

# The Chief Technology Officer's First 100 Days

Published 7 September 2022 - ID G00769286 - 41 min read

By Analyst(s): Samantha Searle, Nick Jones, Arun Chandrasekaran

Initiatives: [Digital Innovation and Enablement Function](#)

Your first 100 days as CTO will be critical to your success. Newly appointed CTOs should create the right digital capabilities, including technology innovation, to support the evolution of your organization's business model.

## Additional Perspectives

- [Summary Translation + Localization: The Chief Technology Officer's First 100 Days](#) (12 May 2023)

## Overview

### Key Findings

- Success as a new CTO depends on how you leverage emerging and mainstream technology to achieve competitive advantage and create, or respond to, disruption. This is critical since one top challenge for CTOs is an inability to change the business model fast enough.
- CTOs are accountable for evaluating how technology architecture should evolve prior to new technologies being implemented, yet struggle to identify and operationalize the right technology to anticipate and respond to disruption quickly.
- CTOs face a broad set of competing priorities and ill-defined responsibilities, which can inhibit their success and jeopardize their credibility. However, those who have set up an office of the CTO (OCTO) are better able to manage this situation, since they can delegate certain responsibilities to their direct reports.

## Recommendations

Enterprise architecture (EA) and technology innovation (TI) leaders who have moved into a CTO role:

- Identify how the CTO can provide value for the organization by understanding the organization's business strategy and culture, to determine where technology can deliver the most impact for competitive advantage and adaptability. This will help boost your credibility as CTO, as well as that of the OCTO, and make it easier to engage people in future innovation efforts.
- Determine the technology strategy to enable the organization's digital business ambitions by incorporating trendspotting and scenario planning into technology planning. Furthermore, monitor external change by obtaining continuous input on business and customer needs.
- Establish an OCTO to better enable digital execution by delegating key responsibilities and activities to the relevant teams, while establishing clear goals and metrics to track execution.
- Build strong relationships with executive peers through proactive engagement and identify key success factors that the CTO role can help realize.

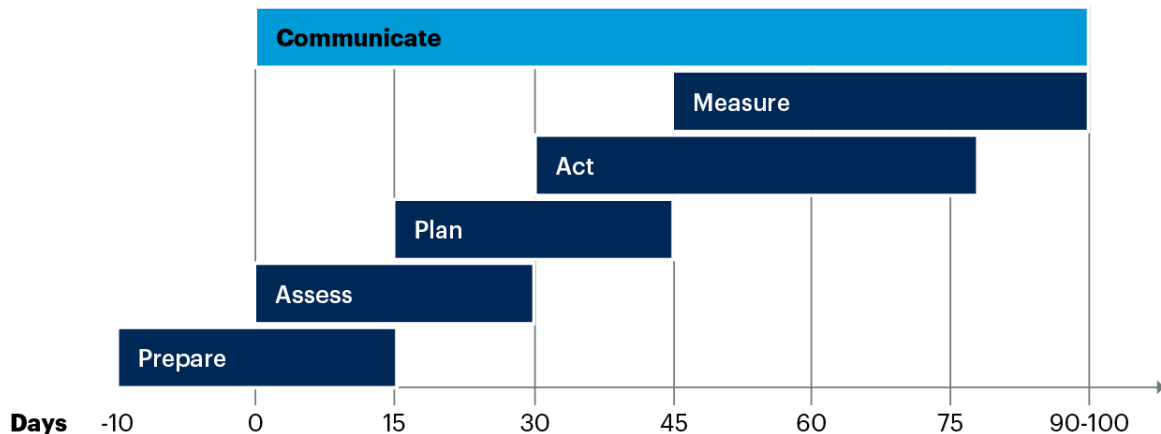
## Introduction

The first 100 days constitute an expected “honeymoon” or transition period. This all-too-brief period is yours to formulate a course of action, make connections, and establish and communicate a personal management style. It is within this critical period that you establish yourself and create the basic perceptions that others will, for better or worse, associate with your subsequent plans and actions.

Proper preparation, assessment, planning, acting, measuring and, above all, communicating can greatly enhance your chances of success. This research highlights the key activities that focus on critical issues, and provides actions and resources to help you achieve your intended outcomes. Gartner also offers a unique companion experience to this research in our [Peer Connect forum](#) for clients starting a new role as the CTO. You can use this forum to meet other newcomers to this leadership role, discuss challenges and get support from like-minded peers.

We break down your first 100 days into five phases (see Figure 1), each overlapping with suggested durations that you can customize. Each phase includes critical target outcomes, actions and resources, as well as some optional ideas to consider as time and resources allow. Communication spans the full duration, and we include specific actions for effective communication for each phase.

Figure 1: First 100 Days Roadmap

**First 100 Days Roadmap**

Source: Gartner  
730166\_C

Gartner

In your first 100 days, you should realize the following 10 deliverables:

1. **Create CTO value proposition and OKRs:** Define your CTO mission and vision for the enterprise and create your personal value proposition for key stakeholders and the enterprise. Construct an initial metrics scorecard covering objectives and key results (OKRs) that will show you are delivering on your value proposition. You will evolve these over time.
2. **Create personal learning plan:** Create a learning plan to identify the new skills and knowledge you need to gain to succeed as CTO in the enterprise, based on your value proposition. If you have moved to a new organization, this should include an understanding of the organization's business model and strategy, industry, organizational culture, and politics.
3. **Create stakeholder communication plan:** Develop a communication plan to introduce yourself and help key stakeholders understand what value the CTO role will deliver, how to work with you, and how you suggest that you work with them.
4. **Assess current-state architecture and technology:** Assess the performance of past and current technology initiatives, as well as other areas under the CTO's responsibility, such as business and/or IT operations and TI.

