The Programmer's Lab Podcast: Exploring Why CIOs are the new CEOs

A Fireside Chat

Transcript

[Host]

Hello everyone, welcome to the Programmers Lab podcast. We have Neha Garg with us today. Neha is the Director of Business Development and Consulting here at Nitor Infotech.

Her primary role is to help businesses bridge the gap between technology and business objectives. Welcome, Neha; we are so happy to have you here with us today.

[Neha]

Thank you for calling me; pleased to be here.

[Host]

So, Neha, you recently wrote a blog highlighting CEO's priorities. Could you tell us a little bit more about what role a CIO plays in an organization?

[Neha]

So, given the way the markets have been changing and with the pre-pandemic and the post-pandemic scenarios in any organization, the market and the business dynamics have drastically changed. And if you actually think about it, taking a reference from my blog, where I have spoken about a bimodal strategy of Gartner, where today the CIO and the CEO equally have to really look at how they bring about a balance between innovation as well as running the organization as they do today. So, from that

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perspective, a CIO today is no more just specific to managing the IT portfolio, which they used to do in a traditional way.

But now it's all about working closely with the businesses and focusing more towards business outcomes. Using technology instead of just focusing on, you know, kind of onboarding technology as they used to do previously.

[Host]

I see. So, given this evident transition that we're seeing, what do you think a CEO today expects from his CIOs?

[Neha]

As we discussed in our previous point, the role of a CIO today has transitioned from the way he used to traditionally manage IT portfolios to how he is going to be really focusing on business outcomes. So, the expectation of a CEO today is more of an executive rather than being on the supporting side, which was, you know, how it was traditionally. So, if we have to talk about how that is going to be applied, previously, the CIOs were, or I would say typically the IT function itself was siloed.

Today, it's all about how we bring in a blend between business strategy and technology, for which a CIO has to work very closely with the businesses. So, the role is now more towards understanding the business of an organization, along with understanding the newest technology. So, it's become much more, you know, I would say prominent as well as important, even at the board and an executive level.

[Host]

Right. So, with CIOs taking on more of a managerial role in addition to their IT portfolio, do you think it's safe for us to say that CIOs are becoming CEOs of their own departments?

[Neha]

In some way, yes, because as we spoke about it in our earlier discussions, it's not just about managing something which is already existing or just talking about systems coming into play. It's all about weaving a full-fledged strategy. And like any CEO who is going to be driving the vision for an organization, it's

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important for a CIO to also equally understand the vision of an organization as well as play a vision for his own department, like an IT vision, which is again going to blend into the business objectives of an organization.

So, if you actually think about it, he is now become like a CEO for his own division, but now having a broader vision of not just focusing towards technology, but enabling business using technology.

[Host]

That was very insightful, Neha. In closing thoughts, could you give us an example where you've seen a CIO act as the CEO of his own division?

[Neha]

So, I'll go back to the research that we have been invested in for over three years now. This has been with CII and we have covered a good sample size of almost 150 companies and most of them being the CIOs there itself. So, the way we have seen transformation being perceived for the last three years and taking post-pandemic and pre-pandemic scenarios, I think now the CIOs have started working very closely with the businesses.

So, in the research itself, we kind of found out that more than 54% of the CIOs today are spending extra time in actually understanding the ground realities of the business and not being very focused just on the technologies. It's more about the applications of technology into the real-life challenges. And here, one of the major aspects for them, which they have to really look at, is also the cultural and the change management part of it.

So, change management plays a huge role in ensuring that the overall transformation strategy, which is going to be placed, is going to help them derive the desired business outcomes. So, I think from the overall experience that we've been having so far by interacting with several CIOs, it's more about the way they have started understanding the businesses more deeply and connecting with the end users, which has really helped them to identify the unknown challenges which typically were not seen earlier.

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[Host]

Okay, that makes sense. Thank you so much for sharing your wonderful thoughts with us, Neha. We look forward to hosting you again.

[Neha]

Thank you for calling me today.

[Host]

We hope you enjoyed our podcast today here with Neha. She mentioned her blog, so be sure to visit us at https://www.nitorinfotech.com/blog and give it a good read and leave your comments for us. And learn more about us at https://www.nitorinfotech.com/ and follow us on our social media platforms. Thank you.

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