

# The Ultimate CIO Job Description

A template to help  
organizations **define and**  
**recruit** the Chief  
Information Officer

By:

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# INTRODUCTION

Your company plans to recruit a Chief Information Officer (CIO), so you need to write a job description. Think you can reuse the one from the last time your company recruited a CIO? Think again!

With data and technology moving to the center of every company's operations, products, and services, the role of the CIO has evolved dramatically—even over the last three years.

Today's CIOs are transformational leaders who bring technology innovation to every aspect of a business. They are experts in deriving business value from raw data, managing enterprise risk, creating innovation engines, and developing a high-performance workplace culture. Today's CIOs focus less on technology delivery, and more on designing an entire corporate ecosystem that is digitally literate, efficient, and secure.

## Why Have We Created The Ultimate CIO Job Description?

At Heller Search, the majority of CIO job descriptions we see in the market are outdated. Many of them treat IT as a cost center, rather than a driver of growth.

We have created this resource as a starting point for creating a job description for the business-centric, transformational IT executive that your company needs so that you can attract the best and brightest in today's talent market.

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Conventions used in this document:

- ✓ A suggestion that applies to the majority of CIO positions.
- ☐ Consider whether this suggestion applies to your CIO job description. Delete those that do not apply.
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_ Add to the list here, based on specifics of your company, your culture and the goals of the business.
- [ ] Bracketed text, for example [company], is a prompt to replace the text with your information.
- Italicized*** text are annotations for the benefit of the template user, meant to be deleted from the final job description.

## I. Position Title

The complete title for the position being recruited. For example:

- Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer (CIO)
  - Chief Information and Digital Officer (CIDO)
  - SVP, Chief Information and Technology Officer (CITO)
- 

## II. Location and Travel Requirements

*The city where will this CIO be located, or a description of the remote work/hybrid arrangement options, as well as the amount and nature of business travel required. For example:*

The CIO will either work from [Company] headquarters in [city], [state], or can work remotely from anywhere so long as they are able to travel to HQ as needed, approximately X times per quarter. They are expected to travel approximately 33% of the time, mostly to our U.S. locations, with international travel expected two or three times per year.

### III. About the Company

*Provide a brief overview of the company, and a website link. Boilerplate copy from your website may offer a good start, but we recommend editing or tailoring this language to suit your target audience of potential CIO candidates.*

*Suggested contents for this section:*



- ✓ *Full name of the company*
- ✓ *Headquarters physical address*
- ✓ *Company logo*
- ✓ *Website address*
- ✓ *Company description*
- ✓ *Mission or values statement*
- ✓ *Notable brands and major milestones*
- ✓ *Annual revenues or a comparable metric*
- ☐ *Total employees*
- ☐ *List of locations*

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### IV. About the Hiring Manager

*In this section provide a short introduction to the executive the CIO will report to.*

*Suggested contents for this section:*



- ✓ *Name*
- ✓ *Full title*
- ✓ *Year they joined the company*
- ☐ *Previous roles at the company, if promoted*
- ✓ *Notable roles before joining the company*
- ✓ *Brief professional bio*
- ☐ *Headshot photograph*

## V. Position Summary

*This section is the elevator pitch, or the executive summary of the CIO role that by itself provides readers with a basic understanding of the type of technology leader being sought. This should be a relatively short summary, as later sections will provide all of the detail.*

*What to include in this section:*

- ✓ *One or two key priorities for the role in the context of the company's current strategic objectives.*
- ✓ *A few of the key qualifications required, such as industry experience or specific leadership attributes.*
- *The number of direct reports to the CIO, and total headcount in the IT organization.*

For example:

[Company] is conducting a search for an experienced and highly qualified Chief Information Officer (CIO) to oversee enterprise technology. Reporting to the (CEO), the CIO will be a trusted member of the executive leadership team (and partner to the Board) on all matters relating to the technology strategy and operations of the Company. The CIO will not only serve as the senior technology leader, but also as a business leader.

The successful candidate will provide strategic leadership and vision across the technical spectrum to bring innovative solutions that (create shareholder value and) enable growth strategies such as new markets, service lines, or M&A. He or she will lead the technology organization, ensuring the Company's infrastructure, applications and security are aligned with the business strategy, and meet the expectations of our clients, partners and stakeholders. The CIO will drive innovation by bringing a digital product mind-set to the organization that enhances the customer experience.

The CIO will identify emerging technologies and lead integration and implementation projects that maximize productivity and efficiency, and drive measurable business results.

The CIO will establish credibility with key stakeholders and instill a culture of technical excellence and continuous improvement. The CIO will manage [X] direct reports on the IT leadership team; total headcount in the IT organization is approximately [Y].