5. **Prepare for an OCTO:** Generate an OCTO charter, which includes the mission and value proposition of the OCTO, as well as its organizational structure, staff plan and key performance metrics. Aim for the OCTO to generate more business value (in terms of cost savings and the contribution of digital products to revenue) than it costs to run it. Use the current-state assessment as input for determining activities and value.
6. **Technology staffing and skills plan:** Build a plan for how to staff both the OCTO and the wider CTO function, in terms of required skills and resources. This should be based on a skills gap assessment that accounts for the future digital capabilities planned. It should also include career paths for staff.
7. **Create innovation culture plan:** Plan how to set up a culture of innovation within the organization. This will help to scale up the prototypes produced by the TI team (if present) and gain buy-in to fund and develop them further.
8. **Create and get approval for financial plan/budget plan:** Establish a financial plan that covers the CTO's and OCTO's budget; initial estimates of planned, required or potential investments in new or current technology; and funding for TI and cultural change.
9. **Develop enterprise digital technology strategy – version 1:** Develop and/or revise the enterprise digital technology strategy as appropriate. Work with those responsible for related technology strategies for areas such as cloud, AI and IoT, and technologies supporting business operations, to ensure alignment. Use the OCTO to engage tactical and operational teams.
10. **Set up regular stakeholder sessions:** Cultivate your personal brand as CTO, as well as the brand of the OCTO. Set up regular one-on-one sessions with stakeholders and town hall sessions with your OCTO and architecture and operations teams to share developments and get feedback. Be visible.

## The First 100 Days Plan

### Prepare Phase (Days –10 to 15)

The purpose of this phase is to prepare you to transition into your new CTO role. If you have been hired into a new organization, then this preparation time is best used to understand the company and its business model; its products, brands and services; its culture; and its politics. Identify the key stakeholders you should connect with, beyond your boss and direct reports. Evaluate how technology is viewed in the organization and how it is leveraged to improve employee and customer experience, as well as current products and services.

If you have been promoted within your current organization, then assess how your new role affects existing relationships with your peers and adapt to set new expectations with them. Ensure that you agree to a firm cutoff date for your previous role. Often, a CTO is promoted internally to fulfill a newly created or recently vacant CTO role (when someone left suddenly). You may be expected to carry on with your previous role until a successor is found. However, the risk this presents negatively impacts the transition to the new role, so defining when to leave your former responsibilities behind is critical to success.

Stepping into any new role always triggers a new personal learning curve, no matter how much previous experience you have. Use the Prepare phase to define a learning agenda for your new role and develop a plan for how you will acquire the necessary knowledge in the first 15 days. This work should begin prior to your official start date for the new CTO role.

### Target Outcomes for the Prepare Phase

At the end of the Prepare phase, you should have achieved:

- A comprehensive knowledge of the organization and its business model, strategy, brands, products and services.
- An understanding of the organization's culture and politics.
- A learning plan that identifies the new skills and knowledge you need to acquire to succeed as a CTO. If you have moved to a new organization, this should include an understanding of the organization's business model and strategy, industry, organizational culture, and politics.
- An outline of the key goals and objectives of the CTO role, as well as the metrics that will measure your performance.

- A shift to the necessary mindset for the CTO role, mentally disengaging from your previous role (regardless of whether you have moved to a new organization or remained in the same one).

## Actions for the Prepare Phase

The purpose of the Prepare phase is to gather the information that will help you understand how to deliver value to your organization as a CTO. What do you need to do to succeed in your role? Evaluate how technology is viewed in the organization — is it a positive, a negative or approached with ambivalence? Have past technology initiatives succeeded or failed? What caused their success or failure? How is technology leveraged to improve employee and customer experience, as well as current products and services?

By following the actions listed below, you will know how to leverage technology to benefit the organization's business model, strategy and digital business ambitions.

## Actions Before Day 1

- Understand the company. Look at press reports, blogs, investor relations information and the annual report (for public companies) to understand the financials, business model and strategy. For private companies, arrange discussions with the CEO, COO and CFO to gain the internal interpretations of this information, as well as other business executives when relevant.
- Understand the industry context. Who are the company's competitors? How does the organization differentiate itself in the market? How has it innovated, and what technologies has it deployed? What makes it successful, or is preventing it from being successful? How is its industry being disrupted by new incumbents and emerging technologies?
- Determine the goals and metrics on which the CTO will be measured, as well as strategic goals relating to areas such as revenue, customer experience, technology and product innovation to which the CTO's work will contribute. Who will be your boss, and how will your success be measured by your boss? What will your key responsibilities be, and who/which functions will report to you? If there is no OCTO in place, build the business case to implement one. These points should be reviewed in the Assess and Measure phases.

- Identify the key stakeholders with whom you should connect, beyond your boss and direct reports. Create a key stakeholder map to understand who you need to meet with or interview in your first week on the job. Prioritize the order in which you meet these stakeholders, according to the actions outlined in this research. It makes sense to meet with your new manager first so that you are clear on your objectives, key responsibilities and what you need to achieve as CTO before talking to the other stakeholders on your list.

