

TOP TEN CIO CONCERNS

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- 1. People Leadership
- 2. Managing Budgets
- 3. Business Alignment
- 4. Infrastructure Refresh
- 5. Security
- 6. Compliance
- 7. Resource Management
- 8. Managing Customers
- 9. Managing Change
- 10. Board Politics

1. People Leadership

Management gurus often say that people are an organisation's most valuable asset. For IT directors they are not only the most valuable, they are causing the most headaches as well. Recruiting, managing and training staff are the most pressing concerns for CIOs, moving up from third last year and leapfrogging aligning business and IT, and managing budgets.

2. Managing Budgets

Budgets are as tight as ever. In last year's research they were CIOs' biggest concern and this year they are still near top at second place. Since the last recession where IT budgets were pared to the bone, organisations are striving to keep a really tight control over them, even though they still need innovative IT to keep ahead of the competition. Savvy CIOs are seeing savings through standardisation of the IT infrastructure so new systems can be financed without increasing budgets.

3. Business Alignment

Keeping IT strategy in line with business strategy is something at which CIOs have become masters but it is still one of the areas that causes a lot of work and is resource heavy. Our research this year has put it as the third biggest concern, up from fourth place last year, and closely followed by its stable mate, refreshing the IT infrastructure.

4. Infrastructure Refresh

Refreshing technology infrastructures and keeping the backbone of an organisation's IT up to date was the tenth biggest concern for CIOs last year. Its movement up the table to fourth place seems to indicate that it now has a direct link to aligning IT with the business.

5. Security

There will never be a time when IT directors can relax about the security of their systems. Internal and external threats are on the increase, especially as the enterprise boundary continues to increase with the growth of mobile and wireless based applications. Security is still mid-point in the top 10 concerns and is likely to remain there for the foreseeable future. Keeping the business operating in the face of threats, whether against the systems themselves, or against the business and the environment in which it operates is part of any CIO's basic role.

6. Compliance

Compliance has moved up two places from eighth last year. Security and compliance work together for CIOs as many governance and compliance regulations were spawned from risk management and directly affect security. For many companies regulatory compliance is now part of everything they do. This has allowed the CIO to understand exactly what resources and processes an organisation has and to increase efficiency and throughput as a result. It is too soon to tell whether the compliance laws will achieve what they were designed for but they are already offering organisations unexpected benefits, giving CIO's the opportunity to take part in company-wide strategic planning.

7. Resource Management

Managing time and resources was a bigger concern for CIOs last year than this but that doesn't mean they have masses

of time to spare and more resources than they know what to do with. More likely, it reflects the more efficient working practises of many organisations, especially those who have already undergone infrastructure refreshes. They are using the time and resources they used to spend on legacy maintenance on more productive projects. Expanding roles and responsibilities, together with the desire to be more involved in business transformation strategy, rather than just the nuts and bolts of running an IT department, reflects a more strategic view of the CIO's role and contribution.

8. Managing Customers

CIOs must prioritise the needs of their users and customers. Dealing with users, the IT department's customers, was recorded as their eighth most important concern, down from last year when it was the sixth most pressing issue. Improving the quality of service for users is a constant for all IT departments and more are putting metrics in place to see just how well they are doing. Excellent customer service and cost effectiveness in driving the business forward are the two overlying themes for many businesses. The aim is to lift the bar on customer service, on cost effectiveness and on the capabilities of service offerings and people.

9. Managing Change

The fast moving pace of technological innovation means change is a guaranteed part of the CIO's role. But the way they manage its effect on the business is more critical. Arguably, the most significant management issue that CIOs have to face this year is change management - business process change, changes in organisational cultures and how they affect people are very high on the CIO's agenda.

10. Board Politics

To manage change and integration effectively, CIOs need the support of their senior management team. The success of change management programmes and the contribution IT can make to those depend heavily on the support and drive of senior managers. If the CIO lines of report " CEO, CFO or COO " understand the power of transformational IT investment and if a CIO can educate and communicate what is possible, IT should be a key enabler for business and process change. Many companies are going through massive change and integration programmes, all of which need board support to succeed.