

The Executive's Guide to Information Technology, 2nd Edition

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The Executive's Guide to Information Technology, 2nd Edition
Authors: John Baschab and Jon Piot
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When it comes to IT, is it better to be a smart follower than a foolhardy pioneer? IT critic Nicholas Carr thinks so. In his foreword to *The Executive's Guide to Information Technology, 2nd Edition*, Carr states that IT isn't much of a differentiator anymore in the business world, but IT management still is. "Big IT projects ... continue to suffer very high failure rates. The risks are as high as the costs. Improving the management of your IT assets and operations can thus translate into big and immediate cost reductions and profit gains."

As Carr points out, this guide, written by John Baschab and Jon Piot, is about lifting IT management out of the "data center" and putting it into the "executive conference room." *The Executive's Guide* is a massive tome (it includes a CD, which helps those lacking shelf space), but don't let its size deter you.

The guide provides specific policies, approaches and tools for managing important IT functions, from human resources and operations to vendor selection and project prioritization. From these lessons, organizational executives can gain many skills, according to the authors, including:

- understanding the main sources of wasted IT dollars;
- identifying the industry average for IT spending;
- understanding symptoms and sources of IT department inefficiencies; and
- learning how to make better decisions in technology direction-setting.

The book is organized so you can dip into a chapter without having to read what came before. It comprises three sections: Part I covers the IT organization and the IT management dilemma it faces. Part II delves into details of practices, policies and strategies for effective IT management, focusing on the business of managing an IT shop, not the technicalities. Part III covers the tools and processes executives and managers need to make effective IT decisions, such as budgeting, cost management, risk management and IT governance.

A chapter is devoted to the CIO's critical role and the talent challenge faced by executives trying to fill the position. While the chapter -- and book for that matter -- is geared to the corporate world, it provides information that chiefs of staff, city managers, county executives or federal chief financial officers could apply to their governments or agencies.

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