

“I hire good, competent technologists to manage and maintain our technology... And I hire expert consultants and vendors to advise us on the appropriate solutions for our agency. What does the success of technology have to do with *me*?”

“We outsource all of our technology needs so *I* don’t have to worry about it.”

If either of these comes close to describing your relationship as executive director to the use of technology in your organization, then this article may be for you.

Lessons learned from the fields of technology assistance and organizational development indicate that your investment in technology is more likely to be pay off, to meet your expectations, and to support your programmatic outcomes, the more integrated technology and the Internet is with the operations, program work and culture of your organization.

The immediate problem or challenge confronting your organization’s technology use (for example, a revised web site, a new online campaign, an updated database) is only one piece of the larger picture of implementing a successful technology or Internet plan. Organizational practices and culture will impact the successful use of technology *as much if not more so* than the quality of the specific technology solution. You can have the best, most cutting edge tools, but if you have no culture for using them, the tools will fail to pay back the benefits of your investment. Successful integration of technology into your organization requires identifying, acknowledging and if necessary changing the organizational practices and culture that impact success.

That’s where you come in. *Your* role as leader is instrumental and imperative in shifting your organization’s culture and practices. Is your organization ready? An Organizational Readiness Assessment will tell you. The benefits and outcomes of an Organizational Readiness Assessment include:

- Identifying and naming the unspoken, the hidden agendas, and the red flags that currently limit your organization’s successful and powerful use of technology.
- Placing you and your staff in a better position to assess, select and work with appropriate technology vendors.
- An action plan for success that will identify: the human behavior changes required in order for your organization to use technology well; the organizational or operational changes required to use technology well; and the appropriate level of resources needed to ensure the success of your technology investment.

Is an Organizational Readiness Assessment for You?

On the chart below, please rate yourself and your organization to help determine if an Organizational Readiness Assessment could benefit your organization. It’s important that you, the leader of your organization, fill this out and not one of your support staff. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like further information.

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Technology Success in Organizations: A Check List for Leaders

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Circle the single answer that best describes you:

What level of involvement do you have / take in technology-related decisions?	none	some		a great deal
What level of involvement do you have / take in contracting tech-related services?	none	some		a great deal
What percentage of responsibility do you take in managing a tech-related contract?	0-25%	25-50%	51-75%	76-100%
How well is technology integrated into the operations of your organization?	not at all; a wholly separate activity	Sporadic	Fairly well integrated	Wholly integrated
How well is Internet communications integrated into your operations?	not at all; a wholly separate activity	Sporadic	Fairly well integrated	Wholly integrated
Rate your senior staff's sense of the value of technology / Internet.	Unnecessary	Necessary Evil	Necessary Good	Strategic Advantage
Rate your overall staff's sense of the value of technology/the Internet.	Unnecessary	Necessary Evil	Necessary Good	Strategic Advantage
Describe the staffing for technology at your organization.	No tech role	Part of someone's role	Tech is out-sourced	1 or more FTE
Do you have an "IT Team" or a "Communications Team"?	Yes			No
What environmental scans or situational analyses have you conducted?	None		External environmental assessment	Internal organizational readiness assessment
How clear are you that your current or planned technology initiative advances the goals of your organization	I have no idea	I have a vague idea	It's in writing somewhere	It's crystal clear to myself and my staff
What practices are in place to measure the impact of the initiative and to inform its future development?	None	Something, but I'm not sure	It's in writing somewhere	Very complete plan in place to measure impact.
TOTALS (Add up the # of boxes you circled in each column, placing totals in the boxes to the right)				

If each of the numbers in the first three boxes (from left to right) are higher than the number in the far-right column, chances are you could benefit from an Organizational Readiness Assessment. Please contact me for more information.