

CAREER FOCUS

DAVID HEAD ON WHY CIOs SHOULD DO MORE CAREER PLANNING

There is an old adage that if you aim low enough, the dangers that you might just get there. CIOs rarely lack ambition but do not always plan their careers as well as peers in the C-suite.

This can be explained in part by the lack of a natural structure, which is inherent in careers that have professional qualifications and more clearly defined routes to the top. CIOs often need to be more opportunistic - by taking on the big challenges and by making sure that they are in a business and

sector where IT really does make a difference. Increasingly, these are necessary but not sufficient ingredients for success.

CIOs' lack of career planning is all the more incongruent given the extent to which they need to plan and be organised in the rest of their working lives. Whether prioritising among a complex myriad of suppliers or planning for the big decisions such as outsourcing and off-shoring, they need to be constantly planning for the future. It is time to start applying these disciplines to career

management. Planning can be an iterative approach or you can start with the big picture - where do I want to get to and how am I going to get there?

One of the best definitions of leadership I have come across is this: you need to provide your people with a vision of the end goal, empower them by helping them to understand their part in the journey, and then give them the tools to get there. If you apply this rigour to your own careers, success will surely follow.

Don't be afraid to take corrective action to get your career back on track and to put yourself in the right situations to achieve success. You need to trust your instincts and the advice of those you trust. Above all, you need to be bold and resolute in your planning and decision-making. No-one else will do that for you.

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