

The **IT** **Finance** Connection

Businesses Thrive When IT and Finance Communicate Effectively

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Taking it Personally

The Lyndon Group's Steve Jenkins says that the most important element of the communications between IT and finance is the personalities of the folks involved.

IT-Finance: What must IT do to be successful?

Steve Jenkins, Project Manager, Lyndon Group: I think the biggest thing is that it is an education or communication issue in the sense that IT has to be able to communicate in terms the finance folks understanding and educate themselves that they are not just spending money on stuff with flashing lights.



They have to take the conversation to their technological level and also they have to understand things from the finance side.

Whether it's a CIO or whoever making the decision he has to have financial and accounting knowledge to understand what affects the balance sheet and the bottom line of the company.

IT-Finance: What steps should they take?

Jenkins: One thing is they need to self-educate themselves in this day and age. The CIO doesn't necessarily come from a strict IT background. The bits and bytes guys have to take it upon themselves to educate themselves to a higher level on things like balance sheets

and income statements. It helps you better build the case. The finance people] are not going to teach you. You have to understand the tools they use to do their business and make their decisions.

IT-Finance: So the IT person's task -- especially if he or she wants to grow in the company -- is changing.

Jenkins: I read a lot of magazines that say for a CIO to be a success he has to be more at the strategic level of the company. Almost more than any other part of company they have to see where the company is today and where it wants to be in the future. The finance guy has to see six months, the IT guys three, five or 10 years in the future.

IT-Finance: Are IT folks getting their "seat at the table?"

Jenkins: I think they don't get the seat in a broad sense. In some sense, some do. The CIO has to go in there and almost take it. I think in some cases that the smaller- to mid-size companies handle it better because the CIO is a person who has risen through the ranks and seen more and has worn more hats [than CIOs at large companies].

IT-Finance: Are IT folks starting to use the right tools?

Jenkins: I think it's happening. The BI [business intelligence] tools ... empower the IT side of the house to bring viable material into the process. This includes graphs, charts, trends, analysis and other things. This enables

them to show CFOs visually various line items and trends in what is happening and it enables them to make decisions much quicker.

IT-Finance: What is the key?

Jenkins: I think it has lot to do with the

"...[CIOs] need to self-educate themselves in this day and age."

type of people involved. I've been doing this 22 years. I find that it really comes down to the people. Both the CFO and CIO have got to be open-minded.

Besides running their departments, they have got to be open minded enough to step out of the blinders and see what they have got to do. CFOs have to got to realize they need to utilize the IT side of the house to figure out how to make their job easier. How can you teach people that? It all comes down to personalities and finding the right mix. Someone let go not usually not to do job, but ability to place nice with others with the job.

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