Ernst Enterprises Newsletter

Your IT Leader:
Manager or Computer Technician?

IT Managers may also be Computer Technicians;
but Computer Technicians are seldom IT Managers.

The Information Technology (IT) function in your business is probably the second or third largest expense you have in your business. This function should bring critical information necessary for your decision making and simplify many routine tasks. The most important component to achieving cost effective success is the person who leads the IT operation. All too often that person is *not* the experienced IT professional required with the depth and breadth of experience to guide the growth and on-going IT management needs of your business.

As in many businesses, the person in charge of your IT department probably grew up in your business and was your computer technician or software guru. S/he was the in-house "expert" who kept your systems running, installed software and new hardware, and knew more about the computers than any other employee.

YOUR IT LEADER NEEDS MORE THAN JUST TECHNICAL SKILLS
The purpose of this article is not to say that knowledgeable, involved technical staff, or "techies", are not important to your business. Rather it is to say that the person in charge of your IT function needs more than technical computer skills to achieve the value of the investment you made in technology. Next to staff, your IT investment is one of your major expenses. Are you receiving the full value of that investment?

We all need someone in our business who can help us find the lost document, rescue our crashed computer, or safely install the newest version of software. But to achieve the full value of your IT investment means that the person in charge of your IT function needs to be able to recruit, train, develop, evaluate, coach and motivate employees who can maximize the operation of your computer systems. Further, they need to know what computer/software systems to purchase in order to build the solid infrastructure that supports your company's long-term growth. These can be the most important decisions your IT leader needs to make.

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Regrettably, the technical skills that make your computer "techie" so valuable for those quick fixes aren't the strategic technical/business skills your business needs today. This is particularly acute if your business is growing and the skill gap of your IT leader also grows.

THE NEXT 3 QUESTIONS WILL HELP YOU DETERMINE IF YOUR IT LEADER HAS THE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE TO GET YOUR BUSINESS TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

1. Is this the biggest job of his/her career?
2. Has s/he attended any workshops or seminars that focus on strategic IT?
3. How are the IT major purchase decisions made in your company?
   a. Is it the result of careful analysis that weighs the cost/benefit of one solution over another?
   b. Is it the pursuit of the newest technology that will hopefully "fix" the problem?

We find the answer to question #1 the most telling. If your IT leader is in the biggest job of his/her career the likelihood is that they do not have experience and skills beyond what they learned at your company.

Likewise, unless s/he regularly attends workshops/seminars/classes to grow their existing skills beyond what they learned at your company, it stands to reason they can't have the depth of experience necessary to take the company to the next level. *In fact, we've found the IT leader in the biggest job of their career can unwittingly or unconsciously hold the company back because it is growing beyond their level to contribute. Is this the case in your company?*

Rich Kern is our IT Practice Leader. He brings more than 25 years of business and IT expertise to help clients assess the effectiveness of their IT Operation and more importantly the IT staff. Rich can cut through the technology confusion and translate IT into business language. Contact Dawn Bremer, Director of Sales at 847/456-6334 to schedule your comprehensive and confidential IT assessment.

To test the security of your computer systems, click here to take a short security assessment, or copy and paste the following link: http://evaluation.eellc.us/survey1.html

Sincerely,

Mark

Mark Ernst
Ernst Enterprises, LLC

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