

Business Technology Leadership



P A K I S T A N



How much do organizations value their IT departments? More importantly, do companies know how much IT can drive their business? One of the biggest voids businesses and vendors have complained about is the lack of data. Specific vendors may know what certain companies exercise in terms of buying behavior, but nowhere were we able to find concerted data that outlined what trends were out there. How can any business strategy be created for an industry or a market if you have no data to base your findings on? We wanted people to stop making the assumptions and help CIO Pakistan to document the data.

How much do you know about CIOs in Pakistan? Read on to find out what our survey results reveal...

Irfan Zafar, GM Technology Innovation, Sui Southern Gas Company Limited

About SSGC: Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) is Pakistan's leading integrated gas Company. The company is engaged in the business of transmission and distribution of natural gas besides construction of high pressure transmission and low pressure distribution systems.

Scope of work: I am responsible for building a strong technology team and create opportunities for people in the company along with setting performance standards for them. The job involves a major technology enabled cultural and business transformation. My role extends beyond just IT - I am a business manager.



Where do you see the role in Technology leading change within the public sector? "Change" in the public sector may seem a myth but we have managed to alter that mindset. Our organization is a world-class utility reference site, an example for everyone else.

Challenges for the CIO: My biggest challenge was to build and retain the team that we have developed over the past 5 years. My second biggest challenge is to find opportunities for continuous improvement within SSGC and making them happen. Every new technology-enabled transformation initiative is an opportunity for my team to do more.

SSGC's annual IT budget: Rs. 100 million or less every year to expand our service network, rehabilitation of technology, and investments in new initiatives.

Your greatest achievement as the head of the department? SSGC is recognized as the most technology-enabled organization in the region and we are very proud of it. My biggest achievement is the team that I have been able to build and retain. Additionally, we have had a number of successful project implementations within the organizations.

Your vision for your organization? IT in SSGC is already a profit center and my vision is to further enhance our customer service and make technology as a major enabler sustaining the transformation.

For more details, please visit www.ssgc.com.pk



We sent out a fairly generic net which spanned 100 companies across various verticals with the following objective: we wanted to be able to better identify who our CIOs were and what role they played the business environment of every company. The CIO or IT Head is the one who is responsible for making all the technology decisions in a company and once you get to know his buying behavior a little better, a lot of things will take place in the market. Vendors, for example, will be able to package their products better matching those needs, or other service providers will know how to perhaps serve the organization in a more optimum manner. As for the majority of questions, we'll get the opportunity to learn what a CIO is all about in Pakistan's terms.

We asked the IT Heads a series of 24 questions which allowed us to get an insight into helping profile them better. From the results, we got 71% respondents based out of Karachi, followed by 14% in Lahore, 9% in Islamabad and 6% percent in the tier two cities. While we're certain that is a CIO in the majority of companies

While we didn't ask our respondents to comment on innovation in the workplace, simply because that is more of a subjective question than objective, but our featured CIOs did talk about innovation. Shahid Sarwar, Director IT of PIA, Pakistan's flag carrier airline address innovation in his interview by saying that the level of competition has increased so intensely, that all businesses need to innovate through technology to stay ahead of the game.

across the country, we've been trying to assess where the greatest concentration of IT heads is. If you notice on our Facebook and LinkedIn groups, there have been a few requests for us to conduct more events in cities outside of Karachi, and while we do, you can see by this sampling why we're so Karachi focused. Simply because it is the commercial capital of Pakistan, Karachi seems to have a very healthy concentration of decision-makers. But this is something we'll be assessing in every survey to better match the industry to the trend and the geographical proximity.

The varying designations were also of keen interest. The head of the IT or MIS department is either the CIO, more commonly referred to as the Head of IT or Department Head. In some cases where the company was smaller, the General Manager was also found to be the one making the technology decisions in the company. Man-

Ibrahim Memon, Head of IT, Greenstar Social Marketing

About Greenstar Social Marketing: Greenstar Social Marketing Pakistan (Guarantee) Limited is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization devoted to improving quality of life among low-income people. A non-governmental organization, Greenstar has a staff strength of more than 1500 permanent and contractual employees. GSMP operates through its nationwide network of 31 fully equipped and fully functional zonal offices covering more than 100 districts of Pakistan.

Scope of work: The IT department is responsible for 3 major areas: IT Infrastructure, Database Management and reporting and Development. The department is also responsible for MIS and IT training, on the organization's own MIS system.

