

# Westerly Consulting, LLC

## Two halves of delivering the strategy

*Manage people and managing technology are different.*

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A company wanting to succeed in the marketplace needs to have strong product strategy as well as a strong engineering organization capable of executing that strategy. In very small companies that execution is usually the prevue of the CTO. As a company grows it is often very difficult for single individual to be both the technology leader of the organization as well as the management leader. Far too often, the technology leader hangs on too long as the management leader, creating problems for the organization that may be fatal.

Strong individuals will often want to own both the managerial and technology jobs. Allowing a strong technologist to own the managerial track is usually as bad a decision as allowing a strong managerial leader to own the technology both skill and bandwidth, as most enough of both to do jobs well. is splitting up the job creates the the valued CTO. On the other cause all of engineering to fall not done well.



Either the strategy suffers or the suffers, both of which are

Many people in the company are involved in the strategy in some way, making failures there visible early. On the other hand, it is hard for those outside of engineering to see the failures in time to avoid missed or poor quality releases. Sometimes the basic machinery of good engineering organization is put in place but the details are not attended to causing problems as:

1. Communication and conflict resolution become poor.
2. Engineering discipline drops off.
3. Testing and quality stop being a priority.
4. Morale falls and becomes negative.
5. Turnover increases.
6. Schedules are missed.
7. Customers become unhappy.

There are certainly examples of one person doing both jobs successfully and there are many more examples of two people doing each of the jobs successfully. There are, unfortunately, far too many

examples of a single individual failing to do both jobs well enough, and thereby taking the company down. This problem only gets worse as the organization gets larger.

The problem occurs because being a good technology leader and being a good people leader generally require different personalities and skills. The technology product visionary needs to do the following:

1. Understand the marketplace and its direction.
2. Develop the technological solution possibilities.
3. Select the technological direction in a timely manner.
4. Define a pragmatic and generally understandable architectural solution.
5. Cause the organization to enthusiastically support the solution.
6. Identify and procure the necessary purchasable technologies (thereby eliminating the tendency of building everything).
7. Define the technologies that need to be built.
8. Resolve technology issues as the building process encounters technology obstacles.
9. Guide the technological and architectural evolution through the building process.
10. Be the prime advocate of the solution to sales, customers and employees.
11. Increment through the above steps to adjust to market changes.
12. Be the face of the product strategy to the customers in marketplace.

The technology manager needs to do the following:

1. Deliver high quality to the market place the timely manner.
2. Hire a good people.
3. Create good teams.
4. Organize the teams for efficient execution of the solution.
5. Train people do their jobs well.
6. Establish and re-enforce an engineering culture that motivates and energizes the team.
7. Assure the product is adequately tested.
8. Establish an efficient decision-making processes, driving for fast conflict resolution.
9. Create an environment that balances the urgency with the need to produce quality product.
10. Cause the development environment and tools to be in place to assure efficiency.
11. Provide an environment that frees the individual engineer from the political winds of the organization.
12. Provide career opportunity for the individuals within their organization.
13. Advocate and inform the rest of the organization about the progress of the product.

The most common problem is the technology CTO who spends too much time on the first list and not enough time on the second list. Often, the CTO will initiate many of the right activities but not manage them with sufficient detail to ensure their success. Each half of the job requires more attention to detail than one individual has time for.

Finally, moving forward is not always easy, as the individual who is losing part of his job will most likely resist that change. Do not let the strong emotional feelings of this leader cause the wrong things to happen. It may take one or two bad releases before the problem becomes totally obvious. Act before your company pays the price.

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