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One myth that is far too common in CPA firms is that you must be a CPA to manage and understand the firm. This is simply not true and is costing firms a lot of time and money while reducing their ability to compete today and into the future. Requiring a CPA certificate to have a seat at the management table is holding back some of your best talent and limiting the firms potential for greater success.

One party that should have a seat at the management table is your CIO, especially if you want to create the alignment between firm strategy and technology. Let's look at five ways CIOs can provide you a strategic advantage and why they should be contributing members of your management team.

1. CIOs bring a different perspective to the table than most partners. They see the entire enterprise and approach strategy from that viewpoint. They strive to break down barriers and eliminate siloes by improving integration. They are also typically outsiders to many of the firm's processes and can more easily see opportunities for improvement. Gödel's Law states that to understand the system you are in, you have to get outside of it.
2. CIOs understand how technology can improve efficiency and effectiveness. They can provide innovative insight into firm and client strategies that will add value. Leadership, relationships and creativity create value. Some of the current priority areas are mobile, virtualization, workflow, digital platforms including portals, cloud computing and business intelligence.
3. The firms with the best technology are those firms with strong IT leadership. CIOs often have to deliver news that client service partners don't want to hear – "we have to invest". Having a strong CIO on your team who supports the firm's vision and integrates technology is a strategic advantage. Great IT professionals will push firm leadership and management to excellence. Don't settle for mediocrity at any level – partner or IT.

4. CIOs have project management skills which are essential to the success of the firm.

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Apple revenue came from services and products that were not for sale three years ago. This is not an anomaly, but rather a trend. Is your firm prepared? A quality CIO can assist you in meeting these challenges.

Technology impacts every area of your firm. One step towards leveraging technology as an asset instead of viewing it as just an expense is having the CIO on your firm's management team. Although alignment between firm strategy and technology is a process, this is a step in the right direction.

Firm Management

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