



5 Tips for High Performing IT Leaders

The job of an IT leader today is to run a high-performance organization capable of partnering with the business to consistently deliver successful solutions. The cold, harsh truth is that technology executives who ignore the need to develop exceptional leadership behaviors become organizational casualties.

And it's not about transforming yourself - you need to build a culture of leadership throughout the IT organization. Behind every successful IT leader is a great leadership team capable of sustaining strong client partnerships, demonstrating business and financial acuity, executing successful projects and delivering exceptional results.

Following are 5 mindsets and strategies that are necessary to become a high-performance leader. Take note that these tips have less to do with programming and system architectures and more to do with interpersonal skills, business knowledge, communication, critical thinking and decision making.

Top 5 leadership tips

5. Think strategically. Give up on doing everything for everybody. To line up your resources effectively you need a collective, consolidated view of what IT needs to get done, based on the business strategy. When you work closely with your constituents to help shape and positively influence their priorities, it's easier to respond to client requests, as you can show them how it does or doesn't line up with the business strategy.

4. Stay out of the weeds. It's easy to think you "don't have time" for leadership activities like strategy development and relationship-building. But "no time" is often just an excuse for sticking with what comes naturally, namely technology work. Start by scheduling some "think time" on your calendar. Take a close look at what you do with your time and clear the decks of non-value-add tasks by delegating, managing your time more effectively and analyzing whether certain tasks are even necessary.

3. Be proactive, not reactive. Leaders don't assume a passive, victim's mentality; they're always looking to raise the bar, before clients complain. True leaders create the future, and that means continually assessing the world around you and taking preemptive action. You need to become socially aware, able to read the political landscape and engage in social networks.

2. Be resilient and effective under pressure. Part of being a leader is making tough and sometimes unpopular decisions and not always being regarded as a "nice guy." Leaders owe it to their companies, clients, executive management and staff to both identify and tackle the stickier issues head on but to do so with a trusted business partner/colleague vs. an adversary attitude.

1. Build trusting relationships. IT leaders and their staffs need to venture out into the business community and interact with peers and department heads on a formal and informal basis. This is the only way to anticipate what's coming down the road, develop a mature understanding of how that affects key constituents and gain the trust of the people with whom you work.

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