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A CALL TO VALUE

7 Ways to Deliver Value to Your
Organization as an IT Person

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You don't get paid for the hour. You get paid for the value you bring to the hour.

– Jim Rohn

Foreward

So, you are an IT person.

You realize that all the cool stuff you know and practice will only mean something when it generates actual value.

You are ready to start creating value for your company and are looking for where to start.

You have come to the right place.

Over at [Toptech Engineering Limited](#), we are kind of a go-to authority figure on when it comes to value creation from technology.

Why's that?

Because we actually know what we're talking about.

Over the last 20 years, we have worked with several IT professionals, helping them deliver real measurable value for their organizations. We have designed approaches, implemented projects, saw the results, spoke to our clients, and then did a deep dive in our findings.

But first, what exactly is constitutes VALUE?

Price is what you pay and value is what you get.

– Warren Buffet

VALUE is something that you create or possess that other people are willing and able to pay money to acquire. Other people are ready to part with money because the VALUE creates better outcomes in what matters to them.

What matters could be physical appearance, sensual or intellectual experiences, popularity, acceptance, influence, productivity, efficiency, growth, profitability, etc.

VALUE could be an idea, a relationship, a partnership, a process, a system, a product, a solution, or a combination of all.

For you as an IT person in a business setting, as intellectually fulfilling as it is to implement the latest advances in smart technology, you need to tailor your work to improve the most important metric of all – **productivity**.

As Charles Koch said:

“So to the best we can, what we do is focus on creating value for others, and how do we do that? We do it by trying to produce products and services that our customers will value more than their alternatives, and not just their alternatives today, but what the alternatives will be in the future. We can try to more efficiently use resources than our competitors, and constantly improve in that, and we try to do the best job we can in creating a safe environment, and environmental excellence, and constantly improve in that.”

Your company exists only because it creates something some people find valuable. These people pay for the value and become customers.

You and your colleagues are responsible for creating the value your company offers to its customers. If your customers find another company's offering more valuable than yours, they will abandon you and your company. There is a real risk that you may run out of business.

So for you as an IT person, two segments are critical – your company's customers and your colleagues. You must find a way to directly improve your company's offering so it stays in business. And you must find a way to help your colleagues do their best work.

Nothing else matters. At least as far as your business life is concerned.

The following are 7 ways to help you deliver value to your business this year. Here is what we will cover:

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I. Attitude – Become a value creator

Try not to become a man of success, but a man of value. Look around at how people want to get more out of life than they put in. a man of value will give more than he receives. Be creative, but make sure that what you create is not a curse for mankind.

– Albert Einstein

It is a common adage that your attitude determines your altitude. Most people assume attitude relates only to how you treat others. If you behave well with others, they are more likely to like you and help ascend the ladder of success. While this is true, the true interpretation is actually more literal than that.

Your attitude *to value creation* determines your altitude in *the work place*.

While talking to customers, we get the notion that some think IT is a dead-end job. And there is some merit to that thought. If you see your daily job as simply completing tasks, what difference does it make if you use a PC or a screwdriver? You are simply completing tasks as they arise.

The IT guy wants to keep buying stuff so that tasks are completed.

The IT gal searches for flashy new scenarios to try out in her environment.

The IT guy looks for more certifications to conquer so he can find more opportunities to complete new tasks.

Businesses see IT as simply a cost center. You keep spending money that impacts the bottom-line. This is a direct consequence of the task completion mindset.

Businesses don't like to spend money. Except they will receive more than they spend. So how does that affect the task completer?

The task completer doesn't get promoted.

The task completer doesn't get raises.

The task completer doesn't get appreciated.

The task completer gets laid off.

Because the task completer is seen as replaceable. By a better task completer or by technology.

It is almost impossible for a task completer to climb to the highest altitude in the workplace. No one wants a spendthrift to lead the company.

Of course, value cannot be created if tasks are not completed. The key point to note however is that *the goal* is value creation, not simply completing tasks. That will help determine which tasks to complete and what outcomes to measure.

Look around you at your colleagues. Anyone who gets ahead does so because of the value they create and the outcomes that ensued, not simply because they completed tasks.

Everyone completes tasks. But those who move up the ladder do so because of the outcomes they achieve as a result of the value they create.

The best way to create value for your organization this year is to develop a shift in mindset. Become a person who creates value and not one who excels at completing tasks. Critically look at the tasks you undertake and measure the value to the business.

