

February 2009 HR–Xchange Summary

The February HR-Xchange topic “HR is from Mars & IT is from Venus” explored the complicated relationship between HR and IT. Greg Frueh delivered a humorous introduction about the differences between these two functions.

The group discussed this first set of questions:

- 1. How would you rate your relationship with IT Staff – do you have a great, good, or poor relationship with your IT Staff?**
 - a. What are some of the elements that contribute to making that relationship great, good, or poor?**
 - b. What can be done to make this relationship better?**

The overwhelming response was that communication is the key to HR and IT working well together. General agreement was that the relationship between the two is good; however, it takes a strong relationship with great communication skills on both sides to make a really successful partnership. Several ways to help create greater success include:

- Follow IT’s process when submitting requests; understand and appreciate their workload; and prioritize your requests
- Communicate the importance of a request if it affects the entire business
- Communication needs to be two-way
- Create a sense of mutual respect and spend time developing the relationship; we are all human and need face-to-face interaction
- Patience, patience, patience!

- 2. What personality type is your strongest (in HR)? What personality type is your IT Staff’s strongest?**
 - a. Are they the same?**
 - b. Are they easily compatible?**

The personality types of people that are in HR versus those that gravitate toward a career in IT were considered, using the DISC typing which characterizes people as one of the following: **Dominant, Influential, Steady, or Conscientious.**

Generally speaking, the typical IT person would have more of the Dominant & Conscientious traits, while the typical HR person would have more of the Influential & Steady traits. To bridge the gaps between IT and HR, the group recommended the following:

- Make IT explain their issues in your terms

- Help IT to see the big picture
- Help IT avoid the quick-fix solution
- Realize IT Issues
- IT has limited resources, and they are being asked to evaluate all of the work they do for the return as well; no more “Well we want it this way, do it...”
- Get an estimate of the time a project will take and the money it will save, and then balance it against what time and money it will take for IT to accomplish it
- IT’s estimates may seem high, but we have to remember that they need to test in a fixed environment, and then we need to test it in a normal day-to-day setting – it all takes time
- Once you sign off and say “Looks good,” the work is not over; IT often has 10-15% more time just to get it into production, finish paperwork, etc.
- Consider how you might change the business to do it the way the software was designed, not just the way you have always done it. Long term—a lot easier, less costly.
- Keep communicating; don’t let finger pointing keep you from success.
- IT will always be IT, and we will always be HR, but the more we understand the other’s point of view the better we will be in the long run.

In summary, the key to success is to understand one another’s workload and be respectful of how we communicate with the other party. Despite the numerous differences between HR and IT, we need to focus on bridging the gaps and moving forward rather than dwelling on how things have been done in the past. And remember to communicate, communicate, communicate!