

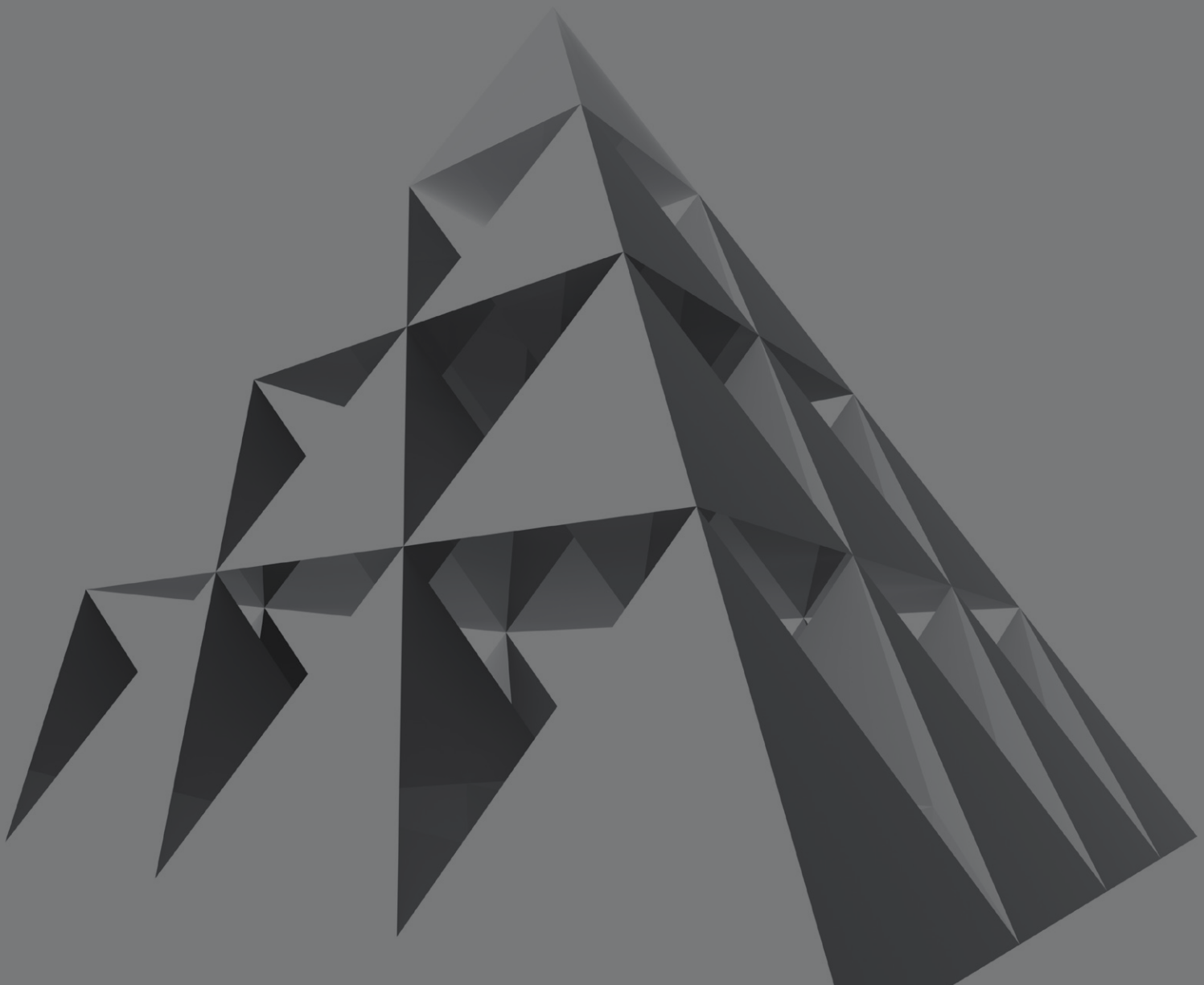
TRANSFORMING IT ORGANIZATIONS –

IT STARTS WITH EFFECTIVE LEADERS



Effective leaders

directly impact employee
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INTRODUCTION

The federal Information Technology (IT) sector faces a unique set of challenges:

- Managing complex technology that is constantly changing
- Meeting security, statutory and compliance requirements within zero-growth or dwindling budgets
- Meeting mission requirements
- Making significant improvements in customer service and delivery
- Developing innovative solutions
- Maintaining a talented workforce
- Keeping the workforce abreast of new technologies and security risks

Overcoming these challenges often results in competing priorities within an organization that affect employee levels of engagement, productivity and retention.

