

Transforming from an IT Manager to an IT Business Leader

As an IT Pro, you wear many hats. Your primary responsibility is “keeping the lights on.” You work tirelessly to ensure that systems are up to date, applications are running, printers are printing and users are happy. It’s hard to get credit when you do a good job. Unfortunately, it’s easy to get “credit” when things go wrong – even if it’s not your fault.

This daily firefighting ties up most, if not all of your time. Chances are high you know of several ways your company could implement new technologies in a way that would save money, make money, or improve processes and efficiencies, but finding time to implement those projects may seem impossible. We understand this struggle.

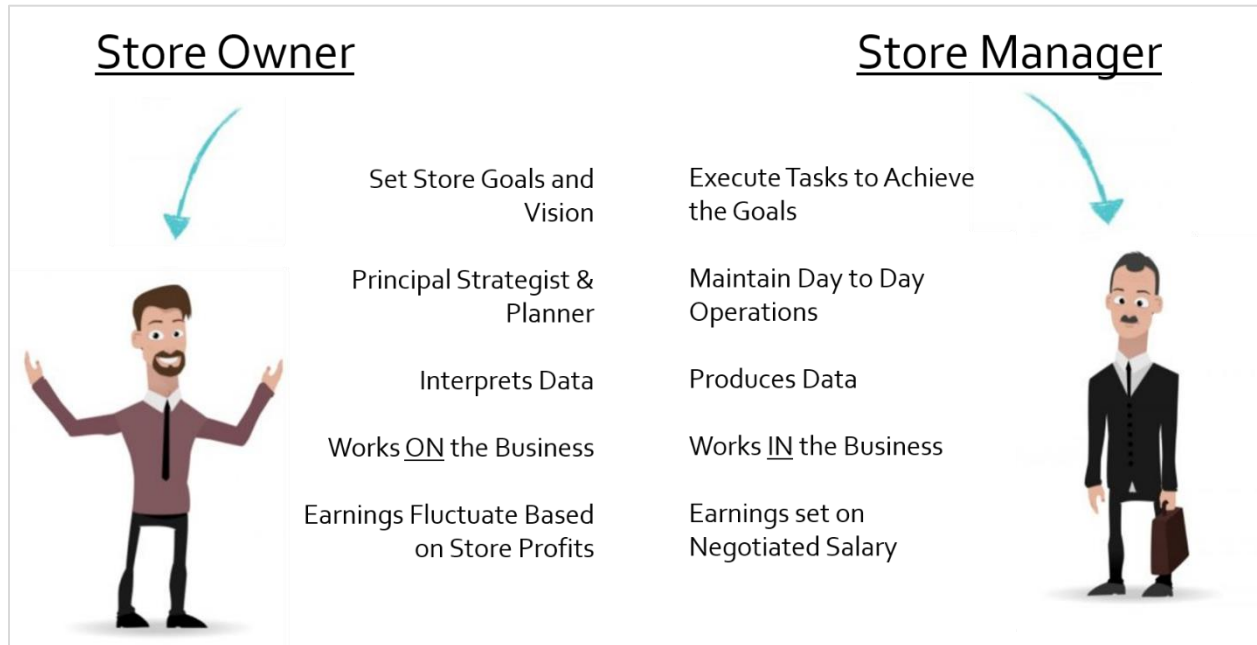
This report will provide you with techniques to help you overcome these challenges so you can make your transformation from an IT Manager to an IT Business Leader.

Content provided by:



The Store Owner vs The Store Manager

To understand the differences between an IT Manager and an IT Business Leader, let's take a step back and look at the difference between a Store Manager and a Store Owner:

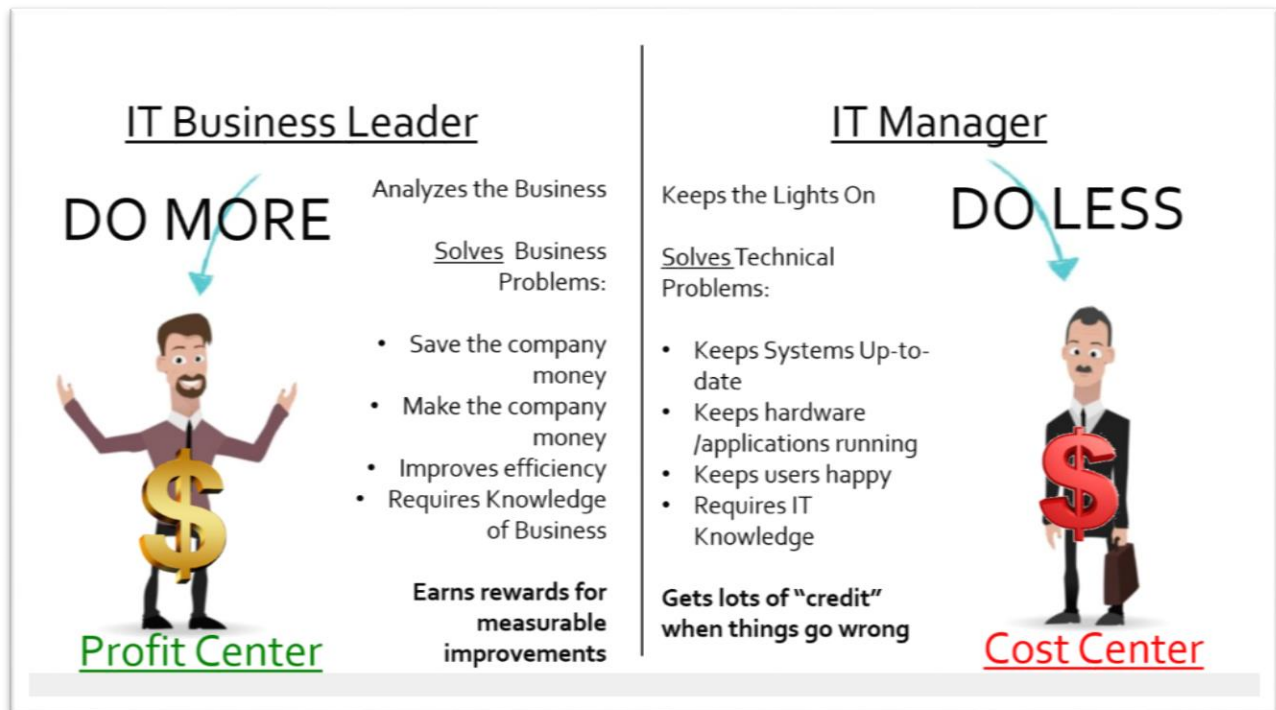


As an IT Pro, you wear both hats. Your job as an IT Manager is to keep the light on. You solve technical problems like keeping systems up to date, keeping hardware and applications running, keeping users happy. This job requires IT knowledge. Any competent IT person can do this job. Unfortunately, with this job you only get "credit" when things go wrong. You don't get "credit" when things are working because that is the expectation: things are supposed to be working.

To be an IT Business Leader you must have more than technical acumen. You must have a thorough understanding of the business you are working for. You must understand the role that technology plays in the organization. An IT Business leader uses that knowledge to save the company money, make the company money, improve operational efficiency. If you are an IT Business leader, you are in tune with the goals of your organization and can match your IT strategy to those corporate objectives. Successful IT Business leaders earn great rewards for the measurable improvements they make in this area.

Your goal is to do as little as possible of the IT Manager role so you can invest as much time as possible in the IT Business Leader role.

The image below describes the differences between the IT Manager and the IT Business Leader:



How do you make this transition? The following are five things you can do to help you spend less time on the right side and more time on the left.

Acquire Great Tools

First and foremost, if you are going to reduce the time you spend keeping the lights on, you need to acquire good tools. The following tools should be in your tool bag:

1. **Monitoring tools** – Monitoring tools enable you to identify issues before they become serious time-consuming problems. An example of this would be a failing server drive. Monitoring tools will alert you to an impending drive failure. It is important to identify these impending problems before they occur so you can schedule your downtime. In this example, waiting until after the drive fails will cost you in terms of unplanned downtime as well as with secondary issues resulting from an unplanned outage. Think about a cigarette that's tossed into a forest. You want to catch that cigarette while it's still smoldering, not after it sparks a full blown forest fire. It's much easier to stamp out a cigarette than to fight a forest fire.
2. **Management Tools**– Speed up resolution and rollout times by having everything you need at your fingertips and automating as much as possible. These are tools

that enable you to address issues quickly so you aren't spending days on end fighting the fires.

Remember your ultimate goal: your aim is to keep your network running in as little time as possible. Let's pretend you have a PC that's a mess. You could troubleshoot that problem machine for two days or, with effective tools, could reimaging the machine and restore it to functional in a matter of minutes.

3. **Ticketing Tools** – You can reduce IT management time by building a knowledgebase as you work on problems. You also need an easy to use and track ticketing system. A ticketing system allows you to track your support tickets and measure your key performance indicators (KPIs) and statistics. The outcome of a well-functioning ticketing system is both a knowledgebase and a minable data set that can be referenced quickly to reduce the time spent troubleshooting repeat issues.

Standardize Your Environment

You must standardize your environment. Non-standard equipment and software cost you a significant amount of time. It is easier to manage an environment where standards are in place. An obvious example is PC standardization. If you have the same piece of equipment on every desk, then you can tell the difference between systemic issues and one-off errors. This makes issues easier to address. In addition, when you go to fix things on that piece of equipment, you have quick access to drivers and it is likely that research has been conducted on that problem before with that particular piece of equipment. You know when you add peripherals they will always work because you've already tested and proven they work.

Software standardization is as important if not more than important than hardware standardization. if you are running four different versions of Microsoft Office, for example, or you have three different versions of Windows the chances are much greater that one of your core line of business (LOB) applications will have an incompatibility between PCs due to differences in the core software running in the environment. When you standardize, you simplify.

Measure Performance

You must measure performance, and to do that, you must track key performance indicators (KPIs) specific to how long it takes you to do things.

Your KPIs should be specific to your environment. They will help you determine both where you are spending too much time and where you need to spend more time. This information allows you to create continual improvements in your environment.

