

Beyond Stakeholder Buy-In: Getting Programmers and Other IT Professionals To Embrace IQ Initiatives

ABSTRACT

Conventional wisdom correctly acknowledges that IT leaders must secure buy-in for IQ initiatives from business stakeholders. Additionally, IT leaders must secure buy-in from rank-and-file IT employees and other IT professionals. This is surprisingly difficult because many IT "best practices" confound IQ efforts. More fundamentally, such questionable best practices are often a natural consequence of flawed IT reward structures.

For IQ initiatives, IT buy-in cannot be an afterthought because the rhetoric that persuades business stakeholders to commit to IQ initiatives will rarely work on IT professionals. Different arguments are needed.

In this session, industry veteran Joe Maguire assesses the situation and suggests solutions. In particular, he describes the following:

- The flawed IT reward structures that lead to sub-optimal "best practices"
- How those best practices, when entrenched in an IT organization, can create resistance to IQ initiatives
- Some approaches--including specific rhetorical and logical arguments--for securing IT buy-in for IQ initiatives.

BIOGRAPHY

Joe Maguire

Principal Analyst and Consultant
O'Kelly Associates



A 28-year veteran of the computer industry, Joe Maguire is an analyst and consultant specializing in data management and requirements analysis. His hard-won perspective is informed by broad experience including twelve years in product development for software vendors (Digital, Lotus, Microsoft, Bachman Information Systems); thirteen years as an independent consulting data modeler and requirements analyst for clients (ranging from small startups to Fortune-10 behemoths); and three years as an industry analyst for Burton Group and Gartner specializing in best practices in data management. He is a much-published author whose books have been praised by a wide range of media outlets including The Mathematica Journal, The Data Access Newsletter, The Boston Sunday Globe, and National Public Radio. A frequent public speaker, Mr. Maguire returns to MIT IQIS for the third consecutive year.

Securing IT Buy-In For Information Quality Programs

MIT IQIS 2011

Joe Maguire

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Joe Maguire

- Analyst/Consultant:
 - Data modeling; requirements analysis; nexus of data and content; collaboration
- Previous Work
 - Decade + in product development for SW vendors
 - Decade + consulting (data + process modeling)
 - Industry analyst (Burton, Gartner)
- Publications
 - *Mastering Data Modeling* (Carlis and Maguire)
 - Dozens of papers: industry analysis, best practices
 - <http://josephmaguire.blogspot.com>

Messages

- Business buy-in for IQ is elusive and necessary
- IT buy-in is *different* and *even more* elusive
- Entrenchment impedes IT buy-in; you will need:
 - Logic
 - Rhetoric
 - Psychology
 - Power
 - Diplomacy

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Agenda

- Previously at MIT IQIS
- Why IT Buy-In \neq Business Buy-In
- Getting IT Buy-In
 - Logic, Rhetoric, Psychology, Power, Diplomacy
- Summary of Messages

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- Previously at MIT IQIS
- Why IT Buy-In \neq Business Buy-in
- **Getting IT Buy-In**
 - Logic, Rhetoric, Psychology, Power, Diplomacy
- *Summary of Messages*

**This is a
Sales Seminar!**

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Previously at MIT IQIS

- High-level messages (a sampling)
 - IQ policy is disseminated throughout the organization
 - Organization treats data as a product (not merely a by-product)
 - IQ policies and procedures are aligned with business strategy
 - Data quality roles are created and clearly described
 - Practical data standards are in place

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Previously at MIT IQIS

- More detailed consequences (a sampling)
 - Controlling information silos
 - Simplifying the application portfolio
 - Establishing modeling standards
 - Requiring specific modeling tools and notations

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Previously at MIT IQIS

- More detailed consequences (a sampling)
 - Controlling information silos
 - Simplifying the application portfolio
 - Establishing modeling standards
 - Requiring specific modeling tools and notations

Previously at MIT IQIS

- You **MUST** secure business buy-in

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- ***Why IT Buy-In ≠ Business Buy-In***
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Business Buy-In ≠ IT Buy-In

- ...in other words, IT will resist or reject some of the messages on the previous slides

Business Buy-In \neq IT Buy-In

- IQ goal:
 - Organization treats data as a product, not merely a by-product
- IT reality:
 - Application/data independence is not always honored
 - Most metrics measure software not data
 - The best practices are for software development
 - Reward structures focus on software

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Business Buy-In \neq IT Buy-In

- IQ goal:
 - Data quality roles are created and clearly defined
- IT reality:
 - Some roles will have to be created
 - They can alter IT structures (e.g., shrink fiefdoms)
 - They can shift some responsibility outside IT
 - Even existing roles are poorly empowered
 - E.g., DBA's at the beck and call of development teams

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Business Buy-In \neq IT Buy-In

