

CIO Executive Leadership Development Primer for 2024

Published 31 January 2024 - ID G00802781 - 12 min read

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Initiatives: [CIO Executive Leadership Development](#)

CIOs have a career-defining opportunity to reach beyond their role to orchestrate the delivery of value-generating capabilities everywhere in the enterprise. This initiative identifies the expanding leadership opportunities for CIOs, and provides personal development and execution advice to succeed.

Scope

This initiative focuses on trends and challenges to pursue opportunities, and develop executive leadership abilities and relationships to navigate the evolving expectations for the CIO role.

Topics in this initiative include:

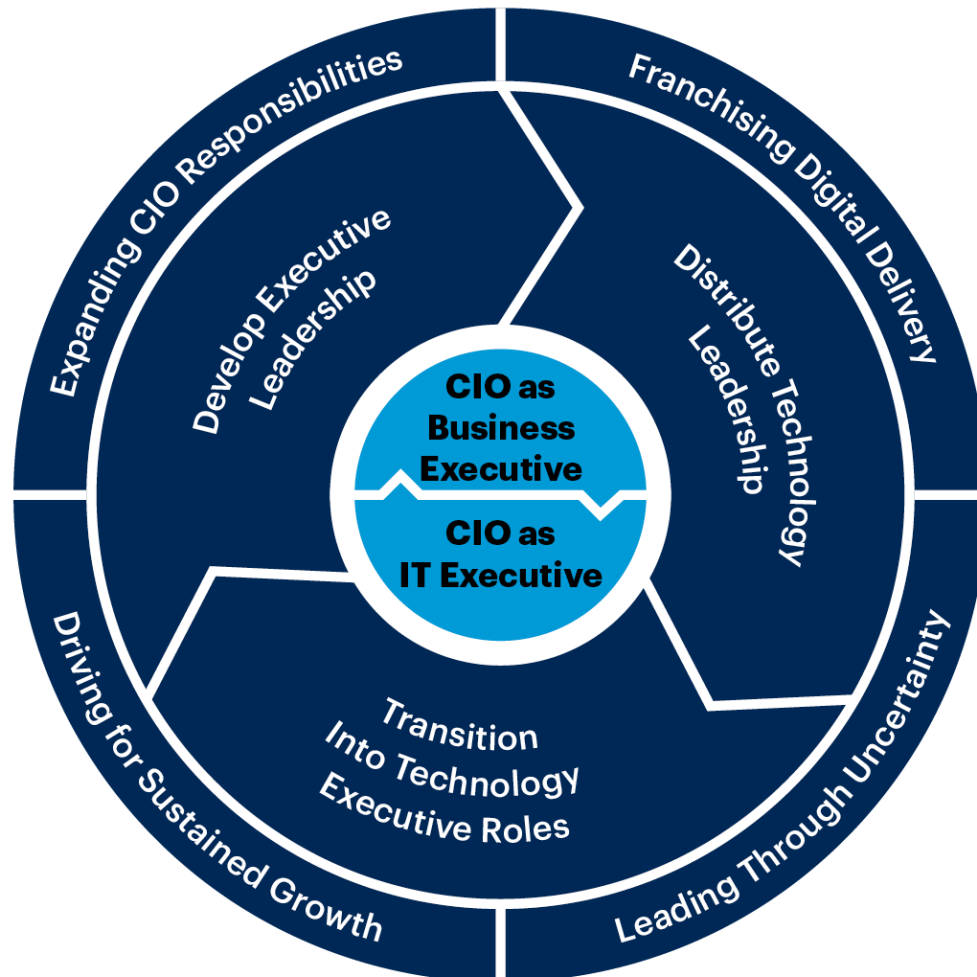
- **Develop Executive Leadership:** Develop executive leadership strengths to deliver the outcomes that matter most to the enterprise.
- **Distribute Technology Leadership:** Establish the practices that empower and equip digital leadership within IT and across the enterprise.
- **Transition into Technology Leadership Roles:** Use proven 100-day transition strategies to rapidly learn, prepare, execute and get off to a great start in the new CIO role.

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Analysis

Figure: CIO Executive Leadership Development Overview

CIO Executive Leadership Development



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The CIO has a big job, and it is getting even bigger. Gartner's 2024 CIO Agenda survey indicates that 80% of CIOs have expanded their role, with 18% leading non-IT functions and 10% leading P&L efforts. ¹ The CIO's core value proposition has always been, and will remain, executive technology leadership to equip and enable everyone, anywhere in the enterprise with the information and technology needed to create value for the organization. CEOs and business leaders are calling for development and operation of technology within all business functions, requiring the CIO to think and act like an executive first and functional leader second.

