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Changing Perception

PART 4: TRANSPARENCY

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One of the age-old remarks about IT groups is that they are a venerable black hole. Requests go in never to be heard of again. Projects begin with what the business feels are solid and clear requirements only to be delivered with different, missing, or out-of-date implementations. IT departments have long been heralded as "the place projects go to die".

Those of us on the other end of that chain know very well that there are a myriad of challenges and complexities to projects that can result in requirement gaps, design challenges, implementation struggles, deployment issues, infrastructure misses, performance problems….and on and on and on.

I think one of the biggest mistakes we have made as an industry is to treat our craft like some sort of behind-the-scenes magic. It has led us down the wrong path, thinking things like: The business cannot possibly understand the complexities of our work or the challenges we face. How could we even explain it to non-software people? It would take so long to explain what we are doing we might as well not even try.

But what if we did? What if instead of hiding behind the scenes, we opened things up and let the business stakeholders inside? What if we worked to find a common language that we could both communicate in and use that language to relay the challenges we have during the process of implementing a new system?

At the end of the day, we are all just people trying to get a job done. With very few exceptions, we all strive to do the best work we can and deliver the highest quality output we are capable of. Because of that common goal, and the importance of the projects we take on, we often have high levels of emotion that can cloud any given situation.

If we remember that our goals are shared on any given project and strive for a level of transparency that can clearly

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show both successes and struggles along the way, we will inevitably find that both sides can put emotion aside and remember that we are working towards the success of the project.

Emotions may still run high at points, but with transparency in place our team can operate as just that – a team. Teams that have transparency and a common understanding of their goals can tackle challenges together infinitely more successfully than those that do not.

How are you showing transparency to those within your organization?

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