

From the The Business Journals:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/bizjournals/how-to/growth-strategies/2021/10/companies-need-operationally-gifted-managers.html>

---

## < HOW TO: GROWTH STRATEGIES

---

Career & Workplace • Growth Strategies

# Companies need operationally gifted managers



Image: Getty Images (gremlin)

Companies need management team members who have a variety of gifts.

GETTY IMAGES (GREMLIN)



By [Renee Fellman](#) – Contributing Writer, The Business Journals  
Oct 6, 2021

---

People may be born with a variety of exceptional talents. They may be artistically, athletically, intellectually, mathematically, mechanically, musically, operationally, socially, or verbally gifted. Some people have multiple gifts; others have none.

Although study and practice can improve almost anyone's skills in any of the above areas, those who have inherited those gifts via their DNA will be able to reach greater heights. For instance, in my youth I took voice lessons. I had a lovely but not exceptional voice, so even if I had studied with the world's preeminent voice teacher and practiced religiously, no one would ever have selected me to sing in any of the great opera companies. I am not exceptionally gifted in that way.

Companies need management team members who have a variety of gifts. Too often, however, companies do not have a CEO or key management team member who is operationally gifted. An operationally gifted person sees the goal in its entirety and can envision and put into place the key pieces needed to reach that goal effectively. Not having someone with that gift may determine how quickly a company becomes successful and whether it becomes successful at all.

Clearly, companies like Apple, Amazon and Zoom have operationally gifted people on their teams. From the beginning, those companies were able to visualize and know how to plan, develop and install systems and tools to make superior products and offer superior services.

Other companies seem to lack someone with that gift.

One example is Indigo Agriculture Inc., a start up that planned to use technology to help farmers improve profitability. In 2019, Indigo was at the top of CNBC's Top 50 Disruptors List, but Indigo has stumbled as a result of inadequate attention to operational details. Seeds did not arrive on time; grain shipments were lost; there were multiple paperwork snafus and payments were not timely. Whether the company's new CEO will be able to right the ship remains to be seen, but in the meantime, ag giants are creating competitive offerings.

Another example is Peloton, 9th on the same Top 50 Disruptors List, a company that had to recall two types of treadmills because of safety concerns. From an operational perspective, the company should have realized the importance of and planned for careful testing and implementation of procedures that would have prevented those recalls.

Indigo and Peloton are high profile illustrations of operational shortcomings, but consumers and businesses confront such annoyances every day. Some are as simple as receiving an email that urges registration for a webinar but does not include the date or time of the event, encountering bots that cannot answer questions or can't be moved so customers can see their computer screens, visiting websites that fail to work easily or receiving products that arrive broken, late or do not work.

The lesson: Companies need operationally gifted people on their management teams.