In 2024, CIOs need to recognize four important areas of executive opportunity. This initiative on CIO executive leadership development will help CIOs explore these areas and understand the impact they have on technology leadership roles and responsibilities. The impact on the CIO role necessitates an advancement of executive leadership competencies. CIOs can incorporate them into their 2024 agendas — that is, into their organizational goals and their personal leadership development plans:

- **Franchising digital delivery** — CIOs need to lead up and across with senior management to place the delivery and management of digital capabilities where value is created — with the people and teams closest to the customers, products or business operations. The CIO's leadership challenge is to empower the democratization of digital delivery while maintaining the appropriate amount of risk mitigation.
- **Leading through uncertainty** — Economic conditions, technology disruptions (like GenAI and AI in general) and geopolitical activity continue to create uncertainty for organizations. Poor leadership most often leads to reactions, rather than strategies. CIOs must proactively lead up and across to help their business leadership find the right balance of business viability now with strategic change for the future.
- **Driving for sustained growth** — Growth continues to be CEOs' No. 1 business priority.² It is coupled with signs of a renewed drive for productivity improvements, as efficiency and productivity have crept back into the list of top 10 CEO priorities. Because 67% of CFOs say digital investments have not met expected outcomes,³ CIOs must maximize the value of their technology investments and — with CxOs — empower, equip and deliver the digital dividends for current and future technology investments.
- **Expanding CIO responsibilities** — Leading CIOs think like an executive first, taking on transformation initiatives, developing and leading new business capabilities, contributing to digital products and designing the future of work. All CIOs need to determine where their enterprises need them to reach beyond their current job description and take on challenges that leverage their strengths.

To maximize their impact on any of these challenges, CIOs must actively self-evaluate their leadership abilities and devote time and energy to develop their executive leadership strengths. Skills such as business acumen, influencing and executive communications are more important than ever. CIOs require relationship strategies that engage their executive peers in building and operating technology-enabled capabilities. Get the right seat at the right leadership tables by developing a strong executive presence based on delivering value, communicating effectively, and building and spending political capital to get things done.

Topics

CIOs must lead into the many challenges facing their enterprises. By actively developing their executive strengths and strategically building relationships and networks, CIOs can partner with other C-suite peers to deliver the right solutions for the enterprise that help it thrive and execute flawlessly.

Our research in this area addresses the following topics:

Develop Executive Leadership

CIOs need to be outcome-driven leaders, relentlessly focused on the outcomes that matter most to the enterprise and ensure strong execution. CIOs need to promote technology leadership as an executive-level team effort and should actively network to build the right relationships with leaders, peers and external stakeholders. CIOs must develop their executive power skills and incorporate continuous learning to pursue, receive and execute expanded career responsibilities.

Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- What leadership skills do CIOs need to succeed, and how can they effectively develop them?
- How can CIOs engage and partner effectively with leaders, peers and critical stakeholders?
- How can CIOs contribute to the work of the C-suite to establish vision, strategy, financial and operational performance, culture and manage talent?
- How can CIOs expand their career within and beyond their current role?
- How can CIOs use storytelling and other best practices to influence various stakeholders?

Recommended Content

🔑 Some recommended content may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

- [The Most Important Executive Leadership Skills for CIOs](#)
- [Quick Answer: How Can I Know What Leadership Competencies Help With Different Business Outcomes?](#)
- [CIO Effectiveness Starts With Outcome-Driven Leadership Mindsets and Principles](#)
- [Make Executive Communications Effective to Amplify CIO Leadership Success](#)
- [Increase CIO Leadership Effectiveness by Building Business Acumen](#)

Planned Research

- Improving CIO's effectiveness
- Building and spending political capital to get things done
- Improving decision making for the enterprise
- Learning from theater improvisation to deal with complexity
- Removing complexity for more effective leadership
- Developing the most effective strategies to be a great change leader
- Establishing a development plan to match your ambitions to your enterprise's expectations
- Shifting executive mindsets to embrace disruptions and evolve change as a strategic advantage