- Make a list of the stakeholders with whom you should connect and set up informal discussions. Their input will help you figure out what you need to do as CTO. It may help to note whether they will support, remain neutral or potentially detract from what you need to achieve as CTO. Be aware that some IT leaders may perceive the appointment of a new CTO as a threat to their job/role. Furthermore, other IT leaders may need to redefine their role in view of the incoming CTO and clarify their responsibilities. This is especially true of the CIO, head of EA and the chief digital officer. It pays to be conscious of how your decisions and actions will impact their areas of work. Below is a list of stakeholders to consider connecting with during the Prepare phase:

- Your manager — usually the CTO reports to the CEO or CIO.
- Executive management — CEO, chief digital officer (if the role exists), president of the board, chief strategy officer, board members, and chief data officer and chief information security officer (or equivalent, depending on whether those latter two roles exist in the organization).
- Direct reports — usually the OCTO team members, or existing EA and TI team members.
- Strategic or differentiating vendors and partners — technology services or product vendors, business ecosystem partners, or internal “suppliers” such as HR and regulators.
- Internal business customers — IT, business unit leads, or customers of the innovation organization or the rest of the organization (for example, in areas such as innovation team, customer experience or new product development).
- External business customers — CTOs with a strong focus on customer experience or digital product development may also want to interview customers to get more detailed feedback on the customer view of digital products and customer experience.
- Collaborators and influencers — may be internal roles, such as I&O leaders, software or product engineers, and informal allies (or enemies). This could also include external roles such as academic collaborators, ecosystem partners, etc.
- Strategic technology and/or innovation partners (for example, technology providers, startups or universities) that the organization is working with.
- Other innovation or TI, either within the organization or outside it (e.g., innovation hubs, open-source or industry-related communities).



## Communications in the Prepare Phase

### Before Day 1

**Assess your communication skills:** In all communications, resolve to follow these best practices for maximum effectiveness:

- Use language appropriate to the audience you are addressing wherever possible. Avoid detailed technical terms. Clearly define any specialist terms, such as abbreviations and acronyms.
- Be brief, clear and consistent in your message across forums and audiences.
- Avoid generic statements — for example, “IT is a critical input to the business” — and focus on only what is specific to your organization’s performance. Tailor the messages to the audience and their role and position in realizing change, innovating and delivering key results.
- Connect plans explicitly to the strategic investment objectives of the enterprise, thus demonstrating that business and IT technology is synchronized with the business strategy.
- Socialize your plans to IT peers and business leaders across the organization, and actively solicit feedback.

**Write an introduction:** Prepare introductory communications material about yourself, your background and your initial ideas on how to deliver value to the organization as CTO. Make this content as fact-based and neutral as possible, and keep it short and succinct. For example, try a 100-word short bio, along with some personal information about your key priorities in life and work, your value systems, and your integrity.

**Draft discussion guides:** Prepare guides to help you organize the following critical discussions:

- **Stakeholder discussions:** Prepare a list of no more than five questions, some specific and others open-ended, that will ensure that the early stakeholder conversations yield insights beyond the polite meet-and-greets. For example, while meeting key business stakeholders, ask them about their perceptions and satisfaction levels regarding the current state of the organization; any urgent issues they feel that must be resolved as quickly as possible; and any chronic pain areas, priorities and general expectations.

- **Staff discussions:** Prepare a list of similar questions for your first meeting with your staff. Ask them about their key work challenges and constraints, and their perceptions and satisfaction levels with their own team and the organization. Also ask about their expectations of you and the CTO function.

## Actions and Communications on Day 1

Since your first day on the job is all about listening and communicating, we've combined this phase's actions and communication tasks.

**Meet and Greet:** Call a meeting for everyone on your direct team, being mindful to offer the option of attending in person or through videoconferencing or audioconferencing for remote workers, to support hybrid working. This meeting has two objectives: (1) to introduce yourself; and (2) to show that you are approachable and available to everyone. Offer no opinions of any kind. Explain that you are still gathering information and are not yet ready to make decisions or changes.

During the meet-and-greet:

- Deliver the introductory message you drafted in advance. State when you will report back to the team with updates on your progress. Make this a frequent "report back" session, especially to celebrate success!
- Let the people attending the meeting introduce themselves in their own way and ask whatever questions are on their minds.
- Remember some detail about each person that will help you start conversations later.
- Be mindful of any apparent biases — identify political/social issues that may remain from your predecessors.
- Be careful of coming on too strong and appearing as a threat or hurdle — first impressions are lasting ones.

Arrange follow-up one-on-one meetings with your direct reports to understand their concerns, priorities and career aspirations. Which ones understand and can describe the bigger picture of what is currently going on in the organization, regarding strategic initiatives, challenges and opportunities? Which ones seem siloed in their views? Where do they need immediate help to overcome obstacles to, or get support for, their work?

**Distribute Your Introduction:** Distribute your introductory remarks to the wider organization. See if you can post them on the company intranet.

**Regroup With Your Manager:** Wrap up the Prepare phase with a meeting with your manager that covers:

- The key challenges and opportunities from your point of view
- Your preliminary strategic vision
- A communication schedule for the future between the two of you

## Resources for the Prepare Phase

### Gartner Research and Tools

- [Effective Communications: A Strategy](#)
- [Creating the Communications Core: The CIO's Guide to Effective Communications](#)
- [Stakeholder Interview Template \(CEB\)](#)
- [Use Stakeholder Maps to Boost Your Executive Transition](#)
- [CTO Insights: How to Build the Right Executive Partnerships to Scale Digital Business](#)

### Other Suggested Resources

- M.D. Watkins, "The First 90 Days — Proven Strategies for Getting Up to Speed Faster and Smarter," Harvard Business Review Press, 2013.
- J. Rocca and S. Wilde, "The Connector Manager: Why Some Leaders Build Exceptional Talent — and Others Don't," Portfolio, 2019.
- K. Scott, "Radical Candor (Be a Kick-A\*\* Boss Without Losing Your Humanity)," St. Martin's Press, 2019.
- Review the company's recent press coverage to be aware of recent announcements that might relate to mergers, acquisitions or divestitures; changes in key personnel (especially executive-level staff); or any new product/service launches.

