Action Plan for HCT CIO

Action plan for first two weeks

Prior to the CIO joining the company the following list of documents should be prepared and waiting for the CIO's arrival. Some of the documents may not exist and the CIO should be informed if they are not available. The documents are to assist in orientation and allow the CIO to get a high level assessment of the current status of the company and the IT department.

The objective of the first two weeks is to focus on gathering information pertaining to organization of the technology staff, hardware and system software that is being used, reviewing existing and planned projects, and identifying capital needs for investments or maintaining normal growth. This includes reviewing the operating budget, personnel, hardware and software maintenance agreements, contracts with vendors, and technical management strength.

Ideally, the following items will be documented and available for review before onsite arrival or upon arrival to expedite the process.

Deliverable: A high level assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the technology state of the company based on the available information.

1. Organization
   - Organization charts – both company and IT organizations
   - Employee list – name, position title, expertise
   - Process for handling change requests (new development versus maintenance)
   - Copy of a site disaster recovery plan

2. Hardware
   - Type of CPUs supported and how many
   - Life expectancy
   - Replacement strategy

3. System Software
   - Operating systems supported
   - Application development tools
   - Database management software
   - Security
   - Life expectancy
   - Replacement Strategy

4. Business Applications Software
   - Primary business applications
   - Support (Internal, external vendor, etc,)
   - Number of users supported by the application
   - Stability and capacity for growth
   - Life expectancy
   - Replacement strategy

5. Existing and Planned Projects
   - Large-scale projects – re-engineering, replacement, new systems, etc.
   - Mid-range enhancements
   - Maintenance backlog
   - New business development needs
   - Productivity enhancements

6. Operational and Capital Budgets
   - Investments needed to maintain normal growth
   - Major investments needed
   - Evaluate operating budget as a percentage of revenue
   - Evaluate technical expense required to support each business service

7. Application Specific Information. This should be completed for each major system.
   - A diagram of the database structure (database schema or entity relationship diagram). Keep it high level.
   - System level documentation that describes the operational flow and the interaction of the subsystems and programs.
   - What programming or process control languages are being used and why?
   - Provide documentation of current programming standards and a count of how many programs adhere to the standard. Describe how changes to the programming standards are implemented.
   - Describe the Release Management System used to track versions of the application software.
   - Define the new employee orientation process and how long it would take for a new employee with five years experience to be fully capable of maintaining the existing application without assistance.
   - Describe operational or database recovery procedures if a system fails in the middle of the day.
   - How do customers access the system? Network, dial up, Internet, leased line, etc)
   - How many concurrent users can the system safely accommodate and still have an acceptable response time? What is considered an acceptable response time?
   - Describe systems and application level documentation that is available.
   - Does the capability exist to simulate a fully loaded system with documentation of the results that identify bottlenecks or limitations?

- Define the technical limitations of the system and ways to remove the limitations. What changes are being made to remove the limitations?
- Describe the software change request process.
- How many software requests have been submitted in the last year? How many were enhancements versus software errors?
- Rate the performance of the current staff. How many requests were completed on time and with little or no rework due to errors?
- Provide a list of key features the software application needs to remain competitive or keep the client base satisfied.
- What specific changes should be made to the application if resources and time were not an issue?

8. Status of where the company is today. Senior management needs to identify the needs, problems, critical initiatives, and key priorities that need immediate attention. At a minimum, please address the status on the following areas.
   - IT support
   - Technical services
   - Network connectivity
   - Security concerns
   - E-mail
   - Uptime (system availability)
   - Internet/intranet capability & access
   - Business applications
   - Systems reliability and availability
   - Feature/function
   - Technology gaps
   - IT track record of delivering new projects on time and in a quality manner
   - User perspective of the IT department
   - Strength and maturity of the current IT staff
   - Strength and maturity of other department managers

