The CIO's call of destiny

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Special Olympics International

Quick Special Olympics primer

- Headquartered in Washington D.C.
- Serving individuals with Intellectual Disabilities
- Programs in all 50 states and 167 countries
- 2.52M Worldwide Athletes ('01 = 1M, '10 = 3M)
- 22,000+ competition events per year
  - Meet, Local, State, Regional, Country, World Games
  - Alternating Summer/Winter every 2 years
- Shanghai 2007 World Summer Games
  - 7600+ Athletes from 160+ countries
  - 40,000+ families, volunteers, coaches, M.D.s, judges
  - Largest sporting event in the world in 2007

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The context for today's premise

- Technology is a several billion year continuum
  - It started with the primordial soup and continues today
  - It is constantly accelerating at a double exponential rate
- Evolution is paradoxical
  - It is created by mutation but enabled by standardization
  - It is enabled by "unlearning" as much as by "learning"
- The mountain is changing and moving
  - The CEO/COO mountain is coming to the CIO
  - Shed the extra weight and learn how to climb
  - Why do you want to reach the Apex?
- As anybody seen Peter?

Special Olympics

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Brave New World

- **Rural Portugal 1936**
  - Literacy <.5%

- **Same place 1976**
  - 1 Telephone

- **September 2006**
  - Ubiquitous Wi-Fi
  - Satellite TV

- **Lisbon**
  - 1979 - 7 years for 2nd line
  - 2007 – Population 9.8M
  - 2007 – 10.8M active cell #'s

Global Phenomenon

- India (2007) 165M cell phones
- 2000 = 1.6M phones
- <$.01 per minute
- 6M new subs/month
- 2 months ago = 400M by 2010
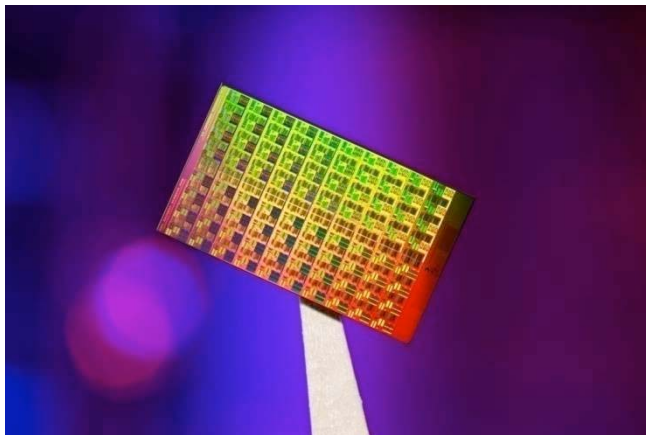- Forecast now is 500M by 2010
- 600M by 2012, a billion by 2017

Plenty of room at the bottom

- **1996 ASCI RED – 1 Tflop**
  - 10,000 Pentium Pro
    - 200 MHz
  - 500 Kw to power it up
    - 500 Kw to cool it down
- **2007 80 Core chip – 1 Tflop**
  - 3.16 GHz
  - 1.62 terabits/s
  - 1.01 teraflops
  - 62w consumption

Evolutionary paradoxes

- Created by mutation, enabled by standardization
  - Successful ones are incorporated in future deployments
    - From mitochondria to Arabic numerals (1,2,3,etc)
    - From Urban Sanitation to Antibiotics
    - From Electricity to Ethernet
    - From TCP/IP to XML
  - And become standards (abstraction layers)
  - Promptly disappearing from our consciousness
  - By adopting them we can concentration on higher layers
  - Therefore enabling new successful mutations
- Starting the cycle anew

Special Olympics