Where do you see the role in Technology leading change within the NGO culture in Pakistan? Advance-

ments in technology, particularly in IT, have made a significant impact on the working style of NGO sector in Pakistan. Strengthening of IT infrastructure in NGOs is usually on the agenda of international donors for which they allocate special funds. In my view this international support has already developed a culture of technology receptiveness in our NGOs, more than any other sector in Pakistan. Organizations like Greenstar who have a nation-wide network are in fact in a position as pioneer use of such technology in the country.

Challenges for the CIO: Information Systems have become much easier to use but the optimal utility is still undermined. Users can access information at the "click of a button", however it is difficult to convince the right budgets be allocated into the relevant infrastructure. Availability of experienced HR is also a challenge, particularly in the smaller cities.

GreenStar's annual Technology budget? More than Rs.10 million annually.

Your greatest achievement as the head of the department? The conversion of the complete MIS system of Greenstar to an online system that has made it accessible not only from within Pakistan but from anywhere around the globe along with the successful implementation of Oracle Financials and HRIS Systems.

Your vision for your organization? Being the custodian of information, I see our MIS and IT grow to a full fledged independent department. More importantly, I see MIS reports to continue to help authentic and update information quickly, which serve as the final verdict in the success of any project or performance in the organization.

For more details, please visit www.greenstar.org.pk



ufacturing companies, primarily industries whose head offices were away from the actual site, had separate IT heads for their plant and separate ones for their business. What we didn't find in our random sampling, was any women in decision-making positions in the business organizations. It could have just been the luck of the draw for the companies we called, but it seems considering the conserving mindset where even the women who study Engineering or Computer Sciences, don't make it into the workforce for very long. Perhaps one of the results of the growing economic crunch is that there might be more serious consideration given to having both members of the family contributing towards the monthly income.

Before opening the survey up to the public, one

We asked the IT Heads a series of 24 questions which allowed us to get an insight into helping profile them better. From the results, we got 71% respondents based out of Karachi, followed by 14% in Lahore, 9% in Islamabad and 6% percent in the tier two cities. While we're certain that is a CIO in the majority of companies across the country, we've been trying to assess where the greatest concentration of IT heads is.

of the main concerns our research team had was that we would not be able to restrict the survey to only experienced IT professionals for a number of reasons. In our initial sampling to assess the quality and relevance of the survey, it became evident very quickly because of the high attrition in the later part of the 1990's when a lot of the IT professionals had left the country in search for better opportunities, the number of years that the majority of IT heads had worked in any one organization, would be fairly limiting. And because this would disqualify the major part of our population, we decided to diversify the spectrum.

Also the term CIO itself was a restricting one. If we were to have restricted the general survey to only those who actually had the CIO designation, we would have had very few respondents to work with. This is a longer project for us to be able to collate information from the CIOs directly, which is a more indepth survey.

Since we were trying to locate those who actually had the designation of "CIO", we didn't come across too many in our random sampling, but from those that we did, these CIOs were primarily in the Financial Sector. In fact, 33% of the 100 respondents were

Shahid Sarwar, Director IT, Pakistan International Airlines

About PIA: Pakistan International Airlines Corporation (PIA) is the flag carrier of Pakistan, whose government owns 85 percent of its shares. PIA's route network stretches to Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and North America. It connects 35 cities within Pakistan. Six million people flew the airline in 2000, when passenger traffic accounted for 85 percent of revenues. Engineering and charter services accounted for nine percent. PIA also conducts some contract work for aerospace manufacturers. There are approximately 19,000 employees and has a fleet size of 44. The principal divisions of PIA include Automation, Cargo Sales & Services among others.

Scope of work: To plan and implement Information Technology systems/services and solutions in all areas of the Corporation across the Domestic and International network.

Where do you see the role in Technology leading change within your sector in Pakistan? The Airline Industry has emerged as the biggest user of IT tools leaving behind all other industries. In the present day competitive environment, use of technology is making the difference between success and failure.

Challenges for the CIO: The first challenge is to keep pace with the rapid advancement taking place in technology tools and platforms and the second is to have them implemented across the organization with the required Business Processes Re-engineering. It is a difficult task which requires financial and human resources along with a management commitment to pursue implementation.

PIA's annual Technology budget? The budget varies from year to year depending upon requirements but generally remains in excess of Rs.100 million.

Your greatest achievement as the head of the department? The greatest achievement is the implementation of a Reservation and Departure Control system across PIA's domestic and international network.

Your vision for your organization? We are already a major IT establishment in the airlines of South East Asia. We however still feel that a lot has still to be done in shape of revamping current systems, adopting to new technology platforms and assisting the airline in its various business processes.

