How to Build the Business Technology Partnership You Really Want

Implement More of the Big Important Things

Technology Doesn't Have to Be Complicated

It just has to do the right job for your company now and into the future.

That sounds simple enough, but we know it takes more than a few words to align the right technology with your strategy. You need a framework that adapts and grows along with your company's and customers' changing needs and expectations.

How Many of These Sound Familiar to You?

Check all that apply.

☐ You have a lot of strategic things that need to be done, but you're just one person.

☐ Even when you have a leadership team, you feel like there's something more that could be added.

☐ You have a lot of ideas, but you aren't sure what to do with them.

☐ Your internal team is telling you what they think you want to hear, not what you need to hear.

☐ You need an objective outside perspective You've been too close to a big important thing for too long.

☐ You need more time in your day.

☐ You tell yourself you'll get started when you have more time, the next big thing is done, you hit a slow period, you have time to do the research, you run out of excuses.

☐ You want to focus more on strategic ideas, but your day is full of do it now distractions.

☐ If you really want to be honest with yourself, you don't have the confidence or expertise to execute on the big idea, even though you know it will benefit your company.

☐ You're uncomfortable admitting that you don't know how to do what needs to be done. You know there's no shame in this. No successful leader has done it alone. You just don't like to admit it.

☐ You know an initiative is a great idea. It's just not something you personally want to invest your time in doing.

What else can you add to this list? These are your personal unshared thoughts so take a few minutes to be brutally honest with yourself.

How to Start Unchecking the Boxes

What if you had a trusted business technology partner, the person who filled in those gaps for you?

Check all that apply.

☐ You know building a partnership makes sense, but you aren't sure where to start.

☐ How do you find the right person?

☐ You feel like you're giving up control.

☐ You know your company better than anyone. How can someone execute the way you can?

☐ You don't know if it will work.

☐ What happens if it doesn't work out?

☐ You've tried partnering before, and it didn't go well.

☐ You want to do everything in-house.

☐ You think partnerships are probably expensive.

☐ We're a small company. An experience business technology person won't want to work with us.

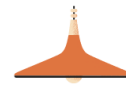☐ Isn't an outsourced IT provider the same as a technology partner? (*Answer: no.*)

(7) Business Technology Traits for a Successful Partnership

Strategy Focused

Getting the right things done is based on long term strategic goals, not the short term day-to-day to do list.
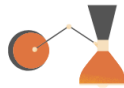
Value Matters

The right business technology partner is hired for long term value, not short term cost.

Proven Expertise

Business technology partners have broad hands-on experience. They balance business knowledge and technical expertise to provide a valuable objective perspective.

Collaboration is Key

The right partner knows collaboration creates unexpected opportunities.

Success is Shared

Partners know that no one is successful alone. The right partnership celebrates the successes of everyone.

Think Scalability

Experienced business technology leaders know that your company, your needs, your customers, and your technology framework have to stay in alignment.

Simplify the Team

Instead of a disconnected collection of outsourced third-party providers, consolidate and simplify with fewer players.

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Create a Partnership Playbook

Every successful relationship needs a set of guidelines to stay on-course and navigate the disagreements. Differences are going to arise. That's a given. A trusted partnership is a valuable asset that everyone commits to protecting. Starting with a mutually agreed upon playbook will go a long way toward supporting communication, collaboration, and success.

Each company is different so craft the partnership playbook that feels right for you. It's not carved in stone so give it room to breathe and adapt as you go along.

A few tips to help you get started.

☐ Sharing doesn't come naturally to most of us. As children we had to be taught, and reminded often, that sharing the sandbox toys was a necessary skill. It was the road to becoming thoughtful, cooperative grown-ups. Building a partnership of trust needs frequent sharing to deliver mutual success.

☐ Differences in approach and methodology are not only expected but also an important part of collaboration. Agree to openly discuss the "why" and "how" before conflict arises.

☐ You chose this partner because they have the expertise to execute. Before you rigidly impose the "we've always done it this way" rule, consider there might be a different way.

☐ Remember that this project has been on your strategic wish list for a long time. There's a reason why it languished.

☐ Get comfortable looking at things differently.

☐ Your partner has your best interests in mind. They will often suggest solutions or approaches that make you uncomfortable. Don't let the notion that every idea has to be yours stand in the way of a future win.

☐ Your partner is completely invested in mutual success. They need to ensure that the outcome meets your strategic goals and expectations. They want to reassure you that you made the right decision to partner with them.

☐ Your partner is a businessperson too. They have fully committed their company's resources and reputation to you. Remember that they have internal demands you might not be aware of. It's simply mutual respect in action.

☐ Ultimately, it is your company, and you are accountable for the decisions. An experienced partner knows and respects this. When you have an open communication channel built on mutual trust, together you will reach responsible decisions.

Your First Partnership Project

You've met the experienced business technology person who checks the right boxes for you. Now what?

Let's keep it simple.

Personal relationships grow one step at a time. The same should be true for business partnerships. Think small, focused steps.

☐ Grab your strategic ideas list, the one you're continually adding to. You know these initiatives could make a measurable difference for your company.

☐ Pick one idea that could have a meaningful impact on your company if you had the time, resources, and confidence to execute.

☐ Describe in detail what the successful outcome looks like. Sit with that for a moment. Visualizing the results helps you clearly describe the purpose behind your project. This becomes the foundation for every step and decision along the way.

☐ Now list all of the things preventing you from starting.

☐ What's the worst that will happen if it's not as successful as you hope?

☐ If you had someone working beside you who could fill in the missing pieces, what would you accomplish together?

☐ This is your first partnership project. It's manageable, it matters, it's measurable.

The project happens here

You Did It. Now Review the Results Together

Yes, we jumped past the actual project implementation. That's a big topic for another guide.

You visualized the outcome.

You clearly saw how you, your company, and your partner all benefited from this project.

When you've reached the end of the project, it's time to pause, review, and objectively assess. This is the step that is sometimes overlooked for the obvious reasons. By the time the project is complete, you're both mentally moving on to the next thing. You're energized by your success. You see the possibility for a repeat with the next big important idea.

But consider this final checkup part of the project. It isn't done until you check these final boxes.

☐ How did the results compare to your expectations?

☐ What did you get right?

☐ What would you have done differently?

☐ How would you change the partnership for the next project?

☐ What happened that you weren't expecting?

☐ What did you learn from the partnership?

Let's Explore Your Business Technology Together

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