A CIOs guide to future-proofing business through the senior gig economy
Introduction

Now that all organisations are technology-based, CIOs have never been in a better position to step forward and own business transformation. It is giving CIOs the opportunity and responsibility to be right at the heart of the board agenda.

A 2017 Deloitte study found that 31% of high-performing S&P 500 companies were more likely to have a tech-savvy board director than other companies. However, in the UK, information brand CIO UK revealed that only 29% of CIOs are full members on their organisation’s board.

As technology is disrupting every industry at an alarming rate, no company is safe. If organisations are to survive the next decade they need to be incorporating technology into their business strategies. To achieve this, boards need to be offering their tech experts a seat at the table.

This report will uncover the issues faced by CIOs, as well as the steps to take to ensure they have the capability to transform an organisation and their career through the gig economy.

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The Problem

In my former life as an interim recruiter who built capability for CIOs and now as Founder of Sullivan & Stanley – The Change Society, I’ve spoken to many CIOs and other change agents about the problems that they face as executives. There are three that kept cropping up time and time again.

Problem one - Capability gap

CIOs don’t have the people and the leadership capability to facilitate change.

Problem two - Speed gap

CIOs are in companies that don’t have the ability nor agility to change. They are hamstrung as the organisational design is based on the 20th-century, but unfit for the 21st century. Combine with significant technical debt and it is no surprise why so many organisations have declining revenues.

Problem three - Current routes to capability are failing and outdated

The original routes - via the use of out of touch recruiters, enormous interview debt, bureaucracy, advisory and management consultancy models - are outdated with the growing needs of organisations. It has created a legacy of slow-moving organisations, with hardly any learning culture, which isn’t suited to the pace of today’s technological change or modern workforce.

As newer businesses with more agility and disruptive tendencies are fast eating the corporate market share, it is creating more pressure for businesses to put change at the heart of the agenda and develop the capability muscle. Without this, they may cease to exist in the next decade.

Therefore, the CIO has a huge responsibility of owning agile business transformation, driving new operating models at pace, whilst still operating ‘business as usual’. This means it is now imperative for CIOs to have their own change capability, although, some are still woefully underprepared.
NEXT STEPS

How to prepare organisations for change and close the capability and speed gap
Different ways of working are unfolding amid an economic climate of uncertainty and constant change. Year-on-year, the rate of technological advancement is increasing and day-by-day, the capability and speed gaps widening, whilst the war for premium talent rages on.

If CIOs are to meet board expectations, optimising technology operations and owning the innovation agenda, then new ways of augmenting capability need to be explored. This means thinking differently and considering new, relevant practices, rather than holding on to past practices that are failing to deliver.

We know for sure the old world is dying and the new world is happening. The collision of these worlds is causing chaos and complexity making change increasingly hard to facilitate and deliver. Indeed, for some, change is too rapid to know where to even start the transformation. Many find it hard balancing today’s demands of keeping the estate running whilst delivering tomorrow’s essentials along with the constant pressure from the board to innovate.

There is a solution - a booming workforce ready to be deployed on demand through the Executive and Knowledge Gig Economy.
The Solution - The executive & knowledge gig economy

Talented people have discovered that creating a flexible, work-life balance is no longer a pipe dream. Gone are the days of corporate politics and rigid work. In its place is the Executive and Knowledge Gig Economy, which maximises and optimises people’s output, income and strengths in exchange for autonomy, choice in a portfolio of work and a more balanced working life. It is developing a larger pool of flexible, highly skilled workers, leaders and change agents that are creating a huge opportunity for businesses. But, how do CIOs capitalise on this shift?

According to the Office for National Statistics, nearly five million UK workers are now classified as self-employed, representing a 45% rise since 2000. This is only expected to rise, with Accenture and Deloitte both predicting that 30% of the UK’s workforce will be freelancing or gig working by 2020.

At S&S, we believe the solution is to shift towards crowdsourcing project-based work. By hiring teams to tap into the knowledge networks they can crowd around specific problems, and deliver desired outcomes, whilst also upskilling a core permanent team, rather than outsource and lose both control, learnings and IP. This creates a scalable workforce of the best minds in the world, that can help meet business agendas and close the capability and speed gap. The sooner CIOs and organisations embrace this way of working (as an enabler, rather than a cost), the more empowered they will be in the future.
**Action Points - How to trial crowdsourcing the gig economy**

**Put top 5% interim talent into your strategy**

CIOs need to look at implementing new sourcing models to achieve more efficiency at less of a cost. By hiring three or four elite people rather than ten or fifteen average people, this will inevitably save time, energy and money. If you look for fresh alternatives and suppliers that have access to the top 5% of senior leaders and change agents, the best will be more productive and will work at a faster pace.

**Outcome and statement of work-based teams**

Interims are one of the most underused and underrated routes to capability in the market. They tend to over deliver and want to make maximum impact in a short space of time as they know they are only as good as their last gig. Look at deploying teams of interims and you can achieve massive results at a rapid pace.

**Experiment with the “Teams as a Service” approach to delivering projects and change**

The “Teams as a Service” (TaaS) model involves hiring, through a trusted partner, a team of the top 5% of interims. This model is a collective of agile talent, who through integration with permanent capability, can swarm around any problem and/or opportunity to deliver key objectives and outcomes.

By crowdsourcing top talent through models such as TaaS, it gives organisations an emergent, vibrant network of people to call upon who have a “can-do” solution centric mentality that all businesses need.

**Create all-star cross-functional teams to tackle CIOs highest priority issues**

Teaming great talent in a cross-functional way not only acts as a force multiplier but also helps align business and technology to deliver quickly. By developing mission-focused blended teams, it creates an environment away from the bureaucracy and over processed operating models, where the cross-pollination of ideas and entrepreneurial thinking is encouraged.
Conclusion

CIOs can future-proof their careers and organisations by having an agile response to change. I believe the old method of relying on the traditional top four consultancies is starting to change.

As we enter this volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous world, there is a great opportunity for CIOs to experiment and trial other routes to capability. These new routes such as access to hand-picked top 5% teams through the gig economy can encourage learning, sharing and the co-creation of solutions to deliver company-wide success and help close the capability and speed gap forever.