7 KEYS TO DELIVER BETTER APPS FASTER

Through Effective IT/Business Collaboration
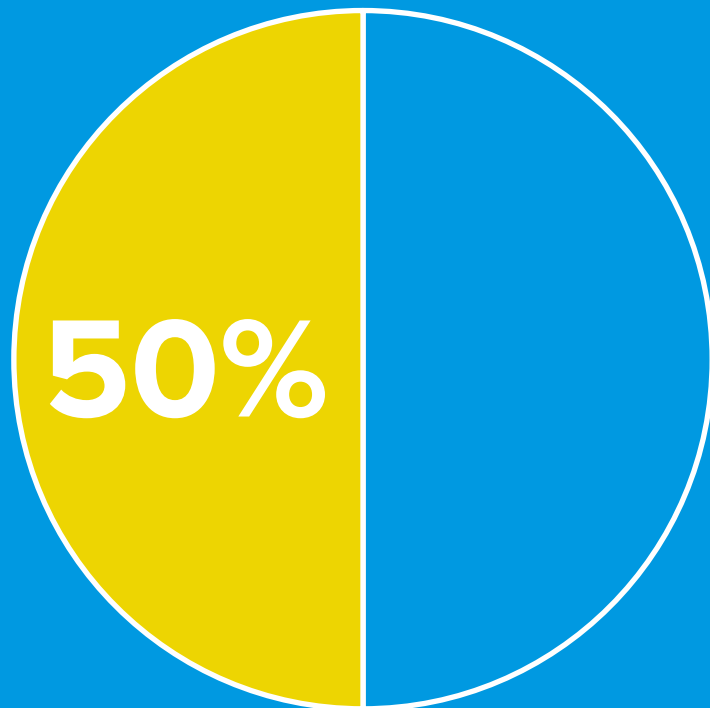
There's a rift between...
IT & Business

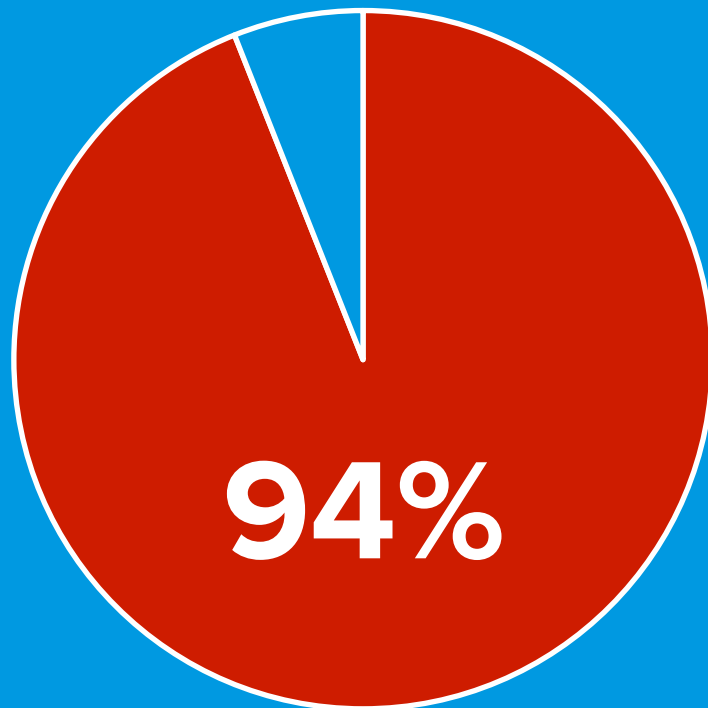# Poor IT-business collaboration is a key reason for... misalignment

50%

According to the IT Governance Institute, 50% of organizations lack any formal structure to align IT investments with business strategy.

