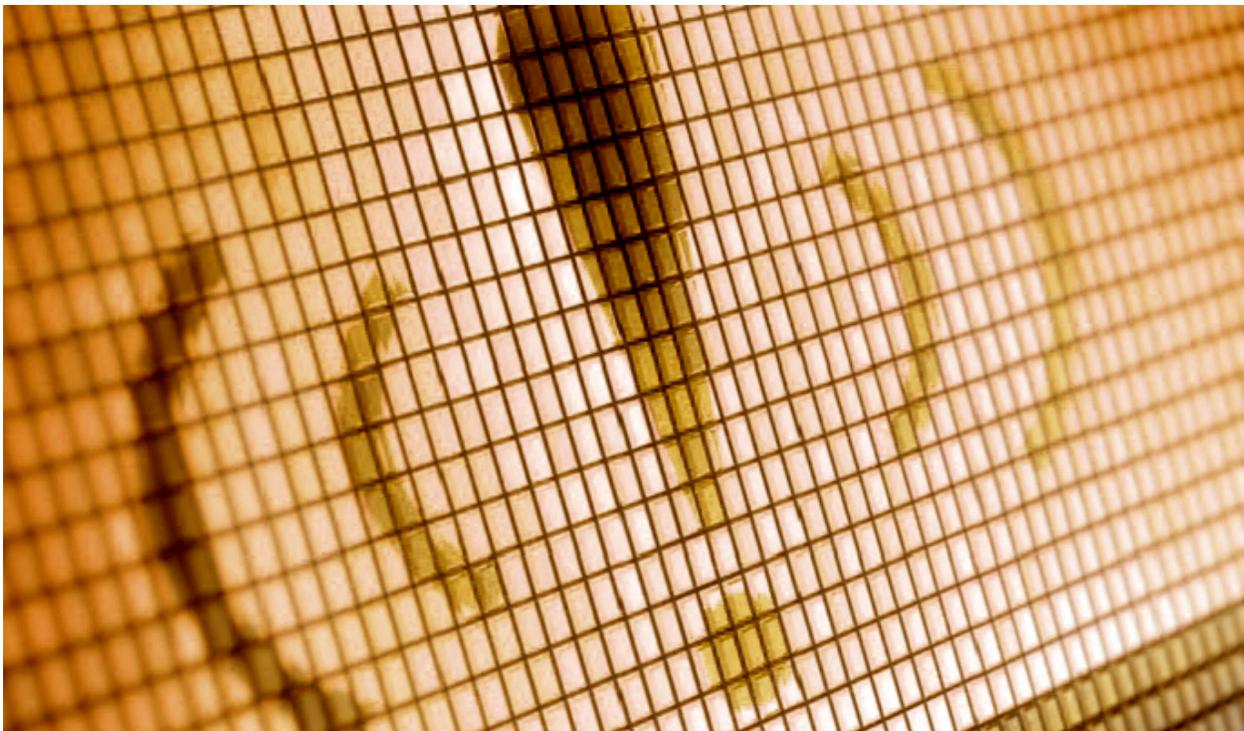




# Healthcare CIOs See Roles Slip in Decentralized Analytics World

**Healthcare CIOs will need to brush up on their people skills and innovation talents to maintain relevance a changing analytics environment.**



Source: Thinkstock



**By Jennifer Bresnick**

November 27, 2018 - Healthcare CIOs will need to adapt to changing expectations and shifting responsibilities as analytics infrastructure and data reporting becomes increasingly decentralized, according to **a new report** (<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/black-book-survey-of-more-than-1-500-executives-confirms-the-changing-role-of-the-healthcare-cio-300755147.html>) by Black Book Research.

CIOs no longer hold a monopoly over purchasing decisions and strategic planning, the report indicates, as hospitals attempt to integrate more clinical and line-of-business management views into their big data analytics initiatives.

In 2015, CIOs held responsibility for 71 percent of purchasing decisions. In 2018, that number dropped to a paltry eight percent, said Doug Brown, managing partner of Black Book.

“Traditionally, CIOs called the shots in IT purchasing after aligning with the department on its need, but digitalization is making a permanent change to the health systems IT purchase process,” says Brown.

Eighty-eight percent of non-IT hospital leaders have seen an upswing in demand for their opinions and technical skills, the survey found.

