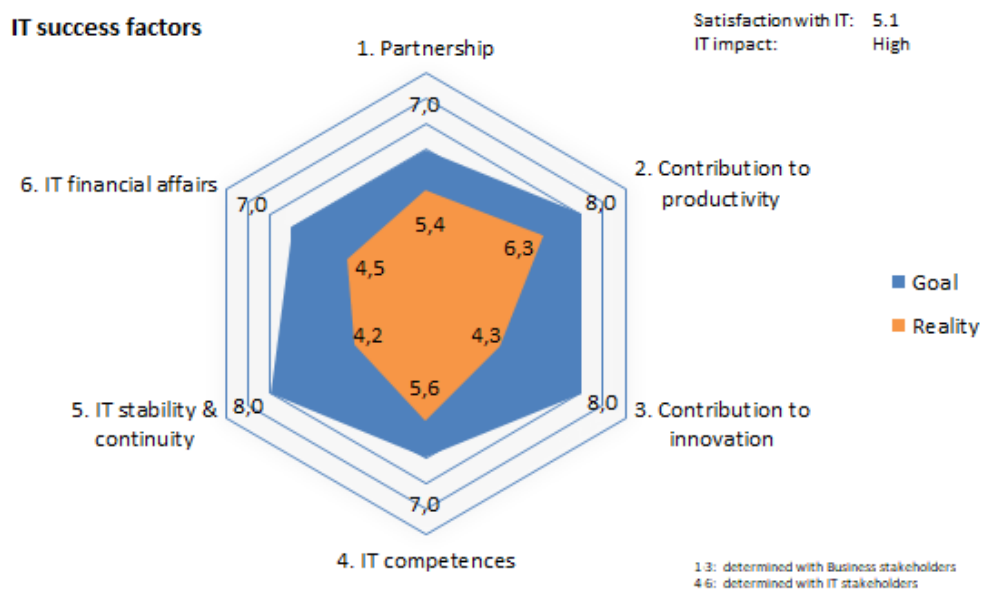


## The six IT success factors: Business innovation with IT as a partner

IT leaders and IT specialists are frequently involved in realizing or initiating innovations. In many occasions they cooperate closely with colleagues of various departments, for projects around for example improving productivity, innovation and information security.

To ensure smooth cooperation, organisations benefit from using a commonly adopted framework. Anton Dijkhuis, interim manager and consultant from IT's Teamwork, developed the integrated framework of the six IT success factors with his team. The six IT success factors contain all themes of business management and information technology in a coherent and measurable manner.



On one hand the business can demand high level services from the IT department: the bar can be raised constantly. On the other hand, the IT leaders can be critical in a constructive manner to their colleagues in business. This enables growth. Below article explains the six IT success factors that create the foundation for successful cooperation on (technological) innovation of organisations.

### IT success factor 1: Partnership

Productivity and innovation of organisations can be improved when financials, users, management and internal and external IT suppliers closely cooperate as critical partners. When users – or their representatives – cooperate smoothly via a process of business IT alignment, the IT department can facilitate process innovations rapidly.

Partnership can both be sensed and measured: the *net promoter score* shows the – top of mind – IT satisfaction with information technology. Measure and discuss the mutual satisfaction periodically with the business and cooperate to realise improvements. At the same time: challenge IT staff to think from the user's perspective, for example: 'What would you think if you couldn't finish your tasks on time as a result of slow business applications?'

