

A close-up photograph of a hand shifting a gear. The gear is silver and has the words 'VALUE' and 'COST' printed on it. The hand is positioned to shift the gear from 'COST' to 'VALUE'. The background is dark and out of focus.

# *Shifting Focus Shifting Results*

A Joint Research Initiative by the  
CIO Executive Council & Capability Management

September 2010



# Executive Summary

The CIO Executive Council and Capability Management partnered to research organisational factors that reduce the potential of Information Technology (IT) projects to deliver measurable value. This was based on interviews with Chief Information Officers (CIOs) from many industries. The findings create a clear call-to-action for CIOs.

## CIOs need to act...

Most CIOs (92%) acknowledge that projects dependent upon IT continue to perform poorly, often with unmeasured business value. The majority (72%) also acknowledge their organisations perceive project delivery as an 'IT capability' and, as a result, IT is blamed for the poor results. CIOs need to address this predicament by refocusing their projects to improve measurable value.

## ...to shift the asset and account focus...

Project delivery is an end-to-end process, yet organisational lines are dominating the focus of IT and the Business. Most IT business cases (82%) are designed only to deliver IT assets, and 64% focus primarily on measuring financial benefits. Many (66%) simply automatically book financial benefits to account, irrespective of actual results. No wonder almost half (46%) of CIOs consider their current business case a destroyer of value.

Both the Business and IT employ traditional standards in their own competency area to discharge what they perceive to be their part of the process — but the sum of the parts is not whole. Indeed, there is a value 'hole' or 'gap', and IT must resort to selling its accomplishments since most (82%) businesses do not have a formal process to govern benefits realisation. This does not work. CIOs need a better way forward.

## ...to a value focus by cutting across organisational lines with projects...

To fill this gap, we need to complement the asset and account approach with a focus on value from our projects. Value need not be subjective or qualitative,

relying on perception to assess. Value driven projects that specifically demonstrate performance allow the CIO to rely on facts to prove IT's value contribution. It will help reverse the current number (60%) of projects pushed by IT, but most critically, equip the majority (72%) of Project Investment Committees that have to primarily rely on cost data and other efficiency measures.

## ...to avoid yesterday's performance being repeated tomorrow...

Twenty years of improving project practices and standards have not led to improved value delivery. Traditional approaches rely on structure in the form of standards and frameworks. If these were working, why are the results still so poor? The (out of focus) problem is business project delivery processes: they require enhancement to drive the specificity necessary to measure value from IT.

## ...and help elevate their seat at the executive table.

To improve their executive position CIOs need to elevate project practices into a corporate capability, not simply aggregate data from them. This will make the whole greater than the sum of the parts — assisting a reposition for roughly the two-thirds of CIOs who report to somebody other than the CEO.

**Value driven projects are the vehicle to overcome the limited business contribution that has held progress back, improve the measured performance of IT teams, and address perception with reality.**

This whitepaper equips the CIO to have three critical conversations:

### The CEO Conversation

*Shift the focus of success from IT to the Business*

**Equip** the Business to appreciate that projects start and end in the Business.

**Enable** the owners of the investments to be equipped to govern the value from them.

**Empower** the CIO, as owner of IT, to create the right perception of IT by measuring the business value reality from refocused projects.

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**Own →  
OwnABILITY**

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### The CFO Conversation

*Shift the focus from cost management to performance management*

**Equip** the Business to understand that they ultimately determine the 'value'; IT can only determine the 'cost'.

**Enable** a change in focus from accounting for cost to accountability for value.

**Empower** the Business to use controls to ensure success, not just to avoid failure.

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**Account →  
AccountABILITY**

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### The Business Unit Head Conversation

*Shift the focus from tools, methodologies and competencies to business capability*

**Equip** the investment committees to focus on 'can we do it?' in addition to simply 'can we afford it?'.

**Enable** a focus on delivering business change and outcomes, not on delivering technology. Realise that no business change delivers no business benefit. No benefit, no value.

**Empower** your project teams to think, plan and engage in business, not technology, terms.

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**Do →  
DoABILITY**

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# Preface



## Vince Gill

Partner

Value. Is there a more popular term in IT today? Is there a more widely defined term in IT today? Probably not.

This joint research with the CIO Executive Council draws on the experience of CIOs across many industries, providing statistics and insights to support the overdue conversations necessary to challenge the status quo. A shift in focus to value driven projects will help both parties who wear the brunt of the blame today — CIOs and project managers — be more successful. Arming the CIO with performance facts, to avoid reliance on perception; arming project managers with direction to help fix organisational issues, to avoid joining the historical project statistics.

Projects are already being undertaken — let's utilise them to put a clear definition and measure on 'value'.



## Jed Simms

Partner

Project and value delivery is a process or, rather, a suite of processes; but too often we have tried to solve project delivery problems through structures and tools. This has not worked.

Structures and tools have a role, but this is within your organisation's overall project delivery capability. 'Capability' is an organisational attribute that includes competent people (trained and experienced), effective processes (including all of the business project delivery processes), appropriate measures (value over cost, for example) and informed business leadership.

This research shows that poor project performance (which is widely acknowledged) is, in part, driven by poor business processes. Increasing project manager or business analyst competencies or restructuring the governance committees does not measurably improve project results.

Instead, you have to refocus onto the business, on developing your organisation's business project delivery capability in all of its dimensions. You can start this by having the conversations recommended in this whitepaper.

## Acknowledgement

We greatly appreciate the significant contribution of all participants. We remain committed to conducting research regularly to further develop insights for our clients.

Capability Management is proud to have partnered with the CIO Executive Council.

## How to use this Whitepaper

This whitepaper supports quick or in-depth reading. To gain a quick understanding, read the first page at the beginning of each Chapter. These are then structured into three to four topics, supported by multiple data points and CIO insights.

Further supporting material is available from [www.capability.com.au](http://www.capability.com.au) and the CIO Executive Council Global Members Portal.



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## *The IT project predicament*

**The CIO generally gets the blame for the poor performance of IT projects, so instead of accepting the poor perception, they should extend the approach.**

IT project performance remains measured as poor, but worse, is still perceived as an 'IT capability' thus inferring that the poor performance is attributable to the CIO. If the current approach to improving project management and IT practitioner skills alone was working, why are the results no better? We need to do more. Until CIOs lead a shift they will continue to be held accountable for poor project results that are only partly within their control.



## Background

The CIO Executive Council ([www.council.cio.com](http://www.council.cio.com)) and Capability Management ([www.capability.com.au](http://www.capability.com.au)) partnered to conduct research into the impediments to generating value from IT projects.

Many past articles, thought leadership publications and surveys indicate the impression of projects dependent upon IT is rarely positive. With so much continued investment and effort expended trying to improve project delivery, the results should have improved!

This research is different. It does not (re)test the performance of IT projects, but researches some specific organisational inhibitors that reduce IT projects' ability to deliver measurable value. It then provides a basis to help CIOs advance.

Leveraging the experience of IT leaders we tested the premise:

*Do organisations create an environment to maximise 'value' from their 'IT' projects? Is value stifled through policies, standards, or simply the wrong focus?*

Our research assessed the:

- Project Environment – how are projects defined, set up and managed by both IT and the Business?
- IT Positioning – what are the formal and informal aspects about IT, and the CIO specifically, that reflect the focus of IT and the business environment in which it exists?
- Organisational Factors – what are the policies, processes and behaviours that impact how projects are conducted?