For more details about the company, please visit www.piac.com.pk

in a bank or financial institution. Telecom and ICT companies have your next largest set of CIOs at about 14% of the total sample size. The majority, however, made up service providers who built the stronger part of the Small and Medium Enterprise segment. But call them what you will: IT heads, IT managers, General Managers, Head of MIS or Network Engineer, our consideration

Advancements in technology particularly in IT has made a significant impact on the working style of NGO sector in Pakistan. Strengthening of IT infrastructure in NGOs is usually on the agenda of international donors for which they allocate special funds. In my view this international support has already developed a culture of technology receptiveness in our NGOs, more than any other sector in Pakistan explains Ibrahim Memon, Head of IT, Greenstar Social Marketing.

was if they are involved in business strategy, they fit the profile we're looking for.

There is a strong trend of automation in the workplace. 77% of the companies report that the majority of their operations critically depend on a sound technology infrastructure. What is interesting is the could be that the number of companies that depend on technology to run their operations are also the ones with the largest IT departments,

Salary scales seem to be on the lower side but then we were focusing on a lot of SMEs. What was surprising was that the salary did not accurately reflect the number of years a lot of the IT heads had been active decision makers within the company. Neither was there too much discrepancy in the number of size of the IT department. Take that analysis one step further and the correlation between the salary range, average size of the IT department and the budgets they have access to, and you have no consistency what so ever. Do keep in mind that the majority of these were private companies – we haven't even started looking into the public sector companies up close.

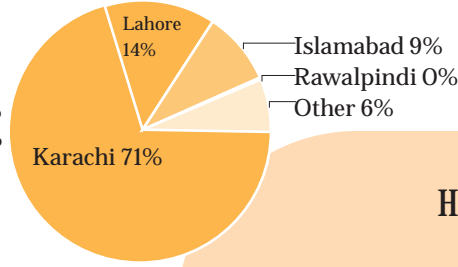
Of course, every category of company has a dedicated IT head to manage the technology side of business, and while these findings remain consistent with what informal assessments have quoted previously, the following results help to better breakdown how the CIO spends his day. A few of the respondents wanted to know why we were so interested in this line of questioning, and our reasoning is this – If you compare the amount of time a decision-making CIO spends inside the office, to the size of his team, it makes you wonder how decentralized the operations in that department are.

Approximately 3% of the respondents spend less

Location, Location, Location!

Where are our IT heads and CIOs primarily based out of?

Karachi 71%
Lahore 14%
Islamabad 9%
Rawalpindi 0%
Other 6%

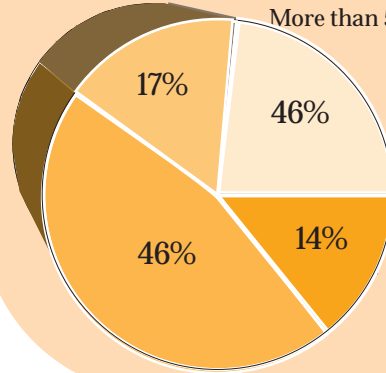


The companies we spoke with, have the following sector breakup:

Financial 33%
Sales and Marketing 0%
Technology 9%
Telecom 5%
FMCG 6%
Multi National Corporation (MNC) 6%
Export / Trade 1%
Other 38%

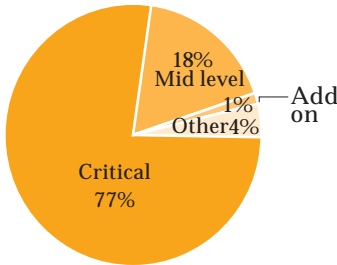
How long have you been the IT decision maker in the company?

Less than 1 year 14%
More than 2 years 46%
More than 5 years? 17%
Other 23%



How much do the businesses depend on IT?

What best describes the role IT plays in your organization?



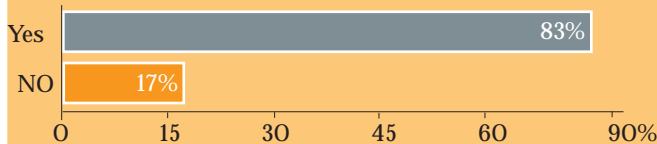
Critical (EVERYTHING runs on technology) 77%
Mid level (Only some operations are dependant on IT) 18%
Add on (Our main operations can do without it - we're still experimenting) 1%
Other 4%

As the head of IT in your company, what is your NUMBER one priority??

What business process does IT support the most?

Supporting all the operations across the company 56%
Business continuity and risk management 24%
Capacity building 8%
Controlling IT costs 10%
Regulatory compliance 1%

Are you part of meetings that discuss a company's long term business strategy?



Who needs the most support?

Accounting and Finance	31%
Customer Service/Support	24%
HR	3%
Sales	18%
Marketing	8%
Manufacturing/Production	17%

What does this mean?

