

YOUR 30-60-100 DAY
PLAN



CHANGING FOCUS

In the past, if you looked at any IT executive's background and experience, it was 80 percent technology and 20 percent business. Now it is increasingly reversed — because you now need to understand the business value of technology. Furthermore, many Boards now recognise the value and risks of technology, so you have multiple non-technical stakeholders to keep informed.

Apart from taking responsibility for all the IT and technology infrastructure within your organisation, you are also expected to be a business leader and influence meaningful change, including the bottom line.

To give you a helpful start we have compiled our suggestions from our experience in working with new executives that have delivered the most value to their organisation.

We hope you find these helpful. Good luck in your new role.

Here is a 30-60-90-day plan that can help you deliver these business expectations:

OVERVIEW

Starting any new position comes with its challenges and opportunities. Whether you're a seasoned executive embarking on a fresh challenge or recently promoted to your new role, it's important to get your first few months' right and start with a plan.

"Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe."
Abraham Lincoln

We all want to come in and demonstrate value, there will no doubt be a number of possible quick-fixes or a backlog of issues you are expected to address. However, focusing on your strategy is often the best plan in achieving sustainable success.



Days 1–30

The initial 30 days are critical in getting a good understanding of the business. Take time to learn about your company's culture, build relations with peers and senior leaders to unearth the critical issues your new organisation is facing, before starting to codify the strategy. It is best to avoid making any changes until you are confident that you understand the lay of the land, otherwise you

may end-up alienating key stakeholders needed to help you deliver the future strategy.

There are several areas you should consider early, as these will help you contextualise any issues you may uncover and help refine your strategy.

Some of the areas you want to assess:

OVERVIEW

Ensure you have a clear understanding of the organisation structure. This includes departments and their core objectives (reviewing existing KPIs may assist here). You also want to capture key stakeholders within each department.

BUSINESS OUTCOMES

Your new engagement may be to achieve a very specific goal in which case, your business outcomes should have been clearly defined. In other cases you may be replacing a staff-member where business outcomes may be less-clear.

Irrespective to your initial brief; starting to capture business outcomes is critical.

CURRENT ISSUES

No business is perfect and even if they were, perfection is often subjective. Start by capturing the current business issues which will help inform your strategy. However, try not to personalise issues but capture these as potential points for improvements, as opposed to areas that are not working. Assessing the perception of IT is also critical.

Negative engagement will only make the successful delivery of any future strategy more challenging. Perception may be different from one department to the next depending on how involved these departments (or staff) have been in past IT projects or their current level of understanding.

ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

Is our IT organization focusing on the right areas?

How are expectations changing towards the role of the IT organization?

Are we delivering business value?

What impact are we having on business outcomes or customer experiences?

Are the right people making the decisions?

What decisions should people be making and what information is required to make fact-based decisions?

Do we have the right skills and people?

What skills are core to our ability to differentiate as a business? What skills and knowledge are unique to us, and what skills are easier to gain access to from an external supplier?

Remember that if something isn't working it is rarely down to individuals – the process can be wrong, insufficient training has been offered, inappropriate checks or change management procedures, no empirical measures of performance or KPIs have been established, poor governance around line-management or regular meetings.

RESOURCES

Any future changes you are planning will ultimately require specific skills and resources. Many businesses scale their resource pool based on client demand for their services and not to manage continuous improvements. So start considering the source of the necessary resources and skills; this may be from within the business, from a 3rd party or through hiring. (Please read our whitepaper on “Outsource IT or Hire?” for

