

CIO - THE TOUGHEST JOB IN THE C-SUITE

In November 2015, Mark Hurd, the CEO of tech behemoth Oracle, was giving a talk to the Georgia CIO Leadership Association's annual awards breakfast, where he revealingly set out his approach to business. Success, according to Hurd, is built upon three foundations: strategy, operating model and people. Although the nuts and bolts of the presentation specifically focused on the paradigmatic shift from on-premise software to cloud computing, Hurd's wisdom could have been equally applied to any industry whatsoever.

What was most intriguing from our point of view was that Hurd was of the opinion that CIOs currently occupy the toughest position in the C-suite and we'd have to agree with him. We look around at the current retail market and we see CEOs cutting IT costs in the face of falling margins and CIOs having to play catch-up with online commerce models that feel outdated almost as soon as they're rolled out.

"If you're CIO of the year and you can operate in this environment, you have my admiration," said Hurd. *"This is really, really hard."*

Now Hurd's comments were couched within his big pitch for cloud computing, but that shouldn't detract from the fact that he is absolutely correct - CIOs have never had it so tough. The rate of change in the information space is so rapid that operating models and company strategies are in a state of constant flux, reacting to every single data point that becomes available. No sooner is one strategy implemented than a shift in technology and/or consumer digital habits forces another change in direction. Staying relevant isn't a generational problem anymore - it needs to be addressed month on month!

Furthermore, cybersecurity needs are growing exponentially. As we saw in 2016 with Three Mobile and others, data breaches put millions of people at risk and can have a cataclysmic effect on the reputation and fate of a business. According to the Spiceworks tech career survey, 62% of IT leaders see cybersecurity as a key skill to develop for 2017 (read our blog piece with Stuart Jubb, Director at Crossword Security [here](#)).

If this wasn't enough to think about, the CIO also has to contend with the increasingly complex people structure within his/her IT division in a time of widespread skill shortages, terrible diversity and CEOs looking to cut costs. According to the aforementioned Spiceworks career outlook survey, 40% of IT professionals were burnt out in their current role, while 38% of those surveyed were looking to find a better work-life balance. Cue the self-pitying violin music...

But seriously, it's clear that CIOs are currently up against it on a number of fronts, which makes appointing the right one even more critical in today's business climate. At ORESA, our refined search process ensures that we find the very best and most talented individuals to ensure your business grows substantially. To find out more, get in touch at info@oresa.co.uk.