How do you relate to your colleagues? Realize that it is not you vs the user, it is you and the user for your company. Work hard to complete tasks that will help them do their best work.

It is not you vs the user. It is you and the user for the company.

What projects are you planning to execute this year, and why? Is it simply to implement state-of-the-art technology and line vendors' pockets? What value will it create? Will it save costs, increase productivity, or accelerate revenue? Will it enhance your company's brand image?

Invest in yourself. Follow mentors. Study how the business works. Think about how you can help. Let the discoveries permeate your daily routines.

Before long, you will begin to create real measurable value for your organization. Your colleagues will see you as a value creator, not just a task completer. And when that happens -

You will get promoted.

You will get raises.

You will get appreciated.

You will become a lynchpin to the organization.

Key Takeaway

Become a person who creates value, instead of one who simply completes tasks. This mindset will raise your altitude at the workplace, and in life.

2. Location – Where are your workloads?

It is a lot easier when you can share the workload to be honest. Especially if you really, really, trust in each other.

– Georgia Nott

In IT parlance, a workload is any application running on a computer. To the modern IT professional, the terms workload, program, software, and application, are usually used interchangeably.

In normal English, workload is the amount of work to be done by someone or something.

The something in the context of IT is the computer.

Today's IT departments are truly spoiled for choice when it comes to locating workloads. Traditionally, workloads have been run in the enterprise data center, under the full control of the IT department. However, with the availability of multiple data center collocation facilities and the explosion of mature cloud infrastructure, workloads are moving more and more away from the enterprise data center.

But should that always be the case?

As a value creator, you need to consider what is best for your particular business, and how that affects the bottom-line.

Collocation providers and Cloud providers are vying for your workloads. The information they publish about purported cost savings and other advantages may actually not be the case for your particular scenario. Moving your workloads might not be valuable long-term, and you may have to repatriate them back to your data center. And sometimes, moving your workloads may be best for your business.

Local companies want your workloads to remain in the enterprise data center so they can keep their facility support contracts. Keeping the workloads might better, or might hurt the business.

The Cloud gives IT teams a lot of flexibility on how and where to run workloads. For instance, an email service can run in a hybrid setup, where the workload can run in the enterprise data center or is pushed to the vendor to be provided as a service, such as Office365. The service to the user remains the same, but the location of the workload alternates.

Yet there are several considerations. What are the legal implications? What about latency? What about security? What about reliability?

The decision on where to locate workloads is not as simple as it used to be. The best approach might be to implement a combination of the three, together with an orchestration framework that ties them all together.

Your workloads are probably thinking like Georgia Nott. They know that sharing is better, as long as there is proper governance and trust.

To make your decision, you need to do the following:

1. Define your workloads. Understand each workload you run in your environment and how they impact the bottom-line.
2. Compute your costs. Calculate the dollarized value of running the workload in your environment. Also, calculate the dollarized value of running the workload in a collocation facility or as a service in the Cloud.
3. Categorize your workloads. Group together workloads that have a similar mode of operation, similar consumers, and similar impacts to the business.
4. Decide tolerance limits. For each category, decide how long the business would be able to cope if the workload becomes unavailable.
5. Determine the impact. For each category, determine the impact of running the workloads in the data center, in collocation facilities, or in the Cloud. Consider worst-case scenarios, especially for factors you cannot control, and forecast effect on the business.

Keep in mind that the goal is not just running workloads, but running workloads efficiently so that profitability increases.

Key Takeaway

Place your workloads where the cost to the business, in cash and performance, is the lowest.

3. Energy – Optimize your consumption

***Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs,
but not every man's greed.***

– Mahatma Gandhi

As our everyday lives increasingly revolve around technology, further expedited by the coronavirus pandemic, IT continues to be a major consumer of energy.

The cost of energy generation is high – to the bottom-line and the environment. Every watt matters. Energy saved from the data center can and should be repurposed for other critical needs.

IT can directly contribute to the fight to conserve our climate. It is no longer sufficient to simply keep the services running. It is equally essential to do so with the minimum possible energy and resources.

This year, look for opportunities for energy efficiency in your environment. Substitute your IT equipment with energy-saving ones^[1]. Implement highly efficient power and cooling equipment. Use energy-saving bulbs. Reduce power and cooling requirements with virtualization and containerization.