## Assess Phase (Days 0 to 30)

Build on your preparations with a more detailed assessment of your organization and the capabilities needed to determine new technology investments. This includes the required investments to optimize business and IT operations, and to support the OCTO business case. Ultimately, in this phase, the CTO should assess how to shape the role to meet business and customer needs, expectations, and technology adoption personas.

### Target Outcomes for the Assess Phase

- Validate the value proposition of the OCTO (or the business case if there is no OCTO in place) and how it will add business value. Review any existing charters or artifacts related to this.
- Establish the implications of the organization's strategy for the technology strategy. Not all CxOs have the same interpretation of strategy, and often the details and consequences of strategy are unclear and not discussed. Leverage your discussions with key stakeholders as part of the Prepare phase to validate where the real business and customer needs lie.
- Determine whether there are needs to hire more staff or upskill existing staff.
- Evaluate the need for any new investments in digital technologies, capabilities or products.
- Agree on a set of key metrics to measure the success of the CTO role and OCTO (if it exists). Metrics to inform decision making should also be identified.

## Actions for the Assess Phase

- Take the Gartner [IT Score for CTO](#) assessment.
- Define areas for improvement, based on the recommendations from this assessment.
- Include internal customers as participants in the assessments, to gain an understanding of what they feel is important and valuable in an objective way.
- Have your OCTO team members also perform the assessment to better understand their perceptions of what the CTO function should focus on. It also helps to determine your areas of attention to your OCTO team in addressing misconceptions or misunderstandings in the mission and objectives of the CTO function as a whole.
- Discern the existing level of maturity in functional areas and activities specific to the OCTO.
- Identify which metrics and defined KPIs can help measure improvement in maturity in those functional areas and activities that have been identified as less mature.

The Gartner IT Score for CTOs is a critical tool. It measures CTO function activities on two primary dimensions: maturity and importance. Results from this assessment are indispensable inputs for CTOs interested in starting, maturing, restarting or rebranding their OCTO or related functions, as well as evolving their personal brand.

The assessment helps CTOs understand the following in an objective and detailed way:

- **Current maturity level** — Understand how well the IT functions reporting to the CTO are performing in their current state and at higher levels of maturity.
- **Target maturity level** — Identify your target level of maturity based on your enterprise's digital business ambition and strategy.
- **Maturity transformation** — Support short- and long-term planning by clearly identifying next steps to improve maturity levels.

Figure 2 shows the functional activity map for IT Score for CTO. The 29 functional activities that a CTO function performs are grouped under five objectives shown in dark blue at the top of Figure 2.

This functional activity map can be used as an overview of all the activities for which you are likely to be accountable. Taking Gartner's IT Score for CTO helps you then prioritize which areas to focus on first.

**Figure 2: Functional Activity Map for IT Score for CTO**



**Gartner**

For more information on Gartner's IT Score for CTO maturity assessment, please see [Quick Answer: What Does Gartner's IT Score for CTOs Deliver?](#) CTOs should prioritize the activities that are identified in the IT Score for CTO assessment results as having the largest gap between importance and maturity. This means identifying the activities with a high importance score but a low maturity score.

In summary, the key actions a new CTO should take during the assessment phase to support each of the five objectives outlined in the IT Score for CTO are:

- **Enable the digital business:**
  - Identify opportunities for new digital products and capabilities, based on your discussions with key stakeholders as part of the Prepare phase.
  - Review the existing list and backlog of digital products and capabilities, and determine which are still relevant and whether some merit further innovation.

- **Lead TI:**
  - Inventory existing innovation management processes, tools and procedures to determine gaps and challenges to leading and managing TI.
- **Develop and implement technology strategy:**
  - Review existing technology strategies, specifically to understand existing plans for optimizing business operations, and managing the technology life cycle and related risk and security.
  - Evaluate current business operations to verify whether the right digital capabilities and products and processes are in place to meet business and customer needs.
  - Review existing business capability models and technology roadmaps to support business operations.
  - Identify any opportunities for automation or further optimization.
- **Optimize technology operations:**
  - Assess overall IT operations and services, specifically reviewing short-term and long-term technology roadmaps.
  - Evaluate the value gained from current strategic technology vendors and make note of any contracts due for renewal or that are worth renegotiation.
- **Manage the OCTO:**
  - Analyze metrics and defined KPIs pertaining to the performance of technology and the OCTO (if it exists), and review prior assessments related to them.
  - Review existing technology job descriptions, including open requisitions, to check that they are still relevant or need to adapt to new requirements and skills for any new or revised projects.
  - Assess the impact of the previous CTO, if there was one, to understand whether previous technology initiatives were viewed as successful, and what you can either build on or improve.

## Communications in the Assess Phase

CTOs need to rely on their soft skills to collaborate with, and extract relevant ideas and generate commitment from, business and IT stakeholders, as well as the rest of the executive team. Soft skills (such as creativity, coordination, passion, influencing and verbal skills) are becoming more important when assessing the expectations of stakeholders and the current maturity level of this role. The ability to navigate politically sensitive situations with a combination of influence, negotiation, political savvy and data will be critical to the CTO's success.

## Resources for the Assess Phase

### Gartner Research and Tools

- [How to Demystify the Chief Technology Officer's Many Personas](#)
- [IT Score for CTO](#)
- [Quick Answer: What Does Gartner's IT Score for CTOs Deliver?](#)
- [Establish 5 Capabilities to Create a Winning Office of the CTO](#)
- [Successful Innovation Strategies Look Beyond Culture by Treating Organizations as a Persona](#)
- [Ignition Guide to Creating a Functional Health Dashboard for the Head of EA](#)

### Other Suggested Resources

- J. Fenn and M. Raskino, "Mastering the Hype Cycle — How to Choose the Right Innovation at the Right Time," Harvard Business Review Press, 2008.
- T. Brown, "Change by Design: How Design Thinking Transforms Organizations and Inspires Innovation," Harper Business, 2009.

