Chapter IV

Important CIO Features for Successfully Managing IS Sub-functions

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ABSTRACT

The importance of and the fast changes in the CIO’s role in organizations are widely recognized. So is the need for CIOs to acquire the appropriate set of knowledge and managerial skills to lead the organization’s effort in effectively using information technology. This study is based on an extensive survey of the literature addressing the desirable features of
modern CIOs, and the impact of such features on the management performance of the IS department main activities or sub-functions. To empirically test the importance of the CIO features, a questionnaire was mailed to the CEO of 2,000 companies in Northern Italy providing a usable sample of 158 respondents. The direct relationships between the CIO features identified in this study and their managerial performance in the areas of IS department human resources, operational management, strategic management, relationship management, and organizational management were corroborated. The results provide some insights on the desirable features for modern CIOs, which in turn can be useful for CIO recruiting and professional development.

INTRODUCTION

The management of information technology as a strategically important corporate asset has been widely recognized. Commensurately, the Chief Information Officer (CIO) role has been changing dramatically, both in terms of its increasing importance as well as its mission and objectives. The new role of the CIO calls for leading the organization to exploit information to gain a competitive edge and to promote an information culture throughout the firm. Thus, the CIO needs competencies, professional training, and a formative path suitable for the new requirements (Brown & Weitzel, 1988; Synnott, 1987).

As CIO competencies continue to improve, the activities carried out in the Information System (IS) area will be affected by this evolution. This work aims at conducting a detailed analysis of available literature in order to identify the most important competencies that will be needed by a CIO in order to effectively exploit the opportunities offered by new technologies and the Information Systems sub-functions (ISS).

More precisely, the aim of this work is to validate the importance of the CIO role in terms of the relationship between CIO competencies and the ISS performance, while taking into account the possible influence of such a relationship on existing organizational characteristics and the peculiarities of the competitive environment in which companies work.

We have organized the chapter as follows. First, we provide the conceptual framework of the study. This is followed by a discussion of the methodology used to collect data. Next, we present the results of the study. Finally, we provide conclusions and recommendations for managers and researchers.
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