Create value for your organization by reducing costs lost to energy generation. Don't forget to document the resultant savings. This is the evidence of your value creation.

You could also get international recognition for your team's efforts.

Key Takeaway

Be energy efficient. Use only as much energy as you really need to.

4. Data – Unearth valuable insights

It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts.

– Arthur Conan Doyle

CEOs and business leaders gather at the beginning of every year to ponder on how to grow the metrics that matter to the business. They theorize, forecast, and strategize. They look forward with vigor to implementing the formulated strategies.

But things don't always go according to plan.

One key missing ingredient in these strategy sessions is *the right information*. The business leaders rely on industry publications, their personal experiences, the news, influencers, competitor actions, and sometimes, just plain gut to arrive at their conclusions. However, these predictions can become more accurate when insights gleaned for the business are applied.

You have probably heard about data and have some sort of data collection system already in place. But the key question is – are you collecting the right data and are you harnessing the right information?

As Clifford Stoll said:

“Data is not information, Information is not knowledge, Knowledge is not understanding, Understanding is not wisdom”.

The objective of data collection is sagacity in business decisions. Without that, the data collected is worthless. It is good to visualize performance metrics – profitability, revenue, costs, etc. But these are lag metrics. Businesses also need to keep an eye on the lead metrics that effect the results.

Key Takeaway

Demonstrate your value to the business by identifying and measuring key lead metrics. Show your business leaders how these have historically affected the lags they pore over.

5. Security – Rethink your security setup

The way to be safe is never to be secure.

– Benjamin Franklin

Every IT professional understands the importance of security and they do their best to keep their environments safe. As part of their training, they study the fundamental principles of security – the three Basic A's of Identity and Access Management, Need to Know, Least Privilege, Encryption, Patching, etc. And for the most part, these practices have been sufficient.

Not anymore.

The pandemic-induced necessities are permanently changing our behaviors. Meetings are now naturally held remotely. People have adapted to, and are now comfortable with, working from home. So many different devices, applications, services, etc, are now being used to perform official responsibilities, connect to corporate networks, and access confidential data. Workloads reside in geographically dispersed locations.

IT teams can no longer rely on the safety of the corporate network to govern data access. They are increasingly dependent on the responsibility and knowledge of the users.

There are so many loopholes.

Cybercriminals are not blind to this state of affairs. They are working tooth and nail to undermine your efforts.

This year, create value by securing your environment. Identify all possible security loopholes. Monitor and record attempted breaches. Compute possible losses that might have been incurred had the attacks been successful. Prepare a report to your boss.

Key Takeaway

Cybercriminals are implementing new ways to gain access to restricted resources. Evaluate your security measures and redress accordingly.

6. Customers – Improve your offerings

You've got to start with the customer experience and work back toward the technology - not the other way around.

– Steve Jobs

IT teams want to implement the latest technologies. After all, they are engineers at heart. Engineers build, break, and rebuild. It is all about efficiency – getting more output with less, even if the particular output does not have a direct benefit to the business.

The thing is, without the business, there are no IT teams. And without customers, there is no business. There are a lot of competitors, direct and indirect, vying for the purse of your customer. And once they get it, they will not let go easily. That is why you must help your organization retain its customers. So that you will still have a job.

Customers naturally try to maximize satisfaction. They are looking for where to get the best deal. If they are buying from you, it is because they feel they are getting the best value for their money from you. If they feel there is a better value someplace else, they will dump you.

But so many things contribute to satisfaction. A customer feels satisfaction from the overall experience. The quantity, and quality, of the purchased product, the speed with which their requests were attended to, the options of channels they have to transact with the company, how the company representatives made them feel, the general ambience of the transaction channel, and many other tangible and intangible factors.

You may not be directly customer-facing, but remember that you are a value creator, not just a task completer. Create value for your company by helping them retain existing customers and even acquire more customers.

This year, figure out a way to help your company improve its customer experience. Increase the speed of processing requests, create innovative channels for customer engagement, ensure a minimum quality standard for all channels, improve application usability, freshen up user interfaces, support users with a smile. Do anything to make your company's customers happy.

If you have a chance to interact with customers, treat them like your long lost best friend. Portray to them that your company genuinely cares about them. Even if you do nothing else on the technology side, this is enough.

