In a fast-moving business environment, how can today’s Chief Information Officer (CIO) make the biggest impact on behalf of the entire organization? To answer that question, we listened to over 2,500 CIOs worldwide. Included in this group were 131 Automotive CIOs from 23 countries. As part of our research, we also sought to understand the differences between responses of CIOs from organizations with high PBT growth (referred to in this report as “High-growth CIOs”) and CIOs from organizations with low PBT growth (“Low-growth CIOs”).

After thousands of interviews, we found that successful CIOs actually blend three pairs of roles. These dual roles seem contradictory, but they are actually complementary. Our findings revealed ways CIOs can be more effective in this everyday balancing act. Even some experienced CIOs acknowledged that they are sufficiently strong in just one or two of the six CIO roles. Yet every role requires at least some attention.

The realities facing each individual influence how that CIO can and should manage change at any given time. Many factors impact the decisions about how much emphasis to place on any single role. Among the other factors are macroeconomic and regional conditions, industry-specific forces and various organizational characteristics, as well as the CIO’s own skills and aspirations.

We share with you the voices of many CIOs and what they are doing to achieve three primary goals: to make innovation real, raise the ROI of IT and expand business impact.
Making innovation real

Insightful Visionary and Able Pragmatist

The Insightful Visionary is active in setting strategy and helps the business explore how technology can drive innovation. The Able Pragmatist sets the stage for enacting innovation. Key Visionary actions are to: push business/technology integration, champion innovation and extend CIO influence. Key Pragmatist actions are to: enable the corporate vision, make working together easy and concentrate on core competencies.

Raising the ROI of IT

Savvy Value Creator and Relentless Cost Cutter

The Savvy Value Creator devises better solutions by understanding customers’ needs, while the Relentless Cost Cutter is vigilant about trimming expenses wherever possible. Key Value Creator actions are to: make the data “sing,” reach customers in new ways, and enhance integration and transparency. Key Cost Cutter actions are to: standardize to economize, centralize the infrastructure and keep cost reduction a top priority.

Expanding business impact

Collaborative Business Leader and inspiring IT Manager

The Business Leader thoroughly understands the organization’s core business and builds strong partnerships, internally and externally. The Inspiring IT Manager demonstrates personal IT expertise and advocates for stronger skills across the IT organization. Key Business Leader actions are to: know the business, get involved with business peers in non-IT projects, and present and measure IT in business terms. Key IT Manager actions are to: cultivate truly extraordinary IT talent, lead the IT forces and enhance the data.
Managing dual roles in the future

Despite the multiple forces in play, our findings show that CIOs have discovered ways to focus on what matters most to them and their organizations. The collective voice of more than 2,500 CIOs worldwide points to key actions to help CIOs attain the primary goals of making innovation real, raising the ROI of IT and expanding business impact.

Figure 1 Profiles illustrate the differences between High-growth and Low-growth Automotive CIOs

High-growth CIOs concentrate most on raising the value of IT, collaborating with the business and being Insightful Visionaries.

Note: CIOs were scored based on a composite for each characteristic. The average overall score for each role was plotted across three performance categories (High-, Medium- and Low-growth).

When we plot Automotive CIO responses across the six roles, there is a clear distinction between Low-growth CIOs and High-growth CIOs. High-growth Automotive CIOs are very focused on the Cost Cutter and Business Leader roles, while Low Growth CIOs clearly emphasize the Inspiring IT Manager role.

Over time, we expect CIOs to regularly assess how much emphasis is appropriate on each of the three pairs of roles. Our profiles offer CIOs a more structured approach to identify where they want to increase their focus and how to do it. Whichever role you choose to emphasize, we look forward to working with you.
About the IBM Institute for Business Value

The IBM Institute for Business Value, part of IBM Global Business Services, develops fact-based strategic insights for senior business executives around critical industry-specific and cross-industry issues. This Global CIO Study is part of our ongoing C-Suite Study Series.