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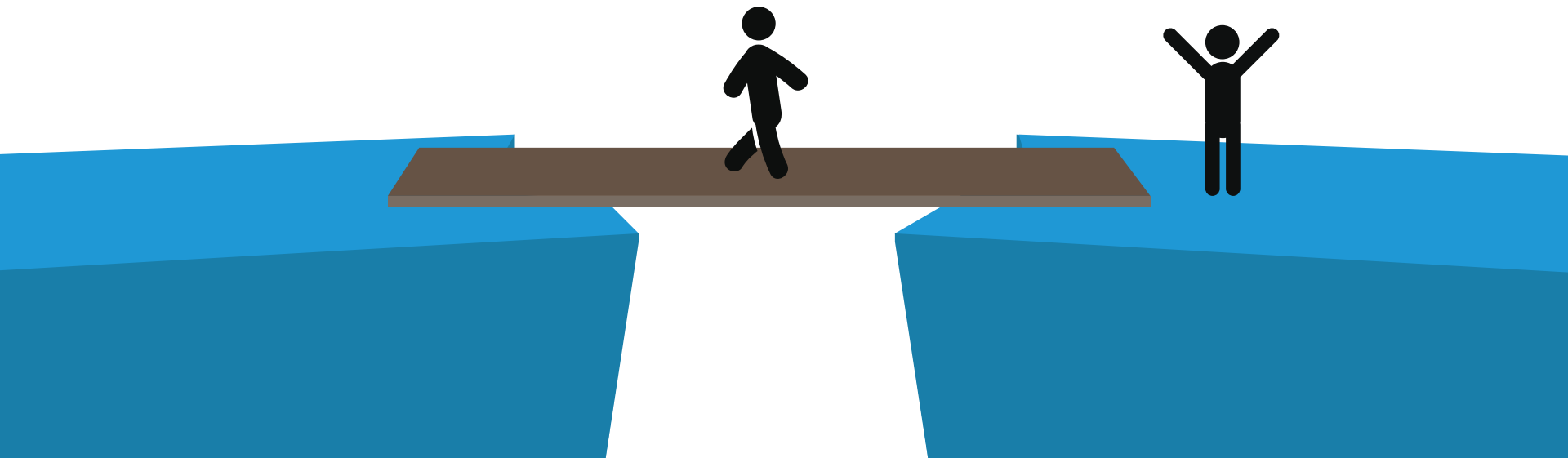# Poor IT-business collaboration is a key reason for... dissatisfaction

74% Non-IT

70% IT

According a McKinsey & Company survey, both IT and business executives are frustrated with IT's ability to drive innovation.

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Poor IT-business collaboration is a key reason for... project failure

94%

According to the Standish Group, 94% of large IT projects are either "challenged" (i.e., over budget, behind schedule or didn't meet user expectations) or fail altogether.

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It's time to bridge that gap with these
7 KEYS TO IT-BUSINESS COLLABORATION

(1) FOCUS ON THE **BUSINESS PROBLEM**, NOT THE USER'S ENVISIONED SOLUTION

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1

Because users are often limited by prior experience, their envisioned solution isn't necessarily the optimal way of doing something.

By focusing on the business problem, developers can bridge the gap between what's needed (functionally) and what's possible (technically), and ultimately design the best solution.

Example:
Needing to collect information from customers, a health insurer envisioned distributing and collecting Excel sheets.

Instead, simply by adding the right user roles, security and optimized forms, a more user-friendly web interface was built that tied into their existing back-end system.

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(2) DIVIDE WORK BASED ON USER STORIES, INSTEAD OF DEVELOPER SPECIALTIES

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2

Rather than focusing on specific technical areas (database, UI, etc.), developers should build a full working piece of functionality each sprint based on user stories.

When developers focus on solving business problems, not completing tasks, the outcome is better software and happier users.

User Story:

As a <role>, I want <goal> so that <benefit>.

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3 **PROVIDE WORKING DEMOS OR PROTOTYPES EVERY SPRINT**

3

Systems design can be abstract. That's why it's crucial to regularly show working demos to validate requirements and assumptions, as well as to discuss modifications because needs have changed.

The longer you wait, the greater the potential disconnect and the more time you'll need to fix it .

Example:
A large church was building a member registration system. Fortunately, an early prototype revealed that a key need was not addressed in the requirements.

The missing requirements were identified within two weeks, saving significant rework down the road.

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4

IMPLEMENT "WALK-IN" HOURS TO VALIDATE ASSUMPTIONS AND SYNCH WITH THE BUSINESS

4

No matter how precise requirements are, there are always points where developers have questions or need clarification.

By providing them with an opportunity each day to interact with the business, developers won't be forced to make assumptions that lead to rework.

Bonus:
When their input is immediately acted upon, business users become much more engaged in IT projects.

Often, by the second or third meeting, they've gone from reluctant participants to willing and enthused advocates.

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5 MODEL COMPLEX BUSINESS RULES AND INTERFACES TOGETHER WITH THE BUSINESS

5

Sitting developers and business users together to build applications facilitates continuous collaboration. Each has a unique perspective that helps ensure the solution is sound from a functional and technical perspective.

