**Chapter 3  
IT Missions**

I’d like to tell a story about a friend of mine who is a CIO, whom I’ll call “Jerry.” He is the CIO of a multibillion dollar technology firm. When Jerry joined the firm, he began to ask other members of the leadership team about their plans and found out they didn’t have much. At best, what had been produced (by Marketing, Finance, Human Resources, Sales, Engineering, and even at the level of the CEO of the company) was tactical rather than strategic.

**One CIO’s Filtered Vision**

Jerry’s new firm suffered from a common ailment among fast-growing companies that have not reached anywhere near saturation in their markets: their number one objective is to “increase sales.” Sales targets might be better defined as, “Increase by 25 percent in the next fiscal year,” but if those targets aren’t qualified further, their suggestion is that *any* new revenue is *good* revenue. What the target doesn’t say is, for example,

1. *What’s the targeted profitability of the new revenue?* Do we go after revenue growth that might deteriorate the current rate of profitability?
2. *Should revenue growth derive from existing products and services or from new products and services?* People in general, especially sales teams, have a tendency to revert to pushing what they know versus what they do not, and so without clear guidance, the tendency will be to continue to push existing products and services.
3. *Should revenue growth come through existing channels, customers, or geographies, as opposed to revenue from new channels, customers, or geographies?* Again, what is known is likely to be pushed more than the new and unknown, so it’s important to declare where new channels should be leveraged, which new customers to target, and which new geographies to enter.
4. *Should revenue growth be organic, or can we grow it by acquiring another company?* Each of these is a noble way to grow revenue, and some companies are better suited to acquiring companies than others. Nevertheless, we need to know how these factors should be taken into consideration.

There are other factors to consider, but as is an ongoing theme in this book, the more general the objective, the fewer ideas will be filtered along the way. Filters are essential to planning. I will reiterate: strategy is as much about defining what *not* to do as it is about what to do. Declaring the sanctity of sales growth (an essential objective, of course) without qualifying the type of revenue growth that one should attempt to achieve does not provide an adequate filter, which in turn means the organization will lack focus. With a dearth of filters in his firm, Jerry realized that he was not likely to get the level of granularity and clarity he required in order to help IT develop its own strategy with full confidence that these plans could be woven together.

**No “Internal Customers” of IT**

Facing Jerry’s situation, a great number of CIOs would simply keep their heads down and continue to take direction from their colleagues outside of IT, not challenging the status quo. These are passive CIOs who have reconciled themselves to being vendors to the business. Incidentally, these often are also the leaders who refer to the rest of the organization as “customers,” a subservient language that speaks volumes and declares a great distance between IT and the true customers: those consumers, businesses, or both that actually provide the revenue for the company. It practically admits that the IT department will have nothing to do with actual customers. Also, as the axiom suggests, “the customer is always right,” so when colleagues are thought of as “customers,” a CIO is not likely to push back when they make requests with which the CIO disagrees, or the CIO will not raise concerns as they arise. It is important that IT recognize that *the only customers are those people who provide funds to the company,* and refer to colleagues as, well, colleagues or perhaps as partners.

You will also note that I try to avoid referring to “the business” as something that is separate from IT. It is still quite common for CIOs to refer to the rest of the organization as “the business,” but again it suggests a distance between what it does and where true business value is created. The IT team must think of itself as part of the business. Therefore, I like to refer to “IT and the rest of the organization,” and to the CIO and his or her colleagues in other divisions as “the IT team and colleagues outside of IT.” Words matter, and this is a message I have been hammering home with my CIO clients extensively for the past few years.

**Projects Don’t Drive Strategy**

Jerry is bold—not a status quo leader. As he asked his colleagues in IT simple questions about how IT had generated the list of projects it was working on, and how the projects were prioritized, the answers he got were unclear. The typical response went something like this: “One of the functional heads spoke with the CIO [Jerry’s predecessor] about the latest critical project that needed to be given top priority. At the time, we were working on what the same executive had indicated earlier was the most crucial project, but that didn’t seem to matter.”

