

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF EVERY COMPANY?

by Tony Leng, Practice Leader and Managing Director, CIO & IT Practice

My simple definition is this: To Find and Keep Customers.

Why is this relevant?

If you are part of senior leadership (SLT) and you don't know where you fit in this definition, you are not adding value, and you are not relevant.

I am a head hunter and focus on CIOs and the companies that sell to them. The role of the CIO is changing from "leverage" (the bottom line) to "customer" (the top line). If your job as CIO is not deeply involved in "finding and keeping customers" – do something quick, because you are not relevant right now.

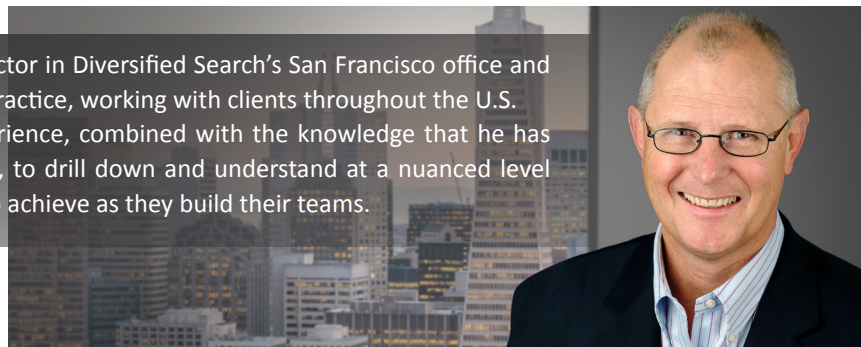
If you are a CIO and don't want to be irrelevant here are some tips:

1. Make sure the leverage stuff works. If the base systems aren't functioning, you won't have credibility and no one will listen to you.
2. Know the business. If I eavesdropped a SLT meeting, would I peg you immediately as the CIO? What I should be hearing is a thoughtful and engaged business executive talking about the "art of the possible". Contributing on all issues; deeply knowledgeable about IT.
3. Don't be boring. Too many CIOs look and act like geeks. Don't drone on about technical stuff – it just puts everyone to sleep. If you want to influence the SLT and Board – be compelling.
4. Be a talent magnet – which presupposes strong leadership (more on this in another blog).
5. Learn all the time. Be curious, connect dots, connect with people, etc.
6. Be authentic. This is for everyone (I will unpack this in another posting).
7. There are other factors – but I am trying to be brief – and not boring!

There is no better time for CIOs to be involved in "finding and keeping customers". The technology is there, and senior leaders want your contribution.

PWC says that CEOs are concerned about 5 things: Security, Mobility, Analytics, Cloud and IoT. If you can't find something in there to help your organization find and keep customers – perhaps you should rethink your own purpose.

Tony Leng is a Managing Director in Diversified Search's San Francisco office and is the leader of the CIO & IT Practice, working with clients throughout the U.S. Tony uses his operating experience, combined with the knowledge that he has gained in the search industry, to drill down and understand at a nuanced level what his clients are seeking to achieve as they build their teams.



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