



# The CIO's Blueprint: Streamlining IT for Business Transformation

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Hosted at the legendary Royal Albert Hall, The HotTopics Food for Thought experience, in collaboration with Tata Communications, brought together CIOs and technology leaders to exchange bold ideas for optimising IT estates and driving transformational business change.

The event began with an inspiring tour of the historic venue, creating the perfect atmosphere for vibrant networking against a backdrop of timeless significance.



The discussion, moderated by HotTopics Editor Peter Stojanovic and Editorial and Strategy Director Doug Drinkwater, began with a question of influence and accountability.

This session was under Chatham House Rule and attended by the following representatives:



**David Codington**  
Interim IT Director (CIO)  
**DLA Piper**



**Dinesh Mohan**  
Global Head for Digital & Technology  
**Expleo Group**



**Graham Thomson**  
CISO  
**Irwin Mitchell**



**Hannah Kenny**  
Head of Digital Transformation  
**Shell Energy Europe**



**Jephtha Allen**  
Senior Director - Head of Digital Infrastructure Advisory  
**CBRE**



**Kshitij Kumar**  
Chief Data and AI Officer  
**DataHat**



**Matthew Taylor**  
Partner, Technology Strategy and Transformation Leader  
**EY**



**Neeraj Shah**  
Senior Program Director - Oasis  
**Allianz**



**Phil Scully**  
VP Digital & EMEA Technology  
**RS Group plc**



**Ross Hodges**  
Global Head of Emerging Technology and AI program lead  
**Cushman & Wakefield**



**Steve Westgarth**  
Global Head of Engineering and Architecture  
**Haleon**



**Doug Drinkwater**  
Editorial and Strategy Director  
**HotTopics**



**Peter Stojanovic**  
Editor  
**HotTopics**

## Changing the Narrative

***How do you see IT's position within organisations against a backdrop of economic difficulties, geopolitical tensions, increasingly tech-savvy businesses, and a race to deliver value and a return on investment?***

The consensus was that in the fast-paced realm of technology and business transformation, it's clear that IT is grappling with a significant branding issue. The narrative echoed by all was that of an expectation gap: while businesses envision a future driven by innovation, the IT function at times still remains fragmented, siloed from boardroom decisions that seem to be gathering more and more voices—but without the perspectives of those actually driving the innovation and technological changes both needed and desired by the wider business.

The need to transition from an "us versus them" mentality to a unified, one-team approach was agreed upon by all. This was cemented by the necessity to refer to each executive's organisation as "our business," opposed to "the business." Unanimously, communication was the common skill set that all agreed needed to be developed, championed, and enforced if true alignment for business transformation is to be achieved.



## A Balancing Act

This led to the question around operational efficiency. ***How are we delivering a modernised IT estate that enables business transformation and efficiencies in terms of resources and cost, while keeping an eye on creeping technical debt?***

Technology investments are often scrutinised due to slow processes, but streamlining efforts across teams can tackle multiple challenges. There's no one-size-fits-all solution; think of it like moving houses—deciding what to keep and what to leave behind can be daunting in IT.

Migrating data effectively is a key concern. Many companies simply transfer everything as-is, allowing outdated systems to persist and creating unnecessary clutter. The fear of losing potentially useful old data hampers the streamlining process.

Additionally, the shift to cloud technology can lead to spiralling costs if not managed wisely. Initial promises of efficiency can fade without a solid data strategy. Decision-makers often struggle to grasp the vast amounts of data they've accumulated, complicating the process of determining what to retain. With nearly 478 exabytes of data generated daily and disconnected projects leading to siloed systems, effective data management has never been more crucial. According to Gartner, 85% of AI projects in 2023 failed, primarily due to these silos and a lack of prepared data.



## Future-proofing the Enterprise for Business Transformation

The talk around AI naturally progressed the conversation to future-proofing IT.

***In an ever-evolving digital landscape, how do we continually evolve the capabilities of the IT function and estate to deliver what the business requires for effective business transformation?***

The subject of communication became a prominent factor of consideration once again. Effective communication and mutual understanding between IT and business leaders are essential for crafting a cohesive strategy for driving the needs of the business forward.

Asking the fundamental question—“Why do you need this tool?”—is imperative. Business leaders must focus on overarching strategies that drive tangible business outcomes. However, understanding these requirements from the outset is challenging.

Historically, IT has excelled at understanding technology but often struggled to convey its value to the business. However, the narrative is shifting. Businesses are demanding technology solutions to address specific needs, transforming the dialogue from “build it and they will come” to “we need you to build X or Y based on our strategic goals.”

The goal is to make technology comprehensible to the business and vice versa. IT professionals must be equipped with the skills to communicate in business terms, emphasising the importance of understanding market dynamics, customer engagement, and competitive positioning.



## In Conclusion

*As we look to the future, IT leaders must adopt a framework that aligns product management, engineering, and technical leadership. This "leadership triangle" should serve as a guiding principle for every team, fostering accountability and clear ownership of projects.*

*By reinforcing these connections, CIOs and their teams can measure success not just through immediate gains but by establishing long-term goals that reflect the commitment to continuous improvement.*

*Ultimately, it's about ensuring that IT not only has a seat at the table but also plays an integral role in shaping the future of business transformation. Through strategic communication, collaboration, and a shared vision, the function can redefine the narrative of IT from a branding problem to a powerhouse of innovation and business success.*

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HotTopics and Tata Communications are proud to launch the **Hyperconnected Business** initiative, a tailored community for CIOs, CTOs, and senior executives to explore modern digital infrastructure. To read more about Hyperconnected Business, click [here](#).