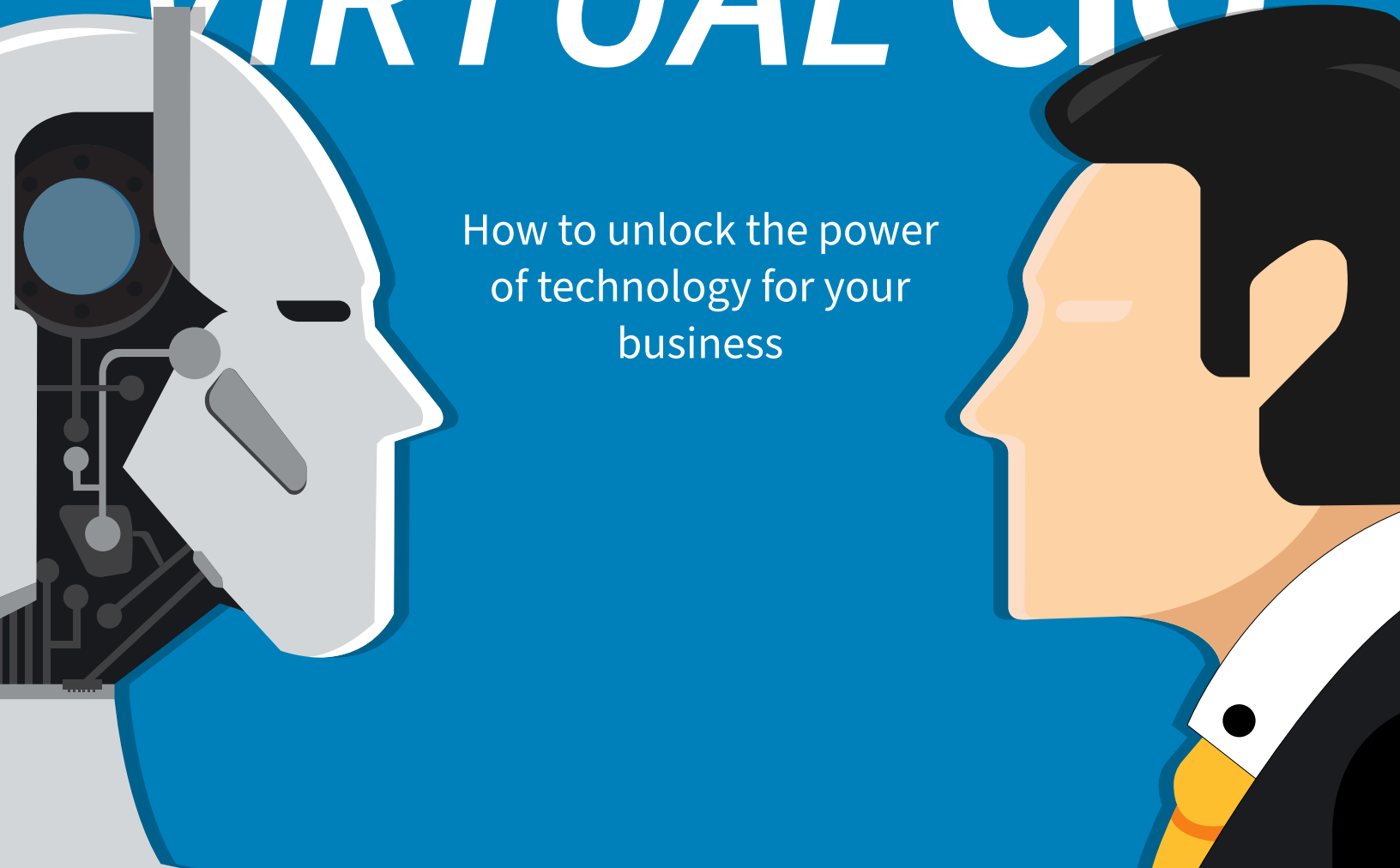
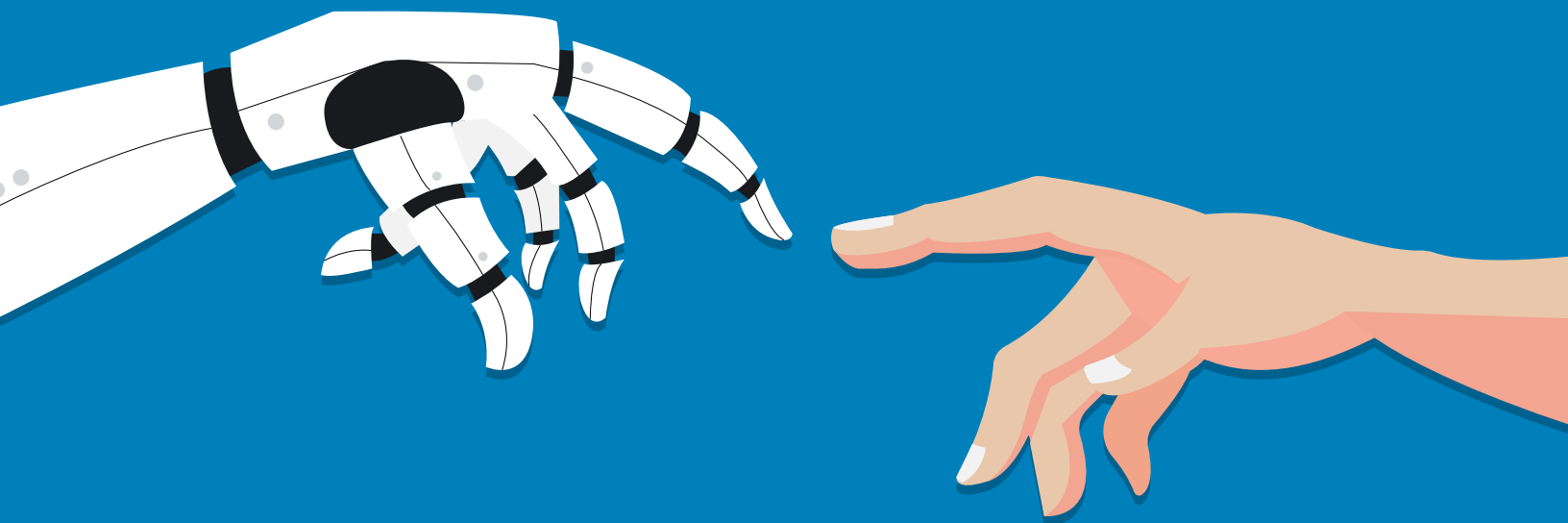




