



FEATURE



## Be the CEO, Even if You Are Not

[By Art Pennington]

**You've just been hired as the CEO** of a large corporation. You've been given one overriding objective: dramatically improve profits! What do you do?

But what if you are not the CEO? What if you are the CIO or a manager or a programmer or a consultant? Anyone in any capacity can initiate a process, which leads to business transforming results. You can be the reason for the dramatic success of any organization, whether you are an employee or just a consultant.

"Most discussions of decision making assume that only senior executives make decisions or that only senior executives' decisions matter. This is a dangerous mistake," said Peter Drucker, the father of American business.

**Profits are good for everyone.** Stockholders, executives, and employees — everyone benefits. Results are the name of the game in business, and profits are the yardstick we use to measure success. When you get credit for achieving results, you get rewarded. When you achieve them consistently, you enjoy tremendous personal wealth and success.

**Approach every business day as if you are the CEO.** Think about issues, problems, and solutions from that perspective. It will give you great clarity in your decisions and will give you many ideas to help your company thrive. It will give you better insight into what contributions you can make to help accelerate business results. The CEO perspective can be most rewarding, especially if you work in the IT department. The IT function has, by far, the greatest potential for affecting the profitability of any business.

**What do you think is the most important function of an IT department?** Is it keeping the old IT engine running? Is it software

architecture and standards? From your seat as the CEO, what do you think is the most important function of IT? If you are the CEO, you want results. You need business transforming results through innovative ideas and knowledge at the point of contact with your customer. You need information. Information is the fuel that runs an organization. Information, wisdom, and knowledge are the forte of the IT department.

If you are the CEO, you want to cross-sell and up-sell customers better. You want to track profitability by customer. Cost reduction is nice, but most companies are trying to do that anyway because it's easy. They don't really know how to up the bottom line or the top line.

You may view your IT department as a support function, like finance and general counsel or something like that. You're supposed to keep that old ship engine running, put oil in it, and if they say full speed ahead, you go full speed. If they say, turn right, you turn right. But you should be looking at the integrated whole, the ability and knowledge at the point of contact with your customer.

**You've got a ton of information coming in.** You have a ton of data every day. And probably only about five pounds of it is really relevant, and only about four ounces is going

to make a difference for higher profits. You must distill out the four ounces every time, infallibly. And get it to the person who can use it.

What your IT department is probably doing right now is giving everybody two tons. And they don't know what to do with it. Do you find that on your own desk? You're getting 100 emails a day? You probably have more information than ever before, but are you more efficient?

**Using your CEO perspective, you can help your IT department** stop sitting at the children's table at dinner. Stop looking at technology. Stop looking at mechanics. Start looking at business outcomes and profit. You can help your company capture the business it has been missing. Stop letting IT just sit there like a lump. Help your IT department switch from being transactional to being transformational.

When your senior management walks in every day, do they hold meetings and there's nobody from IT? Do they send emissaries over to IT like it's a foreign trading company? They wouldn't do that with sales. They wouldn't do that with R&D. They use them as an integral part of the business. So why are they treating IT as some kind of unfortunate pimple?



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**You can help IT claim their rightful seat at the dinner table**, by solving business problems instead of IT problems. When IT needs a budget increase, they may say something like “We need 12 more people.” And somebody says well, why do you need 12 more in IT? “Well, we’ve got to change the code, and we’ve got to upgrade the platform, and we’ve got to do this other technical stuff.” And nobody understands what they are saying.

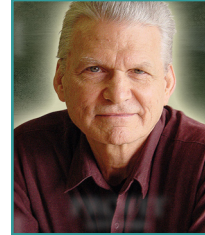
But if the IT guy says, “well right now we’re not getting information to the point of contact. If the people on the phones had this information quicker instead of having to call back, we could up-sell. We could turn our information into profitable wisdom at each customer encounter.” That’s talking and thinking like a CEO. That’s understanding the

interlocking/co-dependency of business and information. That’s the outcome of the clarity that comes from approaching every business day as if you are the CEO.

**Knowledge is a valuable asset, and most companies are not using it very well.** They’re careful about physical assets, and they’re careful about their proprietary intellectual property, but they’re not very careful about the information flowing out of the company. Why would you be careful with those assets, and have all these information assets being wasted?

**IT is a powerful delivery mechanism for accelerating business results.** Information at the right time to the right person can have explosive impact on the top and bottom lines. The quickest path to success is to be

the one to deliver that information. By acting and thinking like the CEO, you may soon become one.



**About the Author**

With over four decades of experience, Art Pennington is president of the Profit Research Institute ([profitmethod.com](http://profitmethod.com)), founder of four successful software companies, author, keynote speaker, holder of multiple patents, and creator of the “Profit Method” of business success. Read Art’s free eBook “PROFIT”, available at [profitmethod.com](http://profitmethod.com)

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