

Bryan: Nothing like a good mai thai

Tim: Nothing like a good mai thai

Bryan: So how you doing today, buddy?

Tim: I'm good. How are you?

Bryan: I'm good, I'm good. I'm enjoying this great weather, holy cow.

Tim: It's not going to last long.

Bryan: It's not going to last long that's for sure. Hey, so so listen I uh I've got a couple buddies and I'd you know I see them all the time they're in IT as well. You know we talk about problems in the business and you know, what I see from them and I experienced it myself just to be honest about it, is there's so much that happens on a daily basis is just sort of keeping out a date and decrepit systems kind of running and keeping the business powered that you're really dealing with the pains of the business in the day

Tim: yeah

Bryan: you still have a lot of time thinking about you know where the future direction should go or even how technology can make a difference in a competitive advantage for the organization and they're really struggling with it and to make matters worse they're getting a lot of pressure both internally and externally to you know to kind of make a difference

Tim: yeah

Bryan: and justify what they spend on systems and you know continuing trying to put band-aids in. I mean it's a tough topic. And so yeah I know I know you've done a lot of work with clients to really try to help them understand, you know, how their IT can impact their business and kind of marry those things together and create a really an overarching strategy for them that's that's kind of woven together in a cohesive manner.

Tim: I like those terms. I mean plan-full approach to IT spend is usually one of the areas lacking in an organization. I always like to tell a story of my grandmother. Grandma, was a great quilt maker.

Bryan: Okay.

Tim: And you know, if you've seen a well-built, designed quilt -

Bryan: yeah

Tim: It's taken some thought. But I use the analogy because it's a lot like the way many of our business owners have acquired their systems

Bryan: yeah

Tim: They dealt with problem dejour, right?

Bryan: Yeah



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Tim: that was the problem of the day, went out and bought a system for that.

Bryan: yeah

Tim: and then tried to patch these things together

Bryan: yeah

Tim: think of what can be done with you know scraps of paper or scraps of material that are laying on the floor versus

Bryan: Yeah, if you put them together and it's sort of a non-cohesive way it doesn't look great. If you plan it out, sometimes those quilts are beautiful, right?

Tim: same thing with an IT strategy.

Bryan: That's perfect, okay.

Tim: So you know, I think you and I both consulted with clients on this but we always talk in terms of starting from the top, right? So what runs the business? I use the acronym VBO - vital business objectives.

Bryan: Yep

Tim: And you know how do we identify what objectives....

Bryan: Can I take some notes?

Tim: Yeah, what are the objectives that you know vital to the business? So that when we get into a decision about a system or systems, we make sure that they achieve what's vital to the business.

Bryan: and so your point is is really have that in your everyday kind of thinking when you're looking at upgrading systems or you're looking at you know the price of change make sure you're looking at those business objectives overall and have it in your thought process.

Tim: You know and a key fundamental piece of developing a strategy, is taking time as a business to agree on what those are.

Bryan: Yeah because that the trick.

Tim: Because that then - you know we always talk in terms of what are the critical success factors of systems?

Bryan: Yeah

Tim: How do they, you know, what pieces do they have to have in play...

Bryan: mm-hmm

Tim: to achieve those vital business objectives?

Bryan: That's partnership with the business. So what you've really got to do is kind of get out of your chair if you're an IT leader and you got to go find a business unit leader and you've got to make sure that you understand what really helps them be successful. Understand those critical success factors and then if you have that in your thought process when you're dealing with your problems of the day, you may think about some better solutions.

Tim: Exactly. And you've used this term with me a lot but I think it's talking in terms of you know, what's the return on our investment?

Bryan: mm-hmm

Tim: As opposed to thinking more from just a cost of ownership perspective

Bryan: Yeah and you know, IT leaders have gotten into this position where they really are defending sort of a cost center centric business model. And so what ends up happening is, they get they get budget allocation. They really don't have any credit for anything coming to offset the budget expenditure and people really don't understand what they're spending their money on. And it's hard to sort of tie that back to any kind of return on the business and we all know it's there. It's right now measured in soft terms, not hard terms. And really if we understand those those vital business objectives and those critical success factors, we then can start to map that kind of that quilt together to you know we're going to do this kind of piece here. It maps this vital business objective and this organization is you know, this much more effective and that's an impact.

Tim: Yeah

Bryan: And we're really looking for impact.

Tim: Yeah, Yeah, and then you know, I'm a Hawaiian beach kind of guy Bryan, and so, cause it makes creates a great analogy.

Bryan: yeah

Tim: sitting back on the beach, watching the ripples in the waves.

Bryan: Right

Tim: So we talk in terms of, how do we implement systems that cause ripples of change, rather than these crashing tidal waves of change that changed the landscape both from a financial perspective,

Bryan: yeah

Tim: and you know from an organizational change perspective.

Bryan: Yeah and you've hit probably one of the topics that's kind of I think most central to my way of thinking is, you know, when we put new technology in an organization we really have to look at the workforce and the impact it has on on them and their ability to work efficiently and effectively.

Tim: Yeah

Bryan: You know we can try to make things better but actually make it worse. And so we have to understand what the business is trying to do and we have to make sure that we take the the necessary measures to educate and inform them on the new systems and how to use them. And what we're really trying to drive is more efficient productivity and effectiveness and market and competitive advantage and let them know that we're in it with them. That we're not the no police. That we're here to help them. I think that's the key.

Tim: Yeah. So I mean I think those are you know when we talk thoughtful business planning,

Bryan: Yeah

Tim: from an IT perspective. Start with our business.

Bryan: Yeah

Tim: And what are the objectives were trying to achieve?

Bryan: Right.

Tim: Identify as an organization. Agree on vital business objectives

Bryan: mm-hmm

Tim: Then what's what's critical to our success? What are the factors that drive our success?

Bryan: Right

Tim: Think of it from the return,

Bryan: Yep

Tim: rather than the cost.

Bryan: Exactly

Tim: And how do we plan this over periods of time so that we're in, you know, a sustainable, achievable ripple of change?

Bryan: Ripples of change, exactly.

Tim: Don't you agree?

Bryan: I think that's I think that really is the core to what we're trying to accomplish with this, yeah, absolutely. Cheers. Mai thai, again?

Tim: Mai thai, again.