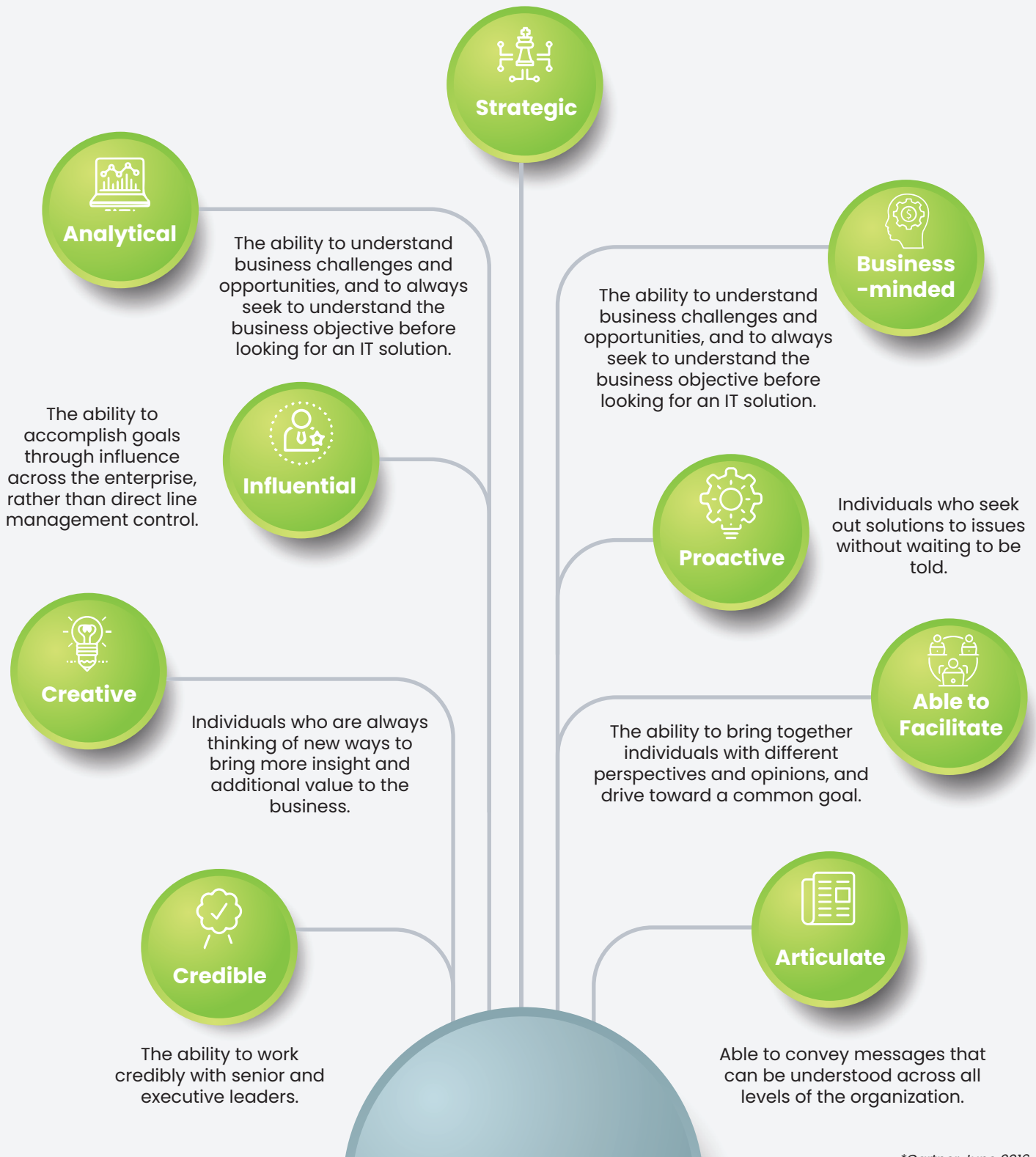
further suggestions).

Ensure to interview your 3rd party providers to fully understand the capabilities they can offer. More sophisticated IT providers will have invested in technology which you can leverage in delivering your strategy.

When hiring, Gartner provides some useful skills to consider:

GARTNER'S EIGHT KEY TEAM MEMBERS SKILLS

The ability to think long term and big picture, and to connect tactical solutions to a long-term plan. Even individuals filling more operational roles will need to have a keen understanding of the strategy and how their work is connected to the bigger picture.



BOARD & GOVERNANCE

Understanding how IT engages at board-level is critical and often a good indicator of the value an organisation places on technology.

Boards of non-technical businesses rarely want too much technical detail but will need to understand how the IT strategy assists the firm in achieving its strategic goals. As it is likely you will ultimately be presenting the IT strategy to the board, obtaining an early understanding of this process will help to save you time in the future.

In addition to this, find out how the business expects to see success. It is unlikely this vision of success is shared across all departments but start with the board executives.

Another important aspect of governance is quickly establishing the right meetings. This may be with other departments or 3rd party suppliers – in the early stages these will help you understand how things are working but later on these will be critical in determining progress and quickly addressing delays. The frequency of these meetings will often be in relation to the pace of change and the level of uncertainty within the activities that underpin the chosen strategy.

And finally, establish a continuous improvement forum with relevant stakeholders. This can be a recurring monthly meeting and should act as a focal point to direct changes which fall outside of the core IT strategy.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

One challenge within most businesses is prioritisation. With a large number of stakeholders to satisfy it is easy for IT to quickly become reactive, focusing on the urgent as opposed to the important.

To help manage this it is important you have a view of the strategic priorities within the business. If everything is important then prioritisation aligns to who is shouting the loudest.

