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Making IT Work:

The 5 fundamentals to getting the most value from your IT investment

Most executives have pretty basic expectations for their business systems and technology infrastructure: they should do what they're supposed to do when they're supposed to do it. They're supposed to work.

But in today's business environment, the management of the Information Technology ("IT") function has become a true challenge for most organizations as IT has increased in complexity. In a highly competitive business world, the dramatic introduction of new technologies makes it difficult for businesses to keep up with the change. This is further compounded by the increased reliance on technology to manage critical information and operations.

However, by following the 5 Fundamentals of IT Management below, you can establish and maintain an IT organization that provides the value and performance that your business needs. But, it's not a simple task. To see if your business is ready for effective IT Management, answer the 5 Key Questions below:

1. **Does your IT organization have what it takes?** IT **must have a strong discipline.** IT must do more than just "put out fires." The implementation of disciplined operations, built upon a foundation of basic standards, processes and systems, will allow IT to be more proactive, flexible and reliable. But this requires strong leadership, vision, and business understanding.

2. *Would you run any other important part of your business this way?* IT **must run like a business.** The activities and cost of running and operating the IT function must be clearly understood. But IT budgets are often unclear or undefined, and the actual costs are lost in a "black hole."

3. **Does the business and IT truly understand each other?** IT **value must be clearly identified and understood.** IT plays a critical role in how your business performs on a daily basis, but executives normally don't understand the true value of IT to the organization. Business and IT executives must be able to communicate effectively and articulate such value on a regular basis.

4. **How do you measure IT performance today?** Performance **must be tracked and measured.** Business performance is measured in many ways, and the management of the business relies on these performance measurements to define strategies and investments. Yet IT, which requires significant recurring investment, typically has few if any clearly defined service levels. IT performance can and should be defined, monitored and measured, just like the rest of your business.

5. **What does "IT's supposed to work" truly mean to you?** IT **strategic position must be agreed and understood by the business.** Executives must understand where IT fits within the strategy and direction of the business in order to decide how to fund and invest in it. And IT must effectively and consistently communicate to the business the reasons for these investments and the value returned.

IT should be treated like any other well run part of your business. It should be responsive, accountable, predictable, measurable, and return value on its investment.

Ask yourself this Key Question:

Can you afford to NOT have IT work well for you?

When evaluating the state of your organization based on these 5 Fundamentals, keep in mind that you cannot transform your organization alone. IT Managed Services is a viable mechanism for achieving business transformation, enhancing business agility and managing IT operational costs. It allows you to focus on your core competencies and establish a solid infrastructure foundation underneath the business.

The definition of "IT Managed Services" is a critical part of the equation. If IT needs to be more than "putting out fires", then IT Managed Services needs to be more than "break and fix". It should include the following key elements:

— *Defining* appropriate IT performance expectations and service levels

— *Implementing* effective IT standards, processes and systems to monitor operations and performance

— *Understanding* the impact of IT failures and mitigating the risks

— *Establishing* realistic and flexible IT cost, investment and business alignment strategies

Leveraging key technical and operational IT expertise when you need it

IT needs to be understood and managed just like any other part of your business. If you believe that preventing "fires" is a much more effective business approach than "putting them out", then you must understand how IT fits into your business plans. Based on this plan, develop appropriate funding, establish structured and disciplined IT operations, and define specific performance objectives that are measurable, and understand and plan for the impact to the business from IT outages. The results will be improved productivity, satisfied business users and customers, effective IT cost management, and an IT operation that is focused on the needs of the business, today and in the future.

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About Auxis:

Headquartered in Coral Gables, FL with offices in Plantation, FL, Atlanta, GA and Washington, D.C., Auxis is a management and technology consulting firm that creates value by enabling growth for its customers. We offer a multi-disciplined approach to develop and implement practical, robust and scalable solutions that generate superior business performance, providing significant competitive advantages to our clients. Our core belief is that our success should be measured by tangible and sustainable financial results. Simply put, Auxis helps clients prosper.

Auxis understands that today's technology is increasingly difficult to manage and support for most businesses. For Auxis, IT is our vision, our mission, and our passion. We make IT Work. To learn more about how Auxis Managed Services can help you Make IT Work, visit us at http://www.auxis.com.