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Half the battle

How CIOs can generate business
value from human networks

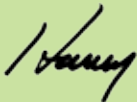


Organizations today are working hard to get more value from the free-flowing business and social networks that exist outside traditional hierarchical boundaries. Employees work across the organization chart and beyond to reach shared goals. Innovation initiatives engage a wide range of employees — as well as partners and customers. This dynamic goes by many names. We call it the power of netcentricity.

While netcentricity is enabled by technology, it also relies on having the right people, policies, and processes in place. As such, technology is only half the battle. Chief Information Officers (CIOs) today must use unfamiliar approaches and tools to create successful netcentric organizations.

This booklet shares the most important steps you'll need to consider in handling the "people side" of technology. These considerations come from many years of experience working both in government and the private sector.

Harnessing the power of netcentricity can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of any business operation — these are the results any CIO should be seeking.



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Table of contents

-
- 1 Plan for people
 - 2 Open the doors
 - 3 Build trust
 - 4 Let go
 - 5 Flatten the org chart
 - 6 Mine the generation gap
 - 7 Where to start?
-

Plan for people

For a company looking to become netcentric, the biggest challenge isn't technology — it's predicting, changing, and responding to the ways people think and act.

Because it doesn't matter how technically sound your systems are; if they don't take the human element into account, they don't stand much chance of being successful.

How do your people engage with current technology? Are there unnecessary restraints on information access based on hierarchies and job titles? Where do existing systems present obstacles to the natural connections people make across organizational boundaries?

Technology adoption is influenced by individual and organizational work patterns more profoundly than ever before, making it doubly important to understand and plan for the human side of information technology (IT) systems.



Open the doors

Most technology systems are designed with security in mind. That means there are lots of protective barriers and firewalls in place to guard against sharing — obstacles to the openness that defines netcentricity.

While security is critical, it's never been more important to open the doors that separate different parts of the organization, giving users access to the information they need, whenever and wherever they need it. Three technical capabilities are critical for that to happen:

- Bandwidth for fast and effective speed of exchange.
- Coverage that is global and seamless.
- Interoperability to ensure that information doesn't get hung up in the transition from one division or organization to another.

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But don't get so caught up in technical specifications that you lose sight of the big picture — opening up new lines of communication between groups that should be sharing information and working collaboratively.

Build trust



Netcentricity is about change. And if you're looking to change the behavior of people who have been operating in the same ways for years, trust will be an important element of your strategy. If they don't trust your vision and your ability to lead, they'll just hunker down, resist change, and wait for everything to return to normal.

Some people say the only way to build trust is to never make mistakes. Good luck with that. A better approach would be to plan for the unexpected.

On the road to netcentricity, some things won't go according to plan. When that happens, the team that trusts you and your vision will respond to new challenges with the speed and urgency required.

Stay in constant contact with internal stakeholders and outside partners. When a project veers off track, communicate clearly and honestly with everyone affected. You might be surprised at the response you get.

Let go

Different groups within any given company are reluctant to grant access to their information.

Remember the Chinese Finger Trap? You probably first encountered one as a child. It's a simple, woven tube that you can insert a finger in each end. The harder you pull your fingers apart to get free, the more tightly the trap holds them. You're able to free your fingers when you relax and slowly pull them apart.

This is one way to understand the dilemma facing many organizations today. Different groups within any given company are reluctant to grant access to their information. The more tightly they cling, the harder it is to unleash the power of that information across the organization. One of the core aims of netcentricity

is to help organizations move beyond this model. But technology can only take your efforts so far. The leaders of each internal group on which your netcentricity efforts will depend must take stock of their information needs and reconsider what they should be sharing with other groups.

Otherwise, you'll be in for a rude awakening when you've built a netcentric infrastructure — and find that no one is using it to share and collaborate.

Flatten the org chart

In every organization, there's a conflict between how the organization is structured and how things actually work. In the best companies, there's very little difference between the two. Netcentricity is one way to further bridge the gap.

