Panel discussion for the CIO Association P2P May 30-31, 2024

The theme of the Peer to Peer Forum is "Adaptive Leadership at the Edge of the Future". Adhering to this theme, our panel will discuss the following:

The Green Digital Landscape: Why CIO's need to become enablers of sustainability in the Digital Age

CIO's have been vital enablers during times of major change, building strong digital foundations, resilient infrastructure, championing digital transformation, cloud migration, remote work and digitally driven customer and employee experiences. They sit at the intersection of technology and business strategy, and know how to create business impact. Organizations are calling on those enablement skills to contribute to mitigating the environmental impact of the business.

Opening Remarks by the Moderator to set the stage for the Panel Discussion:

Corporate sustainability is more than a "nice to have". All of our organizations realize the sense of urgency to act because of regulatory pressure, customer requirements, and the acute awareness of environmental impact that the new generations entering the workforce have. Digital sustainability is now clearly becoming part of all of our digital transformation strategies. To make a real impact, sustainability needs the full force of the organization behind it, and the CIO is a pivotal player.

This panel will delve into the CIO's role in leveraging data and technology as an enabler for a sustainable future.

Participants in the Panel:
Jan Bradley - Chief Information Officer, City of Calgary
Nastaran Bisheban - Chief Technology Officer, KFC Canada, Yum Brands!
Kin Lee-Yow - Chief Information Officer, CAA Club Group

Panel Moderator/Participant:
John Comacchio, Senior VP and Chief Information Officer, Teknion Corporation

The Panel will discuss the following:
- Digital sustainability is the process of applying social, economic, and environmental stewardship principles to digital products, services, and data. What approaches are you undertaking to enable "sustainable transformation" within your current and future technology plans?
    - *Central to any business's ability to execute its sustainability strategy is technology. From adopting renewable energy sources, optimizing data centres, deploying Cloud and SaaS, leveraging and deploying smart building systems and promoting remote work, the right technology-driven initiatives can significantly reduce carbon footprints while increasing productivity and cost savings. However, to be able to realize technology's full potential as a sustainability enabler, technology investments need to be aligned with carbon reduction goals and strategy.*

- As the sustainable transformation journey evolves for the CIO, it is also necessary for CIOs and other IT leaders to not just be involved in the ESG reporting process, but to strategically integrate IT into the overall process. How do you see CIO performance metrics being tied to the sustainability of the IT organization?

- How can CIO's improve data collection, analysis, insights and reporting to improve environmental sustainability transparency?

- The Gen Z generation has grown up with both powerful technology and a keen awareness of environmental impact. How will their perspectives as the new data scientists and stakeholders shape the future of sustainable computing?

- To deliver on the promise of sustainable technology, CIO's must work in close collaboration with other executives to identify the technologies that will help their company achieve its ESG goals. In your opinion, does this reflect yet another turning point in how your organization interacts with you as the CIO?

- As we look forward, how do you see sustainability having an impact in your industry/public sector and how does this shape the future clients/consumers/citizens of your organization and how you service them?

- As a technology leader, what are your biggest challenges when it comes to driving a sustainable business?

    - *Some food for thought: CIOs must be proactive in progressing these organizational shifts, as business leaders will continue to lean on them to ensure company technologies are providing solutions without contributing to an environmental problem. While in years past this was not an active concern, the information and communications technology (ICT) sector has recently become a larger source of climate-related impact. Producing only 1.5% of CO_2 in 2007, the industry has now risen to 4% today and will potentially reach 14% by 2040.*

- From the vantage point of the CIO, what is your view that the sustainability agenda is actually driving and in some cases improving future services and business?

- As a CIO, when considering future employment opportunities would you see it as a priority to understand the sustainability agenda of an organization?

- In closing, what advice would you give to other senior IT Leaders about this important topic?

Some articles of interest:

https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/sustainability/cloud

https://www.cio.com/article/403402/how-cios-can-unite-sustainability-and-technology.html#:~:text=Fortunately%2C%20CIOs%20can%20course%2Dcorrect,of%20technology%2C%20not%20an%20afterthought.

https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2023/08/03/why-the-cio-is-key-to-driving-business-sustainability/?sh=716e8e52731e

https://www.mckinsey.com/de/~/media/mckinsey/business%20functions/mckinsey%20digital/our%20insights/the%20green%20it%20revolution%20a%20blueprint%20for%20cios%20to%20combat%20climate%20change/the-green-it-revolution-a-blueprint-for-cios-to-combat-climate-change.pdf

https://www.rackspace.com/solve/cio-sustainability-superpower#:~:text=Using%20sustainability%20as%20a%20superpower,the%20world%20for%20the%20better.

https://www.cio.com/article/416555/9-ways-it-leaders-can-impact-sustainability-initiatives.html

https://be-ready.cio.com/hybrid-and-multi-cloud/running-green-being-green-the-cios-field-guide-to-sustainability/