

CIS360 Reflection Paper 1: IT Professionals

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Requirements: Read articles on “Role of the Systems Analyst” and watch the IT & Strategy video posted on the Module 1 Canvas page, and answer the questions below. Submit a word-processed document on Canvas by the deadline.

Evaluation Criteria: Overall quality of your writing (including using your words rather than quotes from the articles); the correctness, thoughtfulness, and clarity of your responses.

1. IT-business alignment has been one of the top three concerns of IT managers for the last ten years (or more), according to a series of studies on the “IT Issues and Trends.” Watch the IT & Strategy video posted on the Module 1 Canvas page.

- a) Describe an example (from the readings, your experience, or the news) of an organization that with strong IT-business alignment and an example of an organization with weak IT-business alignment and explain your rationale.¹ *(1 paragraph)*

I think Apple is a good example of an organization with strong IT-business alignment. Since 2007, when Steve Jobs returned as the CEO, the company has been reorganized into a single functional organization focusing on profit and loss, rather than individual sectors within a company. Since the refactoring, Apple has been focusing on the success of the company itself to allow for the funding of innovation, rather than creating a competitive process within itself, which results in an argument and disagreement with the business and profit side of business versus IT and innovation.

Boeing is a good example of an organization with weak IT-business alignment. In October 2018, the first deadly crash from the 737 MAX occurred. After the following crash and reports from airline pilots, the world began to question why failures of an individual jet were occurring. Boeing eventually did speak up and say it was due to a software malfunction. Through several ethical studies and research, it was made clear that Boeing’s staff was under-staffed, thus under-performing. On top of this there was limited support and strong encouragement from higher management to push through a software release and expect pilots to be able to override any possible software malfunctions. This then bleed into no communication between Boeing and airline pilots to understand how to override the software in any case type of malfunction. Overall, Boeing was more concerned about making a profit and pushing out a software version,

¹ If you need ideas of how organization and IT strategies are aligning to innovate and add value, here are some examples: [big data in the pharmaceutical industry](#) or [data analytics in retail companies](#).

than full testing of the software and communicating any possible software bugs/malfunctions. These are just some examples within the 737 MAX that shows how Boeing had poor IT-business Alignment.

- b) IT-business misalignment is often attributed to the “troubled relationship” between IT and the rest of the organization. What is the cause of this troubled relationship, according to the video? Reflect on your own experiences, either as part of “IT” or as part of “the rest of the business” (e.g., as an employee in your current or previous job, as a customer who has had to deal with IT professionals for tech support). Do you agree or disagree with the authors, and why? Why do you think the IT-business relationship is often problematic? (1 paragraph)

According to the video, common causes of the troubled relationship between IT and the rest of an organization is that the business and IT strategies do not align. The video also mentions that another common factor is that IT departments don't prioritize projects based on business priorities and that they seldomly communicate with the rest of the business/organization.

I do agree with the authors, but I also do not think it is that simple. I agree that there is often a lack of communication and understanding between IT and the rest of an organization, but the ‘closeness’ of the relationship can be vastly different within the same and different sectors of business. I agree with the points mentioned about, but another common strain on the relationship between IT and an organization is a lack of communication/soft skills of IT workers as well as a lack of patience and stubbornness of the ‘business’ side of an organization. Often times business staff is concerned about profit and project, yet they are not willing to listen and understand the IT side of things in order to propel the organization itself.

2. A systems analyst is an IT professional, and, as such, is often perceived as a “geek” (as stereotyped, for example, [here](#)). However, I would argue that if the rest of the organization perceives the systems analyst as a one-dimensional technology expert, then the analyst should consider a different career (or should develop additional skills). After reading the description of systems analysts from the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Occupational Outlook Handbook and the IS Job Index 2019, how would you describe a systems analyst? What skills do you think an analyst needs, and why? (1 paragraph)

A systems analyst is someone who understands and identifies requirements of an organizations current IT systems to design and test new ways to improve the efficiency of the organization.

A successful analyst needs a combination of both hard and soft skills. I think the most common required hard skills include knowing a variety of programming languages, understanding hardware and software, and design/architectural skills. These hard skills are important because they are all fundamental areas that must be understood in order to analyze a business to find possible areas of improvement. Next, common soft skills that I think are important for analysts include good communication, process/flow-management, writing, business/organizational understanding, and training. These soft skills are extremely important because they contribute to the overall success of an analyst’s ability to

implement new strategies to improve the efficiency of an organization. These combined skills would create a strong systems analyst that would have the ability to discover, design, implement, and test new ways of efficiency within a company.

3. Think about your career goals (short- and long-term), and the knowledge/skill sets you will need to achieve those goals. What do you want to do (short-term, long-term, or both), and what kind of organization do you want to work for? Will you be on the IT side or the business side (or both)? What knowledge/skill sets will you need to be successful? What are your current strengths and weaknesses? How well prepared do you think you will be when you graduate, and if you do not think you are getting the preparation you need, what else can/will you do? Finally, are you looking forward to your post-graduation career? What about it excites or concerns you?²

In the short-term I want to work for a mid to large size company as a software developer. This being said, I want to switch through companies and positions to eventually, in the long-term, become a Chief Technology Officer of a company. I hope to work on both the IT and business side across various organizations. I will need a significant set of skills and knowledge to be successful. I think some of the most important skills include the skills I listed for the systems analyst job, but I would certainly need to have a very good business understanding as well as maintain a good IT-business alignment regardless of what organization I am currently at.

My current strengths include written and verbal communication, willingness to learn, Java, QuickBooks, and various other languages, frameworks, and tools. Some of my weaknesses, or areas of improvement, include growing the depth of knowledge I have of some programming languages, business strategies, business and IT analysis, and more industry experience. I think I will be well prepared to enter the workforce once I graduate. Although I already feel very well prepared to start a job, I will continue doing supplemental work within programming languages and programming projects to further my chances.

I am looking largely looking forward to my post-graduation career as a software engineer. I am excited to join a team of smart developers to increase my programming skills. I am also excited to get 'real-world' experience as a developer. One thing that concerns me about becoming a software engineer is either being looked over for a position because I don't fit a stereotypical developer or being chosen for a position because I fit a diversity criterion. I want to be chosen for a position as a developer because I was the best overall fit for the company's community and culture of developers.

² If you are unsure of your career aspirations, or haven't thought much about it yet (!), then assume you want to start as a systems analyst in the IT function of an organization (e.g., a service organization such as Wells Fargo Bank or Allstate Insurance, a manufacturer such as Woodward Governor, a retailer such as Wal-Mart or Banana Republic, a health care organization such as Poudre Valley Hospital or Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield), or as an IT consultant for a consulting firm (e.g., Accenture, Ernst & Young, Cap Gemini, Hitachi Consulting, Navigant Consulting). Assume also that you have management aspirations for further down the road. (e.g., project manager, IT manager, Chief Information Officer).