Capability Management conducted face-to-face interviews with more than 40 CIO-level leaders in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide for 12 months from July 2009. This approach captures the insights from their experience, and ensures organisational context is applied in their answers.

### Value

*We define 'value' to include the outcomes, benefits and (quantified) value plus the project's strategic contribution, the meeting of the reasons for doing a project and avoidance of any downsides of not doing the project.*

*Other definitions are provided in the Glossary.*

### IT Projects

*We have employed the phrase 'IT Project' to represent projects that are dependent upon the use of Information Technology. Organisationally, the CIO will typically hold responsibility for key components of such projects.*

*We recognise the challenges raised in this whitepaper are not unique to 'IT'. Operational management and project management differences apply in many contexts – we have simply narrowed the research to IT for the purposes of the CIO.*

## Poor IT project performance is acknowledged

Our approach was simply to validate how CIOs receive the historical findings within project performance surveys and papers by many organisations (including Standish, IBM, Gartner, PricewaterhouseCoopers, KPMG and Fujitsu) and academics. Our summary of these reports is that project delivery *efficiency is poor, effectiveness is unknown*:

- **Efficiency:** Inconsistent to poor results on efficiency measures such as 'on time, on budget', with some evolving to include 'to specification'. It was not easy to compare surveys since the research methods varied, but the interpretation and themes were consistent — IT projects too often compromise budget, schedule or scope; and
- **Effectiveness:** Unknown or indirect results on effectiveness measures such as business benefits from a specific project. Most authors identified a growing preference or trend towards effectiveness measures like benefits, but also the many gaps in the processes, disciplines and subsequently the data made it difficult to effectively measure effectiveness!

Add to any research that the media occasionally make visible failures of massive IT-dependent projects in the public or private sectors, and the generally negative perception is understood.

To our surprise, an overwhelming **92% of CIOs agree with past IT project performance survey findings**. They are considered to accurately reflect current performance, with a few CIOs commenting that the press will sensationalise bad news about an 'easy target' like IT.

Whereas technology performance has increased exponentially over the past 20 years, project performance using this technology, seemingly, has not.

*"If anything I think they may be understated."*  
CIO, Entertainment Organisation

*"Historically, IT starts from behind."*  
CIO, Logistics Provider



## Three-quarters of CIOs believe IT is seen as being responsible

What was more alarming is that CIOs also acknowledge that this poor performance is perceived as being an IT responsibility. **Some 72% of CIOs felt their organisation believed project delivery is an 'IT capability'** rather than a 'Business capability'.

Extending the issue with perception, 75% of CIOs agreed that *one wrong will undo two rights* — one piece of bad news can take away many good efforts.

*"The rights are assumed."  
CIO, IT Service Provider*

*"True, although one wrong probably undoes more than just two rights."  
CIO, Engineering Services Provider*



## Our approach to understand this predicament

To investigate this difficult position for CIOs, we need to:

- **Understand focus:** What the two parties in question — 'IT' and the 'Business' — focus on. Like many others, we dislike the 'us' and 'them' language that remains so popular; a symptom of how IT is perceived. There should not be a concept of 'the' Business, only 'our' Business. In this whitepaper, however, 'the' Business represents all organisational functions outside IT; and
- **Understand value:** Many authors have expressed different definitions of value, most of which include a large qualitative or subjective component (e.g. relying on expectations or perceptions). We focus our definition of 'value' for this whitepaper on the delivery of measurable project value in the Business (since IT enables and supports the Business to improve its results through projects).

Project value is determined<sup>i</sup> by:

- i. How well and completely the **project is delivered**. Does it enable the delivery of the business benefits? We look at the focus of IT in Chapter 2; and
- ii. How well and completely the **Business leverages** the project outputs and outcomes to realise the available benefits. Does the Business pursue and realise the available value? We look at the focus of the Business in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 introduces the gaps that explain the sustained poor performance.

Finally, Chapter 5 provides some guidance for the CIO and Project Practitioners to improve performance.



## Your approach to address this predicament

The findings and implications in this whitepaper will resonate to varying degrees. The topics are inherently connected, so where you start should not matter. What is critical is to start the recommended conversations and actions better equipped than you were previously.

# ***If you don't start the conversation, who will?***



## *Where does IT focus?*

**IT focuses on building (and maintaining) IT assets efficiently — and IT hopes the Business will use these assets effectively.**

When the Business abdicates (much of) its role to IT, IT inevitably reduces its risk by limiting its perspective to delivering 'assets' — something they can control. The focus on 'assets' influences CIOs to prepare their people by standardising how they work, and spending more time than they would like in technical management and delivery.

To understand the focus of IT, we considered:

- What the CIO intends to do;
- What the CIO actually does by considering time allocation; and
- How the CIO prepares IT for projects.



# Leading the Business to new (enabling) assets

IT projects are driven by IT to build IT assets/deliverables.

## The majority just 'do' enabling technology

CIO participants indicated that **82% of business cases are designed to deliver IT assets (deliverables/products)**, with only 18% also targeting business outcomes or future ways of doing business.

Previous research found that only about 20% of benefits come purely from the implementation of a system (asset). Therefore, the dominant focus on asset delivery compromises potential business value achievement.

In the business case, **70% of IT projects use an infrastructure or foundation style justification**. Such arguments typically claim they 'enable' the Business, which may or may not utilise the resultant asset or infrastructure as intended.

## Two-thirds of projects pushed from IT

IT is still creating more demand than it receives with the CIOs, on average, reporting that **60% of projects are pushed** (IT suggestions to the Business), and only 40% are pulled (Business demands on IT).

This statistic suggests that less than half of projects originate with business change as the driver (as opposed to technology impact). This ratio needs to be inverted since business change is necessary for business benefit and value.

*"We used to term 100% of the foundation as potential 'capability' builds. Situation is so bad, I now call it remediation."*

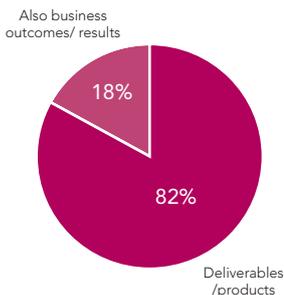
*CIO, Educational Institution*

*"Vendors do play a role. Perhaps they play more than they should. IT should understand the Business needs."*

*CIO, Large Transport Organisation*

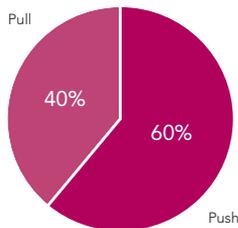
### Deliver Assets – By Definition

Do business cases focus on defining deliverables/assets or business outcomes/results?



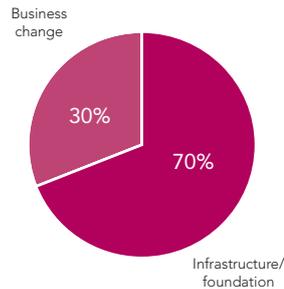
### Push versus Pull

What is the balance of projects that are 'Pushed' by IT or 'Pulled' by the Business?



### Infrastructure or Change

What volume of projects take an 'infrastructure' or 'foundation' argument versus 'business change'?