Forty-five of respondents expect that more than a third of all IT spending will take place outside of the IT department by 2019. Ninety percent of CIOs said that they have already seen line-of-business leaders going over their heads when making purchasing decisions.

“Some say the CIO title and role might just end up losing the 'C' over the next few years,” observed Brown. “In 2018, only 21 percent of CIOs felt they were meaningfully involved in the creation of market-facing innovations and strategic departmental software selections.”

CEOs and other top executives are also cooling on the idea of CIOs **running the show** (<https://healthitanalytics.com/news/big-data-ai-rapidly-transforming-the-cio-role-in-healthcare>). Twenty-nine percent of chief executives think of their CIOs as lacking the strategic knowhow to drive financial success.

A staggering 88 percent of C-suite colleagues view CIOs as little more than developers and project managers.

“Lately, CIOs have been running IT more as a supply function—as order takers and implementation coordinators—than micromanaging IT costs,” says Brown. “As more and more healthcare providers are buying cloud-based services and turning to self-service models, IT decision making is spreading across the health system.”

The executive suite largely believes that CIOs are unable to innovate and implement transformative ideas that will deliver value to the business – a viewpoint that may come as a bit of a shock to the 81 percent of CIOs who see themselves as vital strategic assets.

CIOs may be the victims of the chicken-and-egg problem of generating trust in an organization’s data assets. In **a separate survey** (<https://healthitanalytics.com/news/less-than-50-of-healthcare-cios-have-strong-trust-in-their-data>) conducted by Dimensional Insight, less than half of CIOs expressed strong trust in their clinical, operational, and financial data assets.

Low levels of trust in data may breed uncertainty in the CIOs overseeing data analytics projects, which could in turn lead to reduced adherence to data governance programs, lack of buy-in for new technologies, and skepticism around other CIO-led initiatives to improve analytics infrastructure and deployment.

In addition, very few organizations have access to self-service analytics, which may fuel even more frustration with CIOs perceived to be holding their cards too close to the vest.

Many non-IT executives might feel as if they must take matters into their own hands to gain access to the actionable insights required to succeed with value-based care and population health management, and CEOs appear to be allowing these leaders to bypass traditional decision-making pathways.

The result is a decentralizing analytics environment that is bringing line-of-business leaders to the forefront of the development process.

More than half of participants in the Black Book poll said that line-of-business leaders are more likely to lead analytics initiatives as the industry enters 2019.

In the coming year, organizations **will be targeting** (<https://patientengagementhit.com/news/patient-experience-technology-top-the-list-of-cio-priorities>) critical financial and clinical issues such as revenue cycle management, patient experience improvements, and reductions in wasteful spending – and they only plan to call upon their CIOs as technology consultants, not project leaders.

CIOs wishing to preserve their positions as key leaders in the healthcare enterprise will need to adapt quickly to changing demands and expectations.

Instead of focusing on IT purchasing and management, CIOs will need to switch gears and become experts in scaling existing infrastructure while embracing new strategies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, and more robust **cybersecurity** (<https://hitinfrastructure.com/news/healthcare-cios-target-data-security-physician-satisfaction>), Black Book predicts.

CIOs should start to brush up on their abilities to recruit strong talent, manage relationships, and achieve growth goals as hospitals and health systems look for scale to help combat financial stresses.

“Clearly the success of the 2019 CIO will be measured not on what they have built in infrastructure, but what they orchestrate between services, IT systems and what business goals have been integrated,” Brown noted.

Developing the creative capacity to innovate will be key for CIOs to maintain relevance and authority in this changing ecosystem, said 83 percent of their colleagues. Eighty-one percent would like to work with CIOs that have a handle on the flow of data across the organization, while 77 percent believe that CIOs should become communication leaders and standard-bearers for data-driven cultures.

“While traditional IT delivery management across the organization will remain part of the job, greater importance on the role of the CIO is being placed on attaining a far broader set of business objectives, innovation seeking, and talent development,” Brown says.

“Not all of today's CIOs are going to make the shift successfully, but the role of the hospital CIO will remain absolutely essential for the foreseeable future. While the title of

CIO isn't going to disappear, the role is quickly transforming. One thing is clear, all CIOs across health systems have been challenged with this fast pace of change.”