Distribute Technology Leadership

Executive technology leadership has pivoted, with 80% of executive leaders outside of IT considering digital leadership part of their job. ⁴ CIOs must develop new outcome-driven partnerships with CxOs to share technology leadership responsibility and accountability. This demands a change in the value proposition for the CIO and the CIO's IT organization as well as the leadership responsibilities of other business leaders. By reaching beyond their traditional role, CIOs gain new experiences and build even greater strengths, which can lead to permanent expansions of their role and enable new career paths. ⁵

Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- How should CIOs share responsibility and accountability with CxOs for technology and business outcomes?
- What are the best practices to maximize the value of democratized delivery of digital for the enterprise?
- How should the CIO support the shift from projects to products for IT and the enterprise?
- How will the CIO's role evolve as enterprises increase their use of information and technology in pursuit of mission-critical goals?
- How can CIOs get the right seats at the right tables to impact business results?

Recommended Content

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- [The 2024 CIO and Technology Executive Agenda: Franchise Digital Delivery](#)
- [Executive Partnerships to Franchise Digital Delivery and Drive Business Outcomes](#)
- [CIO's Guide to Franchise Digital Delivery to Maximize Digital Outcomes](#)
- [Executive Essentials: Expand Your CIO Role](#)
- [Everything CIOs Need to Know About OKRs](#)

Planned Research

- How CIOs can actively expand and evolve their role to achieve greater business impact
- How CIOs use value propositions to partner with CxOs and deliver business outcomes
- How CIOs can work with other CxOs to reimagine the corporate center for democratized delivery
- Leadership best practices to support the project-to-product transition
- Leading change across a franchise model
- How to address the elephants in the room when franchising digital delivery

Transition into Technology Leadership Roles

When CIOs transition into the role, whether experienced or not, they have one key objective – to maximize their effectiveness as leaders as quickly as possible. To accomplish this, new CIOs must:

- Rapidly engage with key stakeholders and clarify what is expected.
- Understand the important and immediate key issues or initiatives.
- Leverage their strengths and build on them to improve overall leadership effectiveness.
- Create their brand early on and avoid traps that generate negative first impressions.

Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- How can new CIOs successfully transition into their role to establish themselves as a high-impact peer?
- What are the best practices to make an interim technology leadership position permanent?
- What should an aspiring CIO do to prepare themselves for the role?

Recommended Content

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- [The Chief Information Officer's First 100 Days](#)
- [A Practical Guide to Stakeholder Management for CIOs](#)
- [How to Prepare Your New CIO for Early Success](#)
- [5 Tactics Transitioning CIOs Can Use to Sustain Strategic Momentum](#)
- [5 Fatal Pitfalls New CIOs Must Avoid](#)

Planned Research

- [First 100 days as a new CIO](#)
- [How candidates can effectively prepare to interview for the CIO role](#)
- [The last 100 days of a CIO — setting up successors for success](#)
- [How to make the interim CIO role permanent](#)
- [How to jump-start as a CIO without an IT background](#)
- [Three actions for new CIOs to build solid rapport with C-level during their first 100 days](#)

Suggested First Steps

- [Executive Essentials: Amplify Your Impact by Developing Your Executive Leadership](#)
- [CIOs: Remaster Your Brand to Stay Relevant During Transitions](#)
- [Focus Leadership Effectiveness Across the 5 Dimensions of Strategy](#)
- [Leadership Development Series: Become an Outcome-Driven Executive](#)

Essential Reading

- [The 2024 CIO and Technology Executive Agenda: Franchise Digital Delivery](#)
- [The Most Important Executive Leadership Skills for CIOs](#)
- [The Chief Information Officer's First 100 Days](#)
- [Leadership Development Series: Hone Your Business Acumen to Deliver Value](#)

Tools and Toolkits

- [Toolkit: Templates for Building an Intentional Personal Brand](#)
- [Tool: CIO “Power Skills” Assessment \(Leadership Competencies\)](#)
- [Toolkit: 5 Workshop Templates to Kickstart Your OKR Program](#)

Evidence

¹ **2024 Gartner CIO and Technology Executive Survey:** This survey was conducted online from 2 May to 27 June 2023 to help CIOs determine how to distribute digital leadership across the enterprise and identify technology adoption and functional performance trends. Ninety-seven percent of respondents led an information technology function. In total, 2,457 CIOs and technology executives participated, with representation from all geographies, revenue bands and industry sectors (public and private). Disclaimer: The results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.

