GENE KIM, FOUNDER OF IT REVOLUTION PRESS

Q: If I improve IT production, this allows the business to throw more things into the IT engine. Does the book address getting the business to understand their constraints and select high value target for IT?

A: Yes, that's a great question. We absolutely address that in the book. We make the case that IT Operations is in almost all cases the bottleneck for the entire company. 95% of all capital projects involve IT, and 50% of all technology spend is IT-related. Almost every project has a flow of work that goes through IT Operations, since that's how you deliver value to the customer.

In the book, we talk about how to manage IT Operations as the strategic bottleneck for the entire company. This involves identifying, exploiting, subordinating, elevating everything around the constraint. Doing this often leads to DevOps-style patterns, such as creating automated environment creation procedures, making these available at the earliest stages of the Development process, enabling self-service for the business and for Development.

By enabling everyone to get what needs to get done without typing up constrained IT Operations resources, we can finally "let a thousand flowers bloom." They'll be able to build more applications, conduct more experiments, without IT Operations getting in the way. By doing this, we can increase agility while improving stability, without taking shortcuts that increase technical debt.

And if we do need to create technical debt, we'll at least have a plan to pay it down. One of the things the book pushes for is reserving 20% of Development and IT Operations capacity for technical debt reduction -- or more specifically, for non-functional requirements, such as manageability, scalability, maintainability, etc.

Q: The rate of change that comes with DevOps sounds insane. Couldn't that squeeze out security, couldn't that lead to IT gluttony, how do we stay sane?

A: I believe that DevOps is one of the best things to happen to IT Operations and Information Security in the last twenty years. One of the best things that it does is reduce batch sizes, which invariably reduces cycle times. Now we can finally reduce the "issue found to fixed" time from years down to months to even weeks. In fact, in a well-oiled organization, it could even be fixed in hours.

When 20% of the Development and IT Operations budget is being spent on non-functional requirements and paying down technical debt, one of the biggest beneficiaries is information security. More cycles will be spent fixing security defects than ever.

It's like finally having a balanced diet for IT. 20% of the food consumed will make the body stronger.

Q: Is Kanban or any other lean methodology discussed in the book?

A: Yes, all the concepts such as Lean thinking are introduced in narrative form in "When IT Fails: A Business Novel.", as are some tools, such as value stream mapping and kanbans. They are described in more detail in the "DevOps Cookbook."

Q: Can you share some of the organizations that are seeing success with the DevOps approach?

A: The luminaries and the exemplars in this space include: Amazon, Netflix, Etsy, Joyent, Ebay, Facebook, Twitter... If you're interested in learning more about them, you'll often find these organizations presenting and attending the Velocity Conference (http://velocityconf.com/). Along with   itSMF   Fusion,   it's   one   of   my   must-attend   conferences   every   year.

There's nowhere else you can find talks about amazing organizations doing astounding transformations, such as how Amazon does over one thousand changes in an hour, how Twitter and Pinterest overhauled their entire infrastructure while it was running. This place has all the networking with all the practitioners who are putting these things into practice.

Q: What's the publication dates?

A: January 2013 for *When IT Fails: A Business Novel*, and for *The DevOps Cookbook*, around this winter.