

# The chief confused officer

TECHNOLOGY'S DEMOCRATISATION IS RESHAPING BUSINESS BUT ALSO INTRODUCING NEW COMPLEXITIES AROUND MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE. WHERE DO YOU FIT IN?

**M**uch has been said about the role of the CIO. Some say CIO is an acronym for 'career is over', others see it being eclipsed by the related, co-dependent roles of chief marketing officer (CMO), chief digital officer (CDO), chief knowledge officer (CKO), chief information and security officer (CISO) or chief innovation officer (CIO).

Whether the *title* CIO exists or not is a distraction from the real issue of how the organisation balances and optimises the competing demands of, and for, enterprise technologies and their related business processes and risks.

While it's widely understood IT pervades and supports the operation of almost every aspect of the organisation, the real challenge facing executives across all functions and at all levels is interdependencies between differing systems, technologies, information taxonomies, governance and risk profiles are often not clearly understood or acknowledged.

Whether the technologies used by the organisation are managed and hosted internally in an internal data centre, hosted externally or in the cloud, or outsourced, understanding these underlying relationships is vital.

Technology's democratisation is reshaping whole industries and markets, forcing a rethink around internal structures and processes, and how best to utilise technology in order to remain competitive. This is where the old world of enterprise IT meets the new, hyper-connected digital world.

Federate enterprise IT environments by all means in response, but don't forget to federate the accountability for *enterprise* governance and risk.

Which executive is explicitly accountable for the cost, value and risk associated with the use and deployment of ICT technologies? For example, if the CIO is accountable for IT software and hardware, the CFO for cost and enterprise risk, and the sales director for margin, value and revenue, how are the relationships between portfolios defined?

The reinforcement of vertical (functionally aligned) silos and similar intra-company divisional boundaries starve the CIO of necessary visibility and oxygen, limiting their capacity to deliver enterprise-wide, transformational and innovative value.

In this discussion, *value* trumps cost. If your organisation's IT management mandate is the reverse, what are you doing to influence and change that model in the minds of the c-suite?

The conventional IT vendor management approach may also be

inadequate. Shifting from capital intensive IT purchasing to as-a-service is just one fundamental change reshaping IT services delivery globally. Line-of-business executives who feel entitled to make IT procurement decisions should be acutely aware of the forces at play in the volatile IT vendor ecosystem.

CIOs are not the only executives being redefined in the c-suite. The same could be said about the chief marketing officer, where the winds of change are equally relevant.

The globalisation of markets combined with consumerisation of technology and empowerment of the customer are demanding marketing should know the customer with even greater granularity. The 'market of one', supported by mobile computing, big data, predictive analytics and business intelligence systems, is reshaping the legacy marketing function.

As a CIO, CDO, CMO, CKO, CISO, CFO or CEO, are you able to delineate the accountabilities for cost, risk, value and governance over the spectrum of tasks required to support your organisation's increasingly fragmented and federated IT footprint? And don't forget the critical role played by IT vendors and service providers you depend on too. **CIO**



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