

BLURRING ROLES: CEOs TEAMING WITH, AND LEANING ON CIOs

CEOs have three tech trends on their minds today: digital transformation, cloud, and cybersecurity. With many boardrooms heartily engaged in such things, the CEO is increasingly required to be more in touch with IT investments, rather than just signing off on back-office systems and marketing initiatives.

"Technology now underpins every business, and chief executives are increasingly focused on how they can use technology to drive their business, creating opportunities for CIOs to drive company strategy," [ComputerWeekly](#) observes in reporting a [Deloitte survey of 1,200 technology leaders](#) in 43 countries.

BLURRING ROLES

"For a lot of companies, the CIO and CEO roles are going to start blurring," the report quotes Deloitte survey participant Anand Sahasram, CIO, McGraw-Hill Financial. "So much of what we do today is technology-driven, CEOs will start to acquire significant data skills or CIOs will be in a position to lead transformation and lead the company."

As this trend takes hold, [more than half of CIOs are reporting to the CEO](#). "One of the most urgent tasks facing CEOs is digital transformation, a point underscored by the growing importance of the relationship between CEOs and CIOs," Glory Global Solutions CIO Alex Rammal writes in *CEO* magazine. "And one of the most urgent conversations that a CEO and a CIO can have involves the cloud, and how effectively it is being used to further the CEO's strategic vision and key business objectives."

Cybersecurity is yet another thing pushing CEOs and CIOs (as well as CISOs) closer together. As businesses pursue a digital-first strategy, cybersecurity threats naturally become more of a focus.

"CEOs believe technology is the chief external influence on their enterprises," says [InfoSec strategist Chris Veltos](#) in the conclusion of a three-part *Security Intelligence* series on securing the C-Suite. "More specifically, cybersecurity issues have crashed into the C-suite and the boardroom, and top leadership is under the spotlight when it comes to achieving an acceptable cyber posture."

PUTTING ON THE PRESSURE

That tighter relationship is putting more pressure on CIOs to deliver the goods. "The CIO may be enjoying elevated status but the role's challenges have also increased," writes [CIO's Clint Boulton](#). "As they attempt to execute on the digital strategy, CIOs are starving for talent, particularly for professionals who can glean insights from large volumes of data, as well as employees who can cultivate digital capabilities and protect corporate assets from hackers."

THE RESULT

This is all culminating in what should prove to be firm partnerships between CEOs and their top IT leaders, whether it's the CIO or the CISO, to ensure they have a solid grip on how technology is impacting – or can impact – their business.

So, be prepared for a period of shifting roles, and perhaps occasional confusion around ownership and responsibilities. That's all part of the process of [digital transformation](#), which can't happen in a vacuum. It requires a tight-knit team that's focused on business outcomes. Plan to be patient and proactive.