Effective leaders directly impact employee engagement, making employees want to stay and do good work.

Agencies that invest in finding, growing and keeping effective leaders achieve better individual and organizational outcomes.

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INVESTING IN EFFECTIVE LEADERS AND MANAGERS IS CRITICAL TO OVERCOMING IT CHALLENGES

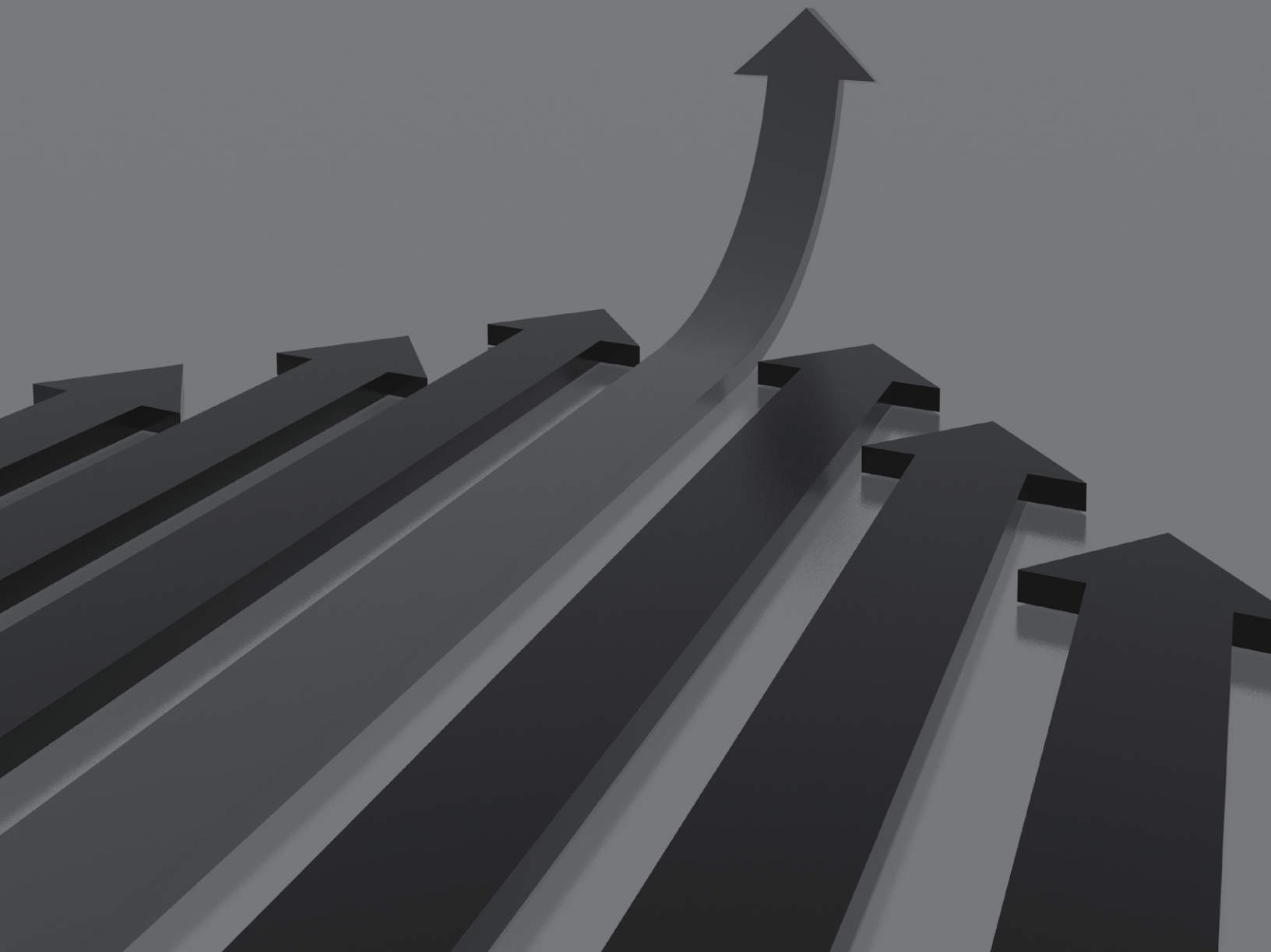
By the end of 2015, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) projects that more than 50 percent of senior executives will leave government service. As organizations find effective ways to attract and retain leaders, it is important to consider what competencies, experience and traits are needed to build and sustain the next generation of IT leaders. The typical way an organization finds its next generation of leaders is to promote from within – moving the most technically competent person into a leadership position. Unless the technically competent manager has developed and demonstrated strong leadership skills, the likelihood that he or she will be a successful leader is marginal at best. Consider the differences between manager and leader functions.

