

Transforming the IT Leader's Mindset

by Gwen Walsh

Expectations for IT have changed dramatically. Not only is IT called upon to support technology needs, but it's also expected to sustain strong client partnerships, demonstrate business acuity, execute successful projects and deliver exceptional results.

For an IT leader to manage this transformation, it's important to first understand the leader's role - to influence and inspire people to get the right work done at the right time to achieve the right results. Any leader who's not doing this must undergo personal change, particularly when it comes to familiar, comfortable mindsets. Here are five behavioral changes IT leaders must consider:

1. Think of the big picture. First, plan exactly how you're going to increase the bottom line, deliver exceptional customer service and optimize IT investments. Next, communicate your plan until everyone understands your expectations and knows how they plug into it. Finally, execute, track progress and review results to ensure you and your staff are delivering quantifiable value.

2. Adopt a proactive approach. True leaders create the future, which means assessing the world around you and taking preemptive action to fulfill client needs and solve their issues before getting buried in chronic problems, client complaints and dissatisfaction with IT results.

3. Resist the temptation to delve into tactics. You must clear your slate to make time for leadership work. Document the most important areas that require your attention, as well as how you're actually spending your time. Categorize each activity as "stop", "start", "continue" or "delegate". Use this analysis to create and execute your

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St. Louis, MO

"Consulting Skills for the IT Professional"

May 7-8

Boston, MA

"Business Requirements Management"

May 20-22

Seattle, WA

"The Politics of IT Project Management"

May 29-30

St. Louis, MO

"Consulting Skills for the IT

personal change plan.

4. Be candid with yourself and others. Before you can help others, you must admit to your own weaknesses. If you're lacking key leadership attributes and behaviors, find a trusted advisor to help you reinvent yourself. Hire people to fill the gaps in your capabilities. Next, objectively identify your team's weaknesses and help them create and execute their personal change plans. It's your responsibility to help them become the very best version of themselves.

5. Prepare for and embrace change. Leaders need to recognize change, encourage and celebrate the benefits of change and plan for the realities of change to ensure the most seamless, fearless and successful transition possible.

Walsh, a former CIO and now senior consultant with Ouellette and Associates Consulting, Inc. in Bedford, N.H., is co-author of the book "The IT Professional of the Future", due out in 2008.

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