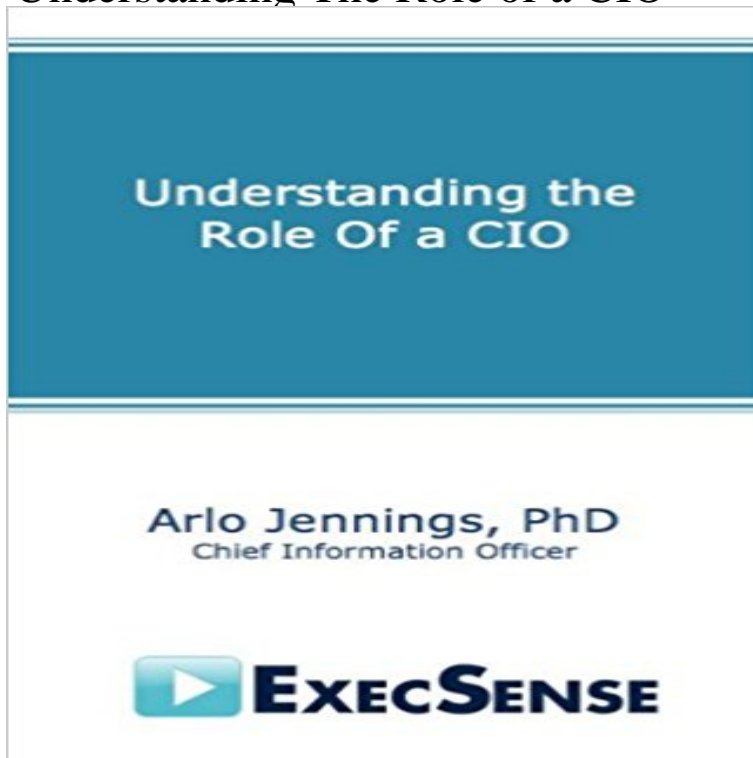


Understanding The Role of a CIO



Having spent 46 plus years in information technology, back to the days of the machine room, I have seen the role of the CIO evolve through various stages with titles ranging from manager of data processing to manager of management information services, to a director title and later to just Chief Information Officer or CIO. As computer technology became more of a necessity instead of a luxury the role of CIO also became part of senior leadership, changing to a vice president or in many cases to a senior vice president. However in today's environment, the CIO may only be over the computer systems for an organization, regardless of size. But this is not the true role a CIO should play in the organization. Smaller organizations may only have small computer systems, stand-alone personal computers requiring only some type support. However, these smaller organizations miss the actual value possible from having a wealth of data to better manage their business. Larger organizations must rely on advanced and complex computer technology infrastructures to maintain not only local business, but national and international business. The introduction of the Internet and access through web sites have led to organizations changing the way they do business and the demand placed on having the right individual lead their information technology requirements. Social media and the threat of network intrusion placed untold demands on budgets for protection. To ensure security, the CIO must understand the business as well as technology. The language barrier between the computer staff and others in the organization became a hindrance in understanding user needs versus wants. The CIO had to become an interpreter and learn to speak layman's language to be understood and had to translate business requirement in terms of how best to

computerize the organization. Suffice it said, the CIO had to evolve as the business evolved and had to become a leader of strong technical people as well as a strong business associate.

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