Think about a track and field athlete competing in a 100-meter dash. When that athlete is preparing for the big race, is he going to practice without a stopwatch? Of course not. His coach is going to time every race he runs, compare it to his top competitor and use those numbers to help the athlete improve his performance. Beating the top competitor's best time is the athlete's goal. The stopwatch is his KPI.

If you fail to do this in your environment, you won't know if you are getting better or worse. You won't know what the impact of particular changes is.

There are a tremendous number of things you can track in your environment. Such things include:

- The total number of tickets over a period of time.
- Average time to ticket resolution
- Length of time it takes to resolve issues related to a specific application

Tracking these things allow you to measure the impact of changes you make in your environment. Suppose you roll out a software update to a specific department and measure how those changes positively (or negatively) affected the number of support tickets you have to manage related specifically to that application. Wouldn't it be nice to know this information before you roll out that software to your entire company?

Delegate

If you are going to successfully make the transition from spending your time fighting fires to investing your time into identifying ways to use technology to improve business, you have no choice but to delegate your IT Management tasks.

There are two ways you can accomplish that. You can simply hire someone to take on the load. Chances are, however, you'll find yourself still managing the IT as you oversee that person. They will have limited expertise, no experience in your specific environment and your transition away from that role will be a long one (if it even happens at all).

Your second option is to outsource the daily management tasks to a third party. Outsourcing is a delicate word among IT professionals. To be clear, we are not talking about outsourcing in terms of firing the internal staff and bringing in a third party. We're talking about augmenting the existing staff with third party resources. Here's why:

A really good IT person that knows how to troubleshoot technical problems and has a good breadth of IT knowledge. This is a person who can solve IT problems in any environment. The generic IT person does not have, however, the experience required to understand your unique business, your company dynamics and culture, knowledge of how your industry is changing, what regulations affect it, etc. But you do.

If you have long-term experience in an organization, you are familiar with these things and that means there is nobody better than you to lead your company's IT vision. If you are a single person IT department, you only have so much time and knowledge. It is very difficult to be an expert at every single aspect of the network and still have time to properly research and execute the special projects that are a part of that vision.

If you are going to be an IT Leader, you must get the daily IT Management chores off your plate.

For more information on the benefits of adding an outsourced IT provider to your team, check out our whitepaper available for download at <https://goo.gl/Af1TFD>.

A case study illustrating a client who completed eleven special projects the first year after outsourcing his IT management to Kalleo is available at <http://wp.me/p5rIEA-ag>.

Educate

The last thing you must do in order to make the transition from IT Manager to IT Business leader is to learn to speak the language of your executive team. You can only achieve this through education.

Imagine you've just implemented a new blade center in your department, and you cannot wait to report to your executives about the new purchase. You walk into the executive board meeting prepared to give them all the details of the new blade center you rolled out. You are excited to tell them how figured out a way to use virtualization technology to create an environment where you can slide different operating systems and virtual machines from hardware platforms...

Nobody in that room cares about what you are saying.

You lost them at blade center.

Imagine, instead, you walk into the executive board meeting and say, "I've been researching new technology, and I've been analyzing our operations XYZ area. Based on my research, I can confidently say that the implementation of this new technology would improve our efficiencies in this area by 25% and add about 5% to our bottom line."

You will have their undivided attention. They will listen to your every word.

You must have an understanding of these things to make that transition:

1. **What are the goals of the executives in your business?** Know them, understand them and be crystal clear on how your goals align with theirs.

Often their goals include some, if not all, of the following:

- Increase Sales
 - Decrease Expenses
 - Improve Customer Experiences
 - Improve Employee Productivity
 - Ensure Compliance
2. **What are the emerging trends that are taking place in your industry?** Go to industry tradeshows (but don't just go to the IT sessions at those shows). Develop an understanding of the business challenges facing your industry. Research how technology can play a role in overcoming those challenges.
 3. **Keep pace with emerging technologies.** Subscribe to newsfeeds from other leaders in the IT industry. Learn about what new technologies are trending, how they are helping other businesses and explore ways to adapt them to your advantage. You do not want to be the last to implement a ground-breaking technology that has improved all of your competitors' businesses, but not yours.

Developing a clear vision of technology and business changes takes time to develop, and you simply cannot achieve this level of leadership if you are also balancing the responsibilities required as the IT Manager.

Conclusion

You have the power to enhance the efficiency of your company's staff, provide timely data to improve decision-making, enhance service to your customers and help make your business more profitable. You will not reap these benefits without a defined IT strategy and tools that are properly maintained and working for you. IT should never be relegated to merely a task on someone's to-do list. Take control of your environment and transform your IT from a cost center to the profit center it is meant to be.

About Kalleo Technologies



Founded in 2004, Kalleo Technologies is a managed IT service provider specializing in highly efficient, remote managed systems.

Kalleo's professionals have extensive knowledge of the challenges facing the marine transportation, government and healthcare industries. Kalleo uses this knowledge to help its clients leverage technology in a way to further their advancement towards their strategic business goals. Learn more at www.kalleo.net.