## Coping with the missing business involvement

Many businesses do not appear to know how to incorporate IT into their (strategic) plans, continuing to see IT as a separate entity. IT tries to address the deficiency by pushing ideas for new systems/assets/infrastructure, but this just perpetuates the IT-Business gap. When isolated from the Business, IT's focus is constrained to mainly building (IT) assets. This inherently limits the business value that can be delivered.

Consider a simple analogy. The majority of IT's current project focus is to produce an asset — the equivalent of a 'brick making factory'. To generate value, the focus of the project needs to be extended (with the Business) to ensure the project delivers a value-generating asset, i.e. a 'factory making bricks'. Only by redefining projects to provide business benefits and value, and not just 'enablement', can IT increase the value it delivers to the Business.





## CIO's time dominated by asset delivery

The discussions we had with the CIO participants frequently raised frustrations about what they believe they should be doing, in contrast to how they actually find themselves spending their time.

### IT operations ranked #1

The *State of the CIO*<sup>ii</sup> asked Australian CIOs to nominate five activities that best characterise how they spend their time. The highest ranking activity for 2010 was **'improving IT operations and system performance'**. This was effectively the same focus as their peers in the United States.

*"No one does benefits realisation - only in a lightweight way. Perhaps the wrong way to look at it - IT presents themselves as large factories to build IT assets."*  
CIO, Utility

#### Extract from *State of the CIO*

	2008	2010
Improving IT operations/systems performance	3	1
Aligning IT initiatives with business goals	1	2
Cultivating the IT/business partnership	2	3
Leading change efforts	4	4
Implementing new systems and architecture	5	5
Cost control/expense management	9	6
Driving business innovation	11	7
Negotiating with IT vendors	-	8
Developing and refining business strategy	8	9
Redesigning business processes	7	10

#### Table of top activities - 2008/2010

Source: IDG Communications (Australia) Pty. Ltd. The Australian State of the CIO Study, 2010

Meanwhile, other surveys highlight that the CIO's ambition is more strategic. For example, KPMG's<sup>iii</sup> recent report states that 80% of CIOs put 'IT Value' in their top three most important trends.

*“Not even maintaining - on the ‘fix’ stage.”*  
 CIO, State Government Agency

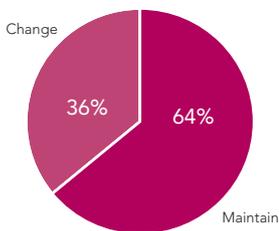
## Half of CIO project time spent on delivery activities

Some 48% of a CIO’s project time is focused on asset delivery, but many of the CIOs who participated in our research aspire to leave delivery to the team and concentrate on pre and post delivery activities with the Business.

More broadly, the Future–State CIO Model<sup>iv</sup> represents a distribution of a CIO’s total time. About one in five CIOs are considered *Business Strategists* (focused on enterprise strategy, innovation and differentiation) under this model.

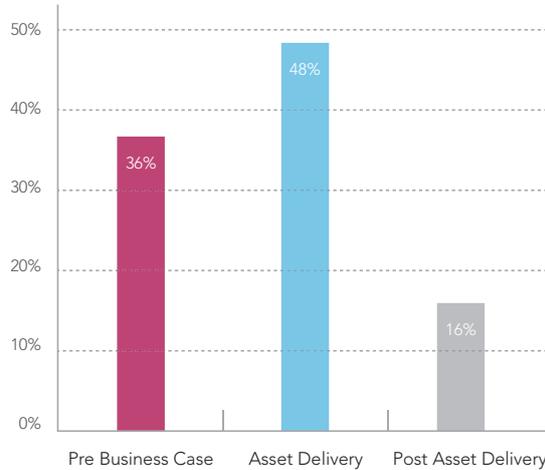
### Change and Maintain the Game

Balance of projects that ‘Change the game’ or ‘Maintain the game’



### CIO Project Time

Where do you (CIO) spend your time across a typical project lifecycle?



*“Strong team and CTO make the technology work.”*  
 CIO, Manufacturer

## Leading the organisation two days per week

On average, 42% of a CIO’s time was spent as a ‘business leader’ and 58% was spent ‘managing IT’.

Many CIOs felt the need to explain why they spent so much time ‘managing IT’; comments regarding their inherited situation were popular, such as being new to the role and in a rebuild mode, or dealing with poor sourcing arrangements.



## Two-thirds of projects 'maintain the game'

In general, CIOs considered **nearly two-thirds (64%) of the IT project portfolio as 'maintaining the game', and 36% as 'changing the game'**.

In considering the maintenance of IT assets, numerous CIOs commented on how much 'break/fix' occupies their resources (e.g. 'we will fix, maintain, and if we have time, change'). In summary, it appears that **half the time of CIOs is spent in operational or technology asset delivery mode.**

*"Like a duck on a pond, we keep the visible stuff looking good, but we are working really hard underneath to keep that façade. If we could work less, we could then focus on value-adding activities."*  
CIO, Major Utility

## The concept of 'IT value'

IT value is often positioned as subjective and based on perception. It needn't be so for projects, at least. CIOs need to raise awareness that the Business ultimately determines the 'value' and IT determines the cost.

A CIO's time allocation needs to be adequate and sufficiently flexible to facilitate this understanding, since no specific proportion is right for everybody.

## CIOs prepare team by standardising

The CIO prepares IT for projects with a strong (internal) efficiency focus — standardising 'how' IT activities are done. Many still like using the people-process-technology phrase, so we sought insights into all three.

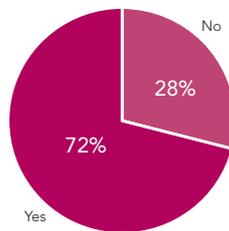
### People: keep standardising how they work

**Some 72% believe standards-based training of Project Managers does help** them do their job (28% of CIOs do not!). Conversations highlighted the merit of standardising, however, **100% of the CIOs believe that the standards do not help define 'why' the project is done or 'what' the project needs to deliver.** The answer to these is seemingly assumed to be clear and correct.

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#### Training PMs

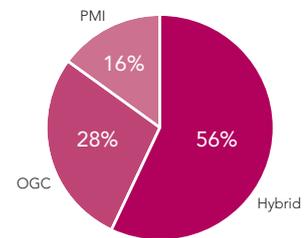
Do you believe training project managers helps?



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#### Corporate Methodology Base

What is the base for your project delivery methodologies?



Organisations face two implications:

- When to involve Project Practitioners (including Project Managers) in the process — often considered too late by the practitioners; and
- How to equip them to help specifically answer the most important questions — What are we doing, and why?



## Process: local over global standards preferred

There has been exponential growth in standards-based training in recent years, but **just over half of surveyed organisations (56%) guide their projects with a 'hybrid' methodology suite**. Standards from the:

- UK's Office of Government Commerce (OGC), owners of PRINCE2<sup>v</sup>, dominate the public sector, but our observation is that it is gaining popularity more broadly; and
- Project Management Institute (PMI) percentage was relatively low, but we find that PMBOK<sup>vi</sup> based thinking influences several organisations that answered 'hybrid'.

The OGC and PMI suite of standards appear to be primarily employed for project-level activities. At the program level, their combined influence was 28%, and at the portfolio level, only 4%.

## Technology: don't blame them or it

**The vast majority (96%) of CIOs interviewed believe that project delivery technology is a 'marginal' issue** (4% considered it 'substantial'). Recognising the visible *touch-and-feel* attraction of tools, 32% of CIOs had commenced implementation of a Project Portfolio Management (PPM) tool. The potential danger is that, unless the Business is driving the PPM tool project with new end-to-end project delivery processes, it may generate further negative perception of IT's focus on 'assets/tools' over Business results.