Exactly how much alignment is there between technology departments and the overall vision and path that the business is heading on? It was interesting to see the correlation here.

Let's profile the CIO a bit better

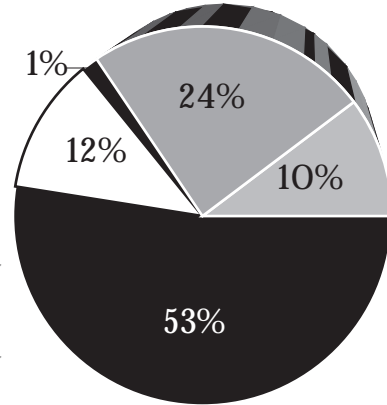
State of the CIO Survey 2009

Size of the IT Department?

Less than 10 people 58%
 Between 10 and 30 people 22%
 Between 30 and 60 people 10%
 More than 60 people 10%

Approximate monthly salary range?

Less than Rs.200,000 53%
 Between Rs.200-300,000 12%
 Between Rs.400-700,000 1%
 Undisclosed 24%
 Other 10%

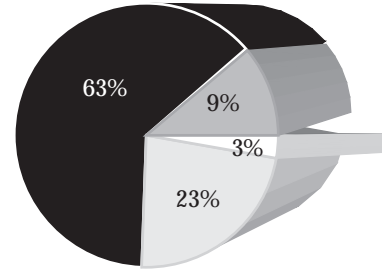


Why is this important?

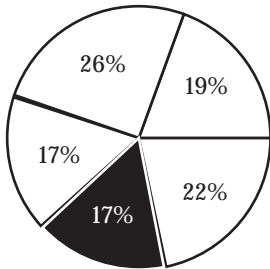
An interesting correlation to draw is the salary range compared to the average size of the IT department and the budgets they have access to. The discrepancy just within this career path is huge, alluding to the lack of standards or consistency

How much time would you estimate you spend with your team every week?

Less than 1 hour 3%
 Between 2-5 hours 23%
 More than 6 hours 63%
 Spend no time 0%
 Other 12%



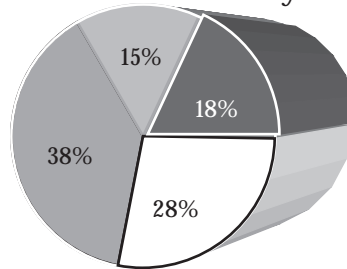
IT Budgets



Less than Rs.200,000 22%
 Between Rs.200-300,000 17%
 Between Rs.400-700,000 17%
 More than Rs.700,000 26%
 Other 19%

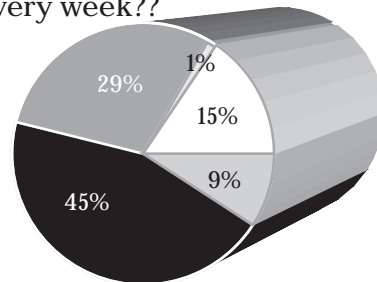
How much time would you estimate you spend with Vendors or Service Providers every week?

Less than 1 hour 28%
 Between 2-5 hours 38%
 More than 6 hours 15%
 Other 18%



How much time would you estimate you spend with your Company's Executives every week??

Less than 1 hour 9%
 Between 2-5 hours 45%
 More than 6 hours 29%
 Spend no time 1%
 Other 15%

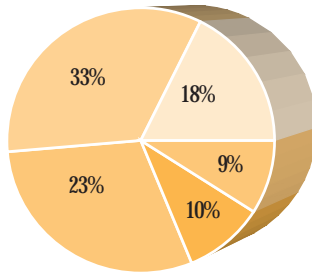


The missing link?

83% respondents are part of organizational strategy yet only 45% regularly "align" themselves with the executives

How frequently do people resign or leave your IT department?

Within 3-6 months of joining?	9%
They usually stay between 6 months to 1 year	10%
Stay more than 1 year	29%
Between 2-4 years	33%
Other	18%



Their reason for leaving is...

to find a better job?	27%
to find a job that pays better?	27%
to leave the country?	18%
to study further?	6%
to change their career?	5%
Other	17%

The top two reasons for leaving the IT department combine to make a great deal of dissatisfaction in the workplace. Either there isn't enough work trickling down to the rest of the department, or considering the IT heads salary scales appear to be on the lower end of the spectrum, companies are just not pumping enough money back into the IT department.

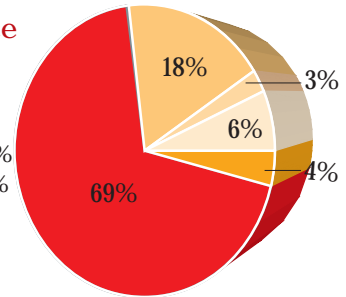
How do you incentivize the team members in the IT department?