### IT success factor 2: Contribution to productivity

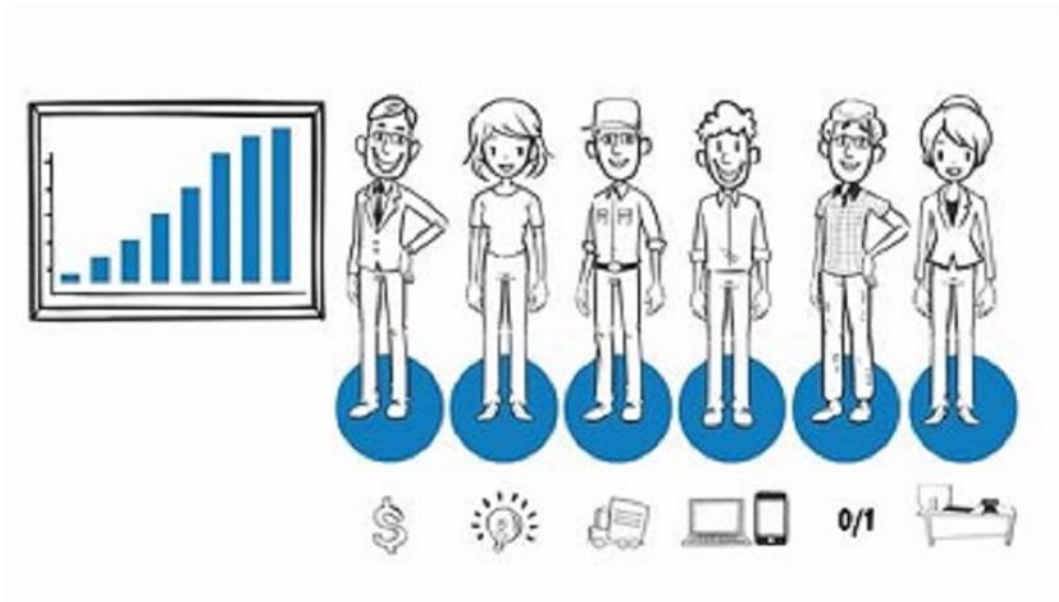
Information technology can contribute enormously to an organisation's productivity, if business applications support the primary processes properly. Productivity increases when information is registered as efficient as possible, in as few as possible business applications, and on suitable devices. The IT department can monitor the data quality: is information registered timely, correctly and completely? At the same time that is the cornerstone for good management information, possibly combined with big data.

A good IT department oversees information flows in the chain, and is able to explain to the business which value add they can deliver to users and partners in the information chain. Make an inventory of information exchanged with partners, and identify if this can be executed more efficiently.

### IT success factor 3: Contribution to innovation

IT departments can also deliver a strong contribution to innovating an organisation. This can be small or large steps. IT leaders should decide consciously about their role for each situation: act as an initiator of innovation, or leave this role to the business managers. When IT satisfaction is scoring low, in a majority of the cases it is smart to take out the causes. When this has been restored, IT can act as a partner for 'business innovation'.

An innovative IT department can be recognized by it's ability to realize changes in business applications flexibly and rapidly, as a result of good IT competences and a solid IT architecture. This will make the business aware of the value add of IT and the IT department.



#### **IT success factor 4: IT competences**

To make an organisation more successful with IT, the IT department and the external IT suppliers need to possess excellent IT competences. In this context we see IT competences much wider than just technical knowledge.

Innovative IT departments have an up to date IT strategy, can work successfully with other departments, and have an excellent information security conforming to ISO 27002/2013. Also when IT services are (partly) outsourced, the proper IT competences have to be on board. In all organisations, this requires the proper domain matter expertise and interpersonal skills.

Many organisational and technical innovations are realized in projects, involving various departments. This requires excellent project skills.

#### **IT succesfactor 6: Stability and continuity**

To carry out their primary processes, many organisations are highly dependent on IT; they have a high IT impact. For that reason business applications and IT infrastructure should be stable and continuously available.

Basic tasks, such as delivery of user equipment and internal relocations should be performed swiftly, business applications should perform above minimal levels set. In addition, because technology develops fast, it is important to involve knowhow of external parties.

Some organisations are not aware of causing their own problems, as a result of managing IT based on a – financially probably logical – financial KPI. For example by deciding that IT may cost x percent of their turnover. A decreasing turnover could cause a shringage in the IT budget, which overtime could cause an aged and malfunctioning IT landscape. This can only be mitigated by the proper technical short term measures, leadership and a proper IT roadmap with solid financial justification.

#### **IT succesfactor 6: IT financial affairs**

IT can be seen as cost, or as an enabler in your organisation. An enabler to work efficiently and effectively.

In any case, it is necessary to manage IT costs and IT investments predictably and professionally. In addition to good performance in all previous IT success factors, this strengthens the control and the image of IT in your organisation.

It is important to manage IT not only based on financials standards. Make a distinction between costs and investments for 'running the business' and 'changing the business'. The IT budget will then be regarded more as a 'business budget', which will decrease financial discussions.

By estimate 75% of IT leaders report to a financial leader. These financials are focussed on creating value. When IT leaders and financials cooperate closely on IT-plan/actuals, capex/opex en IT-subsidies, a golden duo will increase the added value of IT in your organisation.

Read more on [www.it-succesfactoren.nl](http://www.it-succesfactoren.nl) or do the free self assessment on [www.businessitscan.nl](http://www.businessitscan.nl)