

Communications, Information, Technology, and Management (CiTM)

- From I3 Sytems and The I3 Consortium-

May 2021

THE EDITOR SPEAKS - A Leadership Lesson



Many years ago I was doing some work for Mike Quigley who was COO of Alcatel Americas at the time. In a teachable moment, Mike told me that while most people understand that the CEO/COO is in charge of a company, few people understand that these executives do not actually "run" the company. On the surface, such a statement sounds like a paradox but over time I have come to appreciate the wisdom of this sentiment.

The point was while management is clearly responsible for a company (or any organization), almost every action is carried out through subordinates. While the CEO/COO is responsible, these are busy people and any expressed desire, initiative, or policy decision can only become a reality with the support of the underlying company. The difference between success and failure is determined by the CEO/COOs ability to lead, inspire, and coach others who actually carry out an interpretation of the objective. It was a very Harry Trumanese view of the world. In the case of a failure, the buck always stops with the president whereas the aura of success is always attributed to those who actually carried out the task of bringing the vision to light. To this day, this teachable moment was reinforced, when Mike patiently told me that CEO/COOs must be proficient in being able to write both congratulatory and *mea culpa* memorandums.

The distinction between success and failure are seldom binary outcomes. Actions can be clearly defined by a set of success criteria. Success and failure are the ends along a performance gradient while most projects would be placed somewhere between the two extremes. Most projects will end up driving at least some level of success – seldom are any initiatives properly described as complete failures. Leaders, those that must author either a congratulatory or *mea culpa* letter at the end of the day, must be cognizant of a project's status while in process. This requires a solid line of communications with the execution teams.

For successful leaders to fulfill the role of the responsible party, it is essential that the employees are not afraid to fail or be reluctant to communicate. If there are positive communications regarding a project's progress, the execution team is providing the leader with the information they require. If there are roadblocks, the leader must take steps to remove the roadblocks. And, this same knowledge allows the leader to manage expectations with the customer. If the leader is aware that a project might not be able to fully deliver on expectations, they can reset or manage the expectations of the customer. When the customer is alerted of any change in expectation before the project is complete, the customer has an opportunity to adjust their own plans in order to accommodate the altered expectations. The most catastrophic blunders are often those where a project fails to deliver on any expectations AND the news is delivered so late in the process that accommodations cannot be made.

As a member of a team, employees must understand that they have to work together to accomplish much. But far too often, a team member fails to ask for help out of fear of disappointing the team members. Moreover, leaders do not want to deliver bad news to customers out of fear of disappointing them. This failure to communicate can be catastrophic.

Assuming communications are flowing freely, when the situation becomes unavoidable and it becomes necessary to tell a customer bad news, it is human nature to attribute the fault to others in an effort to maintain a personally credible relationship with the customer. Such tactics may temporarily salvage the relationship between individuals but ultimately the customer will lose faith in the larger team. When a customer loses faith in the team, the negative repercussions often prove to be more devastating than a temporarily disgruntled customer.

True leaders understand this and accept that eating a small slice of humble pie to support the larger organization is always a worthy tradeoff and less painful when delivered early.

UPCOMING VIRTUAL EVENTS

- **June 3, 2021. Connected Communities and Driving Smart City Initiatives. Challenges associated with smart cities and business case development.**
- **June 8, 2021. Horasis Global Meeting. Horasis brings together world leaders in business, government, and academia to consider efforts to Foster a Shared Humanity.**
- **June 9, 2021 Beyond Smart Cities. A conversation about how smart city technology can be used to improve quality of life in suburban and rural areas.**
- **June 17, 2021. Accelerate Long Beach - Science and Technology. A conversation exploring the history, present and future of Long Beach's aerospace, satellite and technology industries.**
- **July 6-8, 2021. Data 2021. Brings together researchers, engineers and practitioners interested in databases, big data, data mining, data management, data security and other aspects of information systems and technology involving advanced applications of data.**
- **July 14, 2021. Data Architecture Online. Key strategies and technologies you need to know in order to build and manage a modern Data Architecture.**
- **Sept 17-19, 2021. Data Con LA. One of the largest data conferences in Southern California.**

If you have an event that you would like us to include in our newsletter, please send an email to manager@i3-iot.net

THE I³ CORNER

This is an exciting time for I3 Systems. R1 of the I3 Software is now complete and we are completing the documentation and installation processes. Customers that are in queue to receive their software should be receiving their first deliveries in early June, 2021.

The concept of having a data governance tool, such as I3, that supports distribution of software streams, privacy management, and federated operating environments continues to generate interest. The forward-looking philosophy behind I3 did not come about by accident. Early in the program we wanted to create software that would make data streams more manageable when the Olympics come to Los Angeles in 2028. By setting our sights on a future need, we created a product that positioned our customers for their own future needs. The fact

that privacy and data governance has recently become a critical issue is not a surprise to us as we had been working on these solutions before most recognized the criticality of the need. That we designed our solution so that it functions in federated environments coincides with business' heightened emphasis on the creation of ecosystems or partners and the move away from highly centralized organizational structures. Finally, the fact that we embraced the need to manage emerging data networks as a layered operation that organizes and streamlines data management concepts served to reinforce the need for organizations to adopt I3-like data management concepts.