Salary raises and bonuses	87%
Recognition	51%
Arrange for team building activities	28%
Arrange team outings or trips	31%
Take part in competitions	5%
Other	9%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

How frequently do promotions take place within your IT team?

Every 6 months or so	4%
Every year	69%
Takes more than 2 years	18%
No promotions take place - people just leave the company	3%
Other	6%

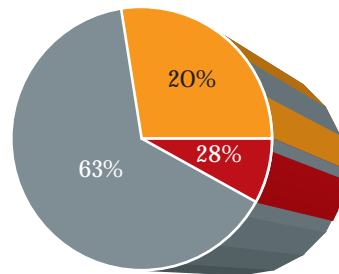


What kind of people do you usually prefer recruiting into your department?

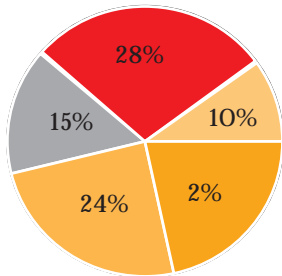
Fresh Graduates (you have no choice - you need too many people and there aren't enough available)	21%
People with at least 2 years work experience	53%
People who have worked abroad and returned to Pakistan	1%
Content experts and not techies (so not necessary CS or Engineering grads)	5%
Just creative people with a slight technical background	3%
Other	18%

On average how many hours does you spend inside the office a day?

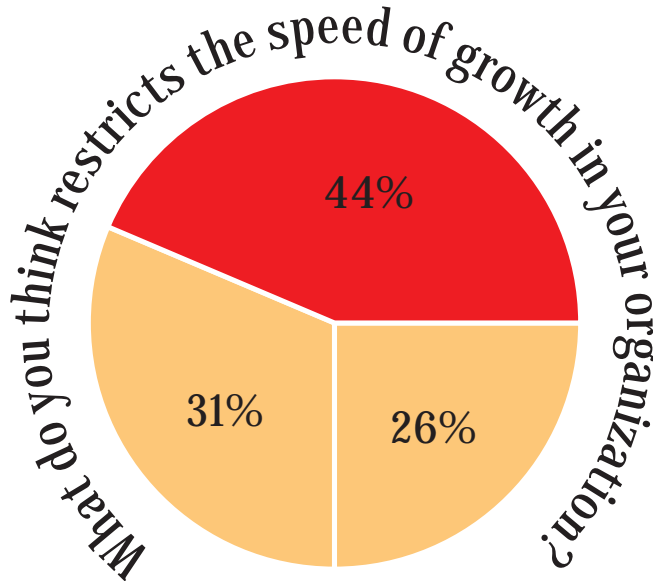
Less than 1 hour a day	0%
Between 2-5 hours	8%
Stay in the office all day	63%
Other	28%



How much time would you estimate you spend with External Partners or Customers every week?

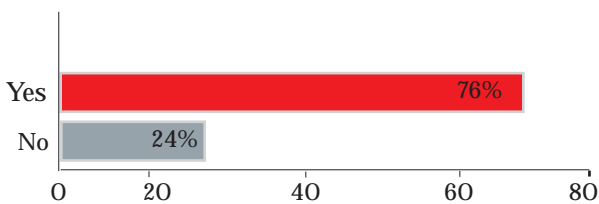


Less than 1 hour 2%
 Between 2-5 hours 24%
 More than 6 hours 15%
 Spend no time 28%
 Other 10%



The technology cannot be deployed fast enough to keep pace with change 26%
 The people cannot keep pace with change 31%
 No growth restrictions - we are satisfied with our speed of growth 44%

Have you heard of CIO Magazine?



Do you make the IT Buying decisions just for your department or for your entire company?

Department Only 13%
 Entire Company 87%

Editorial Note:

Please note that the results above reflect the findings based on the 100 respondents. This survey was initiated over the course of 3 weeks and additional entries have also been recorded after the editorial deadline of the results was announced. If you are interested in running your own analyses or discussing the findings further, please write to us at: feedback@ciopakistan.com or rabia.garib@ciopakistan.com - Various surveys for a number of verticals and trends are already in process by CIO Pakistan. Please visit us online at ciopakistan.com/surveys to participate in these, or write to us if you have thoughts on what additional market research can be conducted.

Majid Noor, IT Manager Gul Ahmed Textile Mills (Ltd)

About Gul Ahmed: Gul Ahmed Textile Mills Ltd was incorporated as a private limited company, in 1953. Since then the company has been making rapid progress and is one of the best composite textile houses in the world. The mill is presently a composite unit with an installed capacity of 103,000 spindles, 220 wide width air jet looms, 90 Sulzer's, 297 conventional looms and a state of the art processing and finishing unit.

