

CIOs ARE THE NEW

INNOVATORS

The role of Chief Information Officer has a brand new job description, and they're moving out from behind the shadows. They have spent so long trying to keep up with the maintenance of their company's IT that they haven't had a chance to bring in new technology – until now. As technology takes center stage in the business world, having a CIO that is able to take on a leadership role within an executive team is pivotal.

So how does someone find, or develop, a **CIO** that has a combination of the business background, technological skills, and innovative mind? It's a challenge that companies are approaching in a number of different ways. These include everything from nurturing from within the company, to hiring outside of the usual description, to turning current executives into more tech-savvy employees. However companies choose to meet these criteria, they're all finding the same result at the end: the more **innovative** your **CIO** the more likely you are to succeed.

Innovation allows for transformation – not just change. It allows for foundational shifts in the way a company operates, or the way they interact with clients, customers, and other brands. Technological advancements have allowed for these grand transformations, and it's why the CIO position is starting to take on a more central role within their company's executive team. Business strategies are now empowered by technology, and the more your executive can have an inside track in how the technology is changing their business, the more cohesive they will be.

IT has been an underfunded department for the majority of its existence, and it is only now coming in on business strategies. Incoming IT executives have to have interpersonal skills and a comprehensive knowledge of business, because they are now at the center of a very pivotal intersection between technology and strategy. So what does the new CIO need to offer to their company?



1. Innovation and Strategy

Progress is becoming increasingly more technology-driven, and we are learning how to do new and more impressive things every day. Our advancements are increasing exponentially, and this means that we need to start finding strategic ways of managing these new systems. Having a **CIO** that not only understands how all of the incoming technology functions, but also how it can be implemented to move a company forward, is vital. New **CIOs** need to think outside of the box, and let go of the usual IT mentality of “*make it work like it did before*”. Technology has shown just how much power it has over a company, and the more a company invests in their IT department, whether in time, money, or training, the more they’ll understand how technology can separate them from others.



2. Leadership

CIO is an executive position, and therefore it needs to be filled by someone that is able to manage and motivate. The IT department can be something that is incredibly hard to staff, especially if you’re looking for people that have an interest in business, and so it needs to be led by someone that can keep staff constantly looking for new ways to improve the technology. In an executive meeting, the **CIO** should not be separated by their “*behind-the-scenes*” responsibilities – they should move to work with marketing, sales, operations, and all other departments because they have the knowledge that everyone else needs to be implementing into their projects and business strategies.



3. Operations and Infrastructure

This has always been at the center of the **CIOs** job description – they are responsible for the maintenance of the company’s technology. That responsibility has been what makes having a **CIO** so important in a company, and why companies rarely question spending money on maintaining their systems. Even with all the advancements within the position, if you don’t have a leader that can handle the company’s tech issues, the position becomes irrelevant. IT skills will always be the most important thing for the **CIO**.

If you spend your time trying to preserve the past, your role will slowly become irrelevant. The role of the **Chief Information Officer** is expanding well beyond the original maintenance position, and is exponentially picking up new responsibilities and tasks. They might still maintain their role in the daily operations of a company, but they must also come up with creative strategies that bring in new technologies. Companies that are hiring **CIOs** that have the blend of business and technological knowledge are going to find progress much more quickly and successfully than those who aren’t willing to invest more in their IT department.