Most people care about those whom they find to care about them. If your customers see that your company cares about them, they would most like to care back enough to remain customers.

Key Takeaway

Find ways to help your company improve the experience it offers to its customer. It will keep them being customers and it will keep you in a job.

7. Partnership – Do more by doing less

We all have different timetables in reaching and realizing that being in healthy partnership is better than being on our own.

– Hill Harper

The Pareto Principle is one of the most iconic discoveries of the 19th Century. Since Vilfredo Pareto published his essay in 1896 that showed that approximately 80% of the land in Italy was owned by 20% of the population, the 80/20 rule has been applied to almost any field of study – from economics to engineering, to computer science, and even sports.

The key thing for you to note is that approximately 80% of the outcomes that matter to you today comes from only about 20% of your daily efforts. That is a fact.

However, you must still keep spending 80% of your time doing the things that least matter to you, because they most matter to someone else. They are tasks that must be done.

But it doesn't have to be you doing it. You can delegate to subordinates, automate, or better yet, outsource to external vendors.

Implement software and hardware automation for mundane and repetitive stuff. Find partners to help you do the things that least matter, so you can focus on doing the things that most matter, like creating a better user experience.

The same should be applied to learning.

As a technology person, when you have to implement a new project or map out a new initiative, what next comes to mind is the question: "How do we do this?" Instead, you should ask: "Who can I partner with that can do this for us?" When your mind works this way, you will find that so many interesting collaborations become possible.

In the book, *Who Not How*, Benjamin Hardy (Ph.D.) writes:

“Creating 10X or 100X results in your life and business may initially sound ridiculous, but it is fundamental to applying Who Not How. You need bigger goals. You need a bigger vision. As Dan says, “The only way to make your present better is by making your future bigger.” Going 10X bigger in your vision, whether that be income or revenue or some other metric, forces you to get Whos involved, because the task at hand literally becomes impossible to do on your own. Those are the types of goals we encourage you to start envisioning. Every time you apply Who Not How by imagining a new goal and getting Whos to work toward it, you will improve your time, increase your income, expand your relationships, and deepen your purpose. Who Not How is the answer.”

When you work with great partners, you free up time to spend on producing the outcomes that are most important to you. You focus your efforts on what you are really good at and leave those you are marginal on to your partners.

You can dream bigger dreams and create greater value because you realize that your goals are not limited by your current capabilities. You can have greater confidence in the knowledge that there are several partners you can work with that will help you fulfill your vision.

It is a question of Who, not How.

Key Takeaway

Partnerships are vital for growth. Cede some of your tasks to your partners so that you can focus on the most important things.

Final Word

I hope you found the information contained in this book useful. Become fired up and create as much value as you can this year.

You might be wondering who I am. Here is a short introduction.

My name is Badrudeen Ajibola Ayomaya (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/badrudeen-ajibola-ayomaya/>). I represent Toptech Engineering Limited (www.toptechengineeringltd.com), the leading digital infrastructure systems integrator in West Africa.

I have been architecting and integrating digital systems for almost two decades. My sojourn has seen me work on the design and build of hyperscale and enterprise data centers, critical power and cooling, enterprise IT systems, physical and network security systems, Internet of Things (IoT), cloud computing, data and business analytics, machine learning, application development, and many more.

I would love to partner with you on your initiatives this year. Let us work together to deliver great value to your business.

Do shoot an email to discuss your project here: Ajibola.Ayomaya@gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

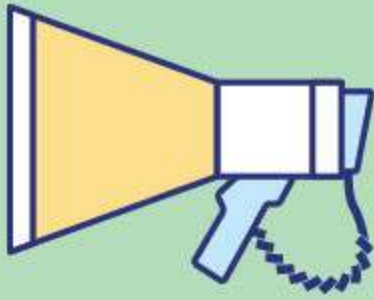
To your success!

Badrudeen Ajibola Ayomaya

1. Find energy saving data center equipment here:

https://www.energystar.gov/products/data_center_equipment





7 Ways to create value for your organization in 2021

VALUE is something that you create or possess that other people are willing and able to pay money to acquire. Other people are ready to part with money because the VALUE creates better outcomes in what matters to them.

For you as an IT person in a business setting, as intellectually fulfilling as it is to implement the latest advances in smart technology, you need to tailor your work to improve the value your organization offers to its customers.

This book highlights 7 Ways through which you can create value for your organization this year.