CIO and the Board: Working together

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1. **CIOs Interaction with the board is an opportunity**

   - To demonstrate that they are business leaders--or reveal that they are not

   - CIOs must improve their skills to interact effectively with the Board

   - CIOs must make IT reports/projects relevant to Board members

➢ **Understand Board's vs senior management's role.**

– They represent and protect the interest of the shareholders or members depending on the organization

– Senior management is responsible for running the organization

➢ **Help the Board to understand the role of the CIO**

– Business executive specializing in IT. Like a zebra, not white with black stripes or white with black stripes

– 52% of CIOs have at least one additional responsibility outside of IT (Gartner)

2. How does the Board view IT.

➢ The Board doesn't view technology for technology's sake but:
- what business initiative it enables
- what risks it exposes the organization
- financial performance
- How it supports the business' strategic plan

3. Get to know the Board and its members
  – Type of board (elected, appointed, political)
  – Technology experience
  – Board focus (cost cutting, M&A, etc)

4. Work with the CEO and the executives.
  – Provide the organization's view
  – Get their view on how to get your message across to the Board
  – Board working process: formal or informal

5. **Present a joint view.**
   – When presenting to the board, you shouldn't be the lone wolf leading the pack, but part of the senior management team

6. **Ensure the Directors have all the information.**
   – Don't just talk about the approval you want to get but also make sure that they have all the information to understand the issue.
   – One of the most challenging task understanding the difference between talking about technology and communicating how a technology impacts business.

7. Speak "business".

– As the CIO presenting to the Board you have to show that you are a business leader who advocates the use of technology to enable the business.

– Do not use technology terms, if you have to, explain it in terms that would be easy to understand, relating it to something that they already know. Using fancy technology terms will lessen the CIO's credibility because s/he can't "speak business" . For example: compare SOA to the Lego "bumps". It does not matter when you bought the Lego, the pieces will fit

Communication has to be – points to follow:

➤brief and easy to remember;
➤focused on outcomes, not process detail;
➤action oriented and clear;
➤no acronyms or technical jargon

8. Educate the Board.

➢ Preparing the Board to understand technology's role in the organization:
   – teaching/discussing IT governance
   – presenting and discussing IT strategic plan and its implication on the business

9. Provide Transparency and Updates.

- Ensure that there is total transparency on how IT decisions are made.
- In addition to getting the IT strategy and projects approved, provide frequent updates.
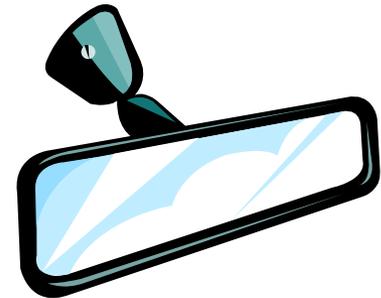
➢ Desired outcome of the presentation:
- ✓ inform provide updates, progress against goals and assessments
- ✓ are you delivering good or bad news
- ✓ request - ask for funding, resources and time (how much, what's the expected benefit to the organization
- ✓ alert inform something has gone wrong: who is impacted, how and when will it be remedied
- ✓ IT strategy is consistent with business strategy

- Provide regular, relevant report to the Board or relevant Board committee

- Present the technology investments in terms of operational, compliance, improving business processes, and business growth

- Offer the Board educational sessions :
  - discuss IT governance
  - Present and discuss IT strategic plan and its implication on the business

- Identify where technology can be a strategic differentiator

- Stay up-to-date on future business requirements (products, processes, regulations)

Questions?