

Striving To Be CIO: A How-To Guide



Understanding when and with what skill set to apply for a senior level position can only improve your chances. Use this article to help you evaluate how to go about securing a CIO position.

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CIO, VP of IT, or MIS Manager - whatever the appellation, the role has significantly evolved from its roots in the basement world of mainframe tech support.

Today, hundreds of letters and e-mail pour into executive career counseling offices, all asking the same question: **"What requirements are necessary to obtain the CIO position in my organization?"** The answer is:

- Business Leadership Thinking
- Delivery of Information Technology Services
- Communication Skills
- Agent of Change

Key Note: *Applying for the CIO position without the proper qualifications does not leave you in a 'nothing to lose' position. Statistics show that applicants applying for senior positions are well documented and remembered. Don't feel that you can apply now, one year from now, and so on. Think "impact" on your first shot!*

Action Plan

Use these top five CIO prerequisites to determine whether you should apply for the job now or work on building up your portfolio to meet these standard requirements first.

1. **CIOs must show remarkable leadership ability.** Leaders stimulate ideas and coax the best from, and give recognition to, all those around them. ***Leadership is the very best career currency one can have.***
 - To find out more on how to become an excellent leader, click [here](#) to visit an excellent Leadership and Management Research Center.
2. **CIOs must show an expertise in aligning and leveraging technology for the advantage of the enterprise.** Specific facets of technology, such as ERP, Web infrastructure, e-commerce, Customer Relationship Management, Sales Force Automation and Data Warehousing, are all examples of applications that the CIO must govern, bringing together interoperability, increased functionality and streamlined support.
 - To find more valuable information on aligning and leveraging technology, be sure to click on this link: "[Success in Leveraging Technology and e-Business Applications, Integration of Business Processes Still Elusive for Most Companies.](#)"
3. **CIOs must demonstrate superior relationship skills, exemplified through management and communication.** CIOs and other C-level officers and business unit leaders must show clear, established relationships with each other, as well as proficiency in directing and supervising people, projects, resources, budgets, vendors and business partners. They must also demonstrate the

consistent ability to intelligently articulate a strategy, an idea, a thought, or feeling in the most comprehensible manner.

- For more information on how to manage senior level business relationships, click [here](#).
 - For more information to develop your management and communications skills, click [here](#).
4. **CIOs must demonstrate an ability to both create and manage change.** Changing the posture of the IT function from an operational necessity to a strategic element is the highest priority here, with expectations of quantum improvements in both IT planning and execution. The ability to create change in the corporation's operating and business processes, for both efficiency and competitiveness, is also commonly sought.
- For more information on change management strategies and how to improve or gauge your current abilities, click [here](#).
5. **CIOs must be business savvy.** In the eyes of senior management as well as peers, the most visible and frustrating shortcoming of senior IT managers is a lack of understanding of the business. Know the business and its future direction inside out before applying for the CIO position.
- For more information on what processes and projects you should know about, visit the [Virtual CIO Services](#) page.

Bottom Line: Before applying for the CIO or top technology management position in your company, make sure that you know your stuff. Not doing so could jeopardize your current position and any future position you want within the company.

Want to Know More?

- "[Model CIO Study](#)" by the Department of Defense.
- "[Reinventing the CIO](#)" by Information Week.
- "[The Elevation of CIO Roles: Organizational Barriers and Organizational Enablers](#)" by the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society.
- "[The CIO Type](#)" by CIO Magazine.
- "[Strategic Information Technology and the CEO Agenda](#)" by ATKearney.

Sources: ATKearney White Paper, CIO Magazine Article, Department of Defense White Paper, Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society Article, InformationWeek Article



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