THE RISE OF THE *VIRTUAL* CIO

How to unlock the power
of technology for your
business





“Due to this continuing evolution, IT has taken on a new role. IT is no longer a cost center, it is a key driver of business growth.”

THE DOUBLING OF COMPUTER PROCESSING SPEED EVERY 18 MONTHS, known as Moore’s Law, has continued to prove accurate since the CEO of Intel initially observed this fact in 1965. While some experts say that trend may be nearing its end, there’s no arguing that technological change is happening at an exponential rate.

And, some of the most significant implications and breakthroughs of rapidly advancing technology is happening in its application to business operations and business intelligence.

Due to these ongoing advancements, IT can now unlock significant growth potential for companies through streamlined operations, increased productivity, cutting-edge cybersecurity, and more. Due to this continuing evolution, IT has taken on a new role. IT is no longer a cost center, it is a key driver of business growth.

In small to medium-sized businesses, managing IT often falls to the CFO, COO, Director of IT, a part-time IT professional, or even a tech savvy office manager. The problem with that reality is that these individuals lack the proper bandwidth to apply to the role and likely do not have the training, technical expertise, or experience to do anything more than maintain the status quo.

Even if a small to mid-sized company recognizes the necessity for a Chief Information Officer, hiring a C-suite executive can prove to be impractical. However, these businesses now have the ability to outsource the role to an IT service provider that offers virtual Chief Information Officer (vCIO) services. But what exactly does that look like?

What is a vCIO?

A VIRTUAL CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER IS AN EXPERT TECHNICAL RESOURCE AND A STRATEGIC BUSINESS PARTNER. The best way to understand a vCIO is by outlining what they do. A vCIO delivers value through the following capabilities:

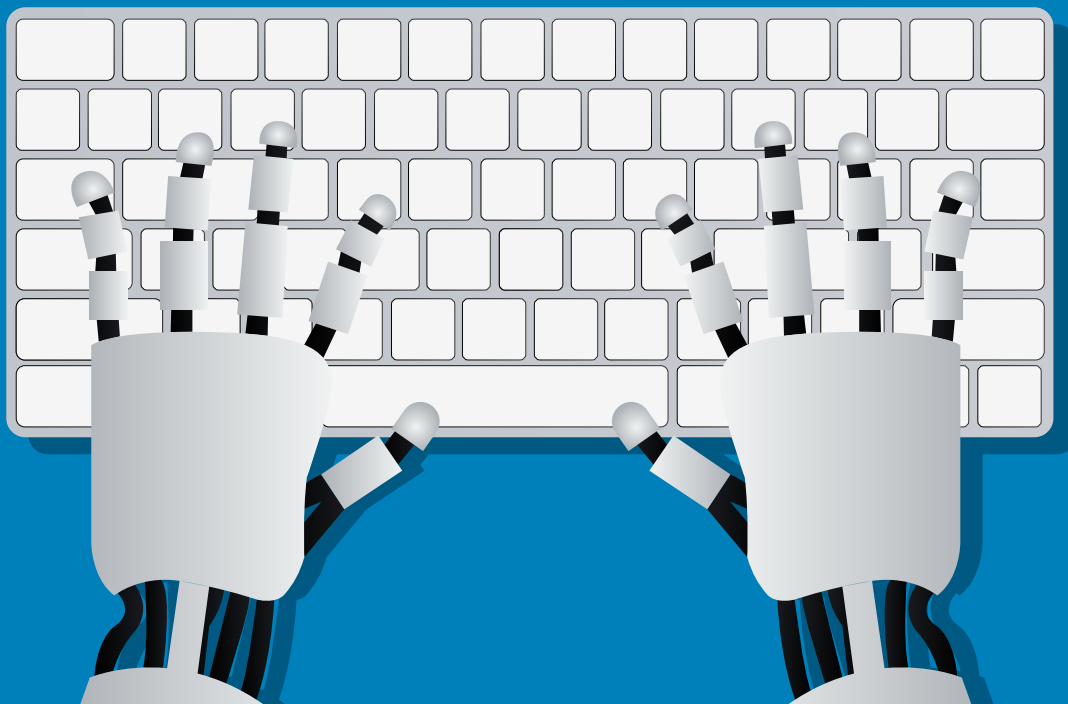
1. Building relationships with your team and digging deep to understand the challenges and opportunities within your business
2. Bringing deep understanding of winning technology strategies and providing synchronization of business and IT objectives
3. Delivering insights from experience in business management and operations

A vCIO develops a comprehensive view of how IT services currently support a business then will discuss business goals, challenges, risks, core values, competitors, competitive advantages, market positions, and profit margins. With a better understanding of these areas, your vCIO is prepared to provide strategic IT direction within the specific context of your business.

In short, a vCIO performs all the functions of a regular CIO including:

- Directing IT strategy
- Creating IT budgets
- Implementing and upgrading IT systems
- Reviewing and reporting on IT department performance

The function of IT is no longer just “Information Technology.” IT now reaches into so many other areas essential for the success of your business. And, all of those are areas where a vCIO can help differentiate your business from your competitors.



The **FOUR** *other “I”’s of IT*



INFRASTRUCTURE

Maintaining or migrating legacy systems, making strategic decisions to reduce cost across an organization.



INTEGRATION

Consolidating systems, linking business processes and data, and developing cloud-based approaches.



INTELLIGENCE

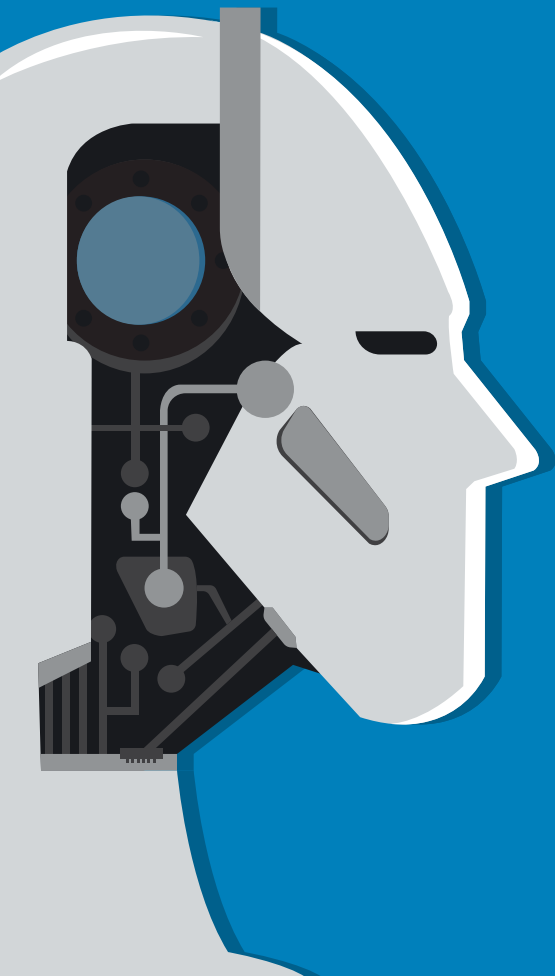
Gaining insights from all the business data at your fingertips to make more informed decisions.



INNOVATION

Staying on top of trends, knowing about potentially disruptive technology in your industry, and determining how or if to leverage it for your business.