## VI. Key Responsibilities

*This section lists the major initiatives the CIO will be responsible for leading, in four major categories: Strategy, Leadership, Team Development, and IT Operations.*

### Strategy

- ✓ Work closely with fellow members of the executive leadership team as a trusted advisor to define and drive a technology strategy that is focused on forward-looking, differentiating technology.
- ✓ Assess current platforms, the evolving needs of the business, and the competitive landscape to craft and execute a technology roadmap that meets the long-term needs of the business, and creates new opportunities.
- ✓ Identify and operationalize emerging trends in digital technologies such as AI / ML and RPA to create competitive advantage for the company.
- ✓ Help determine capital investment parameters, priorities, and risks for enterprise-wide IT initiatives to maximize the return on investment.
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

## Leadership

- ✓ Build strong relationships with business groups and their leaders across the enterprise, and develop a clear understanding of their issues, challenges and opportunities.
- ✓ Implement the most appropriate and effective IT organizational design to support and engage with business partners.
- ✓ Ensure transparency and collaboration between the IT organization and its business partners.
- ✓ Develop and execute an analytics program that makes data a core asset of the company, and empowers company leaders to make data-driven decisions.
- ✓ Ensure, on an ongoing basis, that current and planned technical architecture, investments and solutions are aligned with company business objectives.
- ✓ Prepare and monitor IT operational budgets that meet prevailing objectives and constraints.
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

## Team Development

- ✓ Hire, develop, and retain a diverse, highly-qualified team of technology professionals.
- ✓ Foster a culture of innovation, transparency and accountability in the IT organization.



- ✓ Promote a “business-first” mentality at all levels of the technology function.
- ✓ Ensure that the organization has strong systems analysis and project management skills, and the ability to execute business-critical projects
- ✓ Develop and maintain a plan that provides for succession and continuity in the most critical IT management positions.
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

## IT Operations

- ✓ Direct the design, planning, implementation, and maintenance of the computing infrastructure that supports the company’s operations and business applications.
- ✓ Support the core business through technology capabilities that maximize performance, scale, reliability, and flexibility.
- ✓ Ensure visible and robust delivery of IT services through use of service level agreements, metrics, and performance dashboards.
- ✓ Lead the company’s cyber security efforts to safeguard assets and interests, and oversee the integrity and security of systems.
- ✓ Develop and implement protocols to minimize disruption to business operations in the event of disasters or data loss, and facilitate IT security audits, training, and investigations.

- ✓ Establish and enforce IT policies, processes, portfolio management, development standards and methodologies, including but not limited to DevOps and Agile.
  - ✓ Monitor the industry for developments in IT operations; evaluate and implement relevant new tools and service management frameworks.
  - ✓ Create a nimble, efficient, and effective operational model that leverages the best available internal and external resources.
  - ✓ Develop external IT partners that can meet our current and future needs.
  - ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
  - ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- 

## VII. Skills, Experience & Qualifications

*This section lists the career experience, technical skills and leadership attributes necessary for a candidate to succeed in the CIO role, in four major categories: Leadership and Communications, Transformation, IT Operations, Professional Experience and Education.*

- ✓ Can create a clear strategic vision for information technology that supports business objectives, and execute on that vision.
- ✓ Able to work collaboratively with diverse leaders, communicate an IT vision and strategy across all levels of the organization, and build consensus around key initiatives and projects.

## Leadership and Communications

- ✓ Possesses exceptional interpersonal and communication skills, both oral and written; able to articulate ideas to a variety of technical and non-technical audiences.
- ✓ Demonstrated ability to recruit, hire and motivate a high performing team that values transparency and accountability.
- ✓ Possesses exceptional business acumen, and analytical and problem-solving abilities.
- ✓ Excellent negotiating skills with internal customers and external service providers.
- ✓ Comfortable with ambiguity; can handle the unexpected with flexibility.
- ✓ A team player who favors collaborative approaches when working with internal and external partners.
- ✓ Proven ability to build trust with others through a commitment to the highest ethical and professional standards.
- ✓ A high energy executive; tenacious and passionate about reaching the goal, while keeping ego in check.
- ☐ A courageous leader willing to use facts and data to challenge the status quo.
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

## Transformation

- ✓ Demonstrated experience driving digital transformation and business transformation through innovation and the implementation of technology.
- ✓ Possesses solid knowledge in emerging technologies, and the ability to apply these in the service of the company's key business goals.
- ✓ Experience leading complex, major change initiatives; demonstrated skills in change management.
- ☐ Experience transforming large, disparate data sets into accessible assets that deliver business insights, create operational efficiency and drive revenue.
- ☐ An entrepreneurial mindset; able and interested to pursue new business opportunities.
- ✓ Customer-service oriented
- ✓ Builder of strong technology vendor partnerships; able to manage multiple vendor relationships to ensure the best performance and financial return.
- ☐ Demonstrated experience with as-a-service, cloud-based, and outsourced solutions through third party providers.
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

