3 Actions for New CIOs to Quickly Build Credibility With the C-Suite

The first 100 days are a critical period for new CIOs to demonstrate value and build credibility with the C-suite. This research provides new CIOs with tactics to tap into the "surprise factor" as a way to quickly demonstrate business/mission value with the executive leadership team.

Overview

Key Findings

- There is pressure on CIOs to deliver digital dividends, since CEOs' top area of investment to realize the business strategy continues to be digital capabilities.

- For boards of directors, the main risk to their organization's growth is workforce disruptions. Talent/skills shortages are a primary source of disruptions.

- CIOs are requested to directly take action with regard to artificial intelligence (AI) and generative AI (GenAI). This is because AI is the No. 1 technology discussed at the board level. Moreover, business/corporate areas are estimated to allocate 7.9% of their staff time on average to develop GenAI capabilities.

Recommendations

To quickly build credibility with the C-suite, CIOs should:

- Go beyond what is typically expected from the CIO by exhibiting ambition to turn IT into a digital revenue generator.

- Compensate for talent/skills shortages by adopting a franchising digital delivery mindset with the rest of the business/corporate areas.

- Build quick reliability by anticipating use cases of GenAI for their industry/enterprise before the C-suite places their orders.
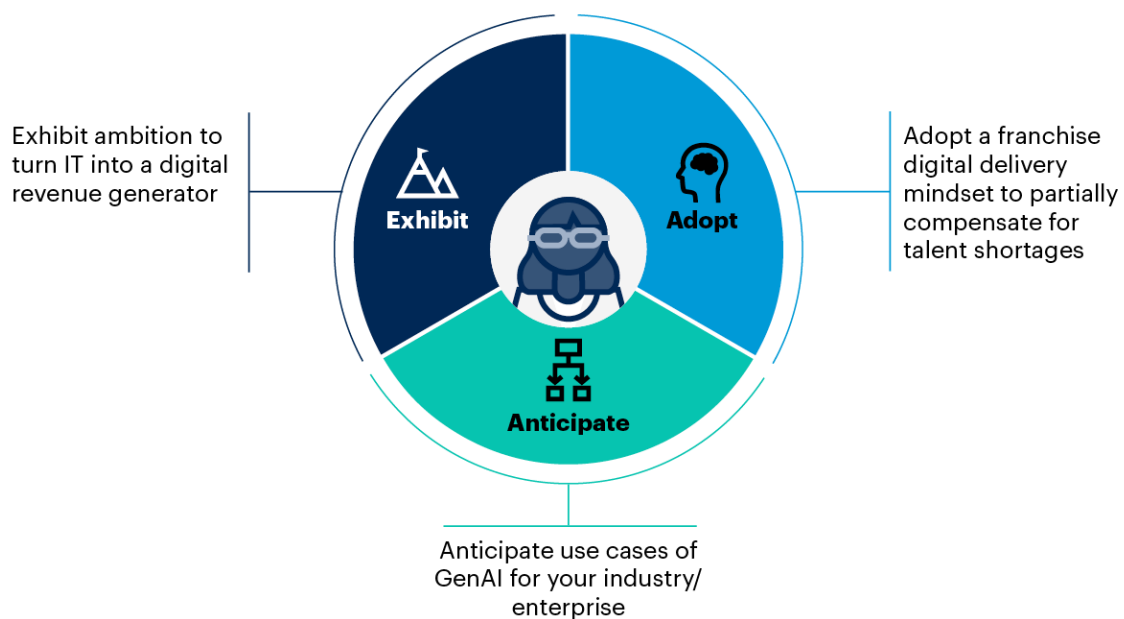
Introduction

When CIOs join a company, it is important to build credibility with the C-suite from the outset by quickly demonstrating a contribution to value.

CIOs will nurture their credibility with the C-suite as their default expectations for the CIO role are gradually met. However, it takes time until the results are tangible. Tapping into the surprise factor, that is, things that are needed (or still unknown) but nobody expects from CIOs necessarily, will act as a fast track.

To be seen as a trusted ally, CIOs do not have to wait for a long time. Figure 1 shows the three actions that CIOs can use during their first 100 days to accelerate their credibility with the executive leadership team, regardless of their reporting line.