Netcentric technology is like a new map of your organization, based on shifting communities of interest rather than rigid hierarchies. In that regard, it serves as the blueprint for a new organization – one with flatter structures and increased collaboration.

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When designing your plan for netcentricity, consider new models based on Web 2.0 principles. Wikis in particular offer a simple and clear template for limitless information exchange among informal communities with shared interests.

Mine the generation gap

Your organization has more people from different generations working side by side than ever before. When it comes to creating netcentricity, this is a major opportunity.

Millennials and Gen Y already embrace netcentricity in their everyday lives. Like it or not, they largely ignore the hierarchies imposed on them by organizations. Their lists of Facebook friends cut across generations and geography. And the digital tools that enable social networking are woven into the fabric of their relationships.

Boomers and Gen Xers are less adept at navigating this landscape. But that doesn't mean they can't do it. In fact, younger generations can lead the way, laying the groundwork for the cross-cutting interactions that are a staple of netcentricity.

When the experience and business skills of older workers are paired with the dynamic, no-boundaries approach that younger workers bring, netcentricity is poised to deliver breakout business value.



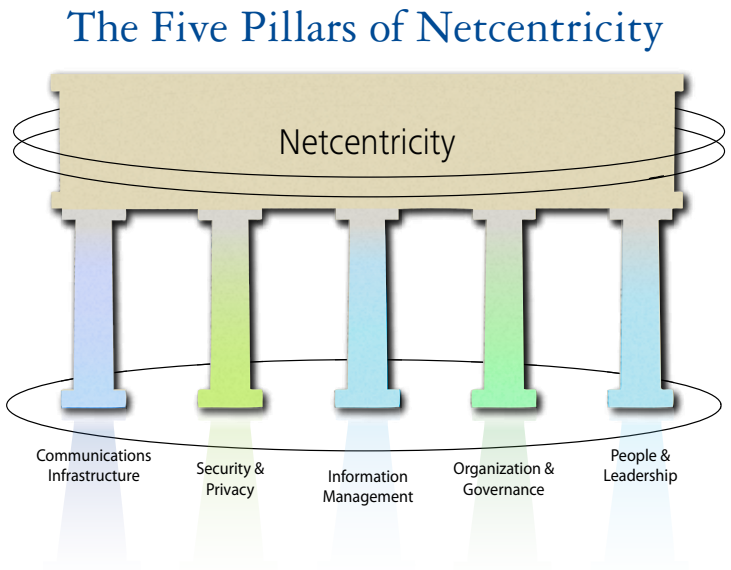
Where to start?

It has never been more important to start mapping out your netcentricity strategy, if you haven't done so already.

Start with a clear understanding of the business needs of your organization. Then plan for how your organization and your technology will need to evolve to become more

netcentric. Consider utilizing a "500 Day Action Plan" to stay on task and to achieve your strategic objectives.

This is not just another implementation project. It's a new, proven way of doing business — one that happens to rely heavily on technology. However, success as a CIO is only achieved when you engage everything from technology to people.



About the Author

Lieutenant General Harry D. Raduege, Jr. (USAF, Ret), is chairman of the Deloitte Center for Cyber Innovation and is a leading expert on cybersecurity issues. He is the former head of the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) and serves as Co-Chair of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Commission on Cybersecurity for the 44th Presidency. He is also a former manager of the National Communications System and was the first Commander of DoD's Joint Task Force for Global Network Operations.

The Deloitte **Center for Cyber Innovation**, part of Deloitte LLP, develops cyber solutions for clients in the public and private sectors who are seeking to improve information sharing, collaboration and performance by harnessing the power of increasingly interdependent networks. The Center helps clients plan for, execute and manage an integrated cyber business strategy to enhance operations, mitigate risks, empower personnel and strengthen customer support. The Center for Cyber Innovation is located in Arlington, Virginia.

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