



Convergence of Geek & Suits: High-Impact OD Strategies

NJ ODN Sharing Day
Newark, NJ

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Anyone have this conversation lately?

Why does everything have to be so complicated?

How can they expect me to deliver what they can't explain?



Ever wonder if it's just you?

The 2004 Standish Group findings suggest it isn't. Of 9,236 projects completed world wide:

- 29% succeeded, up from 16% in 1994
(delivered on time, on budget, with required features & functions)
- 53% were challenged, flat since 1994
(late, over budget, less than the required features & functions)
- 18% failed, down from 31% in 1994
(cancelled prior to completion or delivered & never used)

What's helped improve project success?

- The technical tools have gotten better, reducing project costs.
- Better skilled project managers, using better processes.

Source: Standish Group, Extreme Chaos, 2001.

Other factors:

- Commoditization
- Outsourcing
- Service Oriented Architecture / Software by subscription

Why is this a problem OD can help solve?

The “soft side” of technology may be the hardest to get right.

Key “success factors”:

- ◆ Executive support
- ◆ User involvement
- ◆ Design for people
- ◆ Experienced project managers
- ◆ Clear business objectives
- ◆ Realistic expectations

OD people know diversity

- 1 “Geeks & suits” look at the world in fundamentally different ways.
 - ◆ How we see our relationship with the company
 - ◆ How we relate to technology
 - ◆ What motivates us
 - ◆ How we work best
 - ◆ How we think about problems
 - ◆ What we value in other people

OD people know knowledge sharing & training

- ② Geeks & suits can relate to “Mars-Venus”
 - ◆ We use terminology differently
 - ◆ We use information differently
 - ◆ Technology is complex & changes frequently
 - ◆ IT internal processes, challenges & priorities are very different & often not well-understood by the other

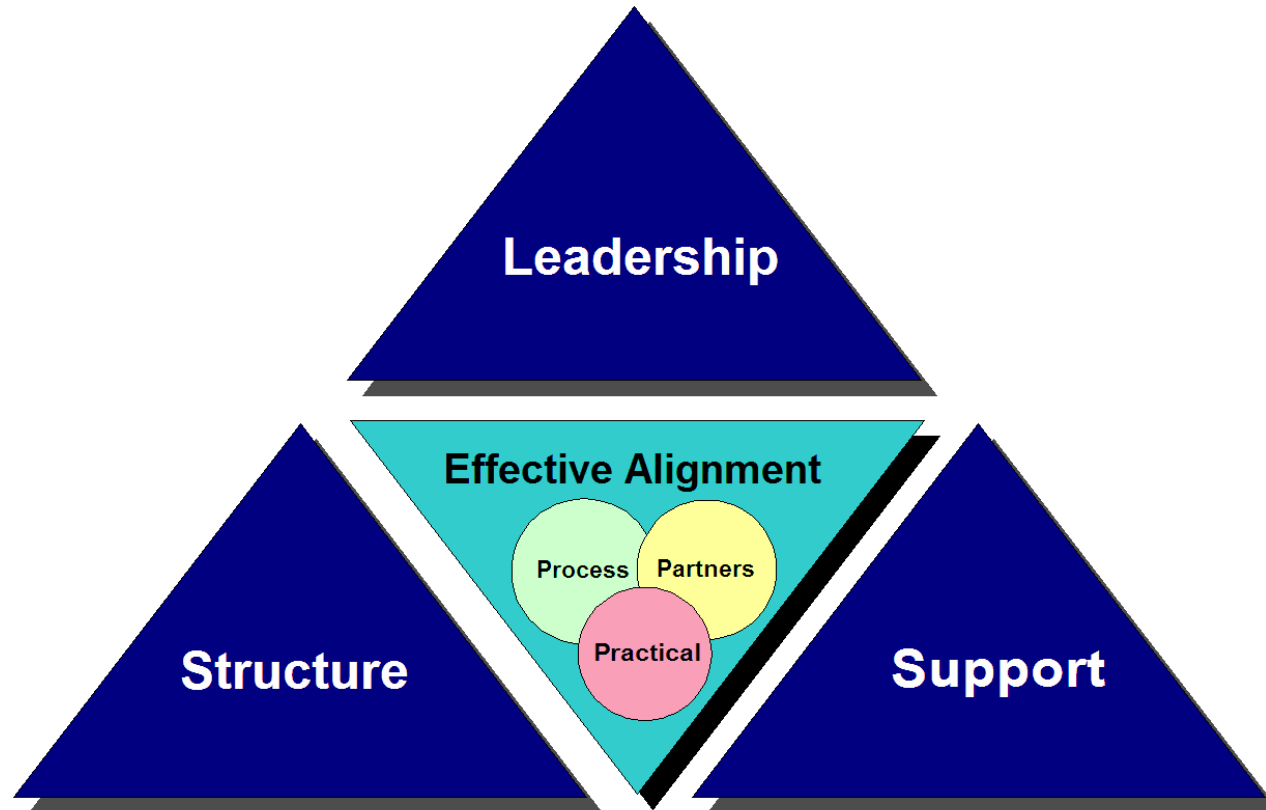
OD people know human collaboration and change

- ③ There are inherent communications barriers in every organization, not just between geeks & suits
 - ◆ Corporate culture
 - How decisions are made
 - Reward structures
 - ◆ Organizational structures
 - ◆ Individual factors (e.g., role, style)
 - ◆ Organizational core competencies

What can we do to make it better?



