



PODCAST: IT Outcomes & Internal Customer Satisfaction

I was pleased to be interrogated – er, interviewed – by the talented Cassie Crossley on her new podcast, [Tech Leaders Today](#).

Please take a listen to uncover:

- our recruiting and staffing approach
- IT's biggest problem today
- stories of how we solved 2 different clients' problems

Excerpts from our conversation are transcribed below.

What is Abraic all about?

The mission of our company is to help organizations achieve better outcomes from their IT investments. **The biggest problem in IT today is internal customer satisfaction.** It's not getting better. Internal satisfaction of various divisions or departments or regions with IT services, in my view, continues degrading.

Organizations are not happy with what they get out of IT for the money. What we do is follow the money; we look at where the costs are allocated, and try to get better outcomes from the investments.

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What is Abraic's recruiting process like?

We have a tough time finding middle management talent. A lot of middle management talent in the IT world today is not excellent material for management consulting.

What we find works is a combination: we hire former CIOs and VPs of IT as senior project managers or client relationship managers. They're supplemented by young, energetic folks that we hire right out of college. **There is a significant age difference between the two waves of employees we have.** We have the youngsters who are ready for new ideas, who are aggressive, who bulldog the engagement and make things happen. They are steered by senior folks, like myself, who give them the right direction. That seems to work out beautifully.

Today, if you go look for middle management, they're going to say I like working with this tool, but I hate that tool... **In business, you're trying to do the best you can with the**

technology you've got. There are folks who have a specific focus in BI or ERP, but they don't make great management consultants.

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Attracting [young talent] is easy. Going to college and majoring in business management, **most of the kids today want to change the world, they think of things globally.** When we tell that them we don't specialize in C# or Java or very specific [technologies], rather we specialize in helping our clients utilize the technologies they already have and get better outcomes from it, they're jazzed about it. Finding candidates has not been a big challenge for us.

What kinds of projects does Abraic take on?

There are three kinds of investments that we help organizations get better outcomes for.

[1] One is assets – not the blades in the computer room. It's all the digital assets, so getting more from your data, getting more from your applications, etc. We've done many projects for organizations who say, for example, "We've got this CRM system. We paid so much money for it, it cost so much in implementation, now it's costing so much money in maintenance fees and licensing fees, and what do we get for it? We're not really effectively selling. What can we do?"

As a management consulting firm, we go in and assess: **What is expected from the CRM system, and where's the gap?** What could be done within the next 3 months, or in the next 6 months, or in the next 2 years?

We recommend continuous improvement programs for these assets,

and we help our customers manage those programs. **The idea is not to add a lot to the IT budget.** It's not to add additional cost. [The client is] already incurring costs for these assets. How do we get more out of it?

The other two types of investments that we help organizations look into are:

[2] Projects or initiatives that organizations plan or are already running. **Project rescue is a part of what we do.** A lot of helping to run projects [and] set up business cases, so the outcomes from projects meet or exceed organizations' expectations. As you probably know, **there are so many project managers out there and, unfortunately, only a fraction of them are effective.** So, introducing an effective project management practice is critical in today's marketplace.

[3] The third investment area is in IT services – the services whose costs are peanut-buttered across all the organization's business units. These include things like the help desk, quality assurance group, or PMO—the general costs that IT has for its services to the business. The controller for a given business unit looks at their budget and says, "I have this allocation for IT QA. What is that exactly? What am I getting for my money? What does this do for me?" Our approach ties into SLAs. We figure out what the expectations are and educate the business, in a lot of cases, as to what this means and how to get more out of it.

What are examples of how Abraic applies a core business philosophy to an IT organization?

[1] A client we had in New York City was regretting that they had implemented such a complex and difficult ERP system that made them do more work than they'd needed to do when they were

on QuickBooks.

We said, "This is a sophisticated system you bought. It shouldn't be that complicated! It should have the flexibility to match the simplicity of your business."

We looked, and their implementation partner had configured the procurement process based on the procurement manual as opposed to the actual procurement process. The manual had 14 steps to the process, and all 14 steps were configured and working. When we interviewed the business, and **asked what the business process actually is**, it included 3 steps.

Then it was just a matter of cutting out the waste. We cut the procurement process from hours, or multiple days, down to a few clicks.

[2] With another client, their most expensive application was complained about non-stop: "The data is no good. It's not reliable. You can't analyze it. It's this or that..." We started analyzing all these complaints. We recorded them and documented them all.

Then we asked the big question: **"Who owns this application?"** And there was no one.

The first thing we did was introduce a governance model that would be the owner for the application. The minute we introduced an owner, about a third of the complaints stopped. We went back to people after to say, "Ok, you complained about this, give us more details and we'll do something about it." And they would say, "Actually it's not happening anymore." Or, "Come to think of it, it only happens once a year."

Once you establish ownership or governance, and you start to ask more questions, you find that a quarter or sometimes a

third of complaints are excuses people make for not doing their job, which is an excellent outcome.

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