How can technology make transformation more human?

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Making the leap from today's CIO to Transformative CIO

The CIO's role has moved from a technology service provider to that of a strategic advisor, playing a central role in the future of the business. In the past, someone with a pure STEM background could have been a successful fit for the CIO role. However, the Transformative CIO is someone with a diverse background – from MBAs, to data science professionals, and might even come from a line of business. Digital is core to their background, and they know how to use technologies across various business processes for rapid improvement. This person understands the business objectives, can communicate and influence in the boardroom and works with line-of-business leaders daily to effectuate results.

After numerous interviews with CIOs from companies ranging in size from small to large and across several sectors, we've found common themes in the Transformative CIO journey. We have taken each of these important themes and discuss them in greater detail over the following chapters how the Transformative CIO enables their business to meet both today's needs and tomorrow's challenges.

Chapter 1 The CIO of tomorrow
It takes a special kind of leader to succeed in uncertain times. We peer into the future and preview the CIO of tomorrow.

Chapter 2 The dancefloor, balcony or both?
Discover three ways in which the CIO shifts from technology manager to becoming a valuable partner to the business.

Chapter 3 Quartet of qualities
What are the four capabilities of the Transformative CIO?

Chapter 4 Go digital or go home
We discuss four levers to pull in building a digital foundation to support innovation, growth and reliability.

Chapter 5 Thinking on your feet
What are CIOs doing to navigate the pandemic and find safe harbor in a never-ending storm?

Chapter 6 The talent agenda
Learn why the IT talent agenda is a key differentiator for your enterprise.

To download and view each part of the series, **click here.**

39%
Lead business transformation initiatives

29%
Strengthen IT and business collaboration skills

The CEO's top priority for the CIO in 2020

31%
Update data security to boost corporate resilience

Source: *2020 State of the CIO Executive Summary, IDG, 2020*

The CIO of tomorrow

What capabilities will the CIO of tomorrow need and how should they align with the business to adopt a "future-back" approach?

Fortune favors the bold

Understanding future trends in the technology sector and where the market is headed to help future-proof the business is a crucial part of the role for the Transformative CIO. While it was difficult to see a global pandemic coming, the Transformative CIO is always thinking about what shocks or unexpected events could be around the corner. And, if a business does not have a culture of taking risks, this task can be even more difficult.

In addition, the adoption of a growth mindset and promoting and advocating a culture of change and transformation across the business is extremely important. Or in the words of fabled production and quality expert, W. Edwards Deming, "It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory."

Five ways to de-risk innovation

1

Becoming a (thought) leader

Tomorrow's CIO needs to establish themselves as a technology and business leader. On the technology side, the Transformative CIO must do whatever is required across the organization's infrastructure model and applications to help develop products and go to market faster. Beyond the technology stack, the CIOs priorities must include ways to bolster enterprise resiliency and enable a better customer experience.

However, the CIO must help drive the business agenda and deliver capabilities across the enterprise to help cut costs, improve revenues and increase overall competitiveness. And of course, the Transformative CIO needs to figure out how to do this in an effective, efficient manner, communicating that vision at the board level where leaders are focused on governance, stakeholders, risk and the environment.

2
Getting the right balance

The CIO of tomorrow requires the right combination of technical depth and strategic business vision. They need to be able to understand and deliver technology products and services. But an organization doesn't want to over-index and end up with a purely tech-focused CIO, who can fix technical problems but can't see what the future holds and how the company needs to transform. At the same time, the business doesn't need somebody who can't identify what issues are hindering operational efficiency and only wants to talk about emerging technologies. The common mistake that businesses often make is veering from one to the other – first hiring a very tactical manager to fix operational issues then overcompensating by bringing in a strategic visionary who comes in and gets everybody to spend time in pods predicting the future of technology. Meanwhile, the business is underserved and could lag in terms of competitiveness.

