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GETTING IT DONE jay bahel

Don't Blow It: Executing Your IT Strategy



I VERY RARELY SEE AN organization that isn't full of great systems ideas. In fact, I often see enterprises that have great ideas and reasonable systems strategies to support them.

That said, what I also see are plenty of organizations that have not been able to execute their IT strategy. And, more often than not, I see smart folks in IT and the businesses that are capable of executing these plans. Under a new way of thinking that I dub "IT Strategy Execution," I believe they can execute for their organizations.

Typical execution issues I see include:

"Our IT team has trouble executing our key business initiatives on time, in budget and on quality."

"We had 14 IT projects scheduled to complete last year, but we completed only six of them."

"Our IT projects continue to go beyond the forecasted completion dates. We are losing credibility with the business and with our CIO."

"My midlevel IT managers don't have the right managerial skills to execute the plan my business is expecting. They are missing the link between the plan and the execution of it."

"I have plenty of money in my IT budget, but my problem is that my IT team isn't executing all the work I've approved in the plan."

"We have more initiatives than we can handle. Soon our business is going to do its own thing."

"Most of our initiatives are never fully implemented. They get worked on but just stay in limbo until they become obsolete."

"At the end of the day, we reward firefighting."

IT must have a greater impact on the business. For IT to be a more relevant and

strategic part of the business, it must execute nearly flawlessly.

Though every organization is different, there are specific techniques that can and should encompass all organizations. Here's a basic view of what IT Strategy Execution is:

- Strategic management tools and processes: This is a simple dashboard approach of key initiatives and prioritization processes that are centered on delivery of tasks/initiatives on schedule, in budget and on quality.
- Facilitation techniques: You have smart folks who are capable of doing your project work. We are often asked to mentor IT and the business to deliver the projects with their expected business benefits.
- Decision making: This requires clear decisions with priorities and clear IT resource allocation based on priorities—adjusted to relevant changes as they arise.
- Accountability for results: Bring accountability to both the IT team and the business owners with whom IT is working.

When these tools and techniques are effectively employed, the results are nothing short of spectacular. You will save money and make money by maximizing return/impact on your IT investment. Your projects will deliver their expected business benefits. You'll have faster, more predictable project completion, helping you gain more credibility for the IT organization. And you'll complete more projects with a more engaged, effective IT team.

I'll be writing more in 2009 about executing IT strategy. As you read these stories, ask yourself, "How can I use this to make a positive difference for my organization?" You'll get tools and techniques to address those opportunities. Then it will be up to you to make the difference in your enterprise. [+](#)

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