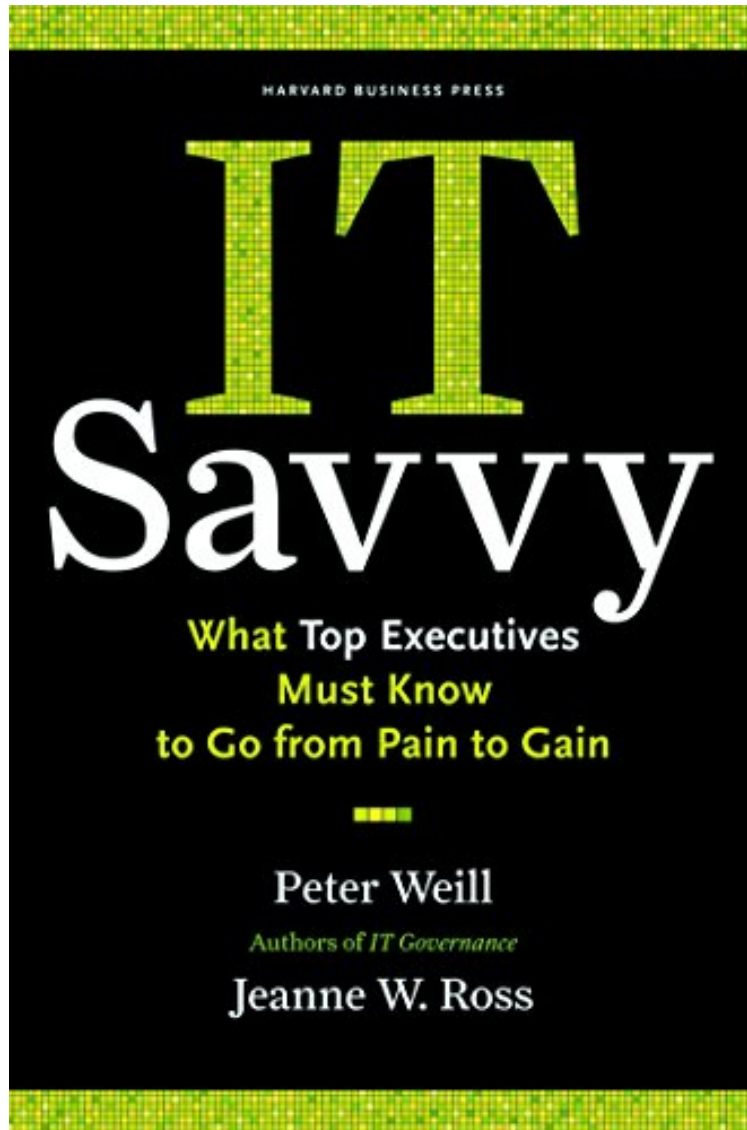


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# IT Savvy: What Top Executives Must Know to Go from Pain to Gain

*Peter Weill, Jeanne W. Ross*

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**Peter Weill, Jeanne W. Ross : IT Savvy: What Top Executives Must Know to Go from Pain to Gain** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised IT Savvy: What Top Executives Must Know to Go from Pain to Gain:

39 of 39 people found the following review helpful. Finally a business book about IT that executives should read By Mark P. McDonald Based on its title IT Savvy, executives may look past this book as another IT advocacy book. You know the kind that says technology will fix everything. Don't make that mistake. Weill and Ross have created a

business book about IT with a clear and concise argument of the role, purpose and contribution IT makes to the enterprise. This is a book executives should read because it clearly states mostly in business terms how executives should think about, lead and fund IT. Highly recommended for business executives, ignore the title and read the book. CIOs and IT executives should read the book as well and buy copies for their business peers. Corporate and IT strategists should read this book as it has several tools that will help them work together more effectively. The book's principle term IT Savvy is defined as the ability to use IT to consistently elevate firm performance. It's a good workable definition, not so prescriptive as to lock out innovation, yet not so open as to mean anything to everybody. The book builds on this simple definition with a number of very powerful observations and statements that matter: You have to stop thinking about IT as a set of solutions and start thinking about integration and standardization. Because IT does integration and standardization well. IT Savvy firms have 20% higher margins than their competitors. You need an operating model before you can make sound investments in IT. IT funding is important, as systems become the firm's legacy that influence, constrain or dictate how business processes are performed. IT funding decisions are long term strategic decisions that implement your operating model. IT Savvy is based on three main ideas with some commentary from the reviewer.

- 1- Fix what is broken about IT, which concentrates on having a clear vision on how IT will support business operations and a well-understood funding model. These are two things required for executives to be accountable for IT and its contribution to raising business performance. This is in sharp contrast to situations where IT is delegated and benignly neglected in the enterprise. Sound advice.
- 2- Build a digitized platform to standardize and automate the processes that are not going to change so you can concentrate on the elements that do change. This is counter-intuitive advice for people who have been told to use IT to chase innovation, but the platform idea is based on studying leading companies and what they do with IT. It may not be sexy, but the platform does drive significant margin, operational and strategic advantage.
- 3- Exploit the platform for growth by focusing on leading organization changes that drive value from the platform. This is sound advice that is often left out of business and IT books. Once you build a platform for scale, and then lead the company to drive scale across the platform to get benefits. You would not build a house you intended to live in and then not live in it, but many companies build a platform and then run away from it.