An organization needs to have a clear understanding of how many managers and leaders it needs to meet its mission. Once understood, the organization needs to invest in helping some of its managers transform into leaders.



Figure 1: Comparison of Manager and Leadership Functions

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FIVE STEPS ORGANIZATIONS CAN TAKE TO GROW EFFECTIVE LEADERS

The results from a Development Dimension International (DDI) 2012 study indicate that organizations that develop their leaders from within achieve productivity 50 percent faster than those who hire their leaders from outside, because they have valuable institutional knowledge, understand the agency's culture and have established credibility among the workforce. Organizations can initiate the leadership development process by taking the following five steps:

1. Evaluate current IT manager and leadership functions to determine which ones require management, those that require leadership and those that require a combination of both
2. Prepare a succession plan that identifies key IT leadership positions and potential internal employees capable of filling the positions in the future
3. Identify leadership development strategies and craft organizational and individual leadership development plans
4. Implement the leadership development plans and strategies
5. Evaluate the leadership development plans and strategies for effectiveness on an annual basis

EIGHT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE LEADERS

Leadership development strategies are effective if they are designed to focus on outcomes and results and are tailored to the needs, capabilities and budget of the organization. Below are eight strategies and techniques agencies can invest in to ensure their workforces are prepared to succeed over time:

1. ACCOUNTABILITY.

Agencies can hold their IT leaders accountable for demonstrating leadership qualities and producing results through the implementation of a results-oriented performance management system that is aligned to organizational goals.

2. EXECUTIVE COACHING.

Agencies can hire an executive coach for their future IT leader to give practical advice and guidance on issues that arise in the workplace. Executive coaches are trained professionals who provide the customized and personalized guidance needed to transform individual employees, supervisors and/or managers into effective leaders.

3. JOB ROTATION.

Agencies can develop and implement a job rotation program to develop future IT leaders. Job rotations are

a management technique used to train employees and future leaders for various positions by providing future leaders with hands-on experience managing and leading projects and teams.



Figure 2: Leadership Development Strategies and Technologies

4. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

Agencies can start the leadership development process by enrolling future leaders in a leadership development program. Leadership development programs are comprised of a series of primarily instructor-led training courses which are based on leadership core competencies and are designed to prepare the next generation of leaders for higher level positions.

5. LEADERSHIP SKILLS ROADMAP.

Agencies can develop and provide future IT leaders with a leadership skills roadmap. A leadership skills roadmap serves as a guide for future leaders to understand what competencies, experience, skills and traits they must learn and exhibit to flourish in a leadership role.

6. MENTORSHIP.

Agencies can institute a mentorship program for its future IT leaders. Mentors are effective because they understand the organization's culture, mission and goals in addition to knowing what the organization needs in its future leaders.

7. SHADOWING.

Agencies can establish a shadow program to help develop its future IT leaders. Shadowing allows future leaders to see the day-to-day activities and get hands on experience in the type of positions they are being groomed for before they actually fill the roles.

8. STRETCH PROJECTS.

Agencies can encourage department leaders to assign stretch projects to its future IT leaders. Stretch projects are assignments given to employees that fall within their normal areas of responsibility, but demand the employees to perform beyond their current knowledge and skills in order to develop them professionally. Stretch projects are challenges that take the future leaders out of their comfort zones, while empowering them to learn and grow.

Effective leadership **saves organizations millions** of dollars each year by increasing employee retention, improving customer satisfaction and heightening employee productivity.



EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP PRODUCES A POSITIVE RETURN ON INVESTMENT

A study reported by the Gallup Business Journal shows that good leaders are 50 percent more productive and 44 percent are more profitable than those who are not. Effective leadership saves organizations millions of dollars each year by increasing employee retention, improving customer satisfaction and heightening employee productivity. If agencies invest the time and resources into planning, identifying and developing IT managers and technical experts, the agency will be better equipped with the future technical leaders they need to achieve their missions and goals and to prosper in the future.

Resources

1. *(Partnership for Public Service, 2011)*
2. *Oracle, Steps to Effective Leadership, 2008*
3. *Gallup Business Journal, People Aren't Your Greatest Asset, 2000*
4. *Information Week: 4 IT Leadership Failures that Make Employees Want to Leave, 2013*
5. *Tech Republic U.S.: Ten Challenges Facing IT, 2011*
6. *OPM, APHIS Leadership Development Toolkit, 2008*

WE CAN HELP

TO LEARN MORE, PLEASE:

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