

So you want to Grow your Business?

You want to grow your business. If you don't then this article is probably not for you.

The “number one” failure of business is poor management, and technology is most certainly a management issue as the following scenario illustrates:

FACT:

UK Department of Trade and Industry – 70% of organisations that experience serious data loss go out of business within 18 months.

Management Question

With hardware and software failures accounting for 78% of all data loss is this responsibility a core competence or not?

Answer

The choice should be clear, it could be a case of – backup or die!

IT is increasingly becoming an issue that instead of contributing to success, has become the Achilles heel responsible for increasing business failures either directly or indirectly.

What this article is about is using IT intelligently in businesses of all sizes, not just deploying computers to be used as glorified calculators and typewriters. But addressing how you can leverage IT for competitive advantage and to win a key differentiator in rapidly evolving markets that can contribute to and sustain business growth.

How can this be achieved? By integrating IT

into your business, strategically and objectively helping manage organisational activities so a business can achieve its performance level while it grows.

Managing growth is not done well by many companies, especially the smaller ones; this is therefore a competitive advantage YOU CAN excel at.

Excel at judging progress in a dynamic growth environment? Can you? Do you? Or are you too busy trying to fulfil or chase the next opportunity?

It should be a mandatory management fundamental, not an option, to clarify your strategy, your objectives to fulfil your strategy, and define explicitly the policies, procedures, checks and balances, essential to make sure your business is on target. In clarifying these pillars of your business you enable the structured demands of IT to be deployed effectively and equip your team to perform as a unit.

For example some basic types of systems and controls could include:

1. Physical – Operational labour resource management, Quality control and equipment management.
2. Control of HR – Systems for Hiring/firing, training.
3. Information Resources – Sales and Market and production scheduling.
4. Financial – KPIs and targets.
5. Communication – Unified collaboration tools for both internal and external interactions.

U N I T E C H

Systems are helping to manage change, responsiveness to competitor actions and market conditions. They also streamline growth and the ability to react to growth demands effectively.

Think of business as a system. Most businesses are not operating in stable environments but in continual flux. To prosper, a business must be in a learning mode, adapting and constantly seeking out new information and applying it to better a market advantage or opportunity.

IT is a basic requirement of doing business today and responding to The 5th Discipline, as defined by Peter Senge in his book of the same name, asserting that "the Superior companies of the future will be those that encourage learning at every level – individual, team, department, organisational".

Where IT is used well, supporting defined business objectives, it is a significant competitive advantage, and is likely to remain so at least for the next 5 years. A unique differentiator in delivering and promoting service or product to customers.

Your commitment should be to your CUSTOMER. If commitment is the foundation then the Customer is the roof resting on all the other pillars that unifies your business and holds it all together.

Commitment to satisfying the customer brings all your resources and expertise to bear on that overriding goal. Is IT one of your business core areas of expertise? For business survival, partnering can shift IT cost from a direct overhead and exposure to a contributor of value, with service level guarantees.

Nigel Gibbons, Managing Director

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