Research shows that IT Professionals do not communicate business value of IT to senior managers in UK

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Microsoft and PC Magazine to host business communication seminar for IT Professionals in response to research

Senior management and IT Professionals are worlds apart when it comes to aligning technology and business, a new survey* has revealed.

Research carried out in January 2000 by NOP, on behalf of Microsoft and PC Magazine, has revealed that only 30% of senior management felt that IT staff communicated very clearly how they can meet business needs through the implementation of technology. Rather, they felt that their IT staff justified investment on the basis of technical features instead of business benefits.

In addition to this, over half (57%) of IT Professionals felt that it was difficult to present a viable business case for implementing new technology as the people they needed to persuade did not have the necessary technical knowledge to understand the benefits.

34% of IT Professionals felt that they would have increased credibility in proposing IT -based solutions to problems if they had more business training. To address this, Microsoft and PC Magazine will host a seminar designed to help IT Professionals communicate more effectively with senior management. More details on this seminar will be available later in the year.

On a regional basis, Microsoft will be including information within its TechNet seminars around the country.

Mike Pryke-Smith, IT Professional group marketing manager at Microsoft Limited explains: "The research has confirmed the needs of the IT Professional and we are keen to provide any support we can to address their needs. Microsoft is pleased to be working with PC Magazine to help British businesses embrace the growing impact of the IT function in securing long-term competitive success."

"At a senior level E-business is seen as just another channel to pursue and IT systems are seen to have a purely administrative function," adds Steven Sonsino, lecturer in strategic management at the Cranfield School of Management. "The new economy demands a fundamental change in the way businesses are managed, moving from the traditional command and control model to a more participative new leadership model. This will drive organisations to change their infrastructure to cope with the opportunity e-business poses and to use technology as the potent management tool it can be, rather than simply worshipping it or despising it from afar. This is still perhaps a manager's greatest challenge."

Martin Perry, Publisher of PC Magazine, concluded: "Whilst both the IT Pro and senior management acknowledge the growing importance of IT in the new e-conomy it is apparent that the IT professional has yet to develop the necessary communications skills and commercial acumen to turn recognition of their worth into a seat at the boardroom table."

Other results from the survey showed that:

·Only 17% of mid-sized organisations (100-499 employees) have IT Professional board-level representation in contrast to 38% of large organisations (500-10,000 employees).

·63% of IT Professionals think they need better representation at board level, whilst only 32% of senior managers agree with this.

·63% of IT Professionals think IT is fundamentally seen as a support function within their company. Senior managers broadly agree with this. From all respondents, the finance department came out as the most influential department within the organisation.

·65% of senior managers say that they are having to become more IT 'savvy' than in the past

·45% of senior managers and IT Professionals agree that in 5 years time IT Professionals will be much more respected than they are now.

For more information on how Microsoft is helping the IT Professional get access to the information they need to communicate business value, please see http://www.microsoft.com/uk/IT

* Research carried out by NOP on behalf of Microsoft Limited and PC Magazine. 303 telephone interviews amongst two audiences (IT Professional and senior managers) of British business, ranging from small (10-99), medium (100-499) and large (500-10,000) organisations across all sectors in the UK in January 2000.

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PC Magazine is the world's most widely distributed Business or Technology Magazine. Its UK edition is bought by almost 140,000 savvy buyers each month of which over 100,000 are subscribers making it Britain's biggest business to business subscription title. PC Magazine's attracts the highest quality readership of buyers through its in-depth, Labs based comparative product reviews compiled using Ziff Davis' industry standard benchmark software. On average, PC Magazine reviews over 400 products per year in its comparative reviews alone.

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