## Plan Phase (Days 15 to 45)

The goal of the Plan phase is to create plans for the key deliverables in the CTO's technology strategy for the organization, define the roadmap for key deliverables, and to refine the CTO persona and operating style. Use the information gathered in the Assess phase to develop these deliverables.



## Target Outcomes for the Plan Phase

The main target for this phase should be to create one or two quick wins aligned to business outcomes. The goal is to demonstrate early success for the CTO and OCTO.

Beyond that, the CTO should focus on creating or updating deliverables for which plans are required. These deliverables are grouped below, according to the relevant objective and activity from IT Score for CTO:

- **Manage the OCTO:**
  - **Manage organizational structure and governance:** Create a charter for the OCTO, which covers all the roles and responsibilities, teams, or functions reporting directly to the CTO, value proposition and performance measures, and key services and deliverables. Use Gartner's OCTO charter template as a guide (see [Tool: How to Establish a Charter for the Office of the CTO](#)).
  - **Manage organizational structure and governance:** Establish an organizational plan for the OCTO, building on the charter. This will define the tasks it will perform, how it will be organized (operating model), mapping of staff to roles and what metrics will be required.
  - **Manage technology talent strategy:** Build a staff plan, which will identify staff requirements and any skills gaps in the OCTO that must be filled. This should include resource planning for building new digital products and capabilities. If you are establishing an OCTO for the first time, then also consider how to support career paths for the teams that reside within the CTO function, such as EA and TI.
  - **Manage organizational structure and governance:** Establish governance plans for the OCTO. The focus should be on the required governance to guide and facilitate decision making for technology investment and TI. This requires clarity on who has decision-making rights for technology investment and TI.
  - **Manage organizational structure and governance:** Develop financial plans. This will include reviewing current resources (if the CTO position existed before) and identifying the resources (financial and otherwise) required to implement the plans.
  - **Socialize the OCTO value proposition:** Create a communications plan. This will define who the CTO and OCTO need to communicate with, how often and the goals of the communication. There will likely be a need for initial communication to introduce the new CTO and perhaps explain new OCTO goals. Then there will be ongoing communication, such as that related to innovation culture and OCTO performance. Also, look for new communication channels to interact with the organization in more compelling ways (for example, if you're not using them already, consider video or social networking).

- **Develop and implement technology strategy:**
  - **Own technology strategy:** Develop one or more technology strategy documents. There will likely be a high-level technology strategy, augmented with substrategies for selected business domains or critical technologies such as cloud. These strategies will, at a minimum, define the current state, key beliefs, future state and key risks. A plan for the high-level strategy is essential; substrategies might not be created in the first 100 days. Ensure that you link the technology strategy to the business strategy, aligning strategic investment and actions to business capability roadmaps and milestones.
  
- **TI:**
  - **Act as a technology evangelist:** Define your leadership brand as CTO. Although it may not be formally defined in a document, a new CTO needs to decide on his or her brand and leadership style. There are many different ways to approach the role within the framework of the overall persona and metrics. For more information, see [How to Manage Your Personal Brand](#) and [How to Demystify the Chief Technology Officer's Many Personas](#).
  - **Create an innovation culture:** Build a cultural innovation plan. Most organizations have the goal to create or improve their "culture of innovation." This is likely to require a broad range of actions. Such actions could involve the innovation team (if there is one), innovation processes, collaboration with business peers, measuring the innovation climate, leveraging organizational change management (OCM) techniques, and the deployment of tools to support collaboration and for tasks such as ideation or running challenges.

Based on the information gathered in the assessment phase, the CTO might also need to do the following:

- Identify new processes for specific situations/tasks, such as innovation and ideation. Some will already exist, but may need to be modified to reflect the new CTO's goals and metrics.
- Determine the need for tools to support the CTO's activities. Examples might include social networking, ideation tools, an EA tool, research subscriptions, intellectual property management, planning, trendspotting innovation management, financial modeling, etc.

Note that you need buy-in on any plans before they can be executed; it's sensible to get buy-in from key stakeholders, including your line manager and key business roles. These might include the CIO and CDO, CISO customer experience (CX) leads, and selected digital product management roles.

## Actions for the Plan Phase

The key actions in this phase are to create and communicate the plans identified above, and to obtain the funding to execute them. This includes:

- **Develop the necessary plans.** Define all necessary plans listed above.
- **Socialize the plans.** Do this with all stakeholders, including business and IT executives, direct reports, and key peers. The latter are typically those with whom you, as the CTO, will have some form of dotted-line relationship or those who are key clients of the OCTO's services.
- **Define your brand and the OCTO brand.** A brand defines the way others perceive a person or organization. Brand is particularly important for CTOs who communicate widely in the organization and must influence others to adopt new technologies and strategies, sometimes at the board level. Once you have defined your brand, you must reflect it in all your actions and communications. Key questions and issues to resolve include:
  - How do you want people to think about the CTO? Look for a brand that fits the culture of the organization and the success criteria for the role; examples include technology visionary and big thinker, customer champion, problem solver, and so on.
  - What reactions do you want people to have when they think about the OCTO?
  - What principles do you want to establish for interaction with the CTO and the OCTO (for example, responsive, nonbureaucratic or innovative)?
- **Establish the budget.** Agree with your manager and the respective budget owners on the available resources and fine-tune plans accordingly. Ensure that the requested budget is realistic and defensible by only asking for budget for the sufficient resource level required to meet your first-year objectives.
- **Orient your budget discussion on the value you plan to deliver through products and services, or business outcomes you will contribute to.**

- Utilize Gartner's IT Budget Tool to manage costs and identify opportunities for cost and value optimization.

