



## ANTEVORTE CONSULTING, LLC

### **Bringing it all together in the Office of the CIO**

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Over the years there has been a struggle to define what constitutes the full scope of Enterprise Architecture. The name implies more of a “thing” than a process or ongoing activity. Various companies have implemented what considered to be some of the components of a comprehensive Enterprise Architecture. These include IT portfolio management, IT investment management, strategic IT planning, IT asset management, and risk assessment. Sometimes, many of these components are assigned to a single Enterprise Architecture team. However, more often, these highly related and critical IT management activities are dispersed to different organizations within (or without) IT. Such an arrangement effectively reduces the value that a close coupling of these critical activities will provide.

How does the forward thinking CIO position these critical activities to make sure that they are properly integrated and accomplished within his/her organization? As CIO responsibilities are shifting from technical and operational to strategic and managerial how does the CIO get critical IT management information in a timely manner? How does the CIO handle the redefinition of his/her job that is now being stretched to encompass strategic, enterprise-wide business goals and objectives? What about the cross functional fire drills that erupt as one crisis is resolved leading to the next big problem?

An approach that is starting to emerge is the establishment of the “Office of the CIO.” Instead of dividing up these critical activities to existing or new departments within IT, forward looking CIOs are building a small tight knit staff that assumes the leadership of the enterprise’s strategic IT planning, IT investment management, IT portfolio management, enterprise architecture, enterprise IT project management, and risk assessment and management. Leveraging established and ad hoc topical committees, these senior IT staffers are then able to insure that all of these critical activities remain tightly coupled and integrated in the overall management of IT at the company.

By consolidating these activities under the Office of the CIO (OCIO), the staff members have a direct pipeline to the CIO and can enforce processes and procedures with the full weight of the CIO behind them. When these activities are distributed to various IT departments and organizations, interdepartmental friction can often work to undermine their effectiveness. This becomes a non-issue with an OCIO. The OCIO staff can work with the interests of the entire enterprise in mind and not be saddled with having to reconcile enterprise priorities with department issues and concerns.

The OCIO also provides the CIO with handy and skilled IT troubleshooters that can be sent forth to tackle the many crises that besiege a CIO. With their regular contacts in IT and the line of business at the company, the OCIO staffers are much more effective in identifying and resolving the sticky issues that often come up in an adaptive forward thinking IT shop.

The OCIO concept fuses together the critical IT management, planning and oversight activities in the enterprise so that the full benefit of their interrelationships can be achieved and leveraged. It also

should greatly simplify the necessary processes for administering and managing these activities since the same small team will be working with them all. In addition, the OCIO, through its consolidation of function, eliminates the need to divide up the various activities into discrete portions between IT departments. In fact, such a division is often so difficult to accomplish that it is not well accomplished. This then leaves both areas of poor to little coverage as well as responsibility overlaps that cause friction and produce inconsistent sub optimized results.

In thinking back over my career in IT, the OCIO concept finally defines a job that I performed for several years at a large (18,000 employees at the start) geographically dispersed independent division of a major aerospace company. We did not have a division CIO and our IT services were provided by a combination of a separate IT services division of the company and “shadow” IT staff that were “non-IT” personnel working in the various major departments of our division. As the shadow IT staffer for the program office (we were basically a single program division), I was moved over to work directly for the division General Manager, through his chief of staff. Our small staff performed many of the OCIO duties outlined in this paper. We had the opportunity to create a division-wide WAN down to the desktop level as well as move into the leveraged use of a division intranet. This may not seem like such a big deal now, but at that time, we had been a highly classified and compartmentalized activity where computer connectivity had been highly restricted. Moving from this enforced disconnected environment into one of integration and communication was a very interesting challenge. It was one that would not have been solved without the synergy that our OCIO team was able to create and manage.

We established and led several oversight committees with key representatives of the various LOB departments. These representatives were the shadow IT leaders as well as key representatives of their respective departments’ IT and business needs. This arrangement allowed us to manage the division’s IT strategy and desktop enterprise architecture through this very active time of connectivity development and transition from the mainframe to distributed desktop services.

Our success validates the OCIO concept, even when it is only partially applied. If taken to its natural extent, the OCIO provides the best organizational arrangement for a successful fully business integrated management of IT at a medium to large size company.



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