Figure 1: Three Actions for New CIOs to Quickly Build Credibility With the C-Suite

Three Actions for New Cios to Quickly Build Credibility With the C-Suite

Exhibit ambition to turn IT into a digital revenue generator

Exhibit

Adopt a franchise digital delivery mindset to partially compensate for talent shortages

Adopt

Anticipate

Anticipate use cases of GenAI for your industry/enterprise
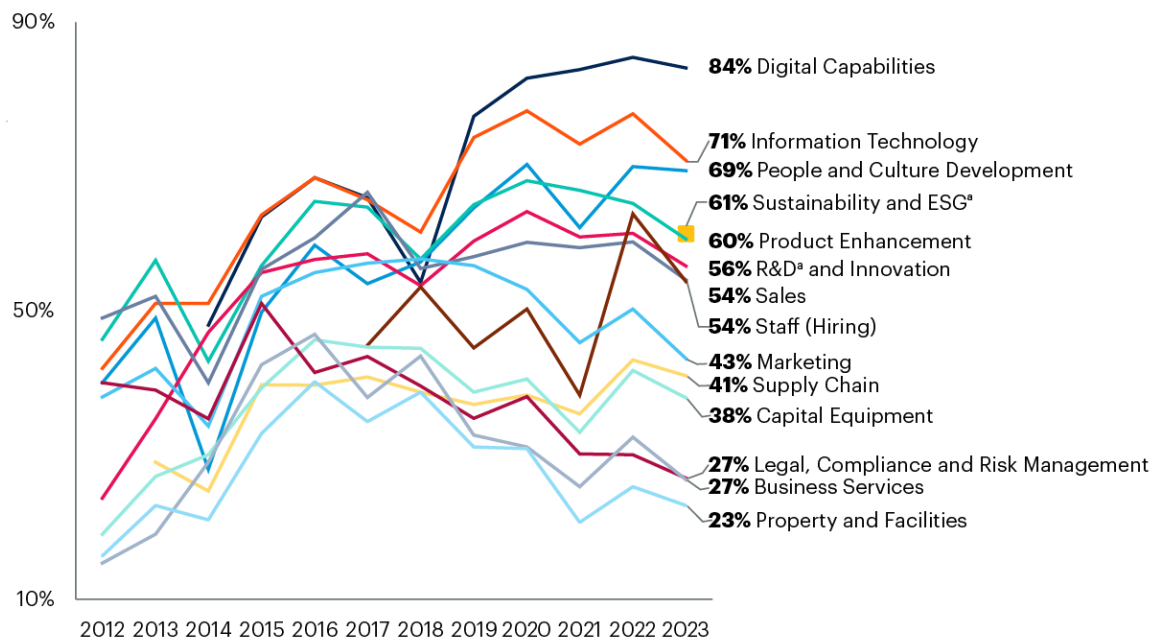
Source: Gartner
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Analysis

Exhibit Ambition to Turn IT Into a Digital Revenue Generator

Since 2019, "digital capabilities" continues to be the area in which CEOs are increasing their investments the most (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: CEO's Investment Increase Intentions

