

An initiative of The Economic Times

ET | Home | News | Case Studies | Strategy & Mgmt | Industries |
Tech-Talk | CIO Wall | Secret Diary of CIO



Mukul Jain

Senior Vice President& Head – IT at DHFL Pramerica Life Insurance

Mukul Jain is Sr Vice President & Head - IT at DHFL Pramerica Life Insurance. Prior to this he was working with Max New York Life Insurance and Newgen Software Technologies.

Questions & Answers Session

23 February 2015, 2:59 PM IST

1. The popular tech sites/blogs you follow.

I follow Gartner, Forrester, Computerworld and CIO as the key guiding material amongst others. I have also subscribed to informative mailers from various information portals, consulting firms and companies like Gartner/IBM/HP etc.

2. The tech legend you respect the most.

It's a tough choice between Steve Jobs and Bill Gates. However, if I am forced to select one then it would be Steve Jobs, for changing the way we interact with technology today! He is truly a legend who could foresee the future of technology and its usage by the masses. He was a risk taker who could do what most others had not and turn Apple into the most valued company in the world.

3. Your advice to aspiring CIOs.

A simple advice to the aspiring CIOs would be; to not be a 'GEEK'. Although technology understanding is key, my recommendation is to focus on business requirement/understanding for a holistic solution. As a CIO you will be looked up to in order to resolve business problems by leveraging technology and create business differentiator through its interactive usage.

4. The biggest lessons learnt in professional career.

A few pointers cum scenarios that must be looked into for a smooth operational success-

Is there buy-in? There is no fun having great technology without business buy-in from the stakeholders. Most IT projects fail because of that and lead to conflicts and a sense of alienation.

#Are roles and responsibilities clearly defined? With a cross functional team it is very important to clearly identify

and document roles and responsibilities.

Communication is the key! A lot of times we tend to communicate only when things are going right and don't when there are challenges. In my experience your honest and transparent efforts are always appreciated even when you have made a mistake, provided you have communicated timely. Regular communication can help overcome most hurdles/challenges that come about!

Learn to say 'NO'! As a technology leader your organisation expects you to manage their IT assets most optimally and help grow the business. By saying 'Yes' always without complete business knowledge and IT requirement, you might be putting the business processes through great risk. It is advisable to do extensive research first and know the technology and the risks involved well before you give your answer

5. 5 traits of highly effective CIOs.

A CIO needs to be a business partner (and not only an enabler) ie; one who is called upon to help generate new ideas rather than only at times of implementation. He needs to communicate well, articulate his ideas and influence others. A smart and solution oriented CIO is always sought after. Most of all he should be open minded because we work in an environment where business dynamics and technology changes go hand in hand. Therefore an open mind with the ability to learn, unlearn and learn again helps significantly.

6. Tips for work life balance.

Considering IT services are a 24x7 requirement, as a CIO I need to be available in case of any exigency. Personally I believe in the following:

Enjoying your work makes it easier especially when you need to stretch yourself!

Delegate the job to experts in the team. Give them a free hand and trust them. If your team is empowered most issues are resolved without your intervention.

Give yourself uninterrupted personal time so that you can reboot. For example I don't check my mails during my personal time but my colleagues and my team know that they can call me in case of an emergency.

Take a vacation once a year!

7. Success parameters for CIOs/IT Leaders in any organization.

Quantitative parameters on CTQ (Cost, Time & Quality) like SLA adherence, uptime, cost optimization, timeliness, productivity improvement are always measured for all our initiatives.

Qualitative measures like business impact, talent management, innovations are measured by taking inputs from business stakeholders.

Encourage having secondary IT managers with sound business knowledge or from the business functions, in order to have an effective IT and business alignment.

8. Embarrassing moments in your career.

I recollect one incident early in my career where we had a showdown due to a last minute system crash. There was a demo scheduled at the client site and we were well rehearsed, but you never know when technology can fail you. Thankfully we had prints of the presentation which saved us and we carried out a demo on a different machine later on.

9. Other than technology what excites you?

I am very fond of gardening and maintain a terrace garden. Spending time with my family relaxes me. I am strongly associated to the cause of blood and platelet

donation.

As told to Salvi Mittal.

ETCIO.com

Follow ETCIO

News ›

Internet of things / Security / Cloud Computing / Strategy & Management / Business Analytics / Big Data / Mobility / Services & Apps / Consumer Tech / Data Center / Case Studies / Corporate / Social Media / Policy / Internet

Features ›

Case Studies / Strategy & Mgmt / Tech-Talk / CIO Wall / Secret Diary of CIO / Healthcare / Automotive / Manufacturing / Financial Services / Retail / IT/ITES / Banking

Other B2B News Sites ›

Retail News / Auto News / Healthcare News / Telecom News / Oil and Natural Gas News / Real Estate News / Technology News

About Us / Contact Us / Advertise with us / Newsletter / RSS Feeds / Widgets / Embed ETCIO.com Widgets on your Website

Privacy Policy / Terms & Conditions / Copyright © 2015 ETCIO.com . All Rights Reserved.