To best manage prioritisation all departments need to share a common understanding of the organisations priorities – for instance, is growing revenue more important than improving efficiency.

The strategic priorities are unique to your organisation and can fall into a few categories (*please ask us for our Excel template to help you build and manage these)



These can then be weighted and used to prioritise the key deliverables in your strategy. This also helps to create a shared understanding of prioritise so departments understand why their requests do not receive immediate attention.

Information & Data sources

Most organisations already have a lot of data covering many aspects of their operations. This can be a goldmine in determining bottle-necks and also can be used to underpin an IT strategy.

Obtain a list of the various information repositories at your disposal. Understand what they contain and how best to access this information.



Days 31-100

Focusing on the important priorities will be critical to achieve success.



Strategy

Although you may not own strategy, you can facilitate it with good strategic processes and the right people in place. Focus on business context and the IT contribution to business success (you don't need to have a full strategy completed yet).

Begin with:

Overview

Creating a one-page strategy which identifies priorities (use your strategic filters to help determine priorities which align to the business priorities)

Board

Ensure you have buy-in from the board and key decision makers about your strategy.

Communication

Ensure you are communicating with and exciting the right people.



Governance

Again, you may not be the main decision maker, but you still need to ensure you have good governance practises in place and are clear about how decisions are made.

Model

Define the governance model – which bodies exist, who needs to be involved.

Decision framework

Be sure that the members are people with authority to make decisions and make sure the meetings are focused on action rather than informal sharing.



Performance Management

Making sure you have the right scorecards and metrics which link into business outcomes is critical to help the team understand the impact of their actions on the wider plan. Ideally, these metrics should be defined such that they demonstrate the value to your clients which may be other internal departments or other organisations.

Metrics

Review your scorecards/KPIs (Key performance indicators). Try to focus on measuring business impact as opposed to activity.

Business objectives

Link your metrics to core business objectives.

Reporting

Define clear reports to demonstrate momentum & value

Note: There are many tools available which can assist in the construction of dashboards (i.e. PowerBI). These can help make sharing data with stakeholders and analysing trends far easier.



IT Operations

Consider whether the IT function is set-up to produce the desired business outcomes. All too often, IT is focused on stability when businesses today place significant value in innovation, agility and flexibility, which means suitable processes need to be in place to generate this value.

Consolidate all your standards, policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs). Consider if they are too complex or too abundant. Are they followed and understood?

What steps are in place to ensure these standards are followed correctly (try performing some spot checks).

Many businesses outsource core parts of their IT operation which means you may not have direct access to these documents however, most IT providers should have this information and be happy to share. Some may be reluctant to simply email copies as it could represent their intellectual property but most will discuss these with you.



Identify and Plan for Quick Wins

It is important to identify some quick wins relatively early. Ensure individuals who have either contributed or suggested any quick-wins are acknowledged, as this builds trust and the spirit of transparency within the team.

Not all quick wins need to be a solution, mining existing datasets can often uncover some previously unknown trends – using existing datasets to underpin your IT strategy is also critical in achieving board buy-in.

Post 100 days

You should now be managing against your strategy with regular checks to ensure everything is on-course.

You should be providing regular updates to the board and key decision makers as to the progress ensuring to highlight what has now been completed and what is the current focus.

About the Author



Gavin Russell is the CEO & founder of Wavex Technology Limited, a London based managed IT services provider and Microsoft Gold partner. Having spent over 30 years in the IT industry Gavin started his career as a software developer then moved to an IT infrastructure role in AT&T, responsible for IT operations across EMEA.

After gaining experience of how large businesses manage technology, he decided to form Wavex with a focus on delivering the best possible end-user experience when it comes to IT support, security and cloud for small to mid-sized businesses.

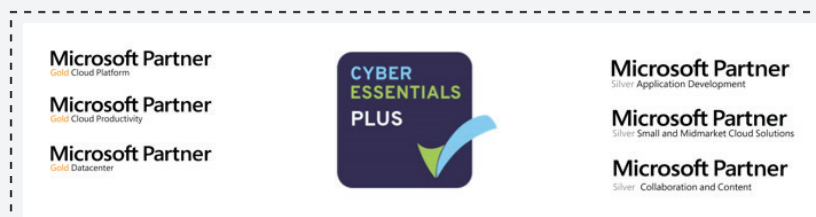
Wavex has now been going for 20 years, has won countless awards, and supports many thousands of users, counting amongst them are a number of prestigious company's. Despite his CEO responsibilities, Gavin continues to maintain close working relationships with the executives of his clients; helping them to solve a range of challenges and use technology to realise their business goals.

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Multiple Awards Winner



Affiliations & Certifications



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