CEOs' Investment Increase Intention in Various Business Areas Over 12 Years

n = 422, all respondents

Q. Compared to fiscal year 2022, how will your organization's investments in the following business areas change in fiscal year 2023?
Source: 2023 Gartner CEO and Senior Business Executive Survey
ª New category in 2023 survey
ª ESG = environmental, social and governance
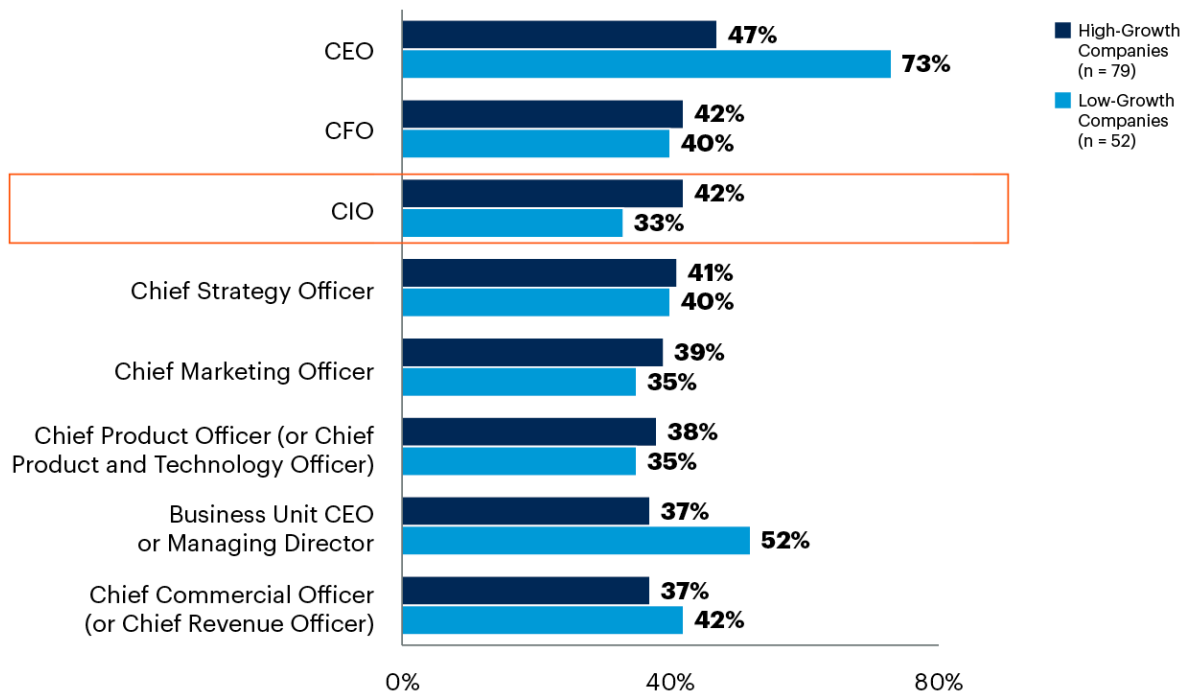ª R&D = research and development
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Thus, CEOs and C-suites are seeking out the best options to meet their business strategies through new digital capabilities. CIOshave to be in search of compelling strategic digital solutions.

Even though we are seeing an increasing focus on profitability, growth continues to be the main objective of CEOs, and CIOs need to show that they are aligned with this objective. Although new to the enterprise or to the role, CIOs should absorb as much information about their industry and use it to propose ways to increase revenue/mission through digital capabilities. Their proactivity in this respect will accelerate their credibility with their CEO. In fact, the CIO is the No. 3 contributor to growth (see Figure 3) in high-growth companies. [1]

Figure 3: Roles That Drive Growth in High-Growth and Low-Growth Companies

Roles That Drive Growth: High-Growth vs. Low-Growth Companies
Percentage of respondents by growth segment

Legend:
- High-Growth Companies (n = 79)
- Low-Growth Companies (n = 52)

Role	High-Growth	Low-Growth
CEO	47%	73%
CFO	42%	40%
CIO	42%	33%
Chief Strategy Officer	41%	40%
Chief Marketing Officer	39%	35%
Chief Product Officer (or Chief Product and Technology Officer)	38%	35%
Business Unit CEO or Managing Director	37%	52%
Chief Commercial Officer (or Chief Revenue Officer)	37%	42%

n varies by segment, corporate business leaders who lead, participate in or influence their company's investment and strategy decisions

Q: What is the nature of the following executives' contributions to your company's growth? (leader or driver role)
Source: 2022 Gartner Understanding Corporate Growth Strategies Survey
Note: Significant differences between growth segments are highlighted.
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Recommendations:

- Some examples of net new digital products/services:

  - Find out how to monetize the likely petabytes of data your company has accumulated over the years. How can your customers/citizens be clustered in terms of interest in the data you can trade with them? What are the specific data packages that each cluster would be interested in? Then liaise with marketing and sales to channel this new value proposition of your enterprise/agency to the outside world.

  - Find out new digital-native product categories aligned with your enterprise/agency mission and vision. For example, devices that leverage the Internet of Things (IoT) to create connected products for monitoring services or personalized recommendations, such as an energy or health or education monitor. Another example can be a subscription or as-a-service model, to offer flexible and value-based options. Talk to the P&L owners of your enterprise to understand their priorities and build off them to create new digital revenue opportunities.

- Some examples of supporting existing nondigital products/services:

  - Explore with your CEO and/or COO the benefits of running a platform business, where multiple sellers and buyers work on the same platform. The increased number of interactions will likely translate into a revenue increase, as a result of either the monetization of the platform or the reputation in your industry.

  - Identify new online channels with customers/citizens through which you expand the opportunities to capture revenue.