Scope of work: I maintain the Cisco-based infrastructure and VoIP Communication IP telephony system along with managing all connectivity, data center operations, Disaster Recovery site and IP-based surveillance and CCTV system across the organization. The IT Department also supports all IT-related workflows and connectivity as well as the textile industry-specific ERP.



Where do you see the role in Technology leading change within the Textile industry? I have been part of the Textile sector for about 9 years and it is unfortunate that only a few textile firms are IT-dependent. If they understand the potential of technology, they will be able to realize greater returns on their investment. We were the first organization in Pakistan to deploy IP Telephony which was initially setup with 500 IP Phones, and today, the IPT network has grown now to accommodate a demand of 1900 IP Phones on its network. The network allows Gul Ahmed managers to view key supply chain-related information through a seamless integration of the ERP system with the XML interface on the Cisco IP phones.

Challenges for the CIO: Achieving business objectives requires change, large and small, whether you are moving toward sustainability or some other vision. Most organizations encounter challenges along the way, for instance: defining measurable goals, developing leadership skills, managing conflicts, or dealing with resistance or other issues.

Gul Ahmed's annual IT budget? Approximately Rs.20 million though the exact figure varies on expansion plans.

Your greatest achievement as the head of the department? Upgrading to a VoIP-enabled infrastructure, network security infrastructure, implementing our Disaster Recovery sites and successfully implementing our ERP solution at GulAhmed.

For more details, please visit www.gulahmed.com ☎

than one hour a week with their team and only 15% spend more than 6 hours with vendors or service providers each week. In isolation, both these figures seem insignificant until you add the 83% of CIOs who said that they took part in meetings which discussed a company's long term business strategy and the 29% that spend more than 6 hours a week with their executives. Almost 63% commented that they stay on the office premises all day long. These figures, when looked at together, seem to be consistent in companies across the board.

Comments from the 5 featured CIOs also allude to a lot of the findings that these results yield. Irfan Zafar, GM Technology Innovation, Sui Southern Gas Company Limited, for example started the interview by commenting on the fact that business strategy is one of the things he does. His role at SSGC is to maintain and further develop the IT department, which is already a critical part of the company's growth. He says, "The job in-

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volves a major technology enabled cultural and business transformation. My role extends beyond just IT - I am a business manager," which is a statement that demonstrates the contribution the technology department has on the rest of the organization.

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It is a difficult task which requires financial

Featured Interview

Arshad Javed Minhas, Executive Director and CIO, Securities & Ex- change Commission of Pakistan

About SECP: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) was set up in pursuance of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan Act, 1997. This Act institutionalized certain policy decisions relating to the constitution and structure, powers, and functions of the SECP, thereby giving it administrative authority and financial independence in carrying out its regulatory and statutory responsibilities.

Scope of your work is within the SECP? Pretty much everything. The IT department here takes care of development, implementation and operation of the technology infrastructure at the Commission. We participate in the strategic and annual planning processes, deployment of major systems, initiatives, managing multiple, concurrent and often disparate tasks for projects. We also ensure changes to the IT operating environment including software, hardware, databases, networks and system software are carefully investigated and implications understood before making such changes.

Due to the nature of the work that the SECP does, we contribute towards the formulization and amendments of rules and regulations required for electronic recordkeeping, filling of returns and registration by the corporate sector and stock exchanges and provide feedback on formalization of corporate policies and advise management and departments of the Commission on the effective and strategic use of IT in a changing business environment.

Where do you see the role in Technology leading Regulation in Pakistan as far as the SECP and financial infrastructure is concerned? SECP's regulatory agenda aims to develop the sectors under its purview and increase compliance through facilitation.

SECP will be initiating programs which will first help the corporate sector in creating an understanding and awareness on how they can take benefit of Information Technology for better record-keeping and management in their own environment as well as electronic compliance with SECP. We have already made amendments in the relevant rules and regulations to allow electronic book keep-keeping and in-



Arshad created SECP's IT Strategic Plan which provides a direction for next 7 years of automation in the organization.

spection and will continue to modify the regulation to facilitate an increased use of IT-based systems.

After we have confidence that the corporate sector has the awareness and capacity to use the necessary systems, we can slowly begin to introduce IT-related guidelines and regulations following a phased approach. However this will have a trickle-down effect, starting from the large companies, possibly through corporate governance initiatives. The SECP has already launched 'eServices' to encourage IT system compliance.

Challenges for the CIO: There are many challenges that one faces as a CIO particularly in public sector organizations and the 'real challenge' is to be successful in each of these as there is no room for failure.

