

## **The CIO is Missing**

Is your CIO missing? You ask "what do you mean by missing?" I mean do you have a CIO? Are they a CIO in title only? Are they members of the executive management team?. Are they involved with the company's day to day business?

Depending on how you answered one or more of these questions could determine if you have a Missing CIO! But, before you start printing up milk cartons with the CIO's picture continue reading this article.

There are numerous ways in which to complete the following sentence. You know your CIO is missing when ...

1. They report to the CFO
2. They can't find the boardroom
3. They find the boardroom but have to serve the coffee
4. They have 'manager' or 'supervisor' as part of their title
5. They provide after hours support for the network
6. ... you get the picture

I'm not going to waste your time talking about the past. About the way things use to be and how things are changing. I am going to spend some time addressing today's business issues that have everything to do with information and the role of the CIO.

How many times have we heard the phrase "the information age"? By now, you probably have developed an internal sound filter that tunes out that phrase. Instead of hearing "the information age", you hear "where is that report?" "I asked for it a whole 30 seconds ago!" Or maybe you hear "let me check the results on my PDA". Regardless of what you hear, people are saying it loud and clear. "This is the information age".

So why is it so many companies fail to understand they need a Chief Information Officer at the highest level in the organization? I can tell you this. If a company has no CIO, they have no one managing their information. Oh, they might have someone managing the data, but as we know, data is not information! Without information companies stop breathing.

Without a Chief Information Officer on the executive team, senior managers are left to their own devices to group data together however they see fit and then call it 'information'. I've seen this over and over again. Here is a quick test to see if information is being managed properly within an organization. Separately ask several members of the executive management team to give you a specific definition for terms such as "profit", "orders", "cost of goods sold", etc. Don't be surprised if you hear a variety of answers. The scary part of this story has yet to be told. Picture this executive team in a meeting making strategic business decisions based upon "profit", "COGS", and other information they assume is defined (and collected) consistently!

Managing valuable information is as critical as managing cash, perhaps even more so. If you lose \$10,000 you will probably recognize your wallet is a little light. However, if you are making business decisions everyday based on bad information, you could be losing \$10,000 every day without even knowing.

The CIO's role revolves around managing information and it has a broad impact on the entire corporation. Future articles will focus in on other aspects of the CIO's role and the importance the role plays in organizational alignment.

*Mr. Waters has over twenty-five years of business experience, twenty within information technology. He offers a unique balance of practical business and I/T experience, as well as his formal education; Bachelors Degree in MIS, MBA in eBusiness, and formal Six Sigma training.*

[For more information on this topic, please contact us as Gerke and Associates – 573-875-7125](#)