

[Gartner issues 10 CIO resolutions for 2005](#)

Reassess your role, embrace change and have a backup plan

News Story by Scarlet Pruitt

DECEMBER 16, 2004 ([IDG NEWS SERVICE](#)) - Reassess your role, embrace change and make a backup plan. That's the advice Gartner Inc. analysts are giving IT professionals on how to approach the coming year.

Predicting that 2005 will be a year fraught with perilous change, Gartner analysts at a roundtable discussion in London today laid out a list of "must do" resolutions to help CIOs navigate the turning tides of IT.

Recovering economies, globalization and regulatory demands will create a business need for IT, but technology professionals will have to redefine their roles to show that they are as savvy at business as they are with technology, the analysts said.

That means IT professionals will have to become more involved with the business side of operations and make technology decisions that are aligned with the strategies and financial goals of their companies. The actual technology they use is unlikely to change over the next few years, but the way it's leveraged will, the analysts said.

"IT leaders have to be shifting their focus away from simply managing technology and to look to managing business information, processes and relationships," said John Mahoney, chief of research and IT management for Gartner in Europe.

The advice comes as more companies look to slash IT budgets by outsourcing functions and reducing internal staff. If IT professionals fail to show their usefulness in the boardroom as well as the server room, they could face elimination. In fact, Gartner predicts that by 2008, most IT departments will employ half as many staffers as they do now, Mahoney said.

As a result, IT professionals face some serious decisions over the next year about what kind of roles they want to have in their field, the analysts said. They must decide if they want to be technology managers or business managers with IT expertise.

"There's a fork in the road, and because business IT leaders are more rare, we see more of a demand there," Mahoney said.

The news may jar IT workers, but it shows that companies must be able to quickly steer change in their business as they face growing competition and unpredictable macroeconomic and political forces, analysts said.

"Chief executives see technology as a barrier to change. This is the most important finding Gartner has made this year," said Mark Raskino, research director of business process and applications at the Stamford, Conn.-based company.

Legacy systems and legacy attitudes about how IT staff should function—as separate from business decision making—are seen by corporate chief executives as blockades to business agility, the analysts said. Technology complexity is viewed as another hindrance to companies' ability to quickly change directions, and Gartner predicts that simplification of IT systems will also be on CIOs' to-do lists for the coming year.

The analysts suggested creating policies to foster simplification, such as requiring older applications to be killed when new ones are added. Gartner also advised IT staffs to cap the number of vendors they contract, reduce management time and make sure out-of-date relationships are eliminated.

The analysts also predicted that companies will continue to have a broad array of IT suppliers, and the days of having a single partner or supplier are over as businesses look for specific solutions to meet their needs and budgets. However, they urged caution.

"Our advice is to challenge best of breed unless it is critical to your business. Otherwise, good enough is good enough," Mahoney said.

Outsourcing will continue to be a significant trend in the years ahead, which will simplify internal operations but put more of an onus on IT workers to prove their worth.

"Despite the fact that IT is a difficult place to work already, it's going to get a lot more difficult and a lot more complex," Mahoney said. Gartner will formally release its CIO "must do" resolutions for 2005 next week.

1. Create alternative plans for the unpredictable year.
2. Decide whether to be technology managers or business managers with IT knowledge; Invest in the appropriate skills.
3. Use regulatory compliance demands to invest in related, strategic areas.
4. Get the IT staff media-ready and try to foster external public relations.
5. Drop "on time and on budget" as a key performance indicator for IT staff. Set new performance indicators beyond that.
6. Get hands-on experience on new key technologies.
7. Combat IT complexity by creating simplification policies.
8. Elevate business process thinking to the management level. Decide process first and applications second.
9. Build a relationship and collaborate with the HR director on strategy for IT staff changes.
10. Critically review the capability of your IT organization and its leaders.