*"Organisations can rely too heavily on their tools and not enough on their people. A manager once asked me, 'What tool should I buy to manage the team?', to which I replied, 'You should manage your team and not buy a tool'."*

*CIO, Technology Services Organisation*

## Value context around the craft

CIOs need to realise that standardising how their team works alone at technical and project levels will not improve (business) value. Indeed, how IT works is typically of not much interest to the Business. They are interested in *why* they do projects, *what* will change, *how much* value will be delivered, and *when*. To answer these questions, CIOs need to shift their focus to the strategic investment and business value levels.

## *Where does the Business focus?*

**The Business focuses on accounting for the asset — this puts a cost to IT efforts, not a value.**

Executives, including Project Investment Committees (PICs), talk about 'value', but are only able to assess 'costs' since the majority are only presented with efficiency/control data. The mainstream exclusion of measurable non-financial benefits loses the focus on what are, often, the real reasons for doing the project. Out of sight, out of mind.

This perpetuates a larger issue since 'cost' (or funding availability) is considered the lesser constraint when compared to the ability of the organisation to change. Ultimately, it manifests in uninformed and unprepared organisational leaders, often forced to rely on narrow and aggregated project detail.

To understand the focus of the Business we considered:

- How the Business measures IT projects;
- How the Business, therefore, manages IT projects; and
- What business preparation is done, and how IT is positioned.



## Account for it – whether we have it, or not

We explored the focus and intent of Project Investment Committees (PICs) or equivalent.

### Three-quarters of Investment Committees are unarmed

All but a few CIOs indicated that their PICs do think and discuss 'value', but **72% of these PICs are not given 'value' data**. They are primarily provided cost and other efficiency data (i.e. they primarily discuss scope, time and budget of the projects in the portfolio). Yet more than any other organisational forum, the PIC needs to rigorously assess each project's potential value!

Organisations need to specifically define 'value', we argue, at least for their projects. We have found that with only limited dimensions (e.g. cost, time) available, organisations may apply misleading definitions to words like 'value', using phrases like the 'value of the portfolio' for the 'sum **cost** of the portfolio'. This is wrong.

When discussing management committees, we found **18% of CIOs believe 'consensus management' is positive**, justifying it on a 'buy-in' basis. This finding is consistent with a 2008 PwC<sup>vii</sup> whitepaper.

*"Often we get to a 'we need this because it is broken'. It is not done because of value or cost analysis."*

*CIO, Insurance Company*

*"Business cases today are ridiculous. CEOs who want to know ROI only, drive the wrong behaviour. Need to broaden the 'value' language."*

*CIO, Utility*

### The need to change at the top

This lack of value information available at the Investment Committee level flows from a lack of value focus at the project governance level. Benefits are assumed to be achieved if the project asset is delivered. This is only true for the minority of available benefits.

Without a focus on realising benefits, and the supporting processes to do so, projects will continue to be seen to under-deliver. CIOs need to champion a focus on 'value' from the top and throughout the project lifecycle.

*“Need to invest properly in the investment (case). Get on the right track.”*  
 CIO, Education Sector

*“We do (look at non-financials), but financials are much more significant. 80% of our focus.”*  
 CIO, Large Call Centre Operator

*“Qualitative benefits come into it, but the Business rarely agree on non-financial measurement.”*  
 CIO, Property Development Group

## Two-thirds are effectively limited to financial benefits — and tied to asset delivery

Business cases seem to be bound by oversimplifying cost management practices. **Nearly two-thirds (64%) of organisations employ a financial benefits only** policy in business cases. Financial benefits are easy to understand and measure, but are the most unstable element in benefits management — they can legitimately change during the project due to factors outside the control of the project. Therefore, you cannot solely use financial benefits as a proxy for benefits realisation.

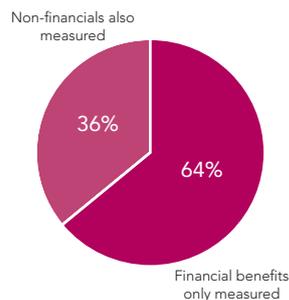
A host of quantifiable, non-financial benefits are typically excluded. Several CIOs commented that these non-financial benefits are often the real reason behind many initiatives, but the project is never set up to achieve them since they are excluded from measurement. Potential and unfortunate consequences also include:

- Projects may be reclassified as ‘infrastructure’, increasing the perception of no/low value from IT investments; and
- Regulatory or compliance projects are poorly defined and grounded (therefore controlled) since they are often given a *free pass* (lighter rigour) to receive funding approval.

**Some 68% of CIOs indicated that the organisational processes only start to measure benefits after the asset (project deliverable) is delivered.** The opportunity to realise benefits that are typically available prior to the project’s full completion (e.g. via process improvements) can therefore be missed.

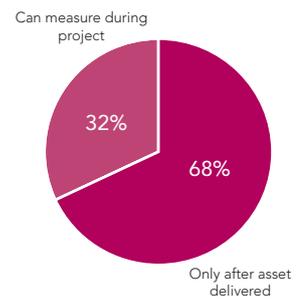
### Dollars Please

Are your business cases limited to financial benefits only?



### Benefits Pre Asset

Do you book benefits prior to the delivery of the IT asset/project deliverables?





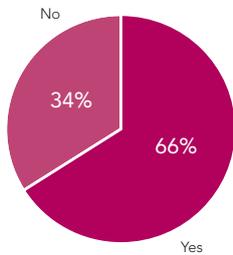
## Only one-third wait to see what is achieved

Irrespective of how much reality may intervene, **66% of organisations automatically book future financial savings** into operational budgets. Participants argued between the:

- Risk that no automatic booking may lead to exaggerated benefit claims in a business case; versus
- Risk that automatic booking may lead to minimised benefits since it makes it inadvisable for managers to commit to anything but the minimum value.

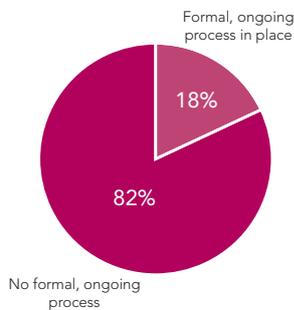
Half announce winner before race starts...

Do you employ a policy to automatically include financial benefits into future budgets?



...and no one at the finish line

Do you have formal structures and processes to ensure benefits are realised into the Business?



