

Why IT Training for non-IT Managers Important

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Technology has become so deeply rooted in business, non-IT managers cannot afford not to learn about Information Technology (IT) basics. For non-technical business leaders and corporate strategists, IT can be a source of much frustration. In many companies, the relationship between IT departments and business leaders is like a troubled marriage, miscommunication is rife, leaving executives struggling to improve the situation. This article is intended to help business leaders to know the reasons why they need to develop a language shared by managers from various backgrounds and areas of expertise, so they can work together efficiently and productively, propelling the company toward future success.

Do you feel as though everything regarding IT takes too long and costs too much? Do you lack the language and instincts to make good decisions regarding IT? Is your company falling behind the competition in your use of technology?

Essential IT for Non-IT Executives offers essential IT management training to help non-technical senior business managers work with, oversee, and generate value from IT. The goal is to institute a working relationship between IT managers and business managers based on transparency, clear communication about IT performance and decision processes. The goal for IT for Non-IT managers is not meant to make an IT specialist out of every manager, but to make every manager confident in resolving IT issues and working with IT staff to make better decisions and to deliver better process change.

Who should be involved?

IT for Non-IT managers is designed for line managers and corporate strategists who want a better handle on their role in IT oversight and management. The material is especially relevant for non-technical managers with IT responsibilities. In turn, IT managers will gain a better perspective on how to work productively with the company's senior executives. In fact, we strongly encourage participants to attend this program as teams of IT and non-IT managers. Away from the habitual patterns of everyday work, colleagues learn to collaborate in ways they have never thought possible.

Why this training is important?

Participants in this program will learn where IT is going, where it fits into their organizations, and how to govern it well. Managers will walk away thinking differently, being able to talk differently with the company's IT professionals, and armed with real-life examples they can use to adjust and improve their organizational processes. If they are able to answer the following questions, then they are ready to go. How to design processes to use IT better?, how to work with IT people to make better decisions? and how to drive transformational change throughout the organization?

These 10 fundamental IT topics and practices need to be on every business manager's list for developing their tech skills and knowledge

How to define a business case for a new application

Especially in big data and analytics projects, IT is often left on its own to try to make the analytics work--without the benefit of strong business cases that can return immediate value to the organization. This is where end business managers should be stepping into defining the ways new technology can best help.

They can do this is by describing specific business problems they want to solve with the help of technology. For instance, the goal might be to cut down on machine failure and maintenance by developing analytics that can monitor machines and detect those likely to fail, so a maintenance crew can be dispatched before any failure can occur, thus saving the company downtime and money. Business managers should be defining these business cases so IT can focus on developing technology to solve the problem.

How to work with an IT vendor

Almost every business unit today works at some point with vendors offering technology. However, before business managers sign on with vendors, they should fully understand their own (and the vendor's) technical and legal liabilities under the contract, what the vendor's service levels are, how the vendor guarantees uptime, and how the vendor secures and keeps data and applications safe. IT typically vets these areas and should ideally be called into the process to make sure everything is in order. However, business managers should also have a working knowledge of these issues so they can participate in discussions.

What IT contributes to the organisation

IT is often perceived as a roadblock department by business managers when they want to get something done. But a more cooperative relationship can be forged with IT if those managers understand IT's responsibilities to the organization.

These responsibilities include keeping systems and networks up ensuring security and privacy for intellectual property, mission-critical applications, and sensitive data; protecting the company from security breaches, malicious viruses, and malware. Ensuring that employees are using systems properly, tracking and monitoring system assets, developing and maintaining applications, and managing relations with technology vendors. Each area involves many essential steps and they take time. Once managers understand this, they are in a better position to evaluate whether IT is truly slow and unresponsive or whether there are simply many steps IT must take through a given process.

How to develop basic reports

Whether it is an Excel report, an end-user reporting tool, or a way to customize a dashboard or an online display, business managers need basic skills to develop their own reports. Of course, there are some highly complex reports that IT must still develop. But most companies have end-user reporting tools that non-IT users can use to create their own reports without having to call IT.

How to take advantages of IT services

Many IT departments are shifting to a self-service philosophy. 33% of new jobs in the United States are for occupations that did not exist 25 years ago ([Fortunly](#)). They are doing this by making portals into private clouds or intranets that end users can access to use or request IT services. Business managers should know what is available on these self-service platforms so they can take advantage of all the resources.

What tech lingo actually means

IT is packed full of acronyms and technical jargon that can intimidate end business users. By visiting an IT website, picking up a technology journal for a few minutes each week, and attending an occasional IT seminar, non-tech managers can master some of the specialized terminologies they need to communicate effectively with vendors and IT.

Where technology fits in with business plans

Almost everyone sees technology as a driving force when they work on their three- and five-year strategic plans. This is also a good time to find out what is in the IT plan. The exercise builds technology partnerships and helps prevent double investments in the same technologies.

How to address security matters

Employees visiting unsafe websites on company time and passing dangerous viruses and malware into the network or sharing user IDs and passwords with co-workers are major risk areas that business managers can do something about. They can educate staff on the importance of avoiding unauthorized websites, opening strange emails, and casually giving out user IDs and passwords.

How to effectively use technology devices

The days of administrative assistance for every manager are long over. Business managers today should be fluent with mobile, laptop, and desktop devices.

How to conserve IT resources and protect equipment

According to research by [Smart Company](#), low literacy skills were significantly impacting the completion of workplace documents and reports at 21%, as well as contributing to time-wasting at 17.7% and materials wastage at 11.5%. Computers continue to be left on in work areas after employees

leave for the day and in some cases, like in a factory or a warehouse, computers and even local servers can be left to operate in dusty conditions with temperatures that are either too hot or too cold. All these conditions contribute to excess energy consumption and to premature failures of equipment. Business managers can help this situation if they educate staff on the proper care of computerized gear.

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