Framework for Effective Alignment



What can IT do?

- Adopt “customer-centricity” as a core value
- Install process so activities are conducted in an efficient, predictable & “non-chaotic” manner
- Implement portfolio management
- Implement a Project Management Office
- Become more business-savvy (CIO – down)
- Improve soft skills
- Use “bridges” to cross the chasm
- Use creative tools to improve understanding, clarity & decision-making
 - ◆ Examples: Intranet; communications group within IT

What can the Business do?

- Adopt “customer-centricity” as a core value
- Improve understanding of technology fluency to improve technology decisions
- Understand how the nature of IT work differs from other business activity, so that appropriate resources are allocated and expectations are realistic
- Provide the resources needed so IT can understand the business requirements at a high level of clarity
- Improve tolerance for detail & iterative thinking
- Ask for visual prototypes
- Use “bridges” to cross the chasm
- Share accountability for the success of IT projects

How OD people can promote partnership

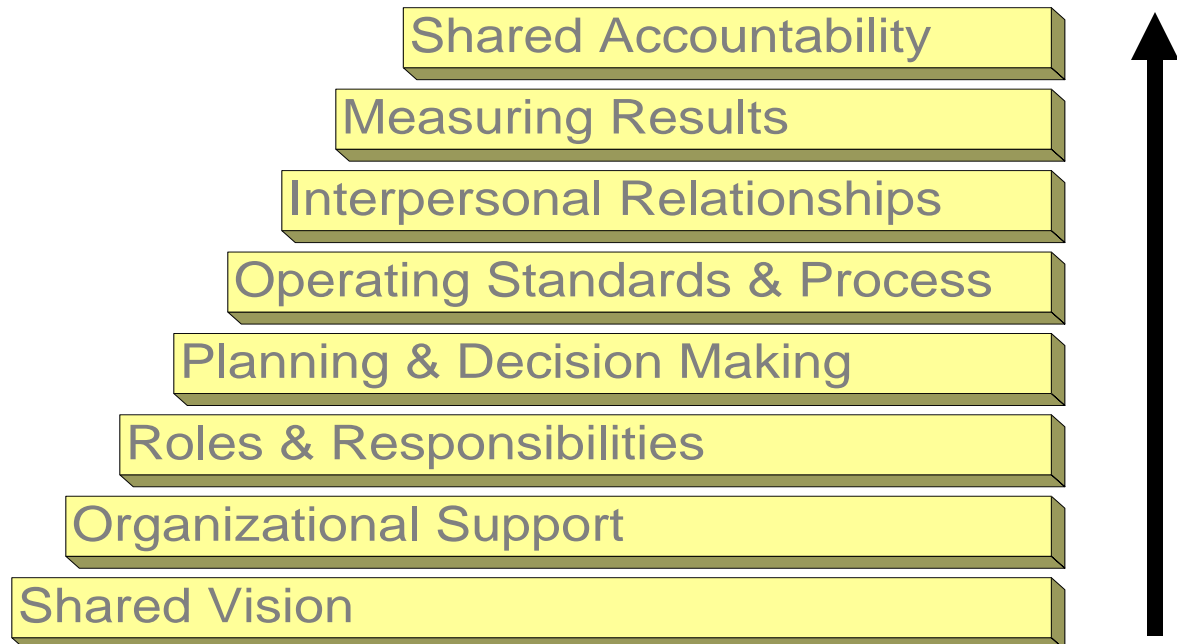
- Establish vehicles that create processes, provide skills & use rewards so that geeks and suits:
 - ◆ Share common vision, goals & accountability
 - ◆ Make sure they really do understand one another
 - ◆ Respect each other's role & "value add"
 - ◆ Can make decisions effectively
 - ◆ Identify problems quickly, without blaming
 - ◆ Make an effort to validate the others' concerns
 - ◆ Share accountability for the problem & the solution
 - ◆ Use common metrics to measure results

Tool: Partnership Framework

How?

- Assess partnership within IT, between IT & business units
- Identify gaps
- Actions

There are building blocks for effective collaboration & teamwork.



Tool: Customer Centricity

Customer-Focused IT Scorecard

Services Customers	Desktop Support	Enterprise Systems	Business Development	Security & Disaster Recovery	Training
The Board					
Executive Team					
LOB Management					
Middle Management					
Supervisors					
Staff					
Customers					
Vendors/Partners					

Operational Services

IT departments are making progress partnering with the business on operational services that focus on reliability, productivity a cost-efficiency.

1. What are this segment's day-to-day needs?
2. What are their goals & objectives?
3. What are burning issues?
4. How do they view us?
5. How would they evaluate our performance?
6. What are good metrics?

Successful delivery of operational services is essential to gain the credibility & trust needed to influence business strategy & implementation.

Growth & Strategy Services

Being an active participant in the organization's growth and strategy depends on:

1. Demonstrating an understanding of the business & its different audiences
2. Having credibility
3. Having influence
4. Being able to position technology as a partner for business innovation, identifying opportunities & successful execution

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- Geeks are valued for technology competence & capability AND they take responsibility for “business fluency” & customer-centricity.
- Suits are valued for core competence essential to organization survival & growth AND they take responsibility for “technology fluency”
- Together, they improve the processes, partnership & practicality needed for alignment & organizational success.