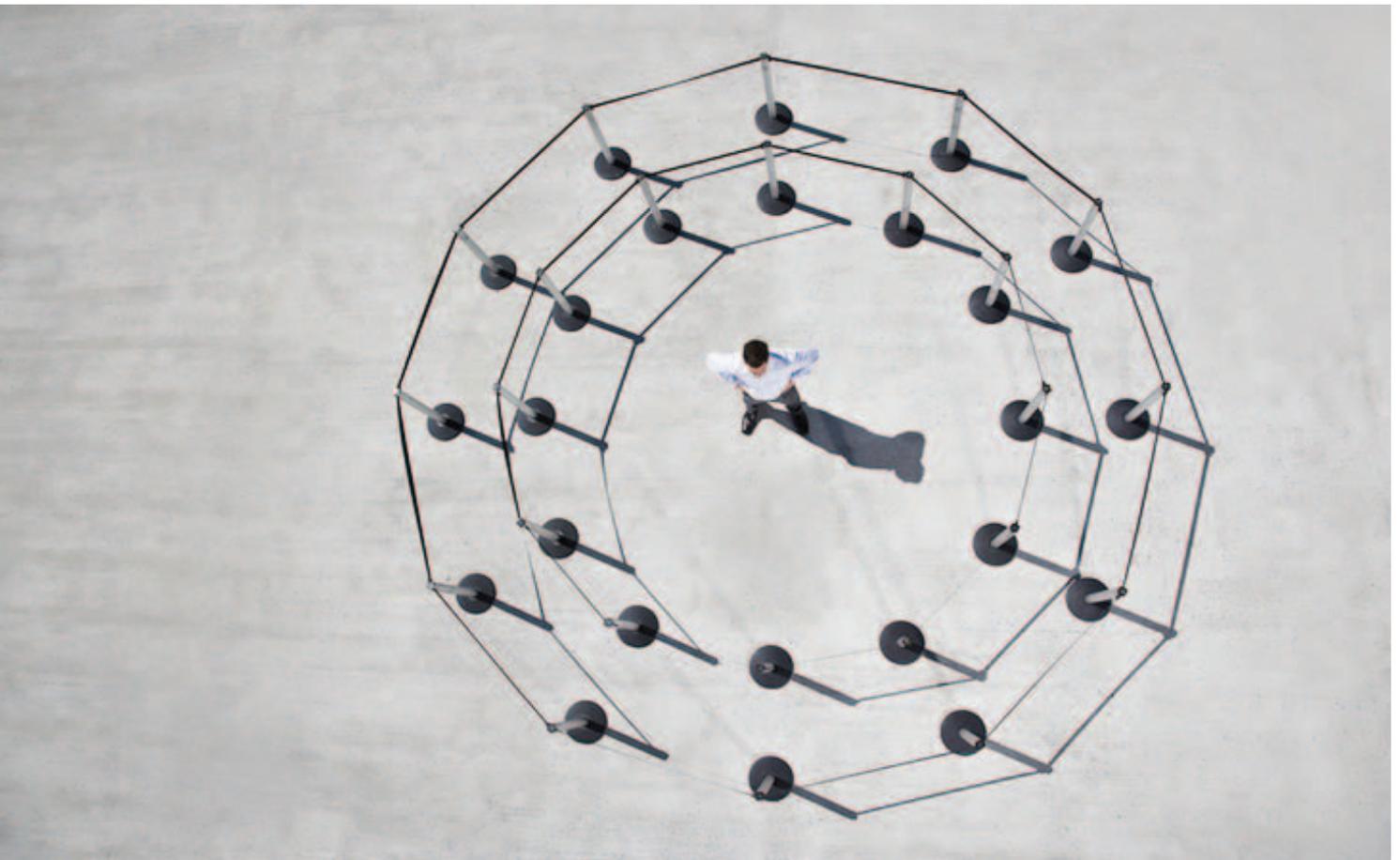
Automatic booking or not, both risks exist because few organisations have formal or complete value measurement processes in place.

*"We cannot measure some key values. Can deal with simple ones like server replacement and head count reduction, but cannot deal with the real performance measures since it is not recorded."  
CIO, Call Centre*

*"Automatically booking is probably the lesser of two evils. Don't book, get exaggerated cases. Automatically booking may discourage targeting full value."  
CIO, Retailer*

## Limited by account policies

In an attempt to increase 'control' over projects, many organisations have introduced financial policies that inadvertently constrain project value. Whereas, additional formal measures are required to support executive accountability for benefits. The CIO needs to challenge these overly simplistic policies and refocus the debate on a holistic view and measurement of business value delivery.





# Do it – whether we can, or not

We explored what the Business does to ensure it only starts projects it can successfully complete.

## Got the cash? Go!

CIOs were asked what resource is most constrained. A **lack of 'change capacity'** within the organisation was the most popular answer. Yet change capacity is rarely rigorously measured or managed across an organisation, or indeed, for individual projects/business cases.

Other constraints were evenly popular, but importantly, the combined answers (68%) for availability of business resources (28%) and the capacity to change (40%) is over double the lack of funds (32%). Funding is typically assumed to be the greatest constraint.

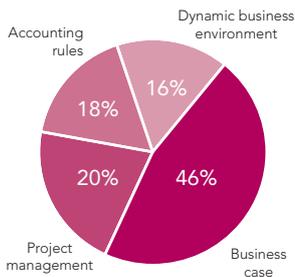
This lack of objective assessment of the organisation's capability leads to projects being approved that will never be successfully delivered.

*"Money is easy, good people are hard."  
CIO, Manufacturer*

*"You could give me more money now, but it will not make a difference. We cannot deliver any more, and they cannot receive any more."  
CIO, Government Department*

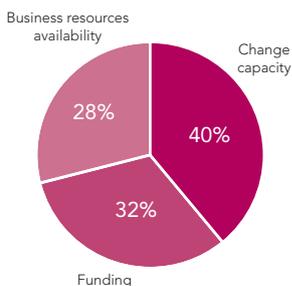
### Greatest destroyers of value

What is the greater destroyer of value for IT projects in your organisation?



### Greatest constraint

What is a greater constraint?



## Projects are not set up for success – at least half of the time

Nearly half of the CIOs (46%) considered the 'business case' to be the greater destroyer of value for IT projects. If the project is not set up for success from the start, what results can we expect?

In many large organisations the business case is effectively little more than an extended capital request form, and is often considered a bureaucratic exercise. Several CIOs from smaller organisations described

*"Systemically not getting the business cases right. Financial rigour plays a part, but limits people's thinking. The CFO reacts badly to concept/ball park thinking."  
CIO, Government Department*

the business case process as 'casual', and said that some decisions are not always ideally objective.

A good business case will greatly assist in removing existing constraints. Clarity around business value delivery will help prioritise the availability of the right resources, and also mount the best argument to compete for the limited investment funds.

### Many projects possibly 'condemned to completion'

When asked what percentage of projects had been stopped over the past year, most CIOs jokingly replied 'zero'. The average overall was 8%. Far from a comprehensive test, it is an easy indicator of what Capability Management terms 'condemned to completion' thinking: once approved, a project is never stopped regardless of how much ambiguity may develop about its business value. More mature organisations are marked by their willingness to cancel projects that are unviable, no longer relevant, or no longer a priority.

### Keep doing, tell us when you are done

Following the earlier finding that two-thirds of PICs are not provided with 'value' data, we extended the hypothesis to test whether the PIC is involved after funding approval, or whether the 'do it' impetus is simply provided to the sponsor. Unfortunately, **82% of surveyed organisations do not have a formal process to govern benefits** delivery into the Business.

Consider the following possible scenario and implication: if financial benefits alone are permitted and they are automatically booked into future budgets upon project approval, it can create the perception that there is no need to establish a formal benefits management process over and beyond the project's lifecycle (since we have already accounted for/achieved the benefits). Right?



## Killed by the business case?

The Business commissions projects to achieve (business) benefits, and setting the project up for success is the most critical step. Unfortunately, many Business policies and practices that dominate today compromise this step. Limited focus by the Business on important measurable non-financial benefits (e.g. competitive, customer, capability, productivity and risk benefits) has potentially resulted in sub-optimal expenditure — poor investment rather than under-investment.

