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Transformation Leadership Event
The Agile Corporation
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TELUS Spark Science Center

Board Leadership:
Putting a Business Voice to IT

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CEO, Inventure Solutions and SVP, IT & Facility Management, Vancity (retired)

CEO, Strategic Technology Leadership Corporation

CEO and Chair Canadian Women in Technology

Speaker's Background

- ➢ CEO, Strategic Technology Leadership Corporation
- ➢ CEO and Chair Canadian Women in Technology
- ➢ CEO at Inventure Solutions and Sr. VP of I.T. and Facilities at Vancity (retired)
- ➢ Senior Vice President, Information Technology at PBC
- ➢ Vice President, Information Technology at BCAA
- ➢ BMath (University of Waterloo), MEd, PhD (University of Toronto)

- ➢ Founding President of the CIO Association of Canada
- ➢ Canada's Most Powerful Woman: Top 100 Award Winner (2009, 2011)
- ➢ Canadian Advanced Technology Alliance CIO award for leadership and innovation (2008)
- ➢ Gartner IT Executive of the Year (2003) for North America

- ➢ Board member ICBC, Burnaby Board of Trade, CGA Canada, Information and Communications Technology Council

The role of the CIO has changed!

- Executive team member: business issues impacted by technology
  - Leadership involves communicating with different stakeholders
  - Leverage CIO View: seeing the organization in greater breadth
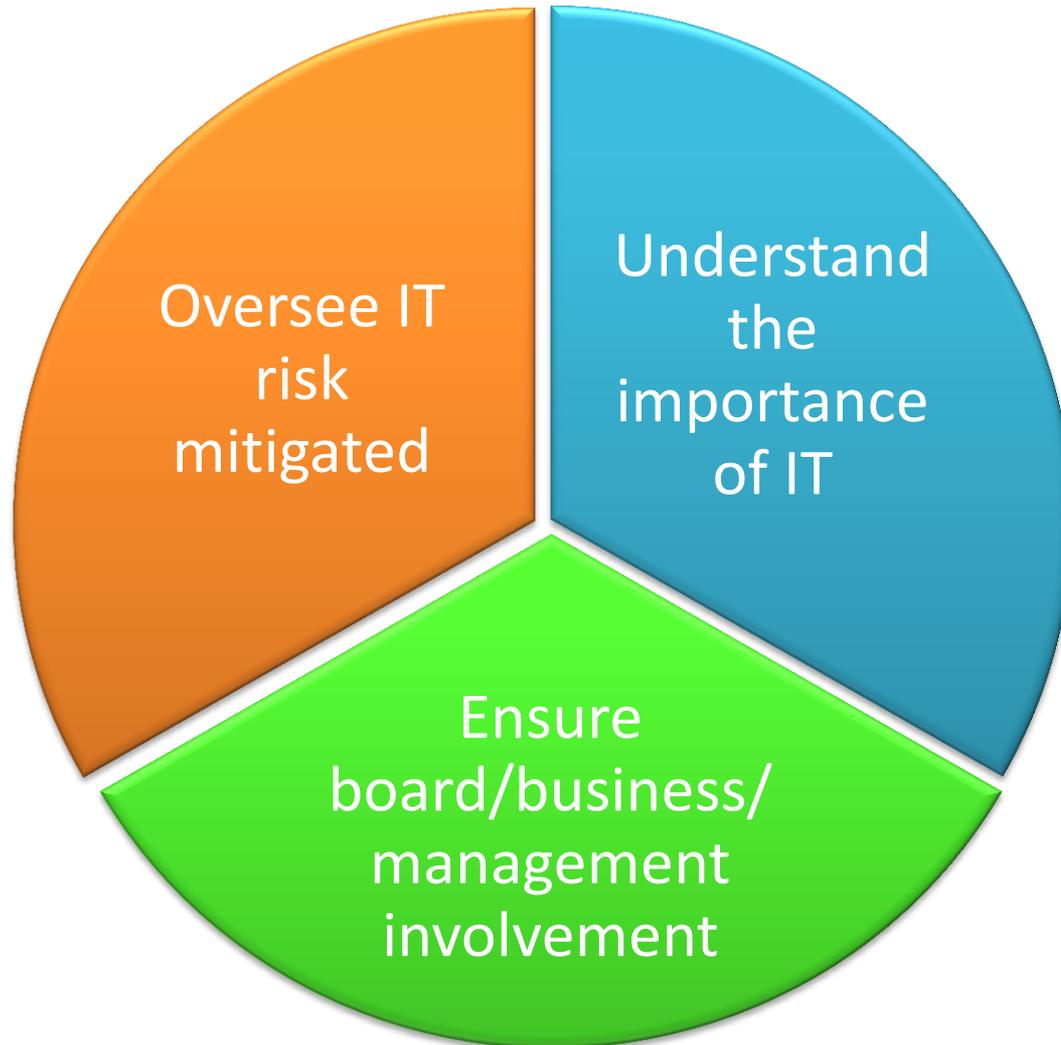
The next step: interaction with the Board