Action plan for first 90 days

The objective of the first 90 days is to complete a more detailed assessment, provide troubleshooting in areas of crises and develop technology strategies for 6 to 12 months and 12 to 24 months.
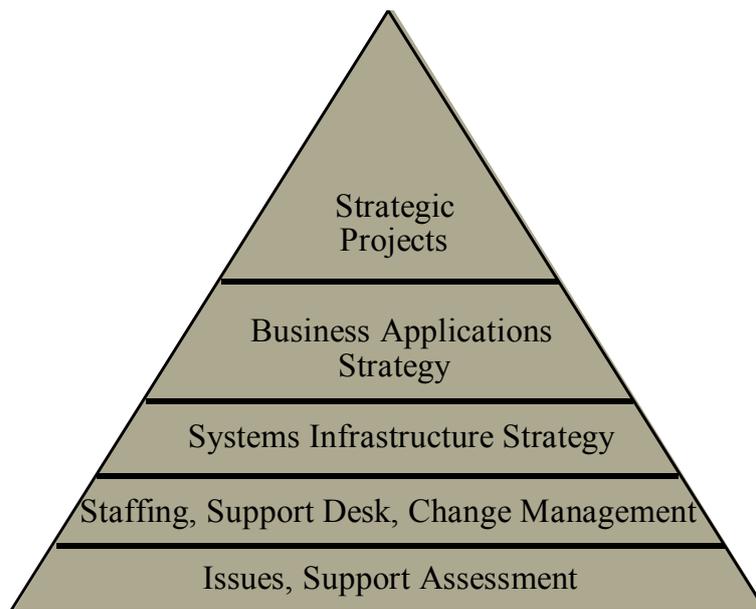
The assessment will consist of three different reviews:

1. Executive Review – This will consist of gaining a global understanding of how the company views itself and to formulate a picture of what the company wants to achieve.

2. Department Review – The objective of this review is to understand the specific needs, challenges, problems, and capabilities each department has related to technology. The review will cover current and future needs. This will allow the CIO to become familiar with the "customer". In order to communicate effectively in the future it will be important to understand the individual strengths and weaknesses of other areas of the company. This also allows the CIO to assess how well each department is positioned to implement new changes and whether the department is in sync with the business objectives as outlined during the executive review.

3. External Client Review – The objective of this review is similar to the Department Review. Assessment of the external client needs, satisfaction issues, etc. are critical to fully assess whether or not the IT organization is focused on the appropriate issues.

4. IT Department Review – The objective of this review is to assess the technology organization and compare the perspective of the technology department to the rest of the company. Many times the perspectives are different and it is the job of the CIO to quantify the differences, determine why they exist and identify measures that will move the groups toward common perspectives.

Deliverable - A more detailed assessment of the company that outlines the business objectives of the company, quantifies the current issues and defines the needs of the future. The CIO's vision and direction for the company's technology focus will be defined based on the assessment. Key goals will be outlined in the vision statement. Each will goal will consists of several high level points:

1. Major objective to be accomplished
2. Key projects
3. Major risks and/or challenges
4. General sense of cost implications
5. Rough timeframes

The key goals will be determined by the technology foundation that is in place today. Failure to have a firm foundation jeopardizes the success of meeting key goals. The graphic below visualizes the layers that need to be in place to have a firm technology foundation to support the business goals. The strategies for the next 6 to 12 months and 12 to 24 months will be defined. These will be periodically refined as the CIO learns more about the company, issues, and strengths/weaknesses of the IT organization.