CIOs need to review and potentially broaden how they engage with the Business in this critical business case/ investment strategy area. Without a CIO-initiated change, the Business will likely continue with a cost-centric focus that constrains value.



## Own it – whether appropriately prepared and positioned, or not

*“Education is expensive, but not as expensive as ignorance.”*

*CIO, Consumer Goods Company*

*“Time poor, and have to prioritise. No one has ever offered me training - assumption that once you have reached that level you know it all, but it is also the prioritisation.”*

*CIO, Global Manufacturer*

*“Everyone does projects all the time, so they think they can do projects. They even do them on the weekend. We need to further the specialist argument.”*

*CIO, Logistics Company*

We considered the preparation and positioning of who owns the project, and who owns IT.

### Too Senior to Learn?

**Most (92%) CIOs believe that formally training and coaching executives in their (governance and sponsoring) role would help, but only 12% do so.** Effective governance is critical for any project — but most organisations just assume those assigned to governance roles inherently understand the role and how to perform it.

Research on project failure has consistently found that more projects fail due to poor project governance rather than poor project management. Yet while organisations are willing to spend money on training project managers, they fail to train those leading, directing and controlling the project expenditure and who are accountable for realising the benefits.

### Equipping the Business to perform

Leading organisations do projects faster and at less cost through effective business leadership and governance. A key characteristic is the level and competence of Business involvement in projects. Equipping the Business to lead and govern is the organisation's road to innovation and quantum performance improvement.

The life of the CIO will be easier if they are supported by informed, educated and effective business executives in project governance roles. It is an initiative CIOs need to pick up and run with.



## CIO positioning a symptom of traditional thinking

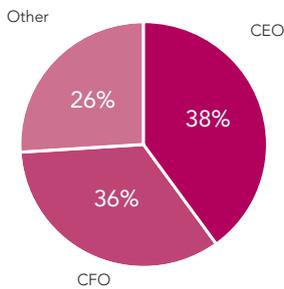
About half the CIOs interviewed (44%) had previously been a CIO, and their **reporting lines were quite evenly spread between CEO (38%), CFO (36%) and other (26%)**. As expected, views on who their boss is (or should be) varied tremendously.

The *State of the CIO*<sup>ii</sup> provides some interesting statistics, particularly the comparison between USA and Australia. US CIOs surveyed indicated a much greater number reporting to the CEO and fewer to the CFO (only 19% in US versus 32% in Australia). In contrast, Gartner<sup>viii</sup> and the Financial Executives Research Foundation (FERF) surveyed CFOs to find 42% of CIOs report to the CFO.

*“A true CIO will report to the CEO — has equal weight as other Executives. Does not really matter, but it is indicative of the culture. It is really about (perceived) credibility.”*  
 CIO, Logistics Company

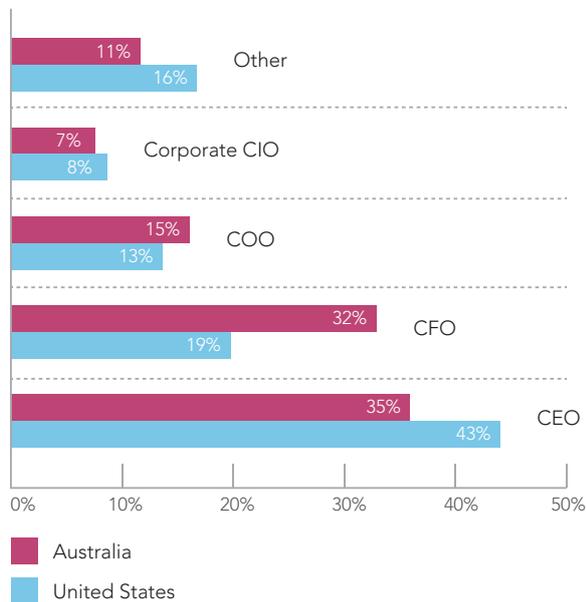
### Organisational Positioning

Which role do you (CIO) report to?



### State of the CIO

USA vs. Australia Comparison



Source: IDG Communications (Australia) Pty. Ltd. State of the CIO Comparative Report, 2010

*“Doesn’t make a difference  
- if you are capable, you can  
run from any position. What  
matters is the attitude the  
Business has towards support  
functions, including IT.”  
CIO, Engineering Services  
Provider*

Another online study of 130 CFOs and CIOs by CFO Research Services (part of The Economist Group) with PwC<sup>ix</sup> highlights some of the problems with relying on ‘perception’. Some 98% of CIOs rate their CFOs as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ on leadership, while only 42% of CFOs say the same of their CIO — less than half. That is a long way to make up; a lot of trust to earn; a lot of perception to shift. How patient are you?

There is positive news from the partnership between the CIO Executive Council and Egon Zehnder International who prepared an IT Leadership Competency Model, based on 10 ‘leadership competencies’ identified by Egon Zehnder International when assessing over 25,000 C-Level Executives. The ‘Outstanding CIOs’ (scores in the top 15th percentile) exceed what was termed ‘Good CEOs’ (average scores in the 50th to 85th percentile) in a number of competencies, including:

- Results Orientation – being focused on the improvement of business results;
- Change Leadership – transforming and aligning an organisation through its people to drive improvement in new/challenging directions; and
- Team Leadership – focusing, aligning and building effective groups both within one’s immediate organisation and across functions.

## To whom you report indicates your perceived contribution to the organisation

The organisational positioning of IT is an emotional topic, and much has been written about to whom the CIO should report. Some authors have espoused that ‘IT value’ is compromised if the positioning is not right.

In the context of this whitepaper, the reporting line determines your starting point to influence and generate project delivery performance improvement. The lower in the organisational hierarchy you sit, the lower the organisation’s perception of IT. This creates an additional challenge for such CIOs to influence their peers and above.



## *Why is there a gap?*

### **Parallel focus, incomplete view**

Has the focus on asset and accounting been wrong? No, just incomplete. These have been parallel areas of focus, with the gap influenced by organisational structure and responsibility. To bridge the gap, projects should be leveraged as end-to-end processes that cut across Business/IT lines.

The disappointment evident in the research and commentary over the past 20 years is the continued use of a subjective concept of 'value' in relation to IT projects. It does not need to be subjective. We need to emphasise process over structure, capability over competency and value over cost.

The focus on cost (assets and their accounting entry) limits thinking, and also limits the potential for benefits and value. You need to recognise that:

- Failing to support the Business with complete processes will result in them failing to support you;
- Focusing on organisational capability makes all projects 'business projects'; and
- Until you shift the focus onto business value it is likely to remain on IT costs.



## Process > Structure

Projects are an end-to-end process that start and finish in the Business. Project (including program and portfolio) management is a suite of processes. Organisations need to recognise that structures, tools, techniques and templates exist to enable and support the processes (not vice-versa).

Many frameworks and methodologies appear to provide process guidance, but are often so high-level and generic they effectively provide little more than structural guidance like role or deliverable matrices. They may define what should happen in a phase, but not define specifically how to do the activity or what good/bad quality is for the resulting deliverable. The over-use of structure and over-reliance on the popular frameworks to define the accountabilities and responsibilities of IT and the Business has not bridged the gap.

