

IT Governance – Decisions – 3  
*By Jody Jankovsky*

As a business owner, you are required to wear a lot of different hats which can be challenging – especially in areas you aren't as familiar with. For many business owners, leading an IT department was something they had never planned to do. After working in IT for 30 years and consulting with hundreds of companies I have seen almost every form of IT management – and mismanagement. In this series of articles, I draw from that experience to outline some best practices for you as a business owner to leverage to get the most from your Information Technology.

In the first and second articles in the series [[hyperlink to each](#)] I discussed how IT Principle's define the role of Information Technology in your business and the architecture and infrastructure implemented in support that role.

Next we'll explore IT Decisions and how well-defined roles, responsibilities and individuals' decision rights create the operational environment for IT effectiveness. In today's business environment where technology is ever evolving, coordinating your employee's technological needs is imperative. Establishing who does what in a business as it relates to Information Technology is no different than establishing accountability in any other business function. It will provide clarity to the entire organization, appropriate chain of command and process efficiency.

The first step in defining "IT Decisions" is defining each team member, the role they take and their position within the organization. The process is to identify the people involved in the decisions that shape IT, and its use in the organization, as well as the units of IT those individuals are responsible for. I recommend building tables of internal and external team members, their unit (be it executive, infrastructure, phone provider, etc.) and their roles (as CIO, technology owner, IT Leader, etc.).

The next step is to define each team members "decision rights" they have, and define their responsibilities. Decision rights range from just providing input to an IT topic to making the final decision on IT topics. When defining these rights be sure to involve all those in the process, and document accordingly, so expectations and accountability are well-defined. In addition, define what decision rights are done by those inside your organization and that done outside the organization.

The last phase is to "define" what each role and responsibility means in your company. This step is done in conjunction with the decision rights step and will keep everyone informed of their own goals, who they can turn to when questions arise and provide clarity to the responsibility. For example, decide what terms like business leader and unit leader mean to your company and what being responsible for IT Strategic Objectives, Principles or Investment (more on this in the next article) look like in your organization.

When you are building or reevaluating your IT department there are a lot of decisions to be made. Turning to IT experts, like those at an IT outsourcing firm can help you

make sure your business is building its IT department and systems in a way that will be most beneficial to your company, your employees and your customers.

In the final article in the series we'll be taking a look at IT as an investment and the best way to budget for growth and success.

*Jody Jankovsky - Founder and managing partner of Black | Line Consulting, Jody Jankovsky has acquired considerable experience in addressing clients' needs throughout his 25-year career in the IT industry. After graduating with a degree in Computer Science from Illinois State University, Jody began his career in Information Technology with Big-Six accounting firm Arthur Andersen S.C. After five years of corporate life, Jody moved his software design experience, his IT knowledge and his entrepreneurial spirit from Chicago's Loop to the suburb of Naperville and formed his own IT consulting firm in 1993. Through work in a diverse range of industries, Jody has developed an intimate understanding of the close relationship between information technologies and business productivity. Black | Line Consulting provides full-service Network Solutions, IT Management and Software Development – imparting technology answers for business questions. Jody can be reached at 630-388-1700 (phone) or [jsj@blacklineconsulting.com](mailto:jsj@blacklineconsulting.com) (email).*