Succeeding as a CIO
A short primer by Ken Venner

Know YOUR space

Continually study and learn the crafts of information technology. Stay immersed in what exists, what works and what is coming up in the technology spaces. This includes network, storage, server, virtualization, messaging, communications (voice, video and IM).   You have to become one of the most advanced technology people in the company.

- Challenge your team, and learn vicariously through them.
- Embrace people in the business that provide recommendations to you about things to implement (learn why they are recommending things, learn what problem they think the tech will solve).
- Learn from your peers what to do and what not to do.
- Learn from your vendors and potential vendors – make time to talk with them, learn from them, learn about other customer implementations
- Strategically attend events that enable you to network and learn from others

Learn YOUR BUSINESS

You can't solve your company's problems, if you don't immerse yourself to understand what it is your company does and how it does it. Learn the process and procedures of your business. Learn how they use information and technology to drive their business, and find places where there may be opportunities to apply tech that the business does not see.

- Ask lots of questions in an effort to learn and know
- Find mentors in the business that will teach you and mentor you
- While learning the business – understand how they are or are not using technology to enable and ask questions about what more the technology team can do to simplify, automate, streamline, predict.

Create a CULTURE of GETTING THNINGS DONE that enable the business

- Create plans, get alignment with stake holders, and then drive the plan and hold everyone accountable (both IT and the business)
- Market the wins that you provide with the business, and seek metrics to show the improvements you collectively make
- Create a culture of "CAN DO" vs NO – but assure that all things created come back to meeting core principles so you don't have tons of one of solutions.

[EMBRACE challenging customers and tough projects](#)

- o Start with the assumption people want to KNOW what you are doing in order to help you do a better job, rather than assume they are looking to point out your flaws.
- o Take time to educate those interested in learning
- o Enable people to perform self service activities to allow them empowerment and awareness that this stuff is actually hard.
-

[Build and maintain a SERVICE DELIVERY engine](#)

- o If you are not building the core product of the business, then you are here to support that engine and you should be customer focused/service oriented
- o With this – create transparency to what is going on – so people are aware and management in the business understands what's going on
- o Don't be the "police force" for the company – unless asked to do so – determine how to deliver needed services at the lowest possible costs, with the highest quality and transparency, and let business managers manage the business.