3
Integration and innovation

The ideal CIO to meet tomorrow's business challenges is one who can synthesize technologies and capabilities, understanding how both can be leveraged to drive forward the digital road map of the business. To achieve this, a CIO doesn't need to be a futurist, but they must be able to weave new technologies and ideas into their organizations. If we think about the history of innovation, often the winners are those companies that adopt new concepts from external sources and either mix them together with other innovative ideas or take them to the next level. The Transformative CIO needs a pulse on the market and must understand emerging technologies, so they can bring them into their business where they are most needed.
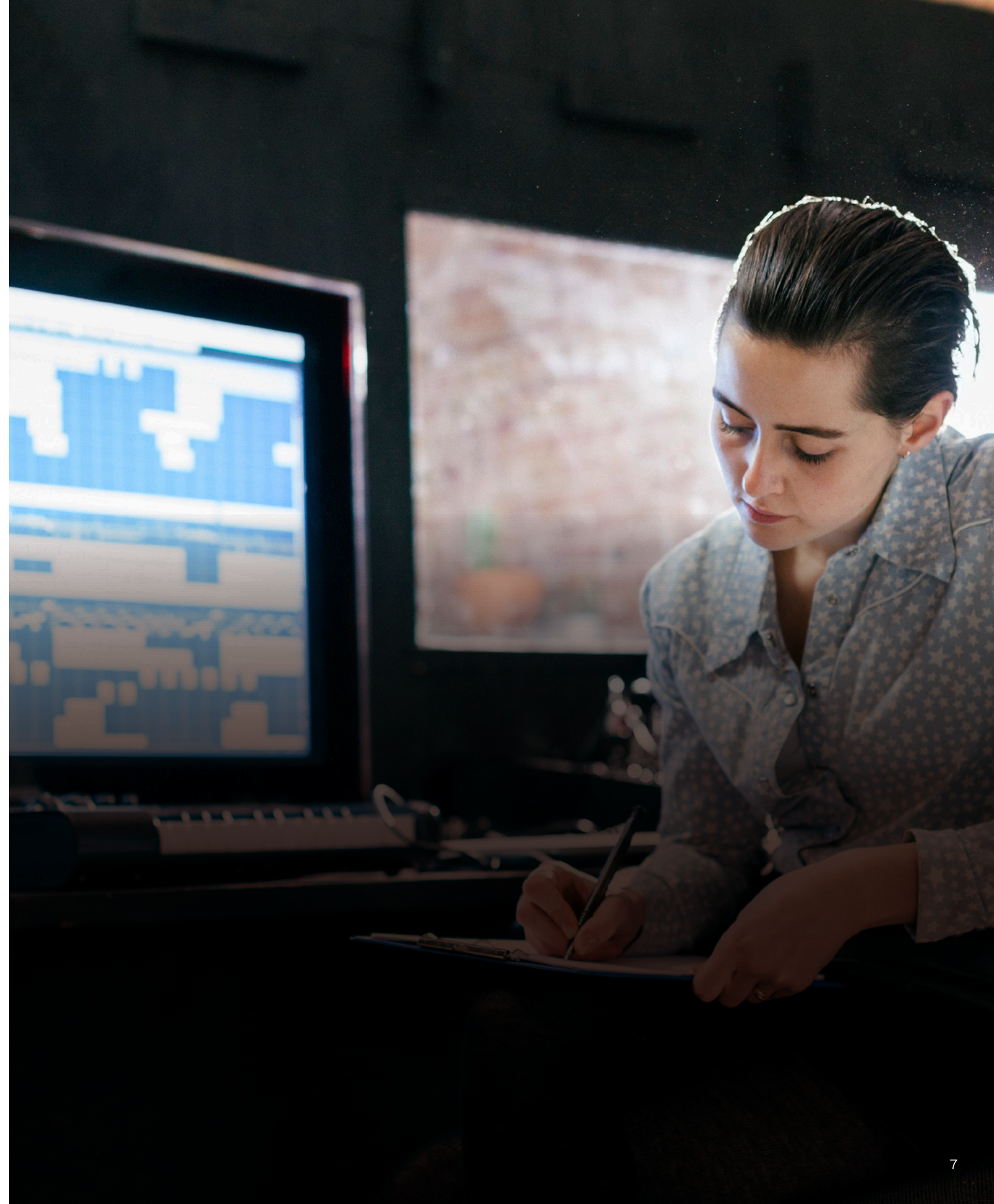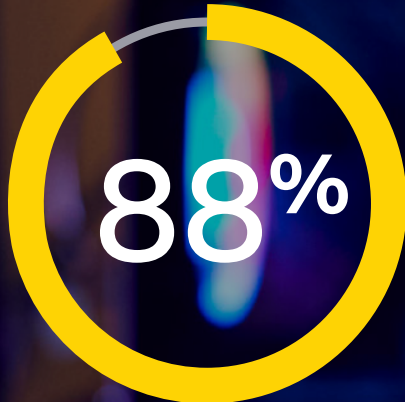
88% of CIOs say they are involved in helping to foster the relationship between IT and OT due to IT/OT convergence.

Source: *2020 State of the CIO Executive Summary, IDG,* 2020

4 Moving from projects to products

The Transformative CIO will facilitate and drive the maturation of product-centric and agile models across their enterprise, as well as broker the services required for the enablement of quick technology integration. This requires the CIO to put in place a cost-effective, agile infrastructure to support bringing new products to market. They will need to help solve key challenges facing the business, including how it can increasingly shift from "projects" to "products" and build the trusted data and intelligence capabilities to enable better decision-making faster. The Transformative CIO will also need to look at enterprise platforms and solutions and determine which are the right ones to increase their company's agility and flexibility to respond to changing business demands and growth opportunities.

5 The future-back approach

Thriving in a post-pandemic environment – placing humans at the center, leveraging technologies with greater speed and quickly scaling innovation – will require a new approach. Future-back planning connects megatrend-based scenarios with concrete strategic actions, enabling companies to position themselves today for long-term success. Increasingly, as the Transformative CIO drives the new concept of business-led IT, their role will become that of a facilitator, business connector and value driver. Instead of just running the organization's IT, their role will evolve in bringing new technologies into the business, creating innovative services or capabilities, and continually adding the firepower of external alliances and partners to help reframe the organization's future and build competitive advantage.

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