The next I3 Consortium meeting is scheduled for June 11, 2021. That meeting will be hosted by the County of Los Angeles which is interested in creating a process to coordinate between the many efforts to tackle digital divide issues within the county. On June 10, the i3 Consortium's working group focused on techniques to make better use of live video analytics will plan their proof-of-concept so that deployment and integration efforts can be initiated this summer.

If you are potentially interested in attending these sessions, be sure to register on the I3 Consortium's list server by sending an email to i3-join@i3-iot.org.

READER CONTRIBUTION: Forecasting the future through periods of chaos by Petah Marian, Futures and Foresight



Foresight and trend forecasting are areas that rely on a huge amount of data in order to make our predictions. Some predictions are relatively linear and, in retrospect, seem easy to predict. For instance, a growing population alongside a lack of investment in new housing is likely to lead to a housing crisis.

These challenges are likely to remain challenges even as we experience disruptive moments like the ones presented by the pandemic over the last year and a half.

But when your focus is on forecasting less linear or tangible things, like values, ways of living and the kinds of products people will want to buy in two or ten years, those traditional sources of data, which use past actions to predict future desires, become less useful.

We are living in a BANI (Brittle, Anxious, Nonlinear, and Incomprehensible) landscape. BANI is a framework coined by fellow futurist Jamais Cascio to replace the VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous) framework.

Cascio describes this as a way of articulating “the increasingly commonplace situations in which simple volatility or complexity are insufficient lenses through which to understand what’s taking place. Situations in which conditions aren’t simply unstable, they’re chaotic. In which outcomes aren’t simply hard to foresee, they’re completely unpredictable. Or, to use the particular language of these frameworks, situations where what happens isn’t simply ambiguous, it’s incomprehensible.”

What has become increasingly clear to people and organisations is that we are no longer living in a linear landscape, where people’s lives largely follow similar patterns on a day-to-day basis, which makes forecasting the future even

more challenging.

As the pandemic got underway, many prior forecasts around technology, fear, telehealth, localism and emotional isolation accelerated, with technology uptake vaulting forward five years through the pandemic. As countries emerge into their varied next versions of normal, predicting what will return to pre-covid levels and what will be different has never been more challenging. The data that companies relied on in 2019 and 2020 does not necessarily reflect our future possible reality. And with countries recovering at different rates, regional differences are widening.

Correctly forecasting shifts is requiring not just more data to join the dots between different elements of a person's experience, but also more creativity, to see the links between what's possible from a technology standpoint, what's likely from an economic standpoint, but also what are the likely attitudinal and emotional responses responses. Consumer-facing innovation is wonderful, but has to be presented at a time and in a way that consumers will respond positively to.

Asking people what they want is not always the best route forward either -- there are huge gaps between what people say and what they do. Ask the average person if they want to buy sustainably and a majority tend to say yes. But when you look at the purchasing behaviour, you'll find another reality entirely (which is largely due to purchasing power)

This is where companies and organisations need to look more both at the big data that they've been collecting but also at other forms of less quantitative research, taking into consideration the disruptive shifts that are likely to continue to take place in the coming years.

But some combination of all of the above is what works. If you were a business serving Gen Z, understanding a few years ago that:

- Sustainability is important to this generation
- The rise of streaming services means that people are less attached to owning physical items
- Young people have less disposable income than prior generations
- They are responding to their lack of prospects by becoming more entrepreneurial

You would have the insight to justify investing in second-hand retail platforms, a segment of the fashion sector that is predicted to eclipse the size of the fast-fashion segment of the market over the next decade.

If a company were to only use one form of data around this, they'd be looking to solve the problem of declining new product sales amongst this demographic.

While developed economies might be coming through the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic, there are other challenges on the horizon that will challenge societies and companies from a BANI perspective.

As organisations navigate this period, they will need to look beyond their traditional proposition, combining tools like consumer insights with speculative forecasting or strategic foresight to understand the many possible futures that might emerge, using this to build a resilient base that will allow them the flexibility to adapt to a rapidly changing world.

Note: Petah will be joining Jerry Power, Clay Grubb, Jagdeep Sahota, and Marina Schmatova at the virtual Horasis Global Meeting on June 2, 2021. This year's event will focus on Fostering a Shared Humanity and our session, entitled "The Trend is Your Friend" will consider how trends can uncover new opportunities but they can also blind you to other issues.

The Smarter LA Plan by Jerry Power

In May, 2021 The City of Los Angeles's Information Technology Agency (ITA) released their strategic plan, SmartLA 2028. The plan provides an outline of how the City plans to use technology to efficiently and ethically improve the quality of life for residents, businesses, and visitors.

The plan properly positions technology as a tool that enables the city to make strides to improve transparency, prepare for natural emergencies, give voice to its constituencies, reduce the environmental footprint, and make the city more efficient from both a process and economic perspective. Technology, in itself, is not the solution to such complex problems but it can provide the tools required to better address these issues. The strategic plan lays out both near and long term goals and opens the door for increased collaboration so that Los Angeles can become a beacon, a pathfinder, in its efforts to take on and overcome the challenges faced by Los Angeles today and in the future.

