

Information technology as an enabler in business

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Business processes are now powered by Information Technology (IT), but there are some questions around the adoption of IT. In some cases, non-IT people, if not well trained, may have different perceptions in the adoption of technology in their organisations. The most disastrous situation is when employees think that technology has come to take away their jobs. Below are some of the benefits of IT to organisations.

1. **Improved Business Agility:** Companies must have the ability to react to change. These changes may come from advancements in technology, an upstart competitor or a new regulation affecting an aspect of the organization's business activity. Whatever the source, changes demand a quick response in order for the company to remain competitive.
2. **Increased Efficiency:** All companies face the challenge of making their business processes function more smoothly and efficiently. Inefficient processes waste valuable time and money but are often difficult to identify and hard to change. With technology, process flows are altered with less effort.
3. **Increased Collaboration:** Teamwork has never been that easy in the business environment, nowadays project teams can work on the same project and remain on the same page despite their geographical dispersion. There are many collaboration platforms accessible online and also organisations are developing theirs. File sharing and communication can be done smoothly when the technological set up is well designed.
4. **Data integrity, completeness and consistency:** Well-designed systems can enforce information integrity, completeness, security, and consistency in different ways. Input validation is key in any system design when input is validated, data types, patterns, minimum, maximum values, ranges, and limits, for example, can be enforced which increases the validity of the data. This will increase the reliability of the data.
5. **Automation takes the burden off the Managers' shoulders:** The management in this Era must focus more on strategy and technical areas not redundant work. It's a good practice to automate all routine processes so that people will focus on the management of systems and focus on other important issues.

Most Pitfalls in IT implementation

1. Insufficient budgetary planning: This is surely a tech-success killer. There's a lot of ways for this to go wrong – improper licensing, no planning for support or upgrade costs, not enough budget to provide enough training, etc. You're better off doing a smaller number of properly funded projects, than a larger set of improperly funded efforts.

2. Failing to secure senior Management buy-in: To position your technology imperative to succeed, you must have buy-in from your organisation's top managers. Support and sponsorship from at least one

upper-level administrator can help ensure sufficient resources, and establish your project as a priority.

3. Limited training: Another common implementation hurdle is planning to provide the training needed to really get users comfortable with the new or updated technology. If you want your technology project to succeed, you need to go out of your way to provide enough training and hand-holding to make users productive with it

4. Inadequate technical testing/validation: The technology you plan to use needs to be tested in real-world conditions. The more reflective your testing is of the ways in which the technology will be used when it is in production, the better your chances of uncovering potential issues and addressing them.

5. Failure to involve end-users from the onset: If your technology is going to be used by faculty, you must get members of that faculty involved upfront, and not just seek to bring them in after the project has moved through initial stages. Developers must have an appreciation of the users' perspectives

6. Poor long term planning: technological investments need proper support and maintenance. You will realise the bad side of technology if you don't plan for the future.

Of course, I haven't covered every possible pitfall, there are many pitfalls that can. To get solutions around these issues stay tuned for “**Managing IT enabled Investments**” article coming soon.

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