Raised earlier, project management frameworks and methodologies are most popular at project management and technical management levels, with the most influential project delivery levels under-supported.

It should be apparent that the over-use of structure and over-reliance on the popular frameworks to define the accountabilities and responsibilities of IT and the Business has not bridged the gap.

You cannot change structure quickly or frequently, but you can use the one IT/Business joint activity — projects — to traverse structural limitations to deliver measurable value; once you complement how you do them with a value lens.

On the hot topic of where the CIO reports, the CIOs who did not care about their reporting line emphasised that the processes they employ are what matters.

**Do you have an end-to-end process chart for project delivery that includes business, management and executive levels?**

## Capability > Competency

Organisational boundaries are generally built along skill sets and competencies. Statistically, the focus over the past 10 years on improving individual project-related competency (skills, knowledge, experience, attitude and aptitude) has been shown inadequate to improve measured value.

You need to improve 'organisational capability'. It requires individual competency, but it also requires:

- Supporting and enabling processes and systems, performance measures and infrastructure;
- Culture, strategy, information and focus; plus
- Management involvement and attention.

A 'capability' is a core focus of the organisation, and it cannot be bought through contracting or outsourcing.

To develop organisational capability you need to:

- Equip **executive management** to understand how to define, drive and manage a portfolio of projects to achieve the organisation's strategy;
- Equip **business management** to lead, direct and govern individual programs and projects to realise the agreed desired business outcomes, benefits and value;
- Equip the **business staff** to identify, simplify, quantify and deliver their real business needs and reap the consequential benefits;
- Equip the **project staff** to plan, schedule, manage and control the delivery of the project so that the business outcomes are achieved and sustained; and
- Equip the **technical staff** to design, develop and deliver solutions that enable the business outcomes to be realised, supported and sustained.

The key to 'capability' is that everyone has a role in a project's success — and 'success' is defined in business outcome delivery effectiveness terms, not only project delivery efficiency terms.

**Do you have a measure of the existence and contribution of each element of your project delivery capability?**



## Value > Cost

Cost will always be important, but you undertake projects to achieve the benefits; so the focus needs to shift to value quantification, management and measurement throughout the project and beyond.

A rigorous value approach to projects counters the view of some parties that 'value' is personal or interpretative (where one day you're 'adding value', the next you're not). It starts by changing the processes to be value-focused so that you can assess and manage the value impacts of:

- Project changes (e.g. technical scope);
- Business changes (e.g. process); and
- External changes (e.g. critical factors outside project control).

This will enable the measure of success to be value delivery focused, not just focused on the cost of project completion.

**Do your project/scope change methods and templates assess the value impacts of recommended changes?**

## *Shifting focus to close the gap*

### **Improve the ability across the leadership team to close the gap**

Some 78% of the CIOs surveyed believe if they can improve an organisation's project delivery capability, it will positively affect broad, bottom-line measures such as the share price for a listed organisation, reduced crime or smarter children for Government agencies with such briefs.

The reliance on expectations and perceptions will not (completely) go away. IT can, however, reconcile and close the gap progressively by shifting the focus of projects to demonstrate real business value.

Performance management is not just cost management done well. You need to help each member of the leadership team understand that they can help address the reasons for the gap outlined earlier:

- Shift from 'own' to 'ownability' with the CEO to address organisation wide issues like executive preparation and positioning;
- Shift from 'account' to 'accountability' with the CFO to address measurement issues through complete value-based processes, balanced analysis, and healthy debate on some popular value inhibitors; and
- Shift from 'do' to 'doability' with the Business Unit Heads to address organisational capability issues to achieve our business outcomes.

The CIO can commence progress with these conversations, and the Project Practitioner can commence with some supporting analysis.



## Shift from own to ownability

### The CEO conversation about organisation-wide issues.

Let's close the benefits 'gap' by improving the ability of our investment owners through better preparation and positioning. We can no longer just use dollars realisation as a proxy for benefits realisation.

#### Projects start + end in the Business

Starting	→	Completing	Let's improve our processes to accelerate turning our ideas into action. Promote innovation and remove bureaucracy by looking at our feasibility activities through a value lens. The successful initiatives will focus on new processes and benefits, not just new systems and costs.
			Let's shift the focus of our Executive/Investment Committees to track and measure outcome-based progress and benefit realisation, and put our organisation among the one in five (18%) that do so.
Outputs	→	Outcomes	Let's invert the majority (82%) of business cases to focus on the 'Business' by articulating the Business outcomes to be achieved. Removing the ambiguity around value, making project performance specific and therefore measurable.

#### Owners Nominated + Equipped

Attendance	→	Competence	Let's acknowledge that Governance is a knowledge set, not an assumption. We need to be among the leading organisations, currently only one in 10, that formally prepare their Executives to effectively and knowledgeably direct, lead and control projects.
Interested	→	Equipped	Let's equip our Executives and Committees to be amongst the one-quarter (28%) that are armed with more than just cost/expenditure data. This recognises that value realisation, not cost control, is the key.

#### The Business → Our Business

Them	→	Us	Let's talk about 'our' business, and remove the 'us' and 'them' language. I recognise that you're not interested in how IT works or even how our technology works — you want results. We can help get those results by pushing innovative technology – but we cannot continue to push the majority (60%) of projects. Business 'pull' will help the ownership of change, and increased change creates potential for increased benefit.
Excluded	→	Included	Let me, as owner of IT, create the right perception to get the best reality. Elevate the CIO structurally to a true 'C-Level' position like one-third of my peers, but also empower me through cross-enterprise processes to measure and improve project value.

## Shift from account to accountability

### The CFO conversation about measurement issues.

Let's close the accountability 'gap' by introducing an end-to-end process for benefits tracking and measurement. You know that you manage what you measure, and value can be measured — at least in terms of a project's outcomes. Measurement is necessary for visibility, and visibility will help accountability.

#### Business → Value, IT → Cost

Everything	→	Projects	Let's focus on projects (measurable time-bound processes) to narrow how we measure value. It will require a comprehensive end-to-end approach, beyond the current accounting and project management 'standards' to create a complete view.
			Let's make it clear that the Business is accountable for realising the value and IT is accountable for managing the costs. This may need us to show the Business how to determine the 'value', but it will also help us all prioritise better.
Manage	→	Govern	Let's invert the popular perception (46%) that business cases 'destroy' value to a different reality where they define and drive value through clear, measurable terms.
			Let's establish the right governance over projects and the full portfolio. This is an area where we can do better than the majority (82%) of our competitors. Better governance committees will also mean fewer committees for everyone.

#### Account for cost + Accountability for value

Later	→	Now	Let's encourage our projects to get benefits where we can, as early as we can. Process improvements do not always need a new (IT) asset in place.
Dollars	→	Measures	Let's accept that value measures need to be more than just financial, and our management need to respect such measures appropriately.
			Let's progressively remove value constraining policies like the automatic booking of financial savings and replace them with active governance and simple value tracking. Visibility will go up, accountability will follow.

#### Avoid Failure → Ensure Success

Soft	→	Hard	Let's better inform our organisational leadership with some hard data. This requires broadening how we measure success. We should also recognise that improved data will help, not replace, executive discussion.
The Means	→	The End	Let's start with the end in mind — then work backwards to plan what we need to do. This will help us focus on the reasons for doing projects, and motivate us to build non-financial data to measure our value drivers.