## Communications in the Plan Phase

**Hone your staff's communication skills.** Incoming CTOs may well identify a need for better communications from and about the OCTO. This is a good time to make sure that your OCTO staff understands their responsibilities and has the necessary business, behavioral and technical skills to implement them. The most critical skills for OCTO staff are trendspotting, technology planning, market intelligence, business capability modeling, DevSecOps and innovation techniques like design thinking and lean startup. Assess staff skill sets and provide training, lab opportunities and tools for any key skills that are lacking (writing, presentation and video, negotiation, conflict resolution, innovation, networking). Identify opportunities to leverage coaching and mentoring as other means to upskill staff. This is also a time to educate staff on the OCTO brand and ensure they reflect it in their own communications.

**Socialize the plans.** Set up meetings with superiors, peers and subordinates to discuss and review these plans. Post the plans on the relevant collaboration tool site or intranet so people can view and comment on them.

**Identify and establish new communications channels.** This includes, for example, internal social networks to support collaboration and innovation discussions and activities, such as challenges. Establish new communications channels such as video, internal podcasts, virtual channels or groups, etc.

**Create communities.** Create communication-oriented organizations such as communities of practice around key technologies, processes or areas of interest.

**Communicate the brand.** Ensure that, having decided on a brand, you reflect this in your communications from the CTO and about the OCTO.

## Resources for the Plan Phase

### Gartner Research and Tools

- [Tool: How to Establish a Charter for the Office of the CTO](#)
- [Leadership Vision for 2022: Technology Innovation](#)
- [How to Demystify the Chief Technology Officer's Many Personas](#)
- [Understanding the CTO's Role in Technology Strategy](#)
- [Toolkit: Getting Started With Adaptive Strategy](#)
- [Prioritize Digital Investments That Maximize Business Value](#)
- [Tool: IT Business Value Investment Framework](#)
- [Develop an Executive Presence by Building an Intentional Personal Brand](#)
- [Toolkit: Templates for Building an Intentional Personal Brand](#)
- [Ignition Guide to Designing a Leadership Development Program for IT Leaders](#)
- [Case Study: An Internal Gig Marketplace for Technology Skills](#)
- [Foster a Culture of Innovation Using a Two-Layered Roadmap](#)
- [Jump-Start Your Innovation Journey With a Customizable Innovation Framework](#)
- [Agile Training and Certification](#)

### Other Suggested Resources

- [Top Strategic Technology Trends for 2022](#) (a Gartner e-book)

## Act Phase (Days 30 to 80)

**"Having a vision for what you want is not enough. Vision without execution is hallucination."**

**— Thomas Edison**

The Act phase clearly demonstrates your personal leadership capabilities by delivering on your strategy and a few high-business-impact areas that would not have occurred without you. It also provides a platform for communicating your long-term vision across a broad set of stakeholders. This phase may also offer opportunities to initiate steps for talent management and cultural transformation, enabling you to exceed your commitments, thereby bolstering your personal leadership reputation for delivering results.

## Target Outcomes for the Act Phase

The main outcome for the Act phase is to Identify and deliver quick wins across any (or a combination) of the four key pillars — people, culture, process and technology — where you can make changes that are noticeable and position the company for long-term success.

Below are other outcomes you should achieve, grouped by IT Score for CTO objective:

- **Enable the digital business:** If the teams you inherit still operate via a traditional project management approach, initiate the adoption of Agile and DevSecOps techniques, or a complete shift to digital product management, as appropriate to respond proactively to the organization's pace of change.
- **Lead TI:** Reinvigorate your team with cultural hacks that can boost morale and increase engineering velocity, resulting in tangible results and clear product outcomes in the short term.
- **Manage the OCTO:** Focus on talent management — identify internal and external talent sources (e.g., other product or innovation groups; technology or innovation partners). Balance rewarding star performers with celebrating team efforts in achieving results. Regardless of results, recognize examples of great team collaboration to boost employee morale. Determine how new technologies will impact the current skill set among teams. Identify any skills gaps and create a skills alignment roadmap plan to address them.
- **Lead TI:** Demonstrate your technology vision by kick-starting a market scan of emerging trends and technologies that can ignite business innovation as part of the OCTO.
- **Develop and implement technology strategy:** Develop technology roadmaps to execute on technology strategies and prioritize technology investments. Ensure that any roadmap always links to business strategy and objectives.

- **Lead TI:** Establish partnerships with thought leaders (both inside and outside the organization) through networking, to keep your knowledge and thinking, and that of your teams, up to date. In addition to finding thought leaders on LinkedIn, at conferences and industry networking events, talk to Gartner experts and connect with other Gartner clients through [Gartner Peer Connect](#).

## Actions for the Act Phase

**Set stakeholder expectations regarding what you can deliver.** CTOs must demonstrate their vision and knowledge with quick wins that can establish their credibility with other stakeholders. They shouldn't challenge the status quo unless they have a strong viable alternative. Hence, focus on keeping what works well, but iterating on things that you believe can be improved, then measure and communicate those success stories. It is important to set meaningful expectations, communicate constantly about progress toward outcomes, and, when achieved, communicate broadly about how and to what extent the aim was achieved to gain stakeholders' full confidence.

**Aim for quick wins by making small changes to technology strategy that result in a meaningful outcome.** Conduct an evaluation of your existing technology and processes across software development, QA, IT operations, project management, security and risk, and asset management. Make meaningful changes to them that eliminate redundant or low-value activities, simplify complex processes, enhance agility, or engender better governance. Areas such as incident management, new technology landscape analysis and IT supplier management are opportunities for CTOs to demonstrate their vision and experience to achieve quick wins.