Plus, any issues can be identified on the spot versus waiting months until the app is built.

Example:
Because one pharmaceutical company's process was so unique, extensive interaction with the business was required to build a site monitoring application.

Developers collaborated directly with the business owner to build the app in a fraction of the time.
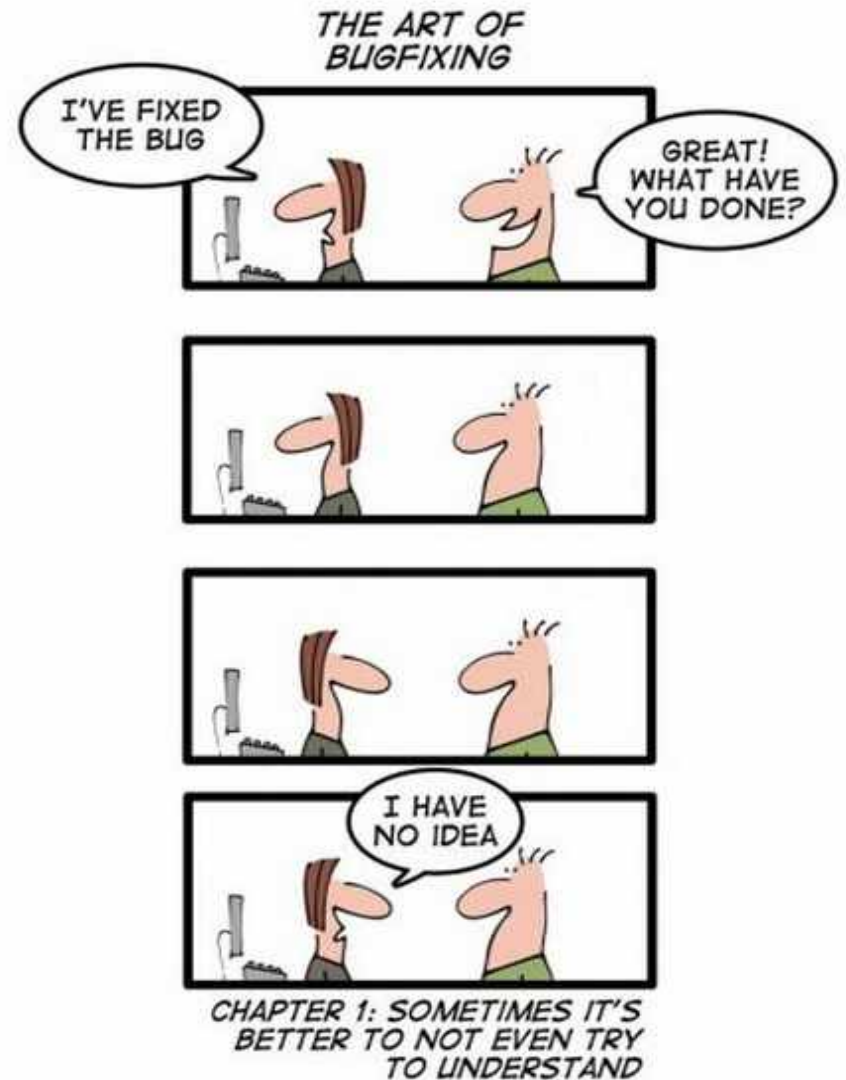
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6 COLLABORATE CLOSELY
WITH END USER TESTERS
(DURING USER ACCEPTANCE TESTING)

6

Traditional UAT is a formal, time-consuming procedure: creating tickets, planning them for release, etc. It's much better to make UAT assessments on the spot.

By collaborating closely with the end user test team, developers can identify and fix issues immediately. This enhances the bug fixing process and ensures a better user experience.