Why is this an issue?

- CIOs find it difficult communicating in a "board-relevant language"

- Often lack of IT champion on Board

- Many CIOs are apprehensive of Board interactions

- Many CIOs don't understand the role of the Board

Board's Role

Board's view of technology

– Board's focus is on the relationship between business strategy and IT strategy

– Not interested in the technology details but:
  – what business initiatives it enables
  – what risks it exposes the organization
  – how it improves financial performance
  – how it supports the business' strategic plan

What CIOs bring to the Board

– Strategic alignment
  - Strategic technology plans
  - Business alignment

– Security and compliance
  - Business continuity, new regulations (e.g. IFRS)

– Value measurement
  - Major project impact/report
  - Applications portfolio management

– Change/risk management
  - New processes due to new systems
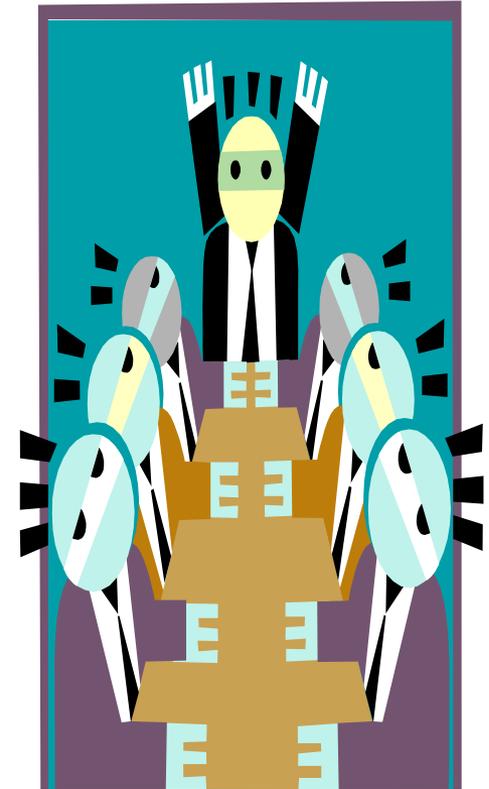
CIO - Board interaction

- Fundamental requirements
  - Strong business skills
  - Interpersonal and communications skills

- Must know how to influence the Board
  - Good strategies and great ideas are not enough

- Find the right balance
  - Good decision making: amount of risk acceptable to the organization
  - Balance: some want analysis paralysis, others want to do it on the fly

Five important steps a CIOs can take to prepare

1. Understand Board's vs Senior Management's role

- The Board represents and protects the interest of the shareholders or members
- Senior management is responsible for running the organization

2. Be prepared to explain the role of the CIO

- Business executive specializing in IT

- Like a zebra, not white with black stripes or white with black stripes

- Often the CIO is not just IT: 52% of CIOs have at least one additional responsibility outside of IT (Gartner)

Five important steps a CIOs can take to prepare *continued*

3. Get to know the Board and its members
  - Type of board (elected, appointed, political)
  - Degree of technology "comfort"
  - Board focus (cost cutting, M&A, etc)
  - Board working process: formal or informal
  - Board decision making process

4. Work with the CEO and other executives
  - Provide the organization's view
  - Get their view on how to get your message across to the Board