² **2023 Gartner CEO and Senior Business Executive Survey:** This survey was conducted to examine CEO and senior business executive views on current business issues, as well as some areas of technology agenda impact. The survey was fielded from July 2022 through December 2022, with questions about the period of 2022 through 2024. One-quarter of the survey sample was collected in July and August 2022, and three-quarters were collected from October through December 2022. In total, 422 actively employed CEOs and other senior executive business leaders qualified and participated. The research was collected via 382 online surveys and 40 telephone interviews. The sample mix by role was CEOs (n = 277); CFOs (n = 95); COOs or other C-level executives (n = 19); and chairs, presidents or board directors (n = 31). The sample mix by location was North America (n = 169), Europe (n = 105), Asia/Pacific (n = 102), Latin America (n = 29), the Middle East (n = 11) and South Africa (n = 6). The sample mix by revenue size was \$10 million in revenue to less than \$50 million (n = 3), \$50 million to less than \$250 million (n = 51), \$250 million to less than \$1 billion (n = 102), \$1 billion to less than \$10 billion (n = 190), and \$10 billion or more (n = 76). Disclaimer: Results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.

³ **2022 Gartner Driving Business Outcomes From Enterprise Digitalization Survey:** This survey was conducted in 2022 to understand how to drive business outcomes from enterprise digital spending. The research was conducted online among 104 respondents across North America, Western Europe, Asia and Oceania regions. Qualifying organizations had at least US\$250 million for fiscal year 2022. All industry segments qualified for the survey. Further, the questionnaire required the respondents to have managed specific finance and accounting responsibilities. Interviews were conducted online. Disclaimer: Results of this study do not represent global findings or the market as a whole but are a simple aggregate of results for the targeted countries, industries and company size segments covered in this survey.

⁴ **2023 Gartner Strengthening CxO Digital Leadership Survey:** This survey was conducted to investigate how CxOs outside of IT take on digital leadership and execution responsibilities, the extent to which they resource digital initiatives, and how they and their teams collaborate with their CIOs and IT departments. The research was conducted online from 22 February through 28 April 2023. In total, 618 respondents were interviewed in their native language across North America (n = 303; the U.S. and Canada), Latin America (n = 68; Brazil and Mexico), Western Europe (n = 145; the U.K., Spain, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Belgium, Denmark, Finland and Luxembourg) and Asia/Pacific (n = 102; Australia, New Zealand, China, Hong Kong, India, Taiwan and Singapore). Qualifying organizations reported enterprisewide annual revenue for fiscal 2022 of at least \$50 million or equivalent. Qualified participants had a role tied to a business unit (43% of respondents) or a corporate function (57% of respondents) and were members of senior management or above midlevel management (with 71% of respondents reporting to a CEO). Disclaimer: Results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.

⁵ **2022 Gartner Reaching Beyond the CIO Role Survey (Recontact)** was conducted via in-depth phone interviews from 1 June through 22 July 2022. Eight CIOs who were members of Gartner's Research Circle, a Gartner-managed panel, participated. This follow-on to research on the evolution of CIO responsibilities in the 2021 Gartner Evolution of CIO Responsibilities Survey was conducted to explore in-depth how these professionals are navigating their new reality in delivering nontraditional IT initiatives.

Document Revision History

[CIO Executive Leadership Development Primer for 2023 - 26 July 2023](#)

[CIO Executive Leadership Development Primer for 2022 - 4 February 2022](#)

Related Priorities

Initiative Name	Description
CIO Innovation Leadership	Gartner helps enterprises understand disruptive trends and new technologies, and master emerging management practices focused on sustainable innovation and digital value creation.
CIO Leadership of Culture and People	This initiative helps CIOs evolve, acquire, develop and orchestrate diverse technology talent enterprisewide to build digital capabilities, shape culture and future-proof the organization.
CIO Impact on Digital Business Strat. and Executio	Elevate IT's value proposition by contributing to digital acceleration via IT governance, IT-informed business strategy, evolving operating models, advancing business operations and digital products.
Technology Finance, Risk and Value Management	We explore technology financial management's evolution to improve decision making, enable business outcomes, and successfully optimize spend and risk while delivering enhanced organizational value.
Exec Leadership: Leadership Dynamics & Comms	This initiative provides executive leaders with approaches to become a high-performing, interdependent executive team capable of solving enterprisewide problems and creating enterprise value.

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