7 IMPLEMENT A **FEEDBACK LOOP** TO CAPTURE END-USER FEEDBACK
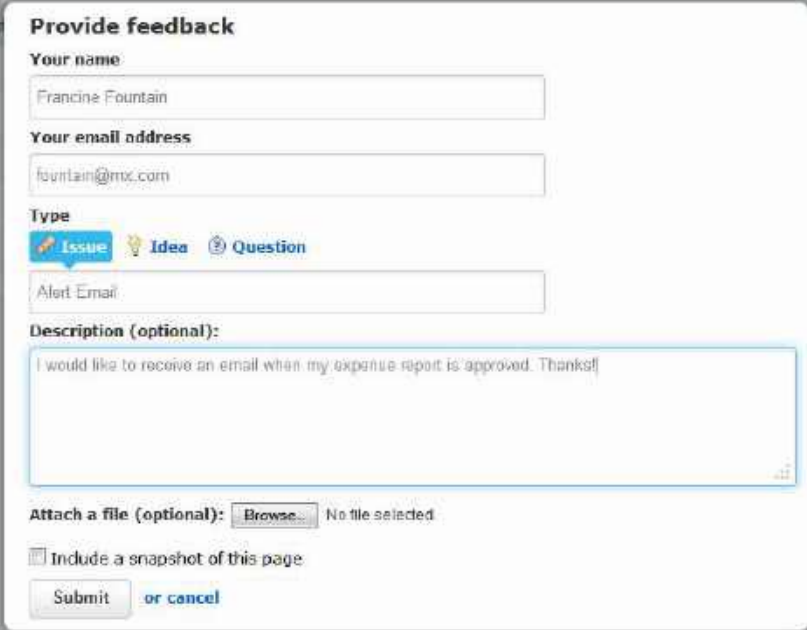
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Complex ticketing systems or spreadsheets stifle user feedback. Moreover, it can be difficult for users to explain what they were doing or expected to happen.

In-app feedback loops make the process easier, allowing end users to submit feedback with all the context (user, browser, form, etc.) captured automatically and fed to the development team.

BELOW:

The Mendix App Platform includes a feedback button in every app for submitting issues and ideas.

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Conclusion:

History has shown that improving developer productivity alone has only marginal impact on IT project success. To deliver better apps faster—particularly those innovative apps dependent on knowledge residing in the business—organizations must finally make IT/business collaboration a reality.

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About Mendix:

The Mendix App Platform uniquely brings IT and the business together, allowing organizations to more quickly, iteratively and collaboratively deliver custom business applications.

Visual, model-driven development capabilities provides a common language for business and IT to build, review and refine applications. In addition, social collaboration and project management features help engage project stakeholders throughout the application lifecycle.

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CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS:

"Mendix's intuitive, model-driven development capabilities will help business users not only collaborate on development efforts but also take over basic application maintenance, freeing up IT resources for other strategic initiatives."
--Wade Sendall, VP of IT, **Boston Globe**

"The Mendix App Platform really enables us to be a more agile organization. We are also producing better results, as we have better collaboration between IT and the process owners who can work together to create the right application."
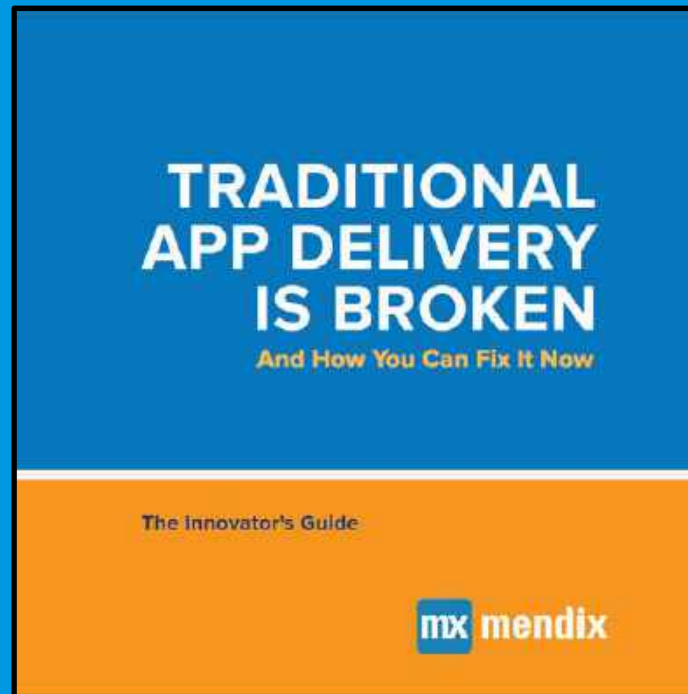--Jilt Bakkes, Director ICT, **AVEBE**

"Mendix works very well in our development shop. We put developers and business users together and they can collaborate very rapidly. We create prototypes and make changes quickly and easily."
--Rod Willmott, Fast Track Director, **LV=**

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TRADITIONAL APP DELIVERY IS BROKEN

And How You Can Fix It Now

The Innovator's Guide

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