The first challenge was to change the mindset towards "real automation". You see, in a typical sense, automation is confused with an abundance of computers and allied equipment as almost everyone is happy to have more of them without thinking of their use or what applications would run on them. When I joined SECP 5 years ago, there was no application or information system present in the organization. Computers were only given to private secretaries who were using them as typing machines or else they were being used by senior officers, who kept them well preserved. Some middle management officers would justify some productive use of the computers for spreadsheet analysis but other than that, these machines were completely deprived.

I took this challenge as an opportunity and decided to try some non-conventional participatory

I had prepared the IT Strategic Plan for the organization which provides a direction for next 7 years of automation. This was a key step in ensuring that all efforts and initiatives launched across the organization were justified.

approaches.

The second biggest challenge is to ensure an equitable distribution of resources among various divisions and departments. The divisions within the organization feel as if they are competing with their own team. This results in a grave discrepancy. In order to meet this challenge, I ensured that all new IT procurement, modification, upgrades and application development decisions were made centrally. These decisions were based on sound justification, real need analysis and realization that resulting outcomes are in line with the corporate IT strategy.

I had prepared the IT Strategic Plan for the organization which provides a direction for next 7 years of automation. This was a key step in ensuring that all efforts and ini-

As the CIO of this extremely influential public sector organization, my vision is to continue the successful integration of technology. IT is an enabler which acts as a change agent to help increase our exposure to cutting edge IT solutions.

tiatives launched across the organization were justified.

SECP's Annual IT budget: Approximately Rs. 100 million, which does not include any special projects.

Your greatest achievement as the head of the department? Technology is relatively new at SECP. Based on our participatory approach, outstanding teamwork by colleagues at the IS&T division, consistent approach and untiring efforts, SECP has a steadfast IT infrastructure.

We have a modern data center with a highly available environment. This provides failover con-

nectivity with 8 regional office stock exchanges throughout the country. A number of applications have been developed both in-house and through outsourcing for all functions of the Commission to ensure timeliness, effectiveness and efficiency to regulatory compliance.

There have been 2 projects which have positively impacted the entire corporate sector.

The first one is the recently launched eServices project. This is the by far the largest automation initiative in the company's history a one-of-its-kind in the country based on SOA. eServices has enabled SECP to conduct online business with the corporate sector in all areas under its purview. A number of services such as Online Name Reservation, Online Incorporation, Online Licensing, Online Filing of

returns, online approval processes to just name a few.

Another achievement is the Market Monitoring and Surveillance System (MSS), which is also a recent deployment. The MSS has tremendously enhanced the capacity of the SECP to continue its function as a stock market regulator. The Stock Market Monitoring and Surveillance is an extremely important requirement for analysis of data on regular basis.

As the CIO, what is your vision for your organization? As the CIO of this extremely influential public sector organization, my vision is to

continue the successful integration of technology. IT is an enabler which acts as a change agent to help increase our exposure to cutting edge IT solutions.

Without doubt, these have played a critical role in the projects we have deployed thusfar and those we still plan to.

I strongly believe that the SECP must play a very important role for the adoption of IT throughout the country in both public and private sectors by becoming a role model organization. With success stories in taking IT based initiatives and before asking others to take advantage of the powers of IT, we should lead by example. Our ultimate goal is to achieve end-to-end digitalization in all our interactions, both within and outside the SECP. Advice for CIOs managing businesses in the global crisis? There's absolutely no doubt that it's a very difficult time, organizations throughout the world are cutting their costs and this can also have negative impact on deployment of IT-related organizational strategies. I would however suggest that CIOs not compromise on making idealized designs based on a "helicopter" view of their environments. They should still design holistic solutions but adjust their implementation strategies and follow a more phased approach based on prioritization. This will help them to select areas which will have quick ROI and later, when the time is right, they can complete the missing pieces of the jigsaw puzzle in order to complete the picture.

For more details, please visit secp.gov.pk

and human resources along with a management commitment to pursue implementation.” With PIA being one of the larger organizations in Pakistan, it’s no wonder they have a budget in excess of Rs.100 million to manage their technology needs on an annual basis.

Trying to assess how productive the workplace was, also proved to be interesting. We’re not surprised at the number of people who wouldn’t disclose their salary packages to us. Hopefully since we ensure the anonymity factor, more CIOs will be comfortable doing so. Recruitment is always a tough job in all companies.

IT departments seem to be struggling, like most other companies, with finding qualified people to fit the job description. The majority of companies, surprisingly enough, end up hiring people ‘with at least 2 years work experience’, only 21% hire ‘fresh graduates’ though only 5% hire experts who have no technical background.

