



Making Your IT Organisation More Agile

IT organisations have changed, are changing and will continue to change. This is not in question. What is different today is the pace and significance of change, whether it is driven by a move to shared services, offshore development, cloud computing or package-based solutions, there is a continual need for the IT leadership team to make their IT organisation more flexible, agile and adaptable to change.

There is no shortage of ideas on what changes to implement but many IT organisations find it difficult to incorporate one set of changes before the next idea presents itself. Equally, many are attempting to incorporate so many changes that it's difficult for them to see the inter-dependencies and take a holistic view of how the whole should operate. As a result, many changes take longer to implement than planned and fail to deliver the full expected value.

The ability to incorporate new ideas faster is therefore an increasingly important issue for many IT leaders. So what can be done to make the IT organisation more agile and better able to incorporate new ideas faster?

Obviously, the overarching constraint – or enabler – is the **installed technology base**. If the legacy systems are not agile and able to adapt to the needs of the business, then the IT organisation itself will have difficulty being agile. Agile technology architecture is therefore an important enabler of agility but one that can take many years to put in place. Fortunately there are **three other enablers** of agility that IT leaders can focus on immediately:

Firstly, make the **IT Operating Model** more adaptable to change. In recent years, tremendous progress has been made in understanding how best to organise IT, what processes and roles need to be in place, and how best to work with external suppliers. Undoubtedly these developments have significantly improved the quality of service delivery and the ability of IT to anticipate and respond to the needs of business colleagues. But in many cases this focus and attention on defining and documenting processes and achieving accreditation has led to a lack of flexibility rather than more agility. Secondly, ensure that the **governance** – decision rights and resultant accountabilities – is in place to allow the leadership team to decide quickly what changes need to be made to the way the IT

Eight Things We (Still) Hate About IT

IT's bureaucratic processes rival the tax system in complexity and IT consists of condescending techies who don't listen, are just two of the eight, as defined by Susan Cramm in her book and HBR [article](#). Susan claims that our frustrations with IT – and IT's frustrations with the business – are alive and well and that we should “move beyond the frustrations and form a new partnership with IT”.

We all recognise what Susan is saying, and it's not a new phenomenon. From the earliest days of IT (or data processing if you prefer) IT professionals and their business colleagues have struggled to understand each other's perspectives and establish a common language based upon shared frameworks and mental models.

This challenge is not going to go away – nor should we expect it – we are however definitely getting better and there are many examples of where IT and business colleagues collaborate effectively. In many respects it's like the weather, some days are better than others!

To read Susan's article, click [here](#).

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About Formicio

[Formicio](#) was formed in early 2010 by a group of thought leaders and practitioners. We help our

function operates and assign accountability for making the change happen. Whilst many IT organisations have governance models in place covering IT strategy (WHAT the IT function delivers), few have explicit governance in place for changing HOW the IT organisation operates. Thirdly, get staff more **engaged** in thinking about how the IT organisation should operate. We know that the more engaged people are, the more willing they are to change. We also know that what they think about their work, managers and management processes has a significant impact on engagement.

Many CIOs who are perceived to have failed did so not because they did not know what changes needed to be made, but as a result of their inability to make the changes quickly enough. It was the lack of organisational agility that was their downfall.

Read my full article [here](#).

I welcome your thoughts.

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clients around the world address tough strategic problems, and develop the insights and organisational capabilities needed for them to successfully implement their chosen strategy.

We use innovative experiential learning approaches to develop the insights and capabilities needed by today's business and technology leaders. Our focus is always on outcomes, not process.

Parting Thought

“The world that we have made as a result of the level of thinking we have done thus far creates problems that we cannot solve at the same level as they were created.”

Albert Einstein, 1879-1955