## IT Operations

- ☐ Broad-based technology background with responsibility for scalable solutions delivery in support of business growth and differentiation.
- ✓ Knowledge of a range of vendor technology solutions; able to select and integrate the most appropriate technologies to support the business.
- ✓ Demonstrated ability to design and implement comprehensive approaches to cyber security and risk management.
- ✓ Experience designing and managing an effective IT governance framework across the spectrum of IT service delivery.
- ✓ Outstanding organizational skills, and the ability to manage multiple priorities in a fast paced, high-pressure environment.
- ✓ A strong background in operational and capital finances, and IT budget development.
- ☐ Understands ITIL, Agile and other technology management frameworks, and how to scale and implement them.
- ☐ Experience leading a global organization with significant offshore operations.
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

## Professional Experience and Education

- ✓ [X] years of career experience in technology, including a minimum of [Y] years in a leadership position.
- ☐ Experience in a CIO or equivalent position is preferred/required.
- ☐ IT leadership experience in a global environment.
- ☐ Experience in [your industry] or a related industry is preferred/required.
- ☐ Experience leading an agile development organization.
- ☐ Experience managing a large outsourcing partnership.
- ☐ Experience in a federated structure with matrixed leadership responsibilities.
- ✓ A bachelor's degree is required.
- ☐ An advanced degree in a related field, such as computer science, engineering and/or business (MBA) is preferred.
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

## VIII. Why this Opportunity is Compelling

*This is your opportunity to sell the company and the CIO job to potential candidates. Ask yourself: Why would a strong digital leader, who most likely already has a great job, or competing offers, consider joining your organization? Imagine you have a “rock star” candidate sitting in your office who you think could be your hire – what would you tell her about the position, the company and your culture to pique their interest? For example:*

*The CIO at [Company] will*

- ☐ Serve as a critical member of the executive leadership team.
- ☐ Play a critical role in transforming an industry leader into a digital business.
- ✓ Play a highly visible leadership role that impacts every part of the business.
- ☐ Lead a major business [or digital, or technology] transformation initiative.
- ✓ Enjoy an executive level commitment to technology investment.
- ✓ join a culture of collegiality and respect [or insert 2-3 company values].
- ☐ Develop and lead a world-class IT organization.
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

## IX. Interview Process

- ☐ First interview with HR representative [or executive search partner]
- ☐ Candidate presentation to the hiring committee by [executive search partner].
- ☐ Initial interview by phone (or video conference)
- ✓ First round of interviews with [Company] [via video conference].
- ✓ Second round of interviews [via video conference] or [in person].
- ✓ Background and reference checks.
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Offer and acceptance
- ☐ Drug screen
- ✓ Start



## X.Contact Information

*Provide contact details for the people on the hiring committee or at your executive search firm whom interested candidates can get in touch with to learn more about the position, and submit their resumes. For example:*

*Qualified candidates should contact*



- ✓ Name
  - ✓ Job title
  - ✓ Company (may be name of executive search partner firm)
  - ✓ E-mail address
  - ✓ Office telephone number
  - ☐ Cell phone number
  - ☐ Headshot photograph
- 

## Additional Resources

[Download](#) an MS Word version of this CIO job description, ready to customize

[All About the Role of Chief Information Officer](#)

[Be the Business: CIOs in the New Era of IT](#), by Martha Heller

[CIO Interview Guide](#) for hiring managers

## About Heller Search Associates

Heller Search is an executive search firm specializing in technology leaders including Chief Information Officer (CIO), Chief Digital Officer (CDO), Chief Technology Officer (CTO), Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) and all senior technology positions (VPs and Directors in all areas of IT) nationwide, in all industries.

Our clients include Fortune 500 as well as mid-market companies, higher education, non-profits, small businesses, startups and private equity portfolio companies.

Founded in 2011, Heller Search is a boutique search firm offering a hands-on, high-touch approach. Our team has in-depth expertise in the IT talent market and high levels of candidate engagement through industry events, thought leadership, and publications, including [The Heller Report](#), a weekly dispatch that has become a 'must-read' in the profession.

Heller Search is headquartered outside Boston, with regional offices in Chicago and Detroit.

The logo features the word "Heller" in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font. The letter "H" is stylized with a blue square to its left. Below "Heller" is the text "Search Associates" in a smaller, blue sans-serif font.  
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