A lot of companies seem to have the trend of bonuses and salary raises and almost half the companies say that there is a formal process to recognize achievers. We’re not really sure if the respondents in this case perhaps misunderstood the question to how they would ideally like to run their IT departments with what they have right now, and you’ll see why with the next few questions.

Linking back to the question of the amount of innovation that is ongoing in the workplace it seems to be an assumption based on these trends that there is a lot of ‘on the job training’ taking place. Correlate that to the results we got from the question, ‘how frequently do people resign’ and ‘their reason for leaving’. A whopping 10% of employees in the IT department leave within a year of being hired, primarily to look for a better job. How much does this “better job” reason have to do with innovation is anyone’s guess, but research avail-

69% of the companies reported having some kind of promotion take place in the IT department almost on an annual basis, but only 3% reported that there is no such environment and people just eventually leave the company. Are these numbers really a healthy indication of a strong workforce?

able online does show a link between the quality of the workplace to the rate of attrition (or productivity, for that matter).

69% of the companies reported having some kind of promotion take place in the IT department almost on an annual basis, but only 3% reported that there is no such environment and people just eventually leave the company. Could it be that there needs to be more team building in the de-

The first challenge was to change the mindset towards “real automation”. You see, in a typical sense, automation is confused with an abundance of computers and allied equipment as almost everyone is happy to have more of them without thinking of their use or what applications would run on them. When I joined SECP 5 years ago, there was no application or information system present in the organization. Computers were only given to private secretaries who were using them as typing machines or else they were being used by senior officers, who kept them well preserved. Some middle management officers would justify some productive use of the computers for spreadsheet analysis but other than that, these machines were completely deprived.

partments for these numbers to either completely nullify or for the others to grow?

Challenges for Growth

There is no doubt an ongoing crisis. Technology brings automation, which ultimately brings business efficiency. Most companies, however, are also finding themselves cut back on IT spending – In fact, a question revealed that almost 80% of the organizations have held back on all IT spending in the past 4 months. We’re assuming this isn’t a good sign for the vendors, who usually make their

orders at least one financial quarter in advance, however we should be able to present some vendor-perspective findings in the next CIO survey we release.

In speaking with Shahid Sarwar of PIA to find out how companies should be getting ready to handle the financial crisis, he says, “viewing the current financial pressures, optimize on the existing resources, delay any capital intensive projects, if possible,

and increase emphasis on Data Security, Network Redundancy and fall back recovery procedures.” Ibrahim Memon, Head of IT, Greenstar Social Marketing, explains that, “The global economic crisis will restricts organizations to make further investments, including into MIS and IT, despite the fact it has become an integral part of all organizations. My advice is to see this crisis as an opportunity – pool your efforts in optimizing the effective use of the available MIS/IT resources and businesses will benefit in the long run.”

Irfan Zafar, GM Technology In-

novation, Sui Southern Gas Company Limited says something fairly simple. "Have a strategy. Look for improvement opportunities within the organization that have direct financial benefit to the bottom line. Invest in people and empower them with a strong and transparent accountability and reward mechanism. It is all about the people you have as your team and how supportive you are of each other." Considering SSGC has reinvented itself into an extremely IT savvy organization, it would seem that Irfan is speaking from experience.

But perhaps the challenge really is to change the mindset that our organizations are stuck in. Once the culture and corporate change can be initiated and opened up to the prospect of technology innovation, then a greater impact can take place. As the SECP CIO looks back over the years and says, "

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Looking Ahead

Pakistan has only recently achieved a certain degree of maturity in its markets. The deployment of large-scale projects have been one of the factors which have accounted for the increased level of awareness amongst the industries which make a significant contribution to the over economy. The only way to drive technology and its enabling characteristics into the mainstream, is to make sure that IT departments play a more significant role in helping organizations to conduct better business. Once the return on investment can be witnessed, technology departments auto-

matically reap the benefits.

But in order for CIOs to really do their jobs, they must be part of the decisions. That is the only way the alignment can take place between the business and the technology. While the business maps out its growth path, the CIO will be able to assess what tools are required to make sure there is enough infrastructure, capacity and power to match that path. And this is not something that can take place overnight.

There is such a serious dearth of extracted, collated information which can indicate that our organiza-

tions, sector or economy is a reality. We encourage IT departments to work with us to better help identify issues, challenges and opportunities within specific sectors, and to help the market better understand and profile the needs of technology divisions within our companies.

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Feedback:

What is your feedback about this story? Did any of the results surprise you? Do you have questions that you would like CIOs to respond to? Write to us at feedback@ciopakistan.com and let us know - If you would like to read this story online and draw your own conclusions, log on to www.ciopakistan.com