These kinds of seemingly arbitrary turnabouts were commonplace, and there was no strategy in place to refocus the conversation. Priorities should change at times, of course, in the face of factors such as

* Changes in the economic outlook
* Changes forged by a competitor that require a response
* A natural disaster having an impact on a part of the operation
* Legal action against the company
* The failure or success of a product or service launch
* The departure of a leader
* Identification of new market opportunities that are underserved by competitors
* Revelation of new data or prototypes that necessitate a pivot
* The acquisition or divestiture of a business

Changes in priorities should drive changes in projects, not the other way around. In reality, often project ideas are allowed to trump strategy, and the opinions of a single, powerful executive trump the logic of the strategic plan.

The consequences of this inconsistency can be negative in several ways. First, it leads to confusion and frustration among those people who were working on a high-priority project who now must stop and change to a different high-priority project. It is only natural that people who spend time working on a project would like to see it through to success. When the rug is yanked out from under them, the team does not see its projects reaching fruition and feels unfulfilled inasmuch as they’ve wasted their time. If a decision for this sort of change happens without a strategic plan in place that offers objective criteria to explain why a change is necessary, then the apparent arbitrariness of the decision only adds to the frustration.

This is unfortunate because members of a team that is frustrated due to the change may well be the same people who need to drive the new initiative. Frustrate the team too regularly, and you sap the energy of some of your most important employees and dilute their efforts on whatever is next.

Jerry’s conclusion after investigating these issues was that IT lacked a clear strategy of its own. Much of this was due to the fact that the rest of the organization was not clear as to where the business should be in one or three or five years, and no one was offering thoughts on the processes, products, and services that would get them there other than simple extensions of what already existed. Jerry recognized all of these issues, and also realized that if IT failed to deliver, even though part of that failure was due to a lack of strategic direction on the part of the rest of the organization, he would be to blame. For the sake of his team, as well as for the sake of self-preservation, Jerry chose a different path.

**Mission Time**

Given a lack of a strategy from the rest of the organization, Jerry elected to create a mission for his IT department to follow. While not a full-fledged IT strategy, the mission would declare for his team, for himself, and to his colleagues a “true north” of sorts that IT would align with. If a project arose, the team would have a single filter to use to help determine whether the team should proceed or not.

As a single-phrase filter, the mission statement would be imperfect, and broader than a multipoint strategy. Still, it would provide some interim filtering. It would be a starting point that could also be used as a conversation starter as he hoped to coax the rest of the organization to develop plans.

The process of creating a mission also was energizing for Jerry’s leadership team. Prior to an initial mission session, he had each person reach out to the constituents outside of IT that they knew best to let them know that IT was holding a planning session in order to create an IT mission. This act alone yielded interesting insights from the rest of the organization regarding plans, even if they were not articulated as full-blown strategies. For instance,

* Some leaders outside IT wanted IT to develop more customer-facing technologies. This came as a pleasant surprise for some in IT who thought that the rest of the organization viewed IT as a function that focused only internally.
* Several executives from the rest of the organization recognized that IT touched all divisions in ways that other divisions did not, and so Jerry’s staff were counseled to be bold in identifying business processes that could be rendered more efficient using technology. Members of the IT team were also pushed to identify business processes that could be improved, consolidated, or eliminated.

From this input, Jerry developed the following mission:

*Leverage technology to improve business processes and operations to benefit our company and our customers.*

**Deconstructing Jerry’s IT Mission**

By dissecting Jerry’s IT mission, we can understand what Jerry hoped to accomplish.

*“Leverage technology . . .”* The mission statement acknowledged that “technology” is IT’s purview and thus the domain it can leverage.

*“. . . Improve business processes and operations . . .”* Jerry realized that IT is one of the few parts of an organization (sometimes the only one) that interacts with most if not all business processes in one way or another. As such, IT sees the business operations from the front end to the back end, and acts as the central nervous system of the organization. Therefore, IT should be charged with identifying ways to automate existing processes, but also to harmonize and optimize processes.