In reading through the plan, it is notable that historically, cities provided services to citizens. And while a particular service met a need, it required citizens to adapt themselves to take advantage of city services. The plan laid out by Los Angeles represents a significant shift in thinking. Rather than the city providing a single solution interface for citizens to utilize (or not), Los Angeles is embracing the idea that its diverse constituencies have different needs. Therefore, the city must provide different mechanisms to support its citizens. Transportation is not strictly a matter of providing roads and assuming everyone has a car. The City must support metro, rail, bike, and shuttle service as a complement to the network of roads so residents can choose the option that best fits their needs. This technology plays an important role in making the selection of a transportation option as frictionless as possible.

Similarly, the city provides many ways to disseminate and otherwise interact with citizens to ease interactions in a way that is convenient for the citizen. For example, citizens can interact with the city on a range of topics via phone, text, a mobile app, kiosks, or via the internet.

A component of the SmartLA plan calls for the City to adapt to the citizen's lifestyle rather than asking the citizens to conform to the City processes. The plan also describes the intent to make the City more proactive rather than reactive. Los Angeles has always strived to be supportive of citizen service needs but the expected tech tools will create the data required to allow the City the capability of anticipating needs. For example, the City will be able to identify roads in need of maintenance so they can schedule the repairs before its citizens have flagged a road as a resident identifiable priority. Such anticipatory detection of conditions benefits the City's residents by improving their quality of life AND because the actions driven can be scheduled in advance, it also reduces costs when compared to a series of ad hoc repair activities.

Many of these technological advances are necessary to support the city's efforts to ready itself for the 2028 Olympics. During the 2017 Olympics, Rio saw an influx of 1.17M tourists over a two week period. To smoothly

support this influx of tourists while continuing to support local residents and businesses, the City will rely on new and emerging technologies that can also be utilized to support its citizens both before and after the Olympics. As these systems materialize, there will be improvements that benefit community health services, acceleration of regional economic development, enhancement of emergency services support, and a reduction energy costs.

A copy of the SmartLA plan, can be downloaded here <https://ita.lacity.org/sites/g/files/wph1626/files/2021-05/SmartLA2028%20-%20Smart%20City%20Strategy.pdf>

READINGS FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

- [IoT, AI, Analytics and Telematics can help small businesses improve their efficiency and bottom line.](#) Large companies are using IoT and telematics to improve operational efficiencies. This tech can help small businesses but costs have been an inhibitor to adoption. Costs are coming down, and now SMBs are using this tech much more aggressively.
- [A first step to automating your business processes.](#) Process automation makes existing processes faster but it can lock-in company processes making evolution difficult. One bank found that they needed better digital visibility across all processes before they could begin to improve specific processes.
- [Putting Digital at the Heart of Strategy.](#) Not long ago tech was a support service. Digital processes were a more efficient form of a manual process. Tech evolved to enable extensions to legacy strategies. In today's world, however, the paradigm has flipped to where tech determines strategy.
- [Seven pivots for government's digital transformation.](#) Governments must evolve from 'doing digital' to being digital organizations. Means moving past where IT is a support service to put tech as a focal point for operations and citizen service initiatives. This is a big change from the legacy view of the government.
- [Four myths about building a software business.](#) Companies with significant software revenue streams are not digitized versions of traditional companies. A tech bolt on organization will not work. Have to focus on the people and culture to create a successful software business strategy.

LET'S CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

Please feel free to forward this email to your friends and colleagues who you believe would benefit from participation in our community. For those of you who wish to be included among those who believe that technology is a tool and that business success is achieved by skilled wielding of the tools available to us, feel free to reach out. If you have suggestions, topics you want to see included in future newsletter updates, or other general inquiries, feel free to email us at manager@i3-iot.net. The ideas expressed in this newsletter are intended to stimulate conversation and dialog that will lead to a better understanding of our collective future. The opinions may not necessarily reflect the opinions of any members of our community of interested people.

ABOUT I3/CTM

Originally founded under the guidance of USC, the Institute for Communication Technology and Management (CTM) was formed to support a deregulated telecom industry. Over time, computer and networking technologies evolved and grew changing the way we do business and live our lives. The CTM Newsletter was created as a vehicle to foster continued conversation about tech associated issues that transcend specific technologies and specific industries. CTM conducted foundational Internet-of-Things research and created a community driven IoT network

vision. Working with the engineers at USC's Viterbi School of Engineering, the cities of Long Beach, Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles, along with a host of supporting companies, academic institutions, and private individuals, this vision was turned into Open Source software that was released in December 2019. I3 Systems was formed to pursue commercial opportunities based on the work of the I3 Consortium and the concepts published in the newsletter. With this grass roots tech movement, the newsletter evolved and continues these conversations even further.

If you wish to be removed from our distribution list, click here [unsubscribe](#)

I3 Systems, 1146 N Central Ave #687, Glendale CA 91202, www.i3-iot.com

I3 Consortium, www.i3-iot.org