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**Jim Boomer** • Feb. 25, 2015



A well-qualified CIO can and should be a key member of your management team, yet few firms are taking full advantage of this strategic resource. By well-qualified CIO, I

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engine. This is a skill that frankly many technical CPAs do not possess or at least not at a level to manage or lead a major firm or business. They have great technical skills, which are important, but often have not had adequate soft skill training and/or inadequate understanding of technology.

2. **Marketing & Sales** – Develop messaging that effectively outlines the advantages of new technology and educates partners and managers on how they can leverage technology as a strategic asset rather than viewing IT as overhead. This generally involves some convincing and the ability to manage change. Not all that different from what we do in our traditional marketing/sales of services to clients.
3. **Communications** – Amazing messaging and education goes nowhere without effective communication skills. A good CIO can communicate through a variety of channels (face-to-face, email, video, etc.) and puts the time in up-front to understand his audience's preferences for receiving the message. They understand that a one-size-fits-all communication strategy is not enough.
4. **Human Resources** – Great CIOs build a team of IT professionals to deliver resources to the firm (internal and external sources). They identify and assist in the development of IT training requirements at all levels of the firm. Recruiting, hiring and managing a team of top level talent requires at least a baseline understanding of human resources and personnel development.
5. **Project Management** – Manage priority projects to insure success, on time completion and within budget. IT professionals tend to be highly skilled in this area already and should be leveraged to train the firm's staff, managers and partners on project management basics.
6. **Budgeting & Cash Flow** – The ability to step back and see the big picture for the firm in terms of finance is important to establishing priorities, budgeting and projecting cash flow. This requires that the CIO be trusted with access to financial information beyond simply the technology budget.
7. **Strategy & Planning** – CIO's need to understand and use a formalized strategic planning process around technology and be responsible for IT planning and

budgeting. The process should integrate the firm's technology plan with the firm's

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## What CIOs Bring to the Table?

There are a number of benefits to including your CIO on the management team. Here are five of the top reasons in our opinion.

1. CIOs bring a different perspective to the table than most partners.
2. CIOs understand how technology can improve efficiency and effectiveness and can provide innovative insights.
3. The firms with the best technology are those firms with strong IT leadership.  
Having a strong CIO on your team who supports the firm's vision and integrates technology is a strategic advantage.
4. CIOs have project management skills essential to the success of the firm.
5. A quality CIO can leadership and management in developing new services and revenue streams.

Over the past several years we have conducted the Boomer Technology Circles and The CIO Advantage and I can assure you that these leaders exist today in firms across the country. Many have recognized a shift in the role of the IT leader and are already developing their skills for the future. Ensure your firm is also preparing for the future by developing your CIO in the areas that will allow you to leverage technology to its full potential.

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