The book concludes with an assessment, based on their research that you can take to determine how IT Savvy your business is. The assessment is a very helpful tool for launching the conversation of how to raise business performance.

**Strengths** The book is clearly written and very well supported with business based case studies of leading companies like UPS, Procter Gamble, Aetna, Seven-Eleven Japan, Pfizer, etc. The cases make for good business based reading and an understanding of what an IT Savvy business looks like. The book is focused with clear language that makes for an efficient yet in depth read. This is the perfect book for executives who want to learn about raising performance, but do not have the time to study it in depth. There also a number of powerful tools, graphics and frameworks that let you apply the ideas. The book is not limited to IT. In fact it features in depth discussions of business processes, shared services, management, measurement, operating models etc. Covering these topics in conjunction with IT shows that the authors are clearly concerned with business performance first, second and third.

**Challenges** Its minor but readers need to recognize that when you talk about the value of anything, like IT, you tend to refer to the thing a lot. This book uses the word IT a lot and IT Savvy, which may give the reader the impression that it's an IT book. I would advise reading past that term and into what is changing in the business. The book is short, small format, and only 182 pages. For some that is a real problem, they take brevity as a sign that the book is about marketing the idea than driving the point home. NOT THIS BOOK. The book is focused and I thank the authors for not wandering in the latter chapters just so they could write the traditional 300-page business book. The book reprises some of the authors earlier works on enterprise architecture and IT governance. This is ok as many readers will not be familiar with this work and the pieces covered here fit well with the overall theme of IT Savvy and demonstrate the authors depth of knowledge. Many of the main points of the book come at the end of paragraphs or chapters. This makes the book a little difficult to skim-read, something that executives often do. My advice is to take the time to read the words and look out for the nuggets of wisdom toward the end of the chapters. Given that it's a shorter book and the language is clear, I found the extra time to read more than paid off in the extra insight gained. Overall, a good book, one that should become a foundation for understanding the role of technology in the enterprise.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This book is complete garbage. Was forced to read it as part of ...

By ElCubanaso This book is complete garbage. Was forced to read it as part of my MBA curriculum. Completely theoretical and no substance to apply in real life. Don't waste your money on this trash... If your professor requires this as reading, spend your time learning stuff on online forums, which are way more applicable to anything you'll ever do in the working world.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Must-Have Book for Business Leaders and Enterprise Architects

By Joseph N. Starwood "IT Savvy" is a must-have book for every business leader seeking to gain competitive advantage through information technology, and for every Enterprise Architect charged with getting the most IT Value from IT investments. Authors Peter Weill and Jeanne Ross deliver clear guidance to take your company from IT Challenged to IT Savvy. They distill into very readable form the methods and best practices from their prior two books: "Enterprise Architecture as Strategy" and "IT Governance". Professors Weill and Ross demonstrate the importance of establishing a business operating model as the basis for IT investments. In the 7-

Eleven Japan (SEJ) case study, they show how SEJ transformed IT from strategic liability to strategic asset. With the business operating model in place, they explain why the IT Funding Model must be aligned, and how other successful companies accomplished this. In the BT case study, Weill Ross show how the company's leadership fixed the IT Funding Model, created powerful outcome-oriented Business Cases, and achieved transparency into IT investments and results. The authors then explain how to build the Digital Platform for business execution that enables, automates, and powers the business operating model. The Swiss Re case study shows how this company created its Digital Platform to manage global risk and enhance relationships with its global customers. They then tackle the challenges of governing the IT Funding Model and individual investments as well as the Digital Platform and its IT estate. In the State Street case study, the authors show how this company employed their Chief Architecture Officer (CAO) and the Office Of Architecture to ensure architectural conformance. Finally, the secrets to deriving and driving IT value from the Digital Platform are revealed. If you want to know these secrets, you must buy "IT Savvy"! \_\_Joseph Starwood

Digitization of business interactions and processes is advancing full bore. But in many organizations, returns from IT investments are flatlining, even as technology spending has skyrocketed. These challenges call for new levels of IT savvy: the ability of all managers-IT or non-IT-to transform their company's technology assets into operational efficiencies that boost margins. Companies with IT-savvy managers are 20 percent more profitable than their competitors. In IT Savvy, Peter Weill and Jeanne Ross-two of the world's foremost authorities on using IT in business-explain how non-IT executives can acquire this savvy. Concise and practical, the book describes the practices, competencies, and leadership skills non-IT managers need to succeed in the digital economy. You'll discover how to:- Define your firm's operating model-how IT can help you do business-Revamp your IT funding model to support your operating model-Build a digitized platform of business processes, IT systems, and data to execute on the model-Determine IT decision rights-Extract more business value from your IT assets Packed with examples and based on research into eighteen hundred organizations in more than sixty countries, IT Savvy is required reading for non-IT managers seeking to push their company's performance to new heights.

About the Author Peter Weill is chairman of the Center for Information Systems Research (CISR) at MIT. Ziff-Davis and eWeek.com named him twenty-fourth of the 100 most influential people in IT. Jeanne W. Ross is director of MIT CISR and founding senior editor and former editor-in-chief of MISQ Executive, a journal for managers translating research findings into action.