Strategic
Projects

Business Applications
Strategy

Systems Infrastructure Strategy

Staffing, Support Desk, Change Management

Issues, Support Assessment

CIO Assessment Executive Review		
ISSUE/ITEM	**SOURCE**	**COMMENTS**
Senior Executive Perspectives		
Company mission	CEO, Pres.,CFO, COO	Primary purpose (products & services) of the company to achieve stockholder value.
Company Objectives – next 6 months	CEO, Pres.,CFO, COO	Key initiatives – immediate and in progress
Company Objectives – next 18-24 months	CEO, Pres.,CFO, COO	Key initiatives – planned
IT Performance Report Card	CEO, Pres.,CFO, COO	Senior management's perspective of how well the IT department is doing to support the mission and objectives of the company.
Company Growth Plan – 12,24,36 months	CEO, Pres.,CFO, COO	Planned or expected growth and the manner in which the growth will occur (higher sales, new products, acquisitions, etc.)
Company organization chart	CEO, Pres.,CFO, COO	
Capital expenditure process	CEO, Pres.,CFO, COO	How are capital items over $1,000 identified, budgeted, and approved?
Budget process & current budget	CEO, Pres.,CFO, COO	Company level & IT with key assumptions.
Process to define/approve major initiatives	CEO, Pres.,CFO, COO	How are major project initiatives decided on and by whom? Once targeted, what is the process to execute?
Financial picture (last 12 months)	CEO, Pres.,CFO, COO	12-month trend and Year-to-Date actual to budget for the company and for the IT department. Identify areas of the company having challenges and why.
IT budget	CEO, Pres.,CFO, COO	Current detailed budget and P&L reports with supporting assumptions backup (staff list with salaries, etc.)
Key departments, mission, state of each & managers	CEO, Pres.,CFO, COO	Senior management's perspective. Focus on primary contributors to the business plan and their IT needs.
Immediate IT needs	CEO, Pres.,CFO, COO	Senior management's perspective on critical IT needs.
Major challenges	CEO, Pres.,CFO, COO	

CIO Assessment Company Department Review		
Department Head Perspectives		
ISSUE/ITEM	**SOURCE**	**COMMENTS**
Department Mission	Dept. Mgrs.	Primary mission to support the company's business plan
Department Objectives – next 6 months	Dept. Mgrs.	Key projects in progress or about to start
Department Objectives – next 18-24 months	Dept. Mgrs.	Key projects expected to start and complete next 2 years
Growth plans	Dept. Mgrs.	Plans to expand based upon understanding of company plans
IT Report Card	Dept. Mgrs.	

Process used in getting IT support
    - major initiatives
    - programming enhancements
    - user equipment & tools
	Dept. Mgrs.	

Use of data processing services	Dept. Mgrs.	Services provided, status, and needs
Department organization chart	Dept. Mgrs.	Size and distribution
Key department staff and role	Dept. Mgrs.	
Department challenges	Dept. Mgrs.	Non-technology related
IT support challenges	Dept. Mgrs.	
IT needs (new technology, updated applications, equipment, day to day support, predictability, etc.)	Dept. Mgrs.	

CIO Assessment IT Department Review		
ISSUE/ITEM	**SOURCE**	**COMMENTS**
Department Mission	Key IT staff	Primary mission to support the company's business plan
Department Objectives & projects – next 6 months	Key IT staff	Key projects in progress or about to start
Department Objectives & projects– next 18-24 months	Key IT staff	Key projects expected to start and complete next 2 years
Understanding of company plans	IT staff	Plans to expand based upon understanding of company plans
IT Report Card – self assessment	IT staff	
Process used in getting IT support - major initiatives - programming enhancements - user equipment & tools	IT staff	
Use of data processing services	IT staff	Services provided, status, and needs
Department organization chart	IT staff	Size and distribution
Key department staff and roles	IT staff	
Department challenges	IT staff	Non-technology related
IT support challenges	IT staff	
IT needs (new technology, updated applications, equipment, day to day support, predictability, etc.)	IT staff	
Change management process	IT staff	
Support desk structure and process - infrastructure - business applications	IT staff	
Programming backlog	IT staff	
Programming update release process	IT staff	
Training needs	IT staff	
Expertise gaps & bench in critical areas	IT staff	
Backup & recovery status	IT staff	
Security status	IT staff	