



COMMUNICATION: THE CIDO'S SUPERPOWER

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When people ask me what skill has made the biggest difference in my career, I don't hesitate: it's communication.

Over four decades in technology leadership roles, including my current position as CIDO at Boeing, I've learned that the ability to communicate clearly and concisely is the single most important factor in a CIDO's success. Without it, even the best strategy or the most innovative ideas will fail to gain traction.

WHY COMMUNICATION MATTERS MORE THAN EVER

As technology and business converge, CIDO's find themselves presenting to a wide range of audiences—from engineers to employees, senior executives, and boards. Each audience requires a different approach, but the common thread is clarity.

If your team doesn't understand where you're headed, they won't follow. If senior leaders don't grasp your message, they won't support it. And if your board isn't energized by what you say, you won't get the resources you need.

That's why communication is not just a soft skill—it's a leadership superpower.

THE POWER OF SIMPLICITY

The challenges we deal with as technology leaders are complex. Systems, infrastructure, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence — these topics are not easily simplified. But that's exactly the task of a CIDO: to take complexity and translate it into terms that resonate with the audience.

I often think of this approach as *storyboarding*. It's about putting together a message that is structured, easy to follow, and compelling. It's about leaving your audience with a clear understanding of the *what*, the *why*, and the *so what*.

CONSEQUENCES OF POOR COMMUNICATION

When communication fails, the consequences are significant. Employees become disengaged because they don't see a clear direction. Senior leaders begin to doubt whether there is a real plan. Boards lose confidence in your ability to deliver.

On the other hand, when communication is done well, it energizes everyone. It creates alignment across levels of the organization. It gives people confidence that the strategy is real and achievable.

FINAL THOUGHT

All of the other priorities of a CIDO—strategy, risk management, transformation—depend on this one skill. Without the ability to communicate effectively, none of them will succeed.

So if you're stepping into a senior technology leadership role, my advice is simple: **master communication early**. It will define your credibility, your influence, and ultimately, your success.



Dana Deasy is the Chief Information Digital Officer and Senior Vice President of Information Digital Technology & Security at The Boeing Company, where he leads enterprise IT, data analytics, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and physical security. Before joining Boeing in 2025, he served as Chief Information Officer for the U.S. Department of Defense, advising the Secretary of Defense on information management, space systems, cybersecurity, AI, and advanced technology development.

Previously, Deasy held global CIO roles at JPMorgan, BP, General Motors, Tyco International, and Siemens Corporation. As an adjunct professor at Carnegie Mellon University, he brings decades of leadership at the highest levels of government and industry to the CIDO program, helping digital executives strengthen their strategic, technical, and leadership impact.

Learn from leaders like Dana Deasy in the **Chief Information and Digital Officer (CIDO)** Executive Education Program at Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College.

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