## Shift from do to doability

### The Business Unit Head conversation about business engagement.

Let's close the scope 'gap' by designing projects to deliver business benefits. Hope is not a plan — unless we rigorously plan backwards from what we want to achieve, we risk incurring most of the pain for limited gain.

#### Can we do it > Can we afford it

Afford	→	Do	Let's address 'can we do it?' in addition to simply 'can we afford it?'. The former may be far more confronting to answer. Let's recognise that most (68%) of the time, it is not the money that holds projects back.
Continue	→	Cull	Let's be informed, and then honest, about the status of our projects. If we only stop less than one in 10 projects (8%), does that lead us to believe we are brilliant or potentially poorly informed?

#### Business Change > Technology Delivery

Technology	→	Change	Let's focus on business change and outcomes — not just technology delivery. We need to realise that no business change means no business benefit. No benefit means no value. Let's work together to define your outcomes, plan for their delivery, and ensure they are fully realised and the resultant business performance improvements sustained.
Push	→	Pull	Let's get the leadership team to drive perhaps twice the 40% of projects they do today. This has to result in better business involvement. We should leverage technology innovation, but not rely on it for ideas.

#### To Them → With Them

Narrow	→	Complete	Let's extend our horizon. Our projects need to go beyond 'enabling' over 80% of the time to include the business change necessary to realise and deliver outcomes. Change cannot be assumed.
Contractor	→	Staff	Let's invert the staff/contractor ratio on projects, and tap into our staff's superior business knowledge to optimise virtually every dimension of the project. We will simply be able to 'do' more.

## The Project Practitioner Checklist

As a Project Practitioner, you cannot take the view that delivering value is 'not my job'. No one wins in projects that do not deliver measured business value.

### Support your CIO to support the CEO

Are your Steering Committee members and Sponsor trained? Do they know both their roles and how to perform them?

Have you been formally trained to know how to effectively report upwards?

Are you trying to get executives to understand IT or project language, or ensuring you communicate in their language?

Is your business case targeting IT deliverables or business outcomes?

Can you articulate the business value your project will deliver?

Is your Steering Committee reporting focused on efficiency measures or does it also include progress towards value delivery?

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### Support your CIO to support the CFO

Can you differentiate between the business outcomes scope and your project scope?

What non-financial data is your project building or relying on to assess performance?

Are your project roles and responsibilities comprehensive and clear?

Have you investigated early achievement of benefits through process improvement?

Are the project's risks being managed or minimised/avoided?

Do your project plans include activities to leverage the delivered asset?

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### Support your CIO to support Business Unit Heads

Do you have data to assess your organisation's capability to successfully execute your project?

Do you know your project's strategic contribution ranking?

Does your team have the requisite skills? Aptitudes? Attitudes?

Is your project driven by 'business change' or 'technology implementation'?

Have you planned what is required to sustain the business change?

Are you targeting clear, specific business outcomes or a set of objectives?

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# Glossary

Definitions are critical. To help the shift, employ the following:

**Capability** An organisational attribute consisting of people with the requisite training, knowledge, skills and competencies plus management support, direction, measures, reward structures and controls plus the necessary organisational structures, policies, rules, processes and systems.

What is often referred to as a 'core competency' is actually a core capability — a capability that the organisation has focused on and sees as critical to its success.

**Competency** An individual attribute consisting of knowledge, training, experience, aptitude and attitude — i.e. the possession of both the requisite skills and how to apply and adapt them effectively.

Important here is 'aptitude': competent people must have the desire and natural ability to use the skills. Certain people can be wizards with numbers but have no interest in pursuing this skill — they will never become competent. Conversely, a person with no aptitude for numbers can attend the training and gain the experience to be 'skilled', but without the natural aptitude they'll never be truly competent.

**Outcome** A very carefully and specifically defined end state that can be measured by a true/false question — can we or can't we; do we or don't we; have we or haven't we? This clarity of measurement ensures no confusion as to the outcome's achievement and ensures that no project suffers from the 99% completion syndrome where much is 'almost finished', but little is actually finished.

**Benefit** The beneficial result of the delivery of one or more outcomes. All benefits are measurable, but only some are quantifiable (and measured in terms of their 'value'). Benefits also provide context for the business and project outcomes — why the outcome is being delivered — i.e. to deliver, enable and support the associated benefits. Benefits must be verifiable in terms of both being able to be delivered (is this a realisable benefit by this project?) and being delivered/realised.

**Value** The narrow definition is the quantifiable value of a benefit, usually in financial terms.

More broadly, 'value' is used to include the outcomes, benefits and (quantified) value plus the project's strategic contribution, the meeting of the reasons for doing a project and avoidance of any downsides of not doing the project.

**Governance** The direction, facilitation and control of projects, programs and non-project activities so as to protect, deliver and sustain the agreed business outcomes, benefits and value — the 'value proposition'.

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<sup>i</sup> Capability Management International Pty. Ltd. Jed Simms. 2010. *Understanding Value*.

<sup>ii</sup> IDG Communications (Australia) Pty. Ltd. 2010. *The Australian State of the CIO*, 2010.

<sup>iii</sup> KPMG. 2010. From cost to value. *2010 Global Survey on the CIO Agenda*.

<sup>iv</sup> CIO Executive Council. 2010. *The Future-State CIO Model*.

<sup>v</sup> PRINCE2 is a registered trademark of OGC. Whilst in the public domain, copyright is retained by the Crown.

<sup>vi</sup> Project Management Institute Inc. 2008. *Project Management Book of Knowledge (PMBOK)*, 4th Edition.

<sup>vii</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers. Whitepaper, June, 2008. *Insights into transformation*.

<sup>viii</sup> Gartner, Inc. 2010. *2010 Gartner Financial Executives International technology study*.

<sup>ix</sup> CFO Research Services (unit of CFO Publishing and part of The Economist Group) with PwC, June, 2008. *Are CFOs from Mars and CIOs from Venus? Overcoming the perception gap to enhance the finance-IT relationship*.



## About CIO Executive Council

The CIO Executive Council is an international organisation which enables members to be more successful by facilitating the sharing of knowledge and creating content and programs around issues crucial to advancement of CIOs and the ICT sector.

With more than 500 members in Australia, North America and Europe, the Council offers its members the unique ability to speak with a collective voice on local and regional issues coupled with access to a powerful, vendor free, global community of senior IT executives willing to share sector specific experiences and knowledge.

The Council gives CIOs a united voice on technology matters, enabling them to act as trusted, unbiased resources to one another in order to strengthen themselves, their businesses and their team whilst collectively advancing the CIO profession.

For further information, contact Caroline Bucknell at +61 2 9902 2713 or [Caroline\\_bucknell@idg.com.au](mailto:Caroline_bucknell@idg.com.au)

## About Capability Management

Capability Management is a specialist consultancy focused on helping our clients achieve optimal value through their projects. Armed with leading intellectual property, Capability Management challenges conventional approaches, often myopic perspectives, and simplifies everything to equip the sponsor who is prepared to outperform.

We support clients through a range of models:

Consulting - Analyse situations and provide guidance through the process;

Programs - Facilitate teams through accelerated programs;

Development - Equip teams and Executives via training and coaching; and

Provision - Expand project resources with high-calibre consultants.

For further information, contact Vince Gill at +61 3 9654 0400 or [vince.gill@capability.com.au](mailto:vince.gill@capability.com.au)

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