Case Study: Principles for IT Leadership Development (University of California)

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CIO Research Team

Initiatives: CIO Leadership, Culture and People

> CIOs can better adapt the role of IT using the University of California's previous enterprise CIO's established principles for IT leadership bench development, which are aligned to four competencies: strategic leadership, innovation, collaboration and change management.

University of California

- **Organization Name:** University of California system

- **Industry:** Education and Healthcare

- **Headquarters Location:** Oakland, California

- **Revenue:** $34.6 Billion (2018)

- **Employees:** 236,302 (2018)

Overview

Recognizing the changing role of the IT function, the University of California's previous enterprise CIO, Tom Andriola, identified that IT's future leaders must play a critical role in leading, influencing and managing change throughout the organization. [1] To address this need, Andriola worked with unit CIOs to establish principles that guide their approach to IT leadership development, aligned to four critical competency areas: strategic leadership, innovation, collaboration and change management.

Principles for Effective IT Leadership Development

The University of California (UC) system was facing competitive pressure from new digital entrants to its core sectors of education and healthcare. Their enterprise CIO realized that their future IT leaders needed to be able to drive innovation and change to ensure IT could support future organizational ambitions. Andriola worked with unit CIOs to establish principles that guide how they approach IT leadership development, aligned to four critical competency areas: strategic leadership, innovation, collaboration and change management. These competencies are ingrained in the UC IT Leadership Academy, which prepares members of the IT leadership bench to become stronger, more effective leaders and agents of change.

Strategic Leadership

- **Use real-world scenarios to build leaders' strategic influencing and decision-making ability**: Academy participants work in teams on assignments that relate to real-world organizational challenges, such as defining external partnership opportunities to enhance or reframe the mission of the UC system. By replicating future, unknown situations, these exercises provide a low-risk environment that builds participants' ability to make trade-off decisions and create innovative solutions to emerging issues.

- **Increase leadership effectiveness through self-reflection**: The CIO and academy facilitators use a series of questions to get participants to reflect on their experience within the academy and with their teams, enabling participants to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their leadership style. This guided self-reflection allows participants to evaluate how they approach innovation in their teams, and identify resources and partnerships they can take advantage of around the organization (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Strategic Leadership Self-Reflection Questions

Strategic Leadership Self-Reflection Questions
Illustrative

Self-Reflection Questions

- Leadership versus Management — Do I understand the difference and what percentage of my time goes toward each?

- How can I approach conversations with my team to change their mindsets to focus on opportunities ahead of us?

- How do I expand my influence across the organization?

- What does innovation mean in my environment, and how do I approach it?

- How often do I look outside myself to borrow ideas and solutions from others within the organization?

- How can I use the frameworks I've been given to innovate and collaborate to accelerate business time to value?

- What are people in the organization working on, and what opportunities should I be taking advantage of?

Source: Adapted From University of California System

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Innovation

- **Show emerging leaders the risks to IT's relevance to stress the urgency of evolving their role:** The CIO focuses the leadership academy's introductory session on the urgency of evolving IT's role, highlighting how a fixed mindset risks IT's ability to support enterprise goals. The introduction sets expectations for participants that failure to successfully collaborate with other parts of the university will limit IT leaders' involvement in important conversations and strategic decisions.

- **Encourage participants to constructively challenge the status quo:** Simulated exercises provide participants an opportunity to break free from their current ways of working and try new approaches. Using the tools and frameworks provided to them throughout the program, participants are encouraged to take calculated risks and push the boundaries of innovation.

Collaboration

- **Highlight network-driven, peer successes to ensure leaders understand the power of collaboration**: The UC system motivates participants to sustain collaboration by highlighting how academy alumni use the skills they acquired to achieve success in their roles. Past participants are invited to speak to cohorts about their experiences, their successes and the impact the IT leadership academy made on their professional careers. Highlighting success demonstrates the realm of possibility for attendees to apply what they've learned to foster collaboration and innovation in their workflows.

