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The CIO resume vs. The CTO resume

By Jennifer Hay in Career Management, February 12, 2013, 10:35 PM PST

Don't confuse the position of CIO with CTO when you're applying for one of those jobs. Resume expert Jennifer Hay talks about the difference.

I admit it! I regularly peruse web sites for resume samples because I'm just nosy about how other people write IT resumes. I prefer to be delighted and amazed but it's not always the case. My first impression when I read the summary below was that it was well-written to blend an executive's technical strengths with his business management skills, a great combination since many organizations want the IT department to be run like a business. At second glance, however, I noticed a major snafu, the summary was written for a CTO and not for a CIO as I had assumed from reading the paragraph below:

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER

Lead and energize multi-faceted technical groups to improve existing IT processes while meeting tight deadlines...

Technology leader who thrives in challenging, fast-paced IT organizations delivering advanced technology systems, solutions, architecture, and applications. Rich mix of business management and technology with the ability to lead multiple development teams through accelerated technology development to meet performance goals, operating requirements, and financial objectives. Expertise in defining high level design, instituting policy and standards, and improving architectures' overall capabilities. Strong problem-solving and solutions-building skills.

(http://b2b.cbsimg.net/blogs/cio-vs-cto-image.jpeg)

Many people seem to be confused about the role and responsibility of a CIO versus a CTO so here's the difference in a nutshell: A CIO is focused internally on technology needed to run a company. A CTO is focused externally on technology that is embedded in products and/or is visible to customers. The CIO and the CTO should work collaboratively to create an enterprise architecture that can support both internal processes and external product development for commercial use.

CIO's resume focus

The CIO is responsible for information strategy, culture, and compliance. Information strategy describes the roles and uses of information in shaping the future of the business and in setting and achieving business goals. Information culture is the degree to which information is integrated into the fabric of the business -- use by executives to understand competitive and economic environments and to define and execute strategy; use by managers to inform decision processes and to manage performance; use by staff to drive effective and efficient day-to-day operations.

The information-to-compliance connection has two aspects: (1) ensuring compliance with data/information regulations including privacy, security, transparency, records retention, etc. (2) using information to monitor regulatory compliance, signal early warning of non-compliance risks, and provide the audit trail to assure compliance and to investigate violations.

CTO's resume focus

The CTO is responsible for technology strategy which includes information, communications, operations, and competitive technologies. One of the primary responsibilities of a CTO is to be continuously aware of science and technology trends and futures. The rate at which technology changes in all areas - information, biotech, energy, environmental, and more - creates an ongoing challenge to be aware of technological developments and make good choices about which technologies to engage. The right choices make the difference between becoming a leader in your industry, playing catch up, or completely losing market position.

Furthermore, the right choices are not only about which technologies to engage, but how to engage with them - through acquisition, R&D, or technology partners. The way that a company engages with technology today has profound influence on the future of that company financially, competitively, and socially.

Summary

Although people and organizations may blur the lines between a CIO and a CTO, they are two distinct roles with very different responsibilities. When working with a resume writer make sure they understand this distinction - the CIO focuses primarily on the technology that a company uses and CTO focuses more on the technology that a company sells. You may elect to position yourself for a combined CIO/CTO position but that should be your choice and not as a result of a misunderstanding.

Jennifer Hay is a highly credentialed resume and LinkedIn writer for IT professionals and executives. She is the 2011 Toast of the Resume Industry (TORI) winner in the technical category. As the world's first nationwide resume writer for information technology (CRS+IT), she a natural choice for professionals seeking high-impact career marketing documents. Additionally, Jennifer's technology product - TweetsResume - won a 2012 Career Innovation Award from Career Director's International.

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5 de 5