



A Covenant for Success:

Does your team have it?

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The Lone Ranger approach worked well on television, but a successful CIO relies on teamwork. You need a strategy that is successfully implemented by a dedicated and talented staff. Sound easy? This *Insights* provides a set of ingredients for a 'Covenant for Success' between you and your teammates.

In previous *Insights*, we've discussed strategies and provided suggestions for developing a successful strategy. It must be a straightforward, attainable roadmap for the next three years that's not full of numbers and that's worthy of buy-in by your staff and constituents.

But even more important than a great strategy is a competent and dedicated staff. A great team can make a mediocre strategic plan look good; however, a mediocre staff can make a great plan look poor by achieving lackluster results.

You have expectations for your staff and they have expectations of you:

- **Your team wants** clarity of direction, good goals and objectives, equitable compensation, and your honest feedback regarding performance and opportunities for improvement. They want you to have courage, compassion, and conviction in your beliefs. They want your guidance and attention, and they want you to follow-up on your commitments and promises. As a team, they want you to make an effort to put the right person in the right job.
- **You want** people driven by realism and not politics, people willing to take risks and drive their own growth. You want teammates who collaborate, who both generate and listen to ideas, and who can change their minds in the face of compelling information. They should be authentic, comfortable with themselves, and able to instill confidence in others. You need colleagues who can lead initiatives (outside of a formal job role), develop others (especially important for members of your management team), adapt to change, and anticipate and prevent mistakes. Your team should stay current and have growth potential, they should want to do more and get involved to maximize good and minimize downside possibilities for your organization at large, not just their area of responsibility. Teammates should be humble and able to contain their egos, not arrogant and full of hubris.

These characteristics for you and your team, when bound by a commitment to the success of the organization and each other, represent a Covenant for Success. However, many of

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these characteristics and attributes are not the requirements listed in formal job descriptions and performance evaluations. Perhaps the stuffy criteria you're currently using for this purpose are not the best or most appropriate characteristics of the team you need to build in order to be successful as a CIO.

As a CIO, it was always interesting to see which members of my staff would be 'missing in action' when we experienced tough times. These were the same people who were slow to move, did not accept responsibility for their personal growth, were indecisive ('let's have another meeting'), and didn't know the difference between excellent and good.

Most teams fail because they don't have the right person in the right job. Native ability is a core requirement—skills can be learned and expertise can be acquired. However, people's fundamental personalities and attitudes do not change.

If you need to transform your IT organization or step it up a notch, you need a management team, including yourself, with the transformational personality traits identified in the Covenant. This may mean realigning your management talent to better use your existing team and recruiting to fill the gaps. Job descriptions may need to be updated to include the most important criteria for success. If your team has already been given the environment in which to exceed expectations and they aren't getting it done, action may be required to assemble a team that can make things happen.

Building an effective team is a reward in itself. To enjoy the rewards of your own Covenant for Success, look not just at skill sets and expertise, but also at the traits in your management team. While it's certainly nice to achieve the various honors and recognition granted to successful CIOs, my hope is that I will be remembered as an optimistic team player with a 'can do' attitude. I recommend that objective to each of you as well. Tally Ho!