

2019 predictions: The CIO will govern

 By [Wynand Smit](#)

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Silos - the word seemingly depicts a neat environment where things tick along or one where everything is operating in disparate chaos, the left hand clueless as to what the right hand is doing. Enter the CIO.



Wynand Smit is CEO at INOVO

According to a recently released Forrester Research report, 25% of CIOs will expand their roles and responsibilities in 2019. As technology plays a more important role in connecting departments and unifying organisational processes and responsibilities, the role of the CIO is evolving to take on more a strategic function in the business. From managing costs and optimising processes to finding ways to increase revenue and derive value from data, the nature of the CIO's job is shifting to align with the escalating customer demands on modern business.

From IT-focused to business-outcome focused

Insights from the “2018 Gartner CIO Agenda Report” reveal that CIO survey respondents expect their jobs to change due to digitalisation. While delivery is still acknowledged as a key CIO responsibility, there is a renewed emphasis on supporting business growth as the number one business priority. Whether this be through product and service transformation through innovation or identifying new sources of revenue, for example, 58% of respondents acknowledged it as the most essential focus area.

This reflects the broader scope of the CIO's role within an organisation. Shifting attention to revenue generation, amongst other key business objectives, requires a fresh take on an organisation's attitude and approach towards adopting and implementing new technology.

Drowning out the buzzwords

“ *Technology is a useful servant but a dangerous master*”. - Christian Lous Lange ”

There are plenty of buzzwords that are adopted by companies and the media alike, but the secret is not in what technology can do, but rather how it is deployed and whether or not it solves a specific strategic or operational objective that is relevant to your business.

Too often, you'll hear so much about Artificial Intelligence or the Internet of Things, for example, to the point that you may feel like your company is missing some critical new solution and falling behind competitors, but the truth is, many of these technologies may have no practical application at all for your business.

In fact, the “2018 Gartner CIO Agenda Report” reveals that AI (followed by digital security and IoT) is the “most problematic technology to implement” according to the respondents who have recently worked with this tech. The research also reveals that the biggest pain point is that there simply is not enough of the new skills required to make the best use of the technology.

Then there is also a matter of factoring in how this technology will be integrated into other services to truly deliver business value – a key challenge for the modern CIO.

Investing large sums in specific non-essential technology can also hinder and distract you from achieving your primary goals. Your customers don't necessarily want AI, they want fast, efficient service and great CX, and there are of course a number of ways to achieve this. Your customers may also still prefer to interact with a human being, so introducing AI or chatbots might not necessarily be the best solution for your business case.

In all certainty, the challenges that will be faced involve discernment when selecting how technology will add value to your business and how to deploy solutions while limiting disruption.

From mining and deriving insight from data to driving differentiation, the role of the CIO is transforming to align with the dynamic shifts in market conditions. That's where the CIO, with a bird's-eye view of business and customer requirements, will be able to have the essential parts in place to select and implement the right technology to ensure the company's continued success in delivering customer service excellence.

ABOUT WYNAND SMIT

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