- IQ goal:
 - Controlling information silos
- IT reality:
 - Best practices and reward structures sometimes *encourage* info silos
 - Unfair to blame this on Agile movement
 - Legit culprit: “Data decentralization”
 - Legit culprit: “Data democratization”
 - “Decentralized” should never have implied “Unshared”
 - Decentralized HW should never have implied decentralized data (A failure to separate conceptual and physical concerns)

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Business Buy-In \neq IT Buy-In

- IQ goal:
 - Simplify the application portfolio
- IT reality:
 - Existing metrics and best practices are confounded by such initiatives
 - “We deliver business value by delivering software”

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Business Buy-In \neq IT Buy-In

- IQ tactics:
 - Establish modeling standards
 - Require specific modeling tools
- IT reality:
 - Artisanal culture of programming
 - Modeling is *rightly* perceived as cumbersome

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Business Buy-In \neq IT Buy-In

The **PRIMARY** reason why we need IT buy-in:

- Attitude:
 - Software is what IT does
- Response:
 - Poor data quality is an emergent property of software, even of defect-free software

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Agenda

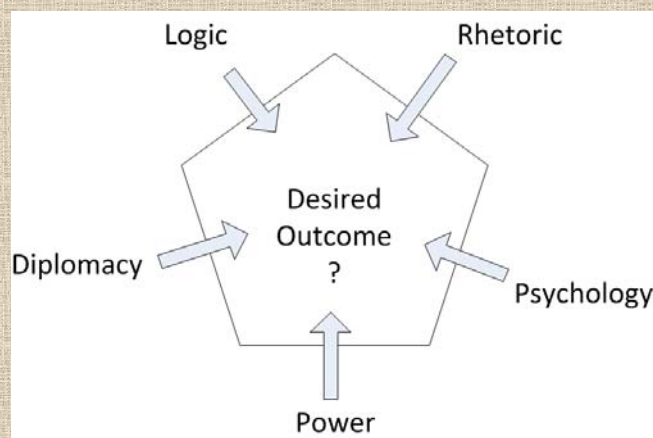
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Getting IT Buy-In



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Getting IT Buy-In

- Five tools
 - Logic, rhetoric, psychology, power, diplomacy
- Use the five tools judiciously
 - Different tools will work at different levels of the org chart
- Some tools can actually work against you in surprising ways

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Logic

- Example:
 - “Poor IQ is an emergent property of good SW”
- Realize that you live in an unfair world
 - Logic doesn't always win
- Know if your organization is polarized. If it is:
 - Logic won't win grass-roots support
 - Perhaps try logic on other, influential, open-minded persons

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Rhetoric

- Example:
 - “Good software won’t keep you out of prison.”
- Realize that you live in an unfair world
 - Rhetoric pleases your fans, but sways few others
- Know if your organization is polarized. If it is:
 - Rhetoric won’t win grass-roots support
 - Perhaps try rhetoric on other, influential, open-minded persons

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Logic and Rhetoric

- What’s wrong with logic and rhetoric?
 - The Cultural Cognition Project (Yale Law School)
 - In polarized debates, people cheer (or boo) for information supporting their (or the other) side
 - Valid scientific data *increases* polarization (!)
 - Upton Sinclair
 - *It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it!*

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Psychology

- Win hearts and minds by influencing the influencers
 - In a polarized environment, forget about grass roots support (cynical, but realistic)
 - The “bow-tie vs. hemp shirt” principle

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Power

- Talk to the VP of HR and VP of IT
 - Change the reward structure
 - Change the performance review metrics for IT
 - Change SW development practices
 - Change the org chart if necessary
 - ...
- Eventually people will optimize their behavior accordingly

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Diplomacy

- Make a real admission that data management best practices are too cumbersome
 - Don't fake it—the agile folks have a legitimate point; data management best practices are often too ornate
 - Example: Data modeling best practices and notations are too intricate
- Control your own rhetoric
 - (Did I really need to mention Upton Sinclair?)

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Summary of Messages

- Poor IQ is an emergent property of good SW
 - Do not allow software principles to be “interpreted” for data quality
 - E.g., “Database Refactoring”
 - Data Quality deserves its own first principles, rather than principles that are analogous to SW principles

Summary of Messages

- To win hearts and minds, influence an influencer
 - Logic doesn’t always win
 - The “bow tie / hemp shirt” principle
 - Don’t be seduced by “grass roots” techniques

Summary of Messages

- Change the reward structure
 - Talk to the VP of HR and VP of IT
 - Change the performance review metrics for IT
 - Say: You can go to prison for erroneous data
 - Say: Good software won't keep you out of prison

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Summary of Messages

- Continue to seek business buy-in
 - Remember that business buy-in does not automatically generate IT buy-in
 - Distinguish those aspects of business buy-in that do translate to IT from those that do not, and develop strategies for IT buy-in accordingly

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- **Q & A**