

The IT Value Hierarchy: A framework for articulating IT Value using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a metaphor

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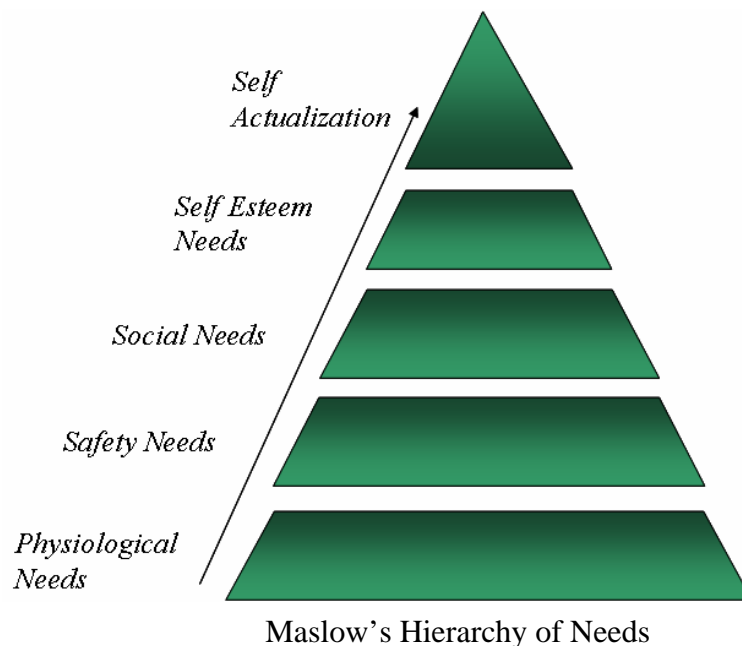
A summary adapted from:

Urwiler, R. & Frolick, M. (2008). The IT Value Hierarchy: Using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a Metaphor for Gauging the Maturity Level of Information Technology use within Competitive Organizations. Information Systems Management, 25, 1.

The IT Value Hierarchy is a simple model for articulating the progressive desire for increasingly sophisticated applications of information technology within competitive organizations using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a contextual reference.

Maslow's Hierarchy

Abraham Maslow developed the Hierarchy of Needs as applied to the field of human psychology more than sixty years ago (Maslow 1943). Since its original publication, the model has been refined, extended, and applied to a wide variety of domains beyond the field of psychology. Maslow's theory generalized that the higher needs of humans become the focus of ambition only as the lower needs are consistently satisfied.

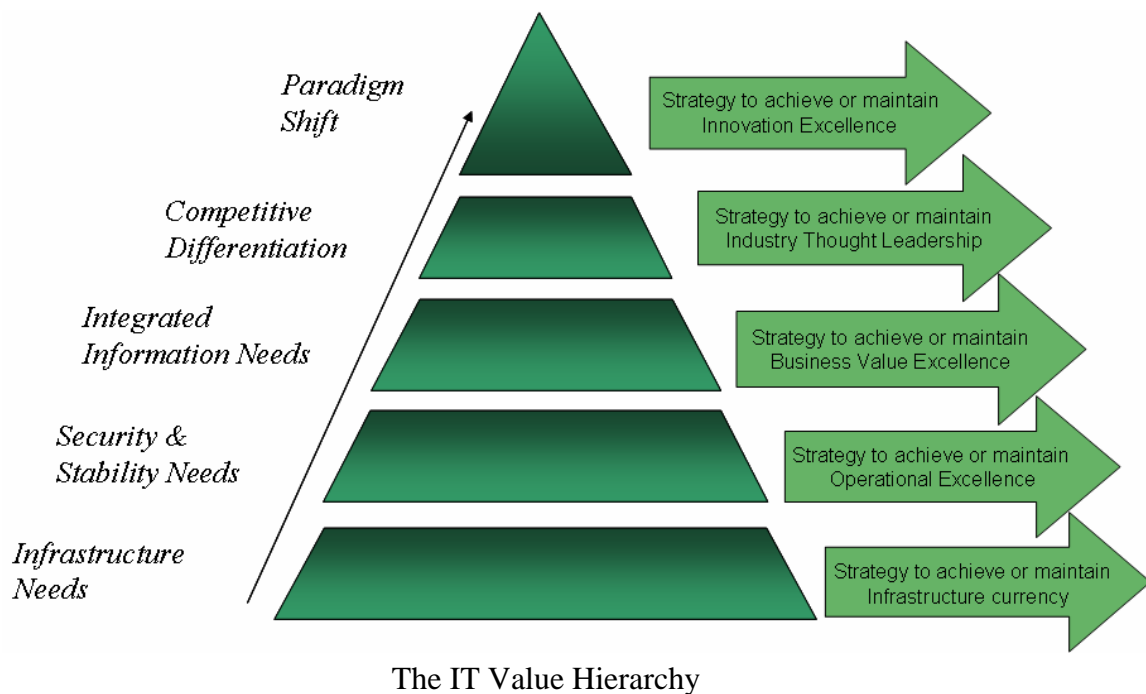


As IT Leaders consider the progressive layers of technology that their respective enterprises require in order to realize the highest business value, a needs hierarchy similar to that developed by Maslow can be derived.

The IT Value Hierarchy

The IT Value Hierarchy proposes that the higher technological needs of the enterprise generally become the focus of ambition once the foundational needs are consistently satisfied. The following describes the hierarchy of progressive enterprise IT needs from the most basic to those having the most valuable impact:

- **Infrastructure Needs**
 - The need for adequate connectivity, networks, telephony, workstations, servers, printers, data centers, & productivity / business software
- **Security & Stability Needs**
 - The need for stability and predictability in IT operations and transactional systems: The quest for “operational excellence”
- **Integrated Information Needs**
 - The need to use information from across the applications ecosystem to drive enterprise decision making: The quest for “business value excellence”
- **Competitive Differentiation Needs**
 - The need to use technology to achieve competitive uniqueness among industry peers: The quest for “industry thought leadership”
- **Paradigm Shift**
 - The application of technology to cause a fundamental positive change in the business model or consumer interaction model: The quest for “innovation excellence”



The IT Value Hierarchy can be used as a framework for IT Leaders when discussing strategy, prioritization, and funding of IT initiatives with their business counterparts. It may help them more readily explain the importance of meeting and attending to the basic technological needs of the organization with an eye on the more sophisticated or innovative applications that may provide competitive advantage.

References

Maslow, A. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50, 370-396.

Urwiler, R. & Frolick, M. (2008). The IT Value Hierarchy: Using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a Metaphor for Gauging the Maturity Level of Information Technology use within Competitive Organizations. *Information Systems Management*, 25 (1), 1-6.