



## Why the CIO Role Needs to Change

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The emergence of cloud computing is the perfect catalyst for CIOs to lead IT through the seismic changes affecting this function in many organisations and providing an ideal opportunity to shift from the traditional supporting role to become an influencer and a transformer.

Cloud computing can be used to create this change because it fundamentally alters how services are delivered and thus requires a change in the structure, operations and thought processes in IT. The challenge still remains that cloud computing often evokes an emotional response from traditional IT staff as it is seen as a threat to their jobs.

The point is fast approaching where those that retain this approach will create a self-fulfilling prophecy as those CIOs that resist the inevitable shift will become obsolete. The current day CIO and IT function should be far less concerned about managing an operational budget and 'doing more with less' and far more engaged in issues of importance to the organisation as a whole, such as increasing sales or reducing the costs of doing business with the end customer.

As the CIO role changes then so will the ability to adopt cloud solutions easily and establish them as efficient components of the IT environment.

For IT to be able to effectively handle both traditional technology and more innovative approaches, such as cloud, there needs to be a programme of organisational change. It is important to recognise that this change is organisational and not simply a case of adapting a few existing processes to accommodate new platforms.

The biggest change required is to alter the perception of the organisation towards IT from being 'T-centric', that is the guys who deliver the technology the business needs, to 'I-centric'. This new perception is one where the CIO leads the function that understands the business and is able to deliver valuable and valid data to inform decisions and assist in changing business operations.

This sounds like a simple binary switch but it will only succeed if the entire IT department both understands and buys into the need to change. The CIO needs to clearly define and articulate the need to change to the department and then build sufficient momentum. Many CIOs have limited experience in managing such change and there is often a tendency to try and keep such programmes 'in the tent' and see it as a set of small process changes that can be undertaken

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within the IT department. The nature of the change in IT now means a more visionary approach is needed.

The most effective way to attain this level of change is to gain sponsorship at Board level and then engage with the HR Department to help communicate the vision for change. This approach will have the dual benefit of demonstrating to the IT department that the organisation buys into the new vision at the highest level and also that the vision is a genuine opportunity for staff and not a threat.

## More information

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