

Leadership Skills Every CTO Needs to Have



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The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has reshaped technology leadership, particularly when it comes to the chief technology officer (CTO) role. Today, CTOs are expected to drive businesses' tech strategies and R&D and understand cybersecurity, coding, and other topics relating to the digital world.

In addition, companies increasingly want agile and kinetic technology leaders, according to a recent Deloitte survey. And, CTOs who possess the skills necessary to quickly adapt to tech challenges and foster digital transformation are well-equipped to succeed.

Now, let's look at four essential skills you need to have as a CTO in today's always-on, hyper-connected global marketplace.

1. Communication

Corporate recruiters often cite communication and interpersonal skills as the top talents employers seek in job candidates, regardless of role. This is because a strong communicator can consistently disseminate the right information to the right audience at the right time. The result: this individual can help their employer avoid missed communications that otherwise lead to costly, time-intensive mistakes.

For CTOs who want to improve their communication skills, it helps to leverage all of the tools at their disposal. For instance, you can learn the ins and outs of Slack, Yammer, and other collaboration platforms so you can keep the lines of communication open with your teams. You can also leverage Bitrix24, Wrike, or other task and project management platforms to ensure miscommunications do not prevent work from getting done on time and on budget.

Don't forget to host regular webinars, group brainstorming sessions, and 1-on-1 meetings across your teams, too. Because the more you communicate with your team, the less likely miscommunications crop up to hamper your business' productivity and efficiency.

2. Listening

Along with communication skills, effective listening can make a world of difference for CTOs. This form of listening goes beyond hearing; it involves listening to what others have to say with your ears, eyes, and the rest of your body.

As an effective listener, you can look beyond the words coming out of a person's mouth and consider them in relation to their body language and tone. This allows you to listen to what a person is saying and understand the meaning behind it. Then,

you can respond appropriately.

To become an effective listener, keep an open mind any time you enter a conversation. It helps to give anyone you're speaking with sufficient time to speak and avoid interrupting him or her. You should maintain eye contact throughout the conversation and use nods, hand gestures, and other non-verbal cues to show the other person you're interested in what he or she has to say.

3. Time Management

How you manage your time can have far-flung effects on your success as a CTO. If you let deadlines loom until the last possible moment or constantly fall behind on work tasks, you and your team may suffer the consequences. In the worst-case scenarios, poor time management can lead to brand reputation damage, revenue losses, and other long-lasting business problems.

Planning offers a great starting point for CTOs who want to manage their time as best as they can. You can use time management apps like RescueTime or Focus Keeper or a planner to map out your daily, weekly, and monthly schedules. Moreover, you can use the "Eat the Frog" technique to identify the most important task in a given day and devote your full attention to completing it.

Tech problems like excessive downtime and high energy costs can also put big dents in your schedule. Monitor the technology used across your business; if you find some tech problems continue to crop up, it could be time to make some upgrades.

Automation can be beneficial relative to time management as well. You can automate appointment scheduling, reporting, and other tasks, so you can focus exclusively on high-value activities.

4. Customer Service

The customer experience (CX) plays a key part in consumers' buying decisions. Research shows 74% of consumers are at least "somewhat likely" to make purchases from a business based solely on the experience. Meanwhile, a successful CTO keeps customer service top of mind, understands a company's target markets, and crafts IT initiatives to support positive customer experiences.

To build exceptional customer service skills, a CTO must first define exceptional customer service. To do so, consider the customer's perspective. You can then determine what people expect from you and your business and hone your customer service skill set accordingly.

Typically, customer-first CTOs are empathetic toward others and are willing to commit the time, energy, and resources necessary to learn from them. They share information in a clear, concise manner and are open to positive and negative feedback. As such, these CTOs know what it takes to engage with others and ensure all parties can work together to achieve the optimal results.

Tips to Enhance Your CTO Skill Set

Leadership development is paramount, particularly for current or aspiring CTOs. Those who have the right skills can lay the groundwork for a successful career as a CTO. They can also provide outstanding support and help their teams maximize their potential.

It helps to continuously explore ways to bolster your CTO skill set, too. Here are three tips to help you hone your CTO skills now and in the future:

- Build your presence. Passion, confidence, and enthusiasm can be contagious; display them in your daily work, and

your team will likely do the same.

- Learn from leadership experts. Read leadership books and blogs to foster a diverse CTO skill set.
- Stay the course. Remain diligent, and remember, there is always room for improvement as a CTO.

Use the aforementioned tips to develop and improve your CTO skill set. That way, you can put yourself in a terrific position to become a successful CTO.

Ethical leaders can have a positive impact not only on their businesses but also on the wider community. By following the key tenets of a morally solid business – transparency, diversity, and authenticity among them – entrepreneurs can ensure that all stakeholders can connect to the company and its leadership in a way that engenders trust and mutual respect. After all, ethical businesses are what consumers deserve, and business owners can in turn reap the immense potential benefits.



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