

4 Tips for Building Stronger Relationships Between IT and Non-Technical Teams

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Most companies have some form of dedicated IT management. According to a workforce survey, the common IT to non-technical staff ratio is typically around 4% of all personnel.

These IT individuals and departments often need to communicate with the other staffers throughout a company. From basic day-to-day activities to long-term collaborations, meeting deadlines and maintaining security, it's important that the relationship between IT and the non-technical workforce is not just existent but effective.

If you're aware of a lack of quality in your IT-related inter-departmental collaborations, here are four ways to enhance communication and build better professional relationships between technical and non-technical teams.

1. Establish and promote healthy communication

Communication cannot be overlooked in any business setting. As the workforce becomes more geographically diversified by distance and time zones, it's important to maintain communication, not just with teams but between departments. This is ground zero, especially in an isolated area like IT.

One way to enhance communication is through regular cross-team

meetings. Many companies hold recurring meetings where everyone comes together to hear company-wide updates and generally realign themselves. If the thought of a full company meeting sounds like a mammoth, intimidating and time-sucking use of resources, never fear. There are multiple ways you can implement this concept efficiently.

For instance, Zappos holds its well-known all-hands meetings three times a year. Spacing out these larger communal moments helps make them special.

If meeting is a problem in any quantity, you can go a different route: pre-recorded messages. If you choose this option, though, be warned that simple video messaging can become just as confusing and lengthy as a meeting. Instead, look for tools that help you send purposeful, value-centered messages.

Marketing platform Drift, for instance, used the communications tool Zight to improve its internal communication. The company used screen recorder technology to send annotated, knowledge-based videos to their employees. This organized and enhanced the purpose of each message, making it easier to reference later on without rewatching the entire thing.

The takeaway? Invest in some form of healthy cross-departmental communication that fits with your workflow.

Related: Effective Communication Is Vital in Today's Diverse Workforce. Here's How to Make Sure Your Message Is Clear.

2. Use jargon-free language

Removing jargon and technical terms from basic inter-departmental communication starts at the top. IT leaders must demonstrate how to remove dense language when talking, recording, typing and otherwise engaging with coworkers.

This isn't just because leading by example is effective. It's also because workplace jargon often finds its largest adherents in the upper echelons of a business. One study from MyPerfectResume found that 33% of those asked considered upper management to be the most likely to overuse workplace jargon.

Even worse? A third of those asked had also used jargon that they didn't even understand. Use jargon-free language. It keeps communication transparent and avoids peer pressure and embarrassment from undermining effective understanding between IT and other teams.

Related: [Here's Why You Absolutely Have to Stop Using Jargon at Work](#)

3. Bridge knowledge gaps with cross-functional training

Specialization and niche knowledge are defining factors for IT teams. Tech workers' value comes from their ability to bridge the gap between humans and machines. However, this expertise isn't as effective if the communication gap between IT staff and other personnel widens too far.

One way to keep all staff on the same playing field is to engage in cross-functional training. This is the process of educating employees from various departments in disciplines that are complementary to their own focus. It emphasizes shared knowledge and helps teams both respect and understand their respective duties in the larger context of business operations.

Google has mastered the art of cross-departmental training. On the one hand, the company famously used its whisper courses – a series of micro-lessons in email form – to teach small teamwork lessons. In addition, the search engine giant encourages employee-to-employee training. This shares

knowledge in a peer-to-peer fashion and maintains a culture of learning.

Again, the takeaway here is that you don't have to follow a formula for cross-departmental training. Find something that works for your setup, and then invest in it.

4. Cultivate a culture of inclusivity

Inclusivity is a common workplace culture goal. It emphasizes making all members of a workforce feel welcome. It seeks to embrace gender, age and other demographic differences and to incorporate the strengths of each individual and team into a company's operations.

This is a powerful way to keep IT and non-technical personnel connected and respectful of one another's contributions. As a central focus of how a company operates, an emphasis on empathy and respect helps keep those all-important communication channels open and healthy.

No company has demonstrated genuine, effective inclusivity in business activity quite as well as Pixar. The media company is famous for its ability to develop high-quality ideas and, at the same time, make sure everyone feels welcome and part of the conversation.

The company's "Notes Days" are a poignant example. These are days when the entire company shuts down and comes together to collectively brainstorm. The result is some of the best inter-departmental collaboration in modern history.

If you want your tech and non-tech teams to connect, make them feel included.

Related: **How to Build an Inclusive Culture That Permeates All Levels of the Organization**

Breaking down barriers between IT and the rest of the professional work world

The IT department has become an integral part of most modern businesses. But it cannot operate in a vacuum. Miscommunications can lead to confused expectations, missed deadlines and even compromised safety and security.

It's essential that leaders make an effort to align their IT and non-technical teams. This keeps everyone informed and up-to-date as you work together to achieve the same goal as a business.

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