

Editor's Note: Delivering Value

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Someone once related to me the story of when they approached a major enterprise-size company that was planning on setting up a nationwide series of replicating databases across a wide-area network, using proprietary software products. Hearing about this project, the consultant approached the CIO of the company and presented a plan that would do the same thing with open source software, at only 60% the cost. The CIO listened politely, but in the end, declined the consultant's help. Why?

It turns out that in this company, the CIO's salary was tied to the amount of money he spent on software. And, even though he could have saved money using open source software, his company would be able to say in their annual report that they spent \$X million on technology investments and also supported their local software economy. (A curious statement, since this was not a US company, and much of the software they were going to purchase came from Redmond, Washington.)

I will never be a corporate executive, it seems, because such a cavalier attitude about money completely blows my mind. I was raised to appreciate the value of a dollar and to spend less whenever possible. On the surface, the corporate mentality seems greedy and rapacious. Except...

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