ALL OF THESE FALL TO THE LEADER OF IT AT YOUR COMPANY. Even if your company does not have the budget to hire a CIO, you can still gain the same level of strategic enablement that comes with a vCIO.



Who Needs a Virtual CIO?

On a very practical level, the ideal candidates for a vCIO are small to mid-sized businesses that do not want to spend the money to staff a C-level leader for IT but want to leverage technology for growth.

► Here are some additional characteristics of a company that can reap benefits from adopting a vCIO model:

YOU NEED IT RESOURCES TO DELIVER MORE VALUE

Currently, IT is little more than a line item on the budget that's required to "keep the lights on," so to speak. Whether a small in-house IT team or a part-time IT professional, your IT resources maintain the status quo and merely keep your business systems and computers running. But why just keep things running when you could have technology to rocket your business upward and create significant growth potential?

YOU WANT SOMEONE WHO CAN CAST A VISION FOR YOUR COMPANY'S TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY

While you understand the basics of your IT systems and processes, you need a leader with deep experience in IT and business operations who can marry your business objectives with your technology strategy. With a vCIO to keep you ahead of the curve through business-technology integrations and insights on the cutting-edge of the tech world, your business can thrive.

YOU REQUIRE CUSTOMIZATION OF YOUR SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

Sure, a number of business software solutions come with out-of-the box configurations, but are those really meeting the needs of your team? Oftentimes, without the oversight of a seasoned IT pro, your employees end up creating quick fixes that turn into long-term workarounds that eat up productivity and can prove to be quite frustrating to team members.

YOU MUST ADHERE TO STRICT COMPLIANCE AND LEGAL STANDARDS

If you're in a highly regulated industry, you know that compliance and legal standards can be complex and ever-changing. Your business systems and processes may have been set up for adherence to those laws, but do you know if they have stayed up to date with new regulatory requirements for personal mobile devices, software patches and updates, user data privacy, and more?

How Does a Virtual CIO Deliver Value to Your Business?

Serving as an integral part of your team, a vCIO develops a strategic IT plan, keeps your systems up to date, ensures security across your network and data, helps increase productivity, and discovers new efficiencies for your operations. In the big picture, having a vCIO at the helm — especially when in conjunction with managed IT services — means you can and your team can focus on your core responsibilities instead of spending time and resources on technology issues.

► Let's look at three key areas where business owners see the direct value of a vCIO

MAXIMIZE YOUR BUDGET

A vCIO creates a roadmap for a long-term technical strategy. This roadmap not only helps ensure all stakeholders understand recommended approaches, but also helps forecast budgets through hardware lifecycle planning and defining the execution of strategic objectives. With that level of expertise available, you can know that you are making smart investments in the right technology that will carry your business into the future.

INCREASE EFFICIENCIES AND PRODUCTIVITY

A business is not properly positioned for growth without a strong foundation of systems and processes. A vCIO deepens integrations of your technology throughout your business processes to prepare your company for growth and success. From APIs to automated tasks and eliminating outdated technology, the vCIO discovers and maps out solutions to existing issues and the deeper issues you may not even have identified yet.

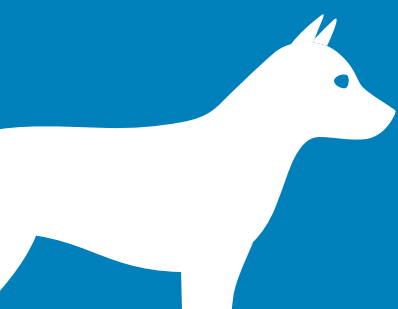
GAIN PEACE OF MIND

With the rise of data breaches, ransomware, and DDoS attacks, cybersecurity is top of mind for any business leader whose company handles sensitive customer information. Additionally, companies need to keep software and hardware up to date to prevent vulnerabilities and maintain controls over PII, PCI, HIPPA and other confidential data. With a vCIO, you can rest assured that you have someone in your corner taking a proactive approach to keeping your business and your customers safe.



BRINGING A VCIO INTO YOUR BUSINESS MEANS YOU GAIN THE BENEFITS OF A CIO AT A FRACTION OF THE COST.

A vCIO gives your business the capability to accelerate business growth with the power of technology. With a vCIO in place, you can jump on opportunities to outpace your competitors, serve your customers better, and be prepared to face whatever technology challenges may arise.



Discover how **YOUR BUSINESS CAN GAIN THE STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE** of a vCIO with BluHeeler's vCIO and managed IT service solutions at **www.BLUHEELER.com**



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Bluheeler was designed for SMBs by making their systems more productive, secure, and uncomplicated.

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