CIOs shouldn't be frustrated if their C-suite peers do not see the feasibility of their proposals at first glance. The proposals might be declined by them due to the following reasons:

- Maybe they are not mature enough to accept them yet.

- Maybe the language used by the CIOs is not appreciated/understood.

- Maybe the peers are right and those initiatives do not fit well in their enterprise/agency.

However, this is one of those occasions where the importance does not reside in getting their acceptance but in proving that you care about growth.

Find related resources in the Appendix (Table 1).

Adopt a Franchise Digital Delivery Mindset to Partially Compensate for Talent/Skills Shortages

According to the board of directors, the main risk to their organization's growth is workforce disruptions, talent/skills shortages being the main cause. [2] Franchising digital delivery can contribute to overcoming that risk.

Franchising digital delivery means breaking down the walls of the IT department to enable the rest of the enterprise to produce technology. The 2024 Gartner CIO and Technology Executive Survey identified 12% of respondents as digital delivery franchisers, and an additional 33% as "explorers" who are making their way (consciously or unconsciously) toward becoming franchisers.

The three merits of franchising digital delivery are [3]:

- Sixty-three percent of franchisers' enterprises meet or exceed outcome targets in enterprisewide digital initiatives compared with 43% of those who don't.

- CIOs perform 1.5x better in all their responsibilities.

- CxOs double the chances of getting the most of digital investments.

Along with those merits, new CIOs who adopt a franchiser mindset will naturally expand technological skills across non-IT employees, compensating for technological talent/skills shortage in some knowledge areas. This a win-win situation for everyone: business/corporate areas will satisfy some of their IT needs faster and the enterprise will benefit as a whole because the IT department will have more time to dedicate to the strategic outcomes.

Recommendations:

- Explore the areas where non-IT employees would be interested in acquiring technical skills to increase their autonomy in the digital space. For example, business intelligence platform, low-code/no-code programming and AI algorithmic. These non-IT employees are the so-called business technologists.

- Provide training and hand over the exploitation of the business intelligence platform to business technologists interested in it. They will be autonomous in generating new reports, modifying the existing ones when needed and playing with the data to turn it into insights for their departments.

- Provide training to business technologists interested in low-code/no-code programming, so that they can create simple applications for their departments.

- Provide any other type of training to business technologists that apply to your enterprise, whereby business/corporate areas will accelerate their technological needs and governance issues are not compromised.

- Determine, along with CxOs, the boundaries that business technologists have to respect to not compromise governance, that is, compliance, data quality/privacy and cybersecurity issues.

- Leverage communities of practice (CoPs) to expand knowledge across business technologists and also to scale best practices in governance. CoPs are groups of business technologists interested in the same technology, who meet frequently to share their experiences in acquiring that knowledge.

Find related resources in the Appendix (Table 1).

Anticipate Use Cases of GenAI for Your Industry/Enterprise

AI is the No. 1 technology discussed at the board level. [2] Moreover, business/corporate areas are estimated to allocate 7.9% of their staff time on average to develop GenAI capabilities. [4]

GenAI applications like OpenAI's ChatGPT or DALL·E have been born democratized. Not only IT people but also many executives can use it, experiment with it and thus glimpse potential use cases for their enterprises.

As enterprise applications of GenAI become more common and widespread worldwide, C-suite executives will increasingly place their orders about GenAI on the IT's plate. This would divert full leadership of GenAI initiatives from the CIO to other CxOs, negatively affecting the CIO's influence in that space.

New CIOs can tip the scales in their favor by illustrating to the C-suite about potential GenAI-based applications for their enterprise (or spearheading the debate about it). This will convey a clear message of "I am one of yours, and I share your primary business/mission objectives." Thereafter, applying a franchise digital delivery model to produce the solutions would be the best way to get quick results (that is, to co-lead, co-deliver and co-govern the GenAI initiatives with business/corporate areas).

Recommendations:

Find applications of GenAI to:

- Speed up the creation of products and services to customers/citizens, or to make the revenue channels quicker and more friendly. For example, adopt GenAI to provide customers/citizens with real-time natural language information about how to solve difficulties or anticipate incoherences in their front-end process. This is very useful particularly for government entities, where citizens have to make transactions that are not always easy to understand (e.g., why a particular transaction failed) or when they are reporting wrong/incoherent information.