If these cumulative changes result in visible improvements to the technology strategy, it really sets you up for success in the long run. It is impossible for most CTOs to effect major changes within the first 100 days; hence, focus on improvements that are small, but visible, and ideally measurable in terms of business value. This can really enhance the business perception of IT and build personal credibility for you.

A key part of the Act phase should focus on executing on the technology strategy in alignment with the digital business strategy. Start by making small changes to technology strategy that result in a meaningful outcome that can be measured. CTOs should work with the EA team and the OCTO to determine which technologies to invest in and deploy to close the gap between the current and desired future state for the organization. Use the business capability roadmap milestones as guidance to direct investment and effort.



Given today's accelerating and volatile pace of change, it is essential to collaborate with senior business executives in these technology decisions. Discussions should focus on how technology can deliver competitive advantage, as well as determining the technologies required to enable the business strategy and model. The technology strategy should also support strategic business outcomes, to demonstrate the value of technology investments. CTOs should create technology roadmaps to help summarize key information and guide these decisions.

**Reinvigorate your team with cultural hacks that result in tangible results.** Culture is the set of behavioral norms and unwritten rules that shape the organizational environment and how individuals interact and get work done in that environment. Culture hacks are actionable, low effort, immediate, visible and often emotional; these "bite-size" initiatives can easily be woven into the organization's cultural fabric and become an integral part of driving larger-scale initiatives. Some of the culture hacks that CTOs can enable include:

- **Customer role-play:** CTOs are the external technology face of a company and have the important responsibility of representing the customer in technology strategy decisions. A simple culture hack could be the CTO representing an imaginary customer at technology strategy meetings and ensuring strategic alignment that puts customer interests above everything else.
- **Crowdsourcing ideas:** Create a common repository of redundant or outdated business processes and crowdsource ideas on how to improve or eliminate them in creative ways.
- **Hackathon event:** Generate a new idea or a prototype that can be implemented in a quick and nondisruptive manner.

Today's volatile environment means innovation techniques are critical to creating solutions to tackle new opportunities and challenges. The CTO should ensure that TI is leveraged for this purpose. Work with senior business executives to identify new business opportunities and challenges that have suddenly arisen and could be addressed by working with the TI team.

Cost optimization is a top priority for organizations today, given the economic uncertainty. CTOs should identify opportunities for quick cost savings by assessing budgets, operational expenses, and current vendor and partner relationships. Savings from these maintenance contracts can be used to fund new innovative initiatives that a CTO wants to implement for the long run.

**Focus on talent management.** You are only as good as your team. What sets apart great technology organizations is their culture and people. As a new leader, emphasize how important these two aspects are for you, and demonstrate that through actions that will change the culture for better and focus on rewarding both individual and team performance as relevant, while boosting the overall morale.

Evaluate the capabilities of your teams and identify high and low performers. Develop a talent management plan that sets high priority for roles that are strategic and important, and ensure you have talented people filling those roles. Where there are gaps, initiate a hiring process to fill those important roles. In addition, ensure there are well-defined career paths that enable people to progress within the organization. Identify star performers and create a conducive environment for them to flourish, or move them to roles that align with their personal goals and your organization's technology strategy.

Boost employee morale by establishing trust early and specifically address building and maintaining trust as a key task (see [3 Actions to Sustain and Rebuild Employee Trust in a Hybrid Environment](#)). Communicate your technology vision and enlist people to support it through town hall meetings and one-on-ones with star performers. Communicate a future of how the organization's success through your vision will positively impact everyone individually and how the tide will raise all boats.

Create a roadmap plan of required skills and roles for future success. Initiate conversations about how the upskilling process will happen internally. Ensure that your upskilling plan aligns with employees' personal goals and takes into account external hires.

Within the OCTO, lay the groundwork to scan and evaluate emerging technologies and trends. Identify the right team members that need to be part of it and clearly define their roles and responsibilities. Create standard criteria for evaluating these trends and technologies, with the expected outcome of creating a prioritized list at the end of this exercise.

## Communications in the Act Phase

- Set stakeholders' expectations on when and how you will deliver value. It is most important to set meaningful expectations, communicate constantly about progress toward outcomes and, when achieved, communicate broadly about how and to what extent the aim was achieved to gain stakeholders' full confidence.
- Communicate your vision to ensure that your IT team is aligned with your goals.
- Initiate cultural hacks that can result in meaningful changes and can be a harbinger of things to come.
- Aim for quick wins in technology or process areas with redundant or outdated processes, or by demonstrating cost savings in sourcing contracts or upcoming purchases or upgrades. However, the real value comes from communicating these quick wins to your manager (CEO or CIO), plus other key stakeholders like the CFO.
- Involve the HR team. Develop training plans with the HR team if you need your team to get upskilled based on any new technologies or to make employee skills align with your technology vision. Include succession plans in case employees leave or move into other roles within the organization.

## Resources for the Act Phase

### Gartner Research and Tools

- [How CTOs Can Create Effective Technology Roadmaps](#)
- [Tool: Templates for CTOs to Create Effective Technology Roadmaps](#)
- [The Art of Culture Hacking](#)
- [Ignition Guide to Operationalizing Trendspotting](#)
- [Ignition Guide to Creating a Digital Innovation Framework](#)
- [Prioritize Your Cost Optimization Initiatives Using Gartner's Decision Framework](#)
- [Digital Capabilities That Help Grow Revenue: One-Page Checklist](#)

## Other Suggested Resources

- Management consulting resources: Leverage resources from external providers when internal resources are not sufficient to drive action in the targeted areas. Request knowledge transfer to internal resources to ensure that new knowledge gained is not lost when the consulting engagement ends.
- N. Forsgren, J. Humble and G. Kim, "Accelerate: The Science of Lean Software and DevOps: Building and Scaling High Performing Technology Organization," IT Revolution Press, 2018.

