One CIO’s Lessons on Leadership

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Key Leadership Concepts to Grasp

- You are not in the technology business
- …you’re in the customer service business
- This is partnership business
- This is a relationship business
- This is a personal business
- Stay in touch with your customers
- Building trust and credibility is everything
- You’re in marketing
- Know what can get you fired!
Customer Service

- IT does not create business value
- …your customers create business value
- Your job: help your customers succeed
- Your goal: deliver excellent customer service at all times
- This will not necessarily come naturally to your IT staff…
- You need to engage with staff about what excellent customer service looks like in your world
- Work to infuse this into the culture of the IT organization
Partnership

- Your customers have to believe you are as committed to their success as they are…be “all in”
- They need to believe you are a true member of their team
- Do the right thing in every situation
- Be a true partner they can trust to deliver what they need when they need it
- That includes helping them find creative alternatives when you can’t meet their needs
- When additional resources are needed, go together to executive management to sell the request (see “marketing” below)
One of the great things about higher ed is that one person can make a big difference

Your customers will not come to you because you are the central IT organization

They will not come to you because you provide the services they need

They will come to you because you have a positive track record

They will come to you because you have credibility

They will come to you because they trust you
Stay in Touch

• As noted, this is a personal relationship business
• Make sure your customer management know who you are
• Make sure you know who they are
• Understand their drivers and concerns
• Understand their needs
• Periodically checkpoint
• Don’t rely entirely on your staff to get the straight scoop…
  go find out yourself
• Always remember you’re part of the Help Desk!
Trust and Credibility

• Your customers know how dependent they are on technology
• …that’s why distributed IT organizations exist
• They have “bet the farm” on technology and will only use your services if they are absolutely confident you’re the best solution
• Your track-record is what matters
  – Establish SLAs…and regularly exceed them!
  – Be honest about what you can do and can’t do
• You are in marketing…get over it!
• “If you build it they will come” or central edicts will not work
• You have to tell your story…don’t assume they know
  – What services you provide…and how these can solve their problems
  – what’s your track-record…what are the costs…who else is using
• Distributed IT leaders are a key target market
  – Engage with them…woo them…win them over
  – They are your partners in delivering IT services to campus
  – You need to become their trusted partner
• Adopt the language and practices of marketing
  – “Customers”…”focus groups”…”market analysis”…
  ”marketing materials”…”incentives”
Know What Can Get you Fired

As a CIO, here’s my list:

- Failure of a major project…think ERP
- Major—particularly repetitive—security exposures
- Fiscal mis-management…”follow the money”
- Arrogance
- Neglecting your Day Job
  …being seduced by the “national presence”
Here it is: Your Moment of Zen!

- A good sense of humor is a tremendous career skill
  - What we do is serious as a heat attack
  - …but don’t have one while you’re doing it!

- “Be Here Now:” be all-in committed to your role
  - But knowing when it’s time to leave is also a key career skill
  - Recognize when it’s time to move on and leave on your terms

- Stay balanced
  - Let go of ego
  - Let go of anger
Questions?