- Increase people's productivity by speeding up their work or by redesigning enterprise processes. For example, in customer/citizen service, adopt GenAI for content generation, text analysis or contract generation.

- Minimize business risks by preventing fraud or cybercrimes more effectively. For example, adopt GenAI to be more accurate in identifying and reacting in real time to nonpayment risks by feeding the algorithm with historical structured and unstructured data.

Find related resources in the Appendix (Table 1).

Appendix

Table 1: Additional Resources by Section

(Enlarged table in Appendix)

Exhibit ambition to turn IT into a digital revenue generator	Adopt a franchise digital delivery mindset to partially compensate for talent/skills shortages	Anticipate use cases of GenAI for your industry/enterprise
▪ 3 Monetization Approaches for Driving Digital Platform Revenue	▪ CIOs' Guide to Franchise Digital Delivery to Maximize Business Outcomes	▪ Executive Pulse: GenAI Use Cases Vary for Every Function
▪ Ten Digital Business Models Are Being Improved by Artificial Intelligence	▪ Case Study: Enable Business Technologists While Managing Cyber Risk (Johnson & Johnson)	▪ Get Started With These Generative AI Use Cases in Customer Service
▪ Gartner Digital Product Landscape: Shaping the Digital Future of Your Enterprise	▪ Case Study: Kick-Starting a Low-Code/No-Code Community of Practice (Heathrow Airport)	▪ Generative AI Use Cases in Sourcing and Procurement
▪ How CIOs Should Turn Business Capabilities Into Digital Products	▪ Case Study: IT Platform Strategy for Democratized Digital Delivery	▪ Create GenAI Business Value With Digital Products
▪ Case Study: Increase Revenue Opportunities With a Digital Referral Platform	▪ Case Study: A New Digital Delivery Model for Customer Centricity	▪ Resource Center — Generative AI

Source: Gartner

Evidence

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 from 2022 through 2024. One-quarter of the survey sample was collected in July and August 2022, and three-quarters was 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 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.

[1] **2022 Gartner Understanding Corporate Growth Strategies Survey:** This survey was conducted online from 8 September through 17 October 2022 to understand how enterprises approach growth today. In total, 211 business leaders who lead, participate in or influence their company's investment and strategy decisions and have good personal knowledge or can estimate their company's financial performance (e.g., gross profit margin, revenue and net profits) participated. Respondents from North America (n = 68), Europe (n = 80) and East/Southeast Asia (n = 63) responded to the survey. 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.

[2] **2024 Gartner Board of Directors Survey on Driving Business Success in an Uncertain World:** This survey was conducted to understand the new approaches adopted by nonexecutive boards of directors (BoDs) to drive growth in a rapidly changing business environment. The survey also sought to understand the BoDs' focus on investments in digital acceleration; sustainability; and diversity, equity and inclusion. The survey was conducted online from June through August 2023 among 285 respondents from North America, Latin America, Europe and Asia/Pacific. Respondents came from organizations with $50 million or more in annual revenue in industries except governments, nonprofits, charities and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Respondents were required to be nonexecutive members of corporate boards of directors. If respondents served on multiple boards, they answered questions about the largest company, defined by its annual revenue, for which they are a board member. 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] **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 to 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: 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.

[4] **2024 Gartner Generative AI Planning Survey:** This survey was conducted to examine generative AI's use case implementation and impact by business function. The survey was conducted from September through November 2023. In total, 822 business executives who lead corporate functions outside IT and who indicated will begin or continue to implement Generative AI across the next 12 months qualified and participated. The research was collected via online surveys in English. The sample was equally split across the following eight corporate functions: finance; HR; marketing; sales; customer service; supply chain; procurement; and legal, risk and compliance. The sample mix by location was North America (n = 536), Europe (n = 176) and Asia/Pacific (n = 110). The sample mix by size was $50 million to less than $500 million (n = 119), $500 million to less than $1 billion (n = 129), $1 billion to less than $10 billion (n = 374) and $10 billion or more (n = 200). 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.

Document Revision History

Three Actions for New CIOs to Build Solid Rapport With C-Level During Their First 100 Days - 7 December 2018

Recommended by the Authors

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

The Chief Information Officer's First 100 Days

5 Fatal Pitfalls New CIOs Must Avoid

CIOs' Guide to Franchise Digital Delivery to Maximize Business Outcomes

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Source: Gartner