

Every IT department is an island



By [Chris Welham](#)

29 Jul 2013

IT departments exist, most often, in isolation. There is a very real disconnect between IT professionals and business executives, particularly in small and medium businesses.

They do not share a common language or an understanding of how technology could be - and should be - linked to business imperatives. As a result, these South African businesses lose significant amounts of money each year.

If you were a fly on a wall in a meeting between the business and finance leadership of a given company, you would notice a basic linguistic understanding between the two groups. Even if the CEO does not have a background in finance, he will understand an income statement and a balance sheet.

This level of understanding is not shared by business and IT leaders. Most executives have a very superficial understanding of the role that IT plays in a business - and the potential for IT to be linked to a company's business imperatives. As a result, the value of and opportunities for IT are often not understood.

A change in mindset - on both sides - is needed

IT thus becomes a frustration - a grudge purchase - and while it continues to be so, it is impossible for technology to be used to its full potential to benefit businesses.

What is needed is a change in mindset from both IT and business leaders, and a willingness to gain an understanding of the needs and imperatives of both fields.

At Space Age Technologies, our 19 years of experience in the industry have shown us the extent of this widespread challenge.

The solution? Relevant IT.

Relevant IT is a term to describe a new approach that helps small and medium business and IT leaders see eye-to-eye in achieving company goals. It is not a quick-fix programme, but rather a framework that facilitates a change in mindset. It provides business leaders and IT professionals alike with a roadmap that guides them on a journey towards integration, where IT leaders play a much bigger role in the strategic planning of a business, and business leaders have a more in-depth understanding of IT.

And the goal is...

The Relevant IT maturity model enables business leaders to identify and prioritise what to change. In order for business and IT to work optimally together, the model identifies several capabilities that businesses need to develop before the goal of Relevant IT can be achieved. The organisation is measured according to its maturity within each capability, providing a guide for how to progress along the Relevant IT journey.

The goal is to get to a point where technology is exploited to its full potential and becomes fundamental to the workings of a business at every level.

An undertaking of this nature is not something that can happen overnight. It takes willingness on the part of both parties to come to a shared understanding and to work towards a common goal. Hard work? Sure. But if the outcome is a business operating at its full potential - and likely a significant increase in profit - is it not a journey worth taking?

ABOUT CHRIS WELHAM

Chris Welham is Director of Space Age Technologies and has always been fascinated by the enormous potential and power of technology. What he most enjoys is using digital technology to provide solutions that empower people and their companies.

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