your teams efficiently, partnering with a system integrator that can help you work with your software, having rules in place for selecting licenses when you create open source code, having support contracts with the right kind of organizations for your products... all you really need to make sure that your use of open source happens optimally in your IT operations.

---

The best way to ensure your open source strategy serves your corporate strategy to the fullest extent possible is to start with your organization's vision and mission statements.

---

---

## Have you thought beyond your IT?

The next most direct impact of open source is not just cost saving, it's recovering the control of your financial agenda. Better than just saving money, you should decide where you want to spend it more efficiently, and when. For instance, instead of spending money on uncontrolled run-time licenses (there is nothing more useless than a run-time license... paying to run something you already have... and whomever you pay it to is free to change the fee they charge any time without you having any transparency as to why and how it is calculated)... could be replaced with a properly structured subscription that entitles you to support service level agreements and upgrades to the products for the duration that you need to use it... and could even scale to follow your business evolution. In a SaaS model, this is exactly what happens, so why not have it for software on premise as well. In the open source world, subscriptions are a very common

and efficient model. Change your software costs from CAPEX to OPEX. Also, why pay for a very expensive integrated solution that does much more than what you really need when you can get best of breed building blocks and just allocate the required amount of your budget to integrate it for your needs, either by recruiting the right team of resident experts, or by contracting to a system integrator that will do the work for you. You can have your own team fix bugs in open source code if they have the required competence, and then, ideally, contribute them back to the community, but you can also elect to contract your support to a company that does that for you with proper service level agreements. Remember that communities aren't support structures with SLAs. Make sure that, for your mission critical support, you work with a professional partner that offers the kind of service you really need, at times when it counts most.

---

## More benefits to Open Source

There are also other financial benefits to open source. Most open source users say that it helps grow revenue and margin. By increasing the speed of innovation, you adapt quicker to your customer needs, and can position yourself in the market before your competition. You're still the experts in

what you do, so even if your code may be shared, your customers still have a strong interest in working with you. Their choice is guided by quality and experience, rather than being forced by some exclusive, binding, contract linked to proprietary code that nobody else can service.

---

Let's look now a bit beyond these most commonly seen benefits of open source. For instance, an HR benefit is that about half of the companies participating in open source activities (communicating about it) find it easier to recruit top talent. Your IT strategy has an impact on the HR strategy of the organization... or could it be the other way around? Should your corporate HR strategy have an impact on how you conduct some of your IT? Do you decide to invest in open source participation in order to make your recruitment easier?

Another interesting aspect of

participating in open source projects is the marketing and communications side. If you decide to be visible in an open source project, by participating in an existing project, or creating your own, you position your organization as a de-facto expert in the corresponding technology areas. When Capital One decided to publish their DevOps monitoring platform, they immediately became visible all over the media, and got positioned as a key player in that space (not counting the sudden increase in interest for candidates to apply for jobs there just because it lets them work on cool open source DevOps code).

---

## Where to begin

A great place to start to make sure your open source strategy serves your corporate strategy to the fullest extent possible, is your organization's vision and mission statements. Usually, these serve to structure the overall strategy of the organization. As an example, one large company has in their group vision statement the words 'most loved, most inventive'. If you look at them from an open source perspective, 'most loved' can translate into 'if we enable our customers to contribute to developing the apps they really want to have, they will totally love us'... so it's a hint that open sourcing some of the customer facing apps could be a great thing to do. And of course, 'most inventive' translates very well into fostering the kind of innovation that happens at an

increased rate when you share the code with your users, customers, partners, and even competitors, to encourage even more innovative features to be built in (by users who love you).

So have a look at your organization's vision, and mission statements. Have a look at the overall strategy definitions, not only for IT, but for HR, communication and positioning in the markets you target, consider how you might also want sustainability, ethics, economical and societal development built into everything you do. And then, explore, come discuss with your favorite open source advisors how defining and implementing a holistic open source strategy can impact all of your organization to make it vastly more successful.

---

## About the author

**Gilles Gravier** is Director in the Open Source Consulting Practice at Wipro. Based in Switzerland, he provides open source and blockchain strategy consulting and advisory services to Wipro's key customers worldwide. Gilles has always been involved in both security and open source. In particular, roles such as Chief Technology Strategist for Security and Open Source at Sun Microsystems, he has advised the largest accounts globally on their IT security strategy and their open source activities. He moved on to develop global market and business development strategies for open source and security in the public sector still at Sun, and then Oracle. Gilles has been active as a technology evangelist, in particular for these companies, around cryptography, DRM, open source and open standards.

---

## About Wipro

Wipro Limited (NYSE: WIT, BSE: 507685, NSE: WIPRO) is a leading information technology, consulting and business process services company that delivers solutions to enable its clients do business better. Wipro delivers winning business outcomes through its deep industry experience and a 360 degree view of "Business through Technology." By combining digital strategy, customer centric design, advanced analytics and product engineering approach, Wipro helps its clients create successful and adaptive businesses. A company recognized globally for its comprehensive portfolio of services, strong commitment to sustainability and good corporate citizenship, Wipro has a dedicated workforce of over 170,000, serving clients across 6 continents. For more information, please visit [wipro.com](http://wipro.com) or write to us at [info@wipro.com](mailto:info@wipro.com)



---

**DO BUSINESS BETTER**

CONSULTING | SYSTEM INTEGRATION | BUSINESS PROCESS SERVICES

---

WIPRO TECHNOLOGIES, DODDAKANNELLI, SARJAPUR ROAD, BANGALORE - 560 035, INDIA. TEL : +91 (80) 2844 0011, FAX : +91 (80) 2844 0256

© Wipro LTD 2016

IND/B&T/SEP-DEC2016

"No part of this booklet may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording and printing) without permission in writing from the publisher, except for reading and browsing via the world wide web. Users are not permitted to mount this booklet on any network server."