## Measure Phase (Days 45 to 100)

To build credibility as a new CTO, you need to prove that you have delivered value within the first 100 days. This means setting up metrics and creating value stories that show how the OCTO's activities have contributed to strategic business outcomes. It is also vital to have metrics that reliably inform the decisions that the CTO needs to make, to ensure that the OCTO's activities do indeed contribute to strategic business outcomes.

### Target Outcomes for the Measure Phase

By establishing relevant measures in your role as CTO, you will achieve:

- The ability to track the impact of the CTO's role, and that of the OCTO, on business performance
- The provision of the right data to inform the decisions you need to make as CTO, providing insight into how well your decisions and actions are being executed
- The ability to monitor how projects and transformations are contributing to strategic business outcomes
- The ability to prioritize and justify technology investments

### Actions for the Measure Phase

As CTO, you should agree with your manager (usually the CEO or CIO) as to how performance in the role will be measured and what success will look like. The key objectives and responsibilities of the CTO should already be defined as part of the Prepare and Assess phases. The metrics that track progress toward objectives and inform CTO decision making should be revised as the role of the CTO evolves and responsibilities change to adapt to the organization's needs. These activities fall under the Manage the OCTO objective of the IT Score for CTO, and the activity to determine and track metrics.

CTOs should work with key stakeholders within the OCTO to determine business-value-driven, quantifiable metrics that ensure their projects and transformation efforts are contributing to key strategic business outcomes such as cost optimization, improving customer experience, etc.

Determine the right combination of metrics to measure individual and team performance, metrics to inform decision making, and operational and project metrics to guide success. Assign metrics accountability to the appropriate OCTO stakeholder.

## **Communications in the Measure Phase**

The CTO should agree with the key OCTO stakeholders on the right combination of metrics to focus on, to ensure that metrics are indeed used as input for decision making. As a guideline, aim for two to three metrics per team/function within the OCTO. If you focus on more than three metrics, it will cause confusion as to which metrics to focus on and risks some metrics being ignored altogether.

Common metrics used to measure CTO success include:

- Operational efficiency
- Product and/or service innovation
- Contribution to revenue
- Cost reduction
- Improvement in customer satisfaction (with customer experience)
- Improvement in employee satisfaction (with employee experience)
- Increased compliance
- Risk reduction
- IT security effectiveness

Metrics should be used as an indication of how the OCTO is impacting key business metrics. Publish key metrics against business performance/KPIs to show how tech investments are being leveraged. These metrics should be displayed in a monthly scorecard, which should be the main focus of any discussions involving metrics. They should inform the OCTO of the decisions and actions needed to improve performance. They should not be used to berate individuals or teams for suboptimal performance.

Measuring TI is a well-known and significant challenge. Seek to strike a balance between measuring the contribution of innovation projects to business outcomes, such as customer satisfaction or revenue from new digital products, and metrics that track progress in learning and acquiring new knowledge, innovation culture and failure rate.

## Resources for the Measure Phase

### Gartner Research and Tools

- [Outcome-Driven Metrics for the Digital Era](#)
- [Digital Execution Scorecard](#)
- [Ignition Guide to Creating a Scorecard for IT](#)
- [Kick-Start Your IT Value Story With Metrics That Matter](#)
- [How to Identify Metrics and KPIs to Measure IT's Business Value Contribution](#)
- [Use Innovation Metrics to Bring Clarity and Demonstrate Business Value](#)
- [EA Business-Value Metrics You Must Have Today](#)
- [Adopt I&O Key Performance Indicators to Deliver Digital Business Value](#)
- [IT Key Metrics Data 2020: Working With Gartner IT Budget and Comparison Tools](#)
- [4 Roadmapping Tactics to Drive Successful Strategy Execution](#)
- [Midsize Enterprise Application Strategies, Part 3 — Create the Application Strategy](#)
- [Integrated Technology Planning \(PG&E\)](#)
- [3 Actions to Sustain and Rebuild Employee Trust in a Hybrid Environment](#)

### Other Suggested Resources

- D. Hubbard, "How to Measure Anything," Wiley, 2014.
- M. Taddy, "Business Data Science: Combining Machine Learning and Economics to Optimize, Automate, and Accelerate Business Decisions," McGraw-Hill Education, 2019.
- J. Kay and M. King, "Radical Uncertainty: Decision-Making Beyond the Numbers," W. W. Norton & Co., 2020.

## Document Revision History

The Chief Technology Officer's First 100 Days - 4 February 2021

---

## Recommended by the Authors

Some documents may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

[Tool: Chief Technology Officer Sample Job Description](#)

[How to Demystify the Chief Technology Officer's Many Personas](#)

---

© 2023 Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved. Gartner is a registered trademark of Gartner, Inc. and its affiliates. This publication may not be reproduced or distributed in any form without Gartner's prior written permission. It consists of the opinions of Gartner's research organization, which should not be construed as statements of fact. While the information contained in this publication has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable, Gartner disclaims all warranties as to the accuracy, completeness or adequacy of such information. Although Gartner research may address legal and financial issues, Gartner does not provide legal or investment advice and its research should not be construed or used as such. Your access and use of this publication are governed by [Gartner's Usage Policy](#). Gartner prides itself on its reputation for independence and objectivity. Its research is produced independently by its research organization without input or influence from any third party. For further information, see "[Guiding Principles on Independence and Objectivity](#)." Gartner research may not be used as input into or for the training or development of generative artificial intelligence, machine learning, algorithms, software, or related technologies.