Alignment is Good, but Misalignment Can Lead to Better

We all seek alignment. Whether it's in our personal or professional lives, we believe that being aligned is good, and that if we are aligned we will be more productive and achieve all those things to which we aspire. Few of us set out intentionally to be misaligned, but all too often become so when others don't see things our way. But is misalignment – or disagreement – necessarily a bad thing? If we were all aligned all of the time is there a danger that no new ideas would emerge? Is misalignment therefore a valuable source of innovation? It's often said that the best breakthroughs come from breakdowns.

If handled correctly, a lack of alignment can encourage us to look at things from a different perspective and, as a result, seek new possibilities. It's not about being right or wrong, but about being creative in our thinking.

Frameworks and mental models can help us to understand the source of misalignment and encourage us to see things from different perspectives. One model that has been extensively used in IT to assess, understand and achieve breakthrough thinking between IT and business colleagues is the Business-IT Maturity Model (BIMM). Not to be confused with the Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI), the BIMM addresses the maturity and trajectory of both business demand for IT (the 'appetite' of the business for IT) and IT supply (the ability to satisfy that demand) – 'two sides of the coin,' as it were.

In its simplest form, the BIMM is an S-shaped learning curve – the business learning to exploit technology and the IT organisation learning to become efficient and effective in delivering IT services and, especially as maturity increases, shaping business demand. Business executives often find the BIMM's simple elegance appealing. They quickly grasp the concepts behind business demand maturity for IT and are able to use the model to analyse how their demand maturity is evolving over time. This equips them to engage in meaningful dialogue with IT leadership about the business implications of both demand and supply maturity.

The BIMM is intentionally simple to grasp and relatively open-ended. The model is a management tool, not a scientific instrument. Its primary purpose and value lie in driving dialogue, especially among business and IT leaders, about the current state and potential evolution of

The New New CIO Role: Big Changes Ahead

CIOs know about change, but can they change? A question explored by Thomas Wailgum in his recent CIO journal article. In the article he argues that "CIOs who can only take orders, who can't speak the language of the business, who can't step out of the proverbial back office and into the front lines of customer service, social media or supply chain management will soon go the way of ancient tech gear – remembered fondly on occasions, but sidelined in the future".

He further argues that CIOs who want to transform must concentrate on four key areas, what he calls the "4 Ps": perception, profile, participation and performance.

Those CIOs who have nailed the 'New New CIO' role – and all four of the 'Ps' – claim their job demands much, but can be unlike any other out there.

To read Thomas' article, click here.

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- Caught Between the Realities of 1.0 and 2.0
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About Formicio

Formicio was formed in early 2010 by a group of thought leaders and practitioners. We help our 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

business demand and IT supply. In the process, they can align priorities, resources and ambitions; clarify strategic intents for the business use of technology; stimulate business appetite for IT capabilities; and maximise the current and future business value of IT. In short, understand each other's perspectives and achieve alignment.

The BIMM can also be an effective tool in helping increase the business value of IT – by shifting the IT dialogue from cost to value, by elevating business demand and by improving the effectiveness of IT supply.

The BIMM is described in three Formicio Insight articles, the first of which is available [here](#).

I welcome your thoughts.

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

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Parting Thought

"The greatest obstacle to discovery is not ignorance – it is the illusion of knowledge."

Daniel J. Boorstin
Historian, 1914-2004