5. Acquire Board experience
  - Be part of volunteer Board(s)
  - Take Corporate Director courses

Example: "Banking Applications Renewal" Board Presentation

1975 Oldsmobile looks nice but as difficult to maintain as a Core banking application implemented in 1975
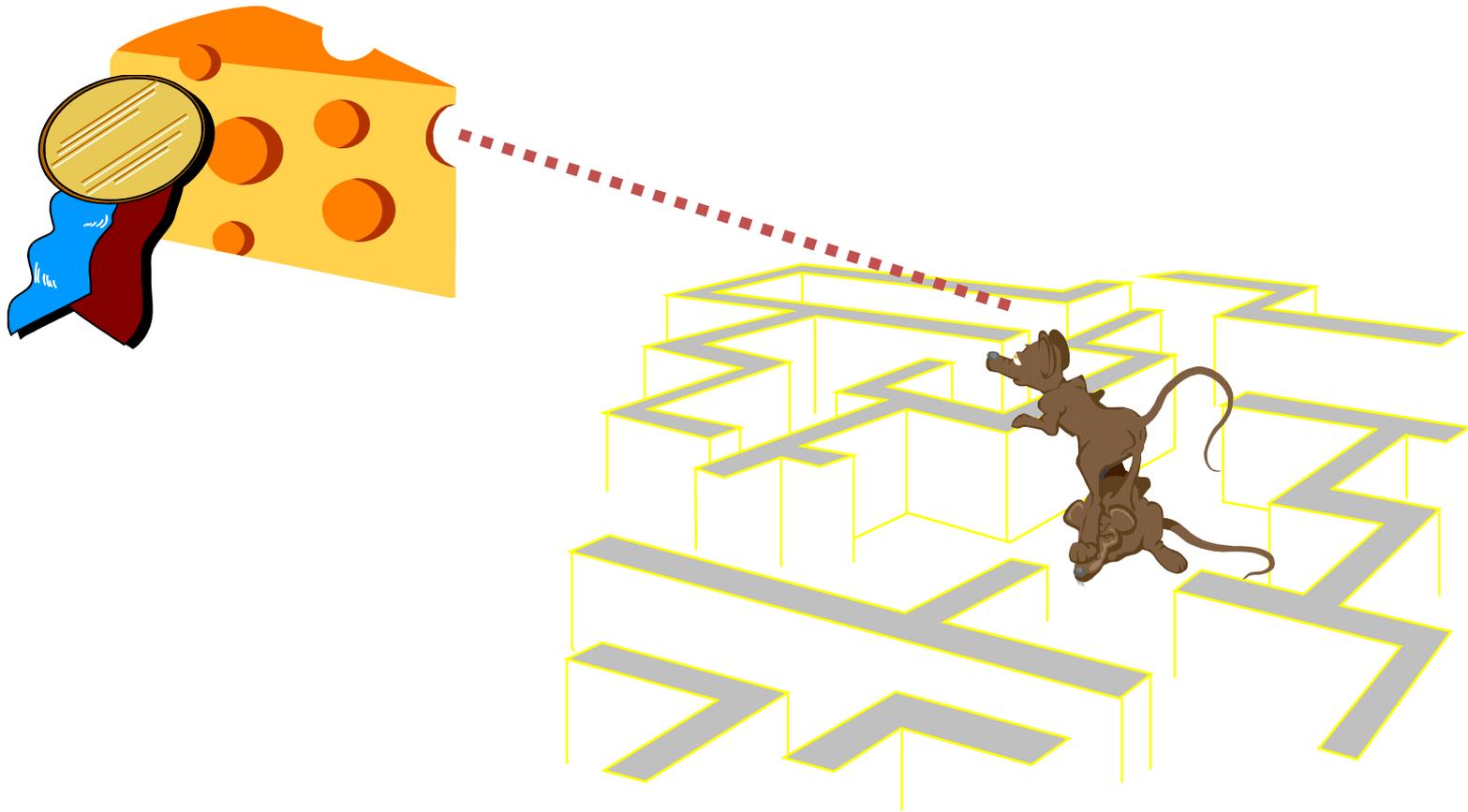
Tips for Board Presentations

- Provide a complete view, all the information needed
- Present a joint view, representing that of senior management, not just yours
- Use "business" terms, not technology
- Watch your message style
- Provide transparency
- Have regular updates

Recommendations

- Provide regular, relevant report to the Board or relevant Board committee

- Present the technology investments in terms of operational, compliance, improving business processes, and business growth

- Offer the Board educational sessions :
    - discuss IT governance
    - Present and discuss IT strategic plan and its implication on the business

- Identify where technology can be a strategic differentiator

- Stay up-to-date on future business requirements (products, processes, regulations)

Lets Discuss!

Who Moved my Cheese?