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CSC's Leading Edge Forum—At the Forefront of Thought Leadership and Next Practices

A leading global consulting, systems integration, and outsourcing company, CSC's mission is to provide customers in industry and government with solutions crafted to meet their strategic goals and enable them to profit from the advanced use of technology. Oracle writer Marta Bright spoke with Lemuel Lasher, president of CSC's Global Business Solutions & Services, about how CSC's Leading Edge Forum is helping companies drive innovation and strategic IT leadership into the enterprise.

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"CSC is the pre-eminent organization where people look to find out what's really going on within the industry and how technology's being applied to create value."

LEMUEL LASHER, PRESIDENT, GLOBAL BUSINESS SOLUTIONS & SERVICES, CSC

Q What is CSC's Leading Edge Forum?

A The Leading Edge Forum (LEF) is a global network of thought leaders that conducts world-class research culminating in points of view, frameworks, models, next and best practices, and case studies. These provide tangible solutions for the challenges our clients face today as well as support action plans for the critical issues our experts foresee looking ahead.

Many of the world's leading organizations rely on the LEF in its mission to act as a catalyst for business and strategy development, explore critical issues of IT management and deployment, identify solutions and actions that direct change and drive business value, and define the future function and staffing of the IT organization.

Q What was the catalyst that drove CSC to start the Leading Edge Forum?

A The LEF program stemmed from a need for a mechanism that focused on thought leadership and socialized intellectual capital across the enterprise. If you're going to drive innovation into a business, you need to begin with thought leadership, because without it and the distinctive points of view it offers, there is very little innovation that can manifest.

Q Who are some of the notable advisors to the program?

A Professor Warren McFarlan from the Harvard Business School and Professor N. Venkatraman from Boston University School of Management are academics whose groundbreaking work in the field of management and technology deployment is widely regarded. Neil Cameron is a successful CIO of a major multinational corporation. Gary Beach is the publisher of *CIO Magazine*, one of the publications most widely circulated among senior IT leaders.

We also have about 20 academic advisors, very prominent in their fields, who we work closely with and who have significantly contributed to LEF research reports.

Q Is there a specific outcome of the Leading Edge Forum that you are particularly proud of?

A In March of 2007, the APQC, which is the benchmarking and leadership organization best known for creating the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, honored CSC with an award for having industry-leading best practice programs around embedding innovation into the business. What's truly significant about this is that we had officially set up the LEF's Office of Innovation for thought leadership programs only two years earlier.

Q Where do you envision the Leading Edge Forum to be 5 to 10 years from now?

A My ambition is that the LEF becomes the pre-eminent thought leadership program around the strategic application of IT for business value. The goal is not to be the biggest program, but rather to be known as the place where the most-profound and deepest thinking is going on—the type that generates practical, actionable ideas and highly successful results.

To learn more about the Leading Edge Forum and the benefits of membership, visit www.csc.com