- **Intentionally engineer successful networking moments through attention to small details**: The CIO and IT team purposefully created opportunities for participants to expand their networks through the seating and team assignments for the leadership academy. They deliberately looked to put together people from areas of the university that did not collaborate frequently to foster connections and promote cross-university idea sharing.

Change Management

- **Teach influencing to develop change agents**: The leadership academy emphasizes influence as an essential competency to ensure that IT leaders are not order takers, but rather coalition-building agents of change in the organization. Participants are given negotiation training and introduced to frameworks, such as the Kotter Model, to build coalitions of support in their teams and to drive change in support of the organization's mission (see Figure 2). [2]

Figure 2: Teachable Ways to Influence

Teachable Ways to Influence

	Influence an Individual			Influence a Network	
	1. Quid Pro Quo	**2. Rational Argument**	**3. Social Proof**	**4. Inspirational Appeal**	**5. Influence by Proxy**
How It Works	Uses access to information and resources as leverage to win support	Uses logical or data-driven argument to win support	Uses examples from elsewhere in the company to win support	Uses motivational storytelling to win support	Uses remote stakeholders who can be coached as proxies to win support
Why It Works	Mutual value is created and future collaborations enabled	Buy-in leads to more effective action than mandated compliance	Individuals respond better to role models and relatable peers	Empathy and faith in a vision generates emotional commitment	In-person interactions exert stronger influence
When It Works	When leaders are at the same level, but in different silos	When outcomes can be measured, improved or altered	When company culture promotes global consistency	When desired outcomes are largely subjective or experiential	In large organizations or when stakeholders are distributed geographically

Source: Cialdini, Robert B., "Harnessing the Science of Persuasion," Harvard Business Review 79, no. 9 (October 2001): 72-79; Enns ea., Harvey G., "CIO Lateral Influence Behaviors: Gaining Peers' Commitment to Strategic Information Systems," MIS Quarterly 27, no. 1 (March 2003): 155-176; Enns ea., Harvey G., "How CIOs Obtain Peer Commitment to Strategic IS Proposals: Barriers and Facilitators," Strategic Information Systems 10, no. 3 (2001): 3-14; Gartner analysis.

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Applying these principles, the UC system's CIO has built a cohort of future IT leaders ready to facilitate collaboration at their campuses and health centers. Eighty percent of the UC IT Leadership Academy's first cohort have been promoted or taken on additional responsibilities since participating in the program.

About This Research

Gartner has spoken with CIOs across a variety of industries, geographies and organizations to identify practical examples of leadership development strategies and tactics. This case study is based on interviews with Tom Andriola, Andrew Isaacs (co-facilitator of the IT leadership development program) and Jenn Stringer (Chief Academic Technology Officer at UC Berkeley and former development program participant).

Recommended by the Authors

"Leading Digital Transformation (Monsanto Company)"

This case study outlines the steps Monsanto took to build an IT operating model that allocates plan, build and run resources to dedicated IT product lines and the role of Monsanto IT in building enterprise digital acumen.

"CIO Leadership, Culture and People Primer for 2019"

Research surveys indicate that culture and talent are high priorities for C-level executives, who view them as either barriers or enablers for digital business. Growing and developing strong leadership abilities are key to tapping into workforce potential and creating a dynamic, inclusive culture.

"Tenure-Busting Rotation Program (PSEG)"

IT staff with long tenures can develop siloed thinking and an aversion to risk and change. PSEG's CIO developed a mandatory rotation program for IT employees and managers who have held the same role for five years to enhance skills and competencies and prevent role entrenchment.

"Ten Guiding Principles for Developing Leaders"

Effective leader-led development can increase the performance of rising leaders by 27%, yet senior leaders spend most of their time on low-value development activities. This tool acts as a guide to help senior leaders maximize their leader-led development time and improve the outcomes of rising leaders.

Presentation Deck

Download the presentation slides.

Endnotes

[1] Tom Andriola, the former enterprise CIO of the UC system, is now the vice chancellor of information, technology and data at UC Irvine.

[2] "The 8-Step Process for Leading Change," John Kotter.

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