



15 MINUTES with DAVID WADE

CIO/EVP of Primerica Financial Services

ITO America sat down with David Wade, CIO/EVP of Primerica Financial Services, for a quick chat about the importance of business and IT alignment at organizations.

Wade joined Primerica Financial Services, which encourages middle income families to purchase term life insurance and offers solutions to help families eliminate debt, in February 1980. Wade is well versed in all areas of technology, including IBM mainframe, Wintel engineering and AIX distributed systems, networking, and PALM/Windows mobile technology. He manages a team of 260 IT data center, application programming and information security associates.

ITO America: Can you explain how Primerica has used business and IT alignment to its benefit in recent years?

Wade: Primerica has used business and IT alignment to its benefit in recent years to achieve business objectives and increase productivity. Additionally, this tight alignment has resulted in a 'shorter time to market' delivery of critical initiatives.

ITO America: What drove you to attain better alignment between the businesses and your department?

Wade: Our CEO was the primary driver in attaining better alignment between the business and IT. He fully understands the value of IT to the overall business model and strategic objectives. He is intimately involved in monthly meetings where priority initiatives are identified and given the greatest focus and therefore are resourced accordingly.

ITO America: In your role as CIO, what tools and strategies have you found to be the most successful in achieving IT alignment?

Wade: As CIO, I regularly practice the three "Fs" in IT. In order to successfully deliver on time, defect free code, it is often essential to be Frank, Friendly and Firm not only to my staff, but also my business partners and third party vendors.

ITO America: When IT and the business are truly aligned, what are the results? What results have you seen at Primerica?

Wade: When the business and IT are aligned, business objectives are more readily achieved. At Primerica, these results have been both financial as well as compliance related.

ITO America: If a CIO is just beginning to tackle IT and business

alignment, where should he or she begin? What pros and cons should they consider?

Wade: A CIO just beginning to tackle IT and business alignment needs to fully understand the corporate strategy and personally get engaged in strategic planning. It is also essential that senior management values IT resources and understands the vital role they play in achieving goals and objectives. A process needs to be initiated where by a formal IT strategic roadmap plan is developed.

ITO America: What trends do you foresee in 2010 for IT and business alignment? Are any new technologies emerging that might make a big impact?

Wade: I believe that in 2010, we will see an increased usage of web applications that facilitate information sharing with the use of Web 2.0. This technology will allow users to interact with other users in different geographic locations. In these tough economic times, this technology is cost effective and will be strategic in distribution companies like Primerica.