As an organizational choice (though not one Jerry opted to make), a number of IT departments are choosing to set up their organizational chart on the basis of business processes rather than aligning them to standard IT activities (development, infrastructure, quality assurance, and so on), business functions, geographies, or the like. For example, among other alignments, IT can align to a process such as “order to cash,” meaning the chain of events starting when a customer places an order and ending at the point at which cash is collected and revenue is recognized. This process is relevant to every revenue-earning division of the company, and for some companies and industries, the lag between order placed and revenue banked can be substantial. Creative use of automation may shave valuable days or even weeks off the process. To the extent that IT can develop and automate better processes across the organization, can suggest process consolidation so that multiple divisions leverage the same processes when appropriate, and can enable these processes with automation, IT can be the glue that brings the company closer together, rendering efficiencies while also stimulating collaboration in some surprising ways.

Too many CIOs decide to purchase or build solutions without thinking about the people and process points first. Sorting out the latter two items first before committing to a technology is critical. Jerry’s vision was not grand enough in the area of process improvement to warrant changing his organizational chart but, nevertheless, he recognized a need for IT to align its activities to business processes, as a key layer of value.

*“. . . To benefit our company . . .”* Jerry’s statement pointed out that he intended information technology to benefit the company. This suggests that metrics should be put in place to gauge value derived from IT. That value may come in the form of greater productivity, improved cost efficiencies, or better decision making based on more timely availability of data, just to name three layers of value.

*“. . . And our customers . . .”* IT departments have not held the true customer in their purview nearly as much as they should. The neglect is exacerbated by the fact I mentioned earlier, that many IT departments refer to colleagues as “customers.” Jerry was sure to emphasize the need to focus on true customers as part of the mission.

**From Source of Insight to Substance of Message**

Much of the logic expressed in Jerry’s IT mission occurred to its makers only in the act of making it. Once the IT leadership team agreed to it, he made sure that each member of the team truly bought into the mission and would tell his or her teams about it, pass on the logic that led to its creation, and use the statement as a way of gauging whether ideas they pursued were focused appropriately.

The creation of the IT mission also armed Jerry with a message to bring to his peers in the leadership team of the company. Previously he hadn’t had the guidance that he needed from the rest of the leaders; in the absence of clear plans from them, he could say that his team would use the IT mission as the first screen to gauge the validity of the portfolio of activities that IT would undertake.

Jerry’s colleagues outside of IT were impressed by the proactive approach that he undertook. As some of them probed to determine what strategy was in place to support this IT mission, it provided Jerry with the opening he needed to engage the rest of the organization in a conversation about the need for clearer plans. Had he done so without having taken a first step himself, his request might have seemed hollow. Since no mission existed in other parts of the organization, Jerry could claim the moral high ground and have a productive conversation requesting comparable clarity elsewhere, having taken the first step.

Let’s move on to two more examples of inventing an IT mission, at Google and Marriott.

**IT Mission at Google**

One might think that being the CIO of a legendary technology company would be like *A Tale of Two Cities*: the best of times and the worst of times. On one hand, at a company such as Google one need not ever make the case that technology needs to be thought of as a strategic weapon in the arsenal of the company, as many IT executives still must do in their companies. On the other hand, there are many people throughout the business who feel they can do the job of CIO better than can the actual CIO. For many of the company’s engineers, CIO seems like the easiest of the executive positions.

Google CIO Ben Fried’s job is far from easy, but he focuses more on the best-of-times scenario, recognizing that by being surrounded by some of the best technology talent in the world inside and outside the IT department, he has no dearth of opportunities to pursue. In fact, even the issues turn out to be opportunities. As he says, “At Google, we are programmed to think that if you see an opportunity or a problem, we need to do something about it.”

When Fried joined Google in May of 2008 after more than thirteen years at Morgan Stanley, there were a great number of opportunities to chase down and a good number of issues to resolve. This is typical for an organization that has been through such tremendous growth as Google had. The company’s core services (such as Search, Gmail, YouTube, and Maps) have grown tremendously, and the company continues to grow through acquisition. The complexity is exacerbated and the opportunities multiplied by the company’s continued desire to shoot for the moon with ideas such as Google Glass or the driverless cars emerging out of Google X. Fried’s team’s ability to react quickly to these opportunities earned it a reputation for being experts with the tactics. They could seize upon an opportunity or squelch a problem as soon as either was identified.

A couple of years ago, Fried wanted to plant a figurative flag to declare what Google IT stood for. As the company continued its tremendous growth, the demands on IT would grow accordingly, and without a filter to allow it to prioritize, the department might be crushed under the weight of the growing needs and expectations of the rest of the organization.

Fried and his leadership team defined Google IT’s mission:

*To empower Googlers with world leading technology.*

(*Googlers* is the term that Google employees use to describe themselves.)

This is a bold statement, clearly asserting that average is not good enough. If that seems too bold, consider that the company’s mission as a whole is “To organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful.” The IT mission grew out of that because one ambitious mission deserves another to support it. At least three implications are noteworthy about the Google IT mission.

First, it requires that IT develop tight collaborations with colleagues outside of IT, so that the department truly knows what Googlers need to be successful. Fried had a valuable arrow in his quiver: he had some of the deepest engineering talent in the world, and in many cases his team could seek the counsel of colleagues who had invented significant aspects of the Internet, technology infrastructure, and computer languages. That said, at the time Fried’s team defined its mission, IT needed to develop stronger ties with these experts earlier on in the development of new technologies.

In line with this theme of collaboration, like other executives Fried encourages his team to think of their workspaces as fluid. Individuals tend not to have fixed spaces, but rather gather in clusters that are emblematic of the collaborations that are necessary for whatever topic or project is currently being pursued. On one of my trips to Fried’s New York office, members of the IT team occupied office space with members of the product law department on the basis of project ideas that required the expertise of each, as an example.

The second implication of the mission is that IT would eschew following others and instead lean toward developing the truly new. For many companies, infrastructure would not be counted as truly new and innovative. Many companies think of it as a commodity to be outsourced. At Google, infrastructure is a source of competitive advantage. Google has a liberal policy in allowing employees to choose the technology they need, and Fried and team make sure that the infrastructure backbone is strong enough to ensure that Googlers’ experience is flawless no matter the technology that they use.

Fried has also been a key catalyst in Google’s efforts to provide free wi-fi hotspots in a number of cities, including in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York where Google’s East Coast headquarters is located.

Each of these examples is indicative of Google’s tendency to turn its own complexity into a source of advantage, and even highlights how Google IT can empower Google customers and not just the Googlers mentioned in the mission.

The mission statement’s third implication is that Google IT’s development methods will be agile, as Google’s competitors are many and varied, and they are not treading water. Agile methods deliver projects and capabilities quicker, and speed to deliver is essential. On this front, Fried and his team have one of the best user acceptance testing groups immediately at hand in the form of Google employees in the surrounding cubes and offices. Again, this provides ample room for feedback, advice, and ongoing iterations of projects that more fully flesh out what is valuable and what is not.

Through its mission definition and related steps, Fried and his team have laid the foundation that has enabled the enviable growth and success of the company in the past half decade; and like the company itself, he and his team continue to think of ways to add more value to the company as a whole.[**1**](https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/implementing-world-class/9781118634110/xhtml/Chapter03.xhtml#ch03ft1)

**Marriott IT: Vision, Mission, and Value Proposition**

Marriott is one of many IT organizations that have both a vision and a mission. At Marriott, the vision is the more general statement, and the mission provides an additional level of specificity regarding the plans that they maintain. I find their example of special interest because it granulates one level even further than their overarching vision and mission statements, making crystal clear to employees within IT, as well as for those who partner with IT internally and externally, how IT means to direct behavior and ultimately the culture of the organization.

Bruce Hoffmeister, the global CIO of Marriott, developed a set of ideas he titled “Powering Marriott Through Technology.” To that, he linked the following vision:

*We are innovative business leaders powering competitive advantage for Marriott and our brands, who anticipate technology trends and adapt to emerging opportunities while delivering core functions flawlessly.*

**Vision and Value**

At many points, the phrasing and layers to this vision highlight a new kind of IT value proposition.

*“Innovative business leaders . . .”* The first descriptor is that the IT department is to be a group of innovative business leaders. The focus on business innovation is relatively new for IT departments, and calling out IT as a function made up of business leaders is also still not the norm, unfortunately, as I mentioned a few pages back. This can be seen in the typical reference to IT versus the business: “IT and the business,” as though they are separate entities. Hoffmeister suggests that they are one and the same—IT *is* the business.

*“. . . Powering competitive advantage for Marriott and our brands . . .”* IT also needs to be a source of competitive advantage for Marriott. This is again a very powerful statement, suggesting that IT is not just keeping the lights on, making sure that the telephones work, making sure that the email is up and running, but that it needs to be a source of competitive advantage. It needs to be a differentiator for the organization. In other words, IT should provide the sorts of capabilities that will drive consumers to prefer one’s brand.

*“. . . Who anticipate technology trends and adapt to emerging opportunities . . .”* It also calls out the need to anticipate technology trends, and this is a theme that is already explored in the book but bears repeating. Technology needs to be an R&D function of sorts, constantly looking around the next corner to identify the next trend that is appropriate for the organization to leverage. Identifying the trends that will apply best to the company is obviously an important qualifier. Trends are only as good as their application and ultimate value creation for the company itself, and IT needs to act as a translator.

*“. . . While delivering core functions flawlessly.”* This last phrase is really the foundational point, but I like the fact that Hoffmeister calls it out last. “While delivering core functions flawlessly” gets back to the whole notion of IT’s core job, which is making sure that the core systems, infrastructure, all of the technology components that IT is responsible for, need to be up, available, and doing what they’re meant to do. Ken Venner, current CIO of SpaceX and former Broadcom CIO, calls it “like air, an assumption that we have, that it is going to be there.”[**2**](https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/implementing-world-class/9781118634110/xhtml/Chapter03.xhtml#ch03ft2)

Hoffmeister makes the appropriate point that if IT is not delivering what it is supposed to be doing from an infrastructure perspective or from an applications perspective—if IT isn’t up and available—then all else does not matter. Moreover, you are not going to be asked to be innovative. You’re not going to be given the opportunity to be a source of competitive advantage. You’re not going to be asked to spend time on new trends and new things. Ultimately, you are not likely to be the CIO for very long.[**3**](https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/implementing-world-class/9781118634110/xhtml/Chapter03.xhtml#ch03ft3)

**Marriott IT’s More Specific Mission**

Hoffmeister goes on to define “Our Mission” (IT’s mission) in terms of five components.

1. *“Anticipate technology trends and adapt to emerging opportunities.*” This brings up the very important point that IT needs to be collaborative. IT needs to be, at its core, a networked part of the organization, identifying both internal and external strategic opportunities and partnerships. It’s important to note that this is with colleagues as well as with external partners of various kinds in order to develop strategies that are in fact innovative.
2. *“Grow our industry leadership position with holistic solutions.”* There are two interesting points to this: that there are going to be core platforms; that is, don’t choose many different technologies, but when possible, actually limit the technology footprint to a core set that will be focal where investment will be made. Also, limit the number of additional components that may take away from that focus, and then use that as a source of differentiation for the organization.
3. *“Deliver innovative technology reliably, predictably, and cost-effectively.”* If you cannot do the basics with a degree of certainty and professionalism, your colleagues will not trust you with funds to be more adventurous and innovative.
4. *“Enable people to use information for strategic decision making.*” This calls out the aforementioned point that IT is often responsible for the pipes but doesn’t necessarily pay enough attention to what’s flowing through them. The information that makes up half of the name of the information technology function needs to be focal. A key value proposition for the IT department of the future will be to empower colleagues to tap information for insight, which will yield value through more informed, timely decisions.
5. *“Create meaningful opportunities for IT professionals.”* The IT department is only as good as the people who are a part of it, so it is important that IT, like other departments, invest in its people. Perhaps a key additional point is that the dynamism of IT requires that an ongoing investment be made in people, whether it’s reinvigorating the organization’s existing staff with training on new technology or augmenting the team’s existing skills with the fresh perspectives and talents of new hires. These are the ways of ensuring that IT is up to date on the latest and greatest from a technology perspective and not falling behind. It is easy to go from high performance to average performance by not investing in people and in new skills that are anticipating the needs of the organization as it continues to evolve, and IT needs to be firmly cognizant of that imperative.

**Marriott IT’s Third Level: “How We Create Value”**

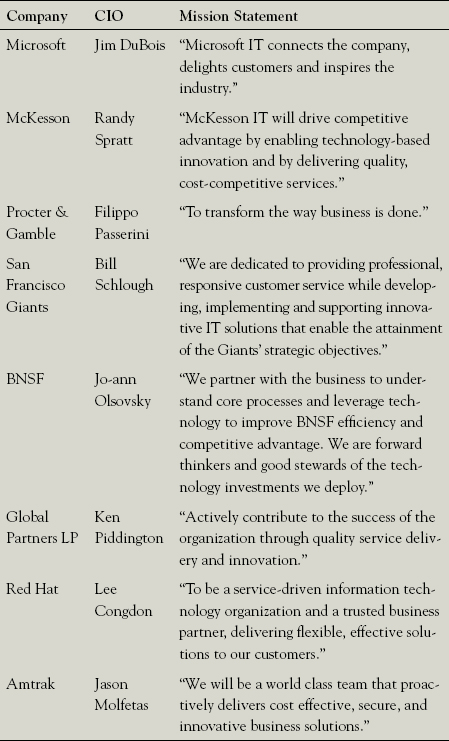
Now a key differentiator, a level that I don’t regularly see IT leaders taking in their vision and mission continuum, is defined by Hoffmeister as “How We Create Value.” Here again, he makes five main points, and I was thrilled when I read that the number one point, literally IT’s first word in “How We Serve,” was “listen”:

1. *“Listen to our partners to understand business opportunities.”* IT departments and IT leaders historically have not been known as necessarily the best listeners, yet listening is the first key ingredient to being a good partner. As IT is delivering the needs of the business, it needs to make sure that it also facilitates conversations that will define those needs as effectively as possible. That means asking very good questions (starting with ones such as Jo-ann Olsovsky asked in Chapter Two), then sitting back and listening, and summarizing the key points to demonstrate an understanding. Certainly this doesn’t mean that it is a solely passive experience. IT needs to be a counselor and a consultant of sorts to the rest of the organization, pushing its thinking, suggesting the new or unthought of. It begins with listening.
2. *“Provide strategic insights to drive the right solution.”* It is not surprising that Hoffmeister, an executive who grew up in the finance function at Marriott, would call out the need to think about the way in which IT *articulates its value proposition in business terms.* As Hoffmeister himself says, system uptime is merely “par for the course in many ways. It is the expectation. We need to define value in a better way, in terms that our colleagues understand.” So, for instance, this means that everyone in IT must understand the key metrics of the business, such as revenue per available room (“revPAR” as the hoteliers say), a key metric in the hotel and hospitality space. As Hoffmeister says, if there is anyone in IT who does not understand the inner workings of the revPAR metric, that is problematic. So an important part of his own training for all employees is making sure they understand those key metrics and think further about IT’s potential contribution to those metrics.
3. *“Be easy to work with; use clear processes and flexible thinking.”* The process point is squarely within the bailiwick of IT departments in general, and process excellence ought to be the goal for leading IT departments. For IT to be as agile and flexible as possible, a key is to have *repeatable* processes. Too many organizations do not have clear processes and as a result must redefine how they do things each time. Typically, things proceed in an ad hoc fashion, and valuable time is wasted. Having clear processes matters greatly, along with some flexibility to them.
4. *“Foster experimentation through trial and error, balancing risk with reward.”* Part of what the flexible processes and the agility ought to bring about is the ability to try things, to fail fast, and to learn from those unsuccessful trials so that the subsequent trials are more successful and build off past experiments. This needs to be a key aspect to the IT protocol as well.
5. *“‘See around the corner’ and advance future technologies.”* This implies IT’s need to be cognizant of and engaged in the evolution of business in general, and technology more specifically, in order to apply emerging technologies in a compelling fashion that delivers value—in business terms—back to the organization.

This very comprehensive Marriott IT framework can be used for onboarding new IT employees, can be a filter for existing IT employees to determine priorities, and can be a cultural rallying point as to where IT ought to fit into the rest of the organization.

**Common Factors in Other IT Missions**

[Figure 3.1](https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/implementing-world-class/9781118634110/xhtml/Chapter03.xhtml#figure3-1) displays IT missions in use at various leading companies.



[**Figure 3.1**](https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/implementing-world-class/9781118634110/xhtml/Chapter03.xhtml#figureanchor3-1)**.** **Current IT Missions at a Variety of Leading Companies.**

Notice what these mission statements have in common:

* *Inclusive language:* All-inclusive language, such as “we” or the company name, establishes collective ownership and personal investment in the mission.
* *Proactive stance:* Many mission statements are proactive in nature, using language such as “drive,” “actively contribute,” “forward thinking,” and so on.
* *Innovation:* Three of the statements mention “innovation,” revealing the need for technology to be constantly exploring new avenues of value, rather than just maintaining a back office.
* *Business success:* Almost all of the mission statements maintain a focus on the true end game, and place an emphasis on supporting or driving business success and “competitive advantage,” not just IT success.
* *Partnership:* All of the statements use language such as “service,” “enable,” or “partner” to suggest that IT cannot and should not operate in a vacuum, but rather can be most effective when enhancing the value that other disciplines offer.
* *Customer centricity:* There is an allusion to or a direct mention of end customers in some of the statements, suggesting a need to create value through IT for the people who buy the company’s products or services.
* *Action-oriented:* Most of the mission statements explicitly call out “delivery,” suggesting that IT will not sit idly but will produce tangible value in various forms for the organization.
* *Accountability:* This theme runs through each of the statements. Accountability and transparency are qualities that IT needs to embrace, and even lead on, as it is essential that IT leadership encourage the rest of the organization to be accountable and transparent, as well.

**Where a Mission Is Most Needed**

Creating a value-oriented IT mission is particularly important in those scenarios in which the IT department does not have much guidance from the rest of the organization, does not yet have a strong IT strategy per se, or both. It is a great first point of orientation for the IT department. That said, it is also highly effective to continue to keep in place for the IT team in general to learn, almost like a mantra. This helps focus the entire team on those principles that are most important, and it provides guidance on behaviors to exhibit on a daily basis, including factors to look for when recruiting, criteria to use in evaluating internal talent, and additional factors to consider when contracting with an external partner or vendor.

In Chapter Four, we return to our main agenda of how to develop and flesh out a full IT strategy by first helping Corporate and other divisions develop strategies of their own.

**IT Mission Take-Aways**

1. Creating a mission statement is a fast way to begin to find “true north” and to distinguish meaningful projects from those that ought to be filtered out, especially when corporate and divisional objectives are being expressed as simplistic “targets.” It is also a good first step toward developing a true IT strategy.
2. Projects should be the outcome of missions and strategies, not the drivers of them.
3. As you create a mission statement, think in terms of the value proposition of IT. Will the statement make it easy to see how IT is likely to contribute to overall financial value?
4. What does your mission statement need to say about IT as a developer of processes and other future assets versus its ongoing role in delivering core functions?
5. Be able to “deconstruct” your mission statement into highly meaningful and prescriptive phrases.
6. Use your mission statement as a starting point to coax other divisions toward clearer strategies.
7. Consider going further by describing how IT wants to behave (for example, “how to serve”).
8. Articulate where in IT and its staff you can put your mission statement to immediate practical use as a guideline or filter:
   * In metrics
   * In recruitment
   * Elsewhere within IT

**Notes**

[1.](https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/implementing-world-class/9781118634110/xhtml/Chapter03.xhtml#ch03_ft1) All quotes and information in the preceding section are from Peter High, “Google IT’s Mission to Empower Googlers with World Leading Technology,” *Forbes*, July 22, 2013.[2.](https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/implementing-world-class/9781118634110/xhtml/Chapter03.xhtml#ch03_ft2) Peter High, “Metis Strategy’s Forum on World Class IT,” podcast interview with Ken Venner, November 7, 2011.[3.](https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/implementing-world-class/9781118634110/xhtml/Chapter03.xhtml#ch03_ft3) Various quotes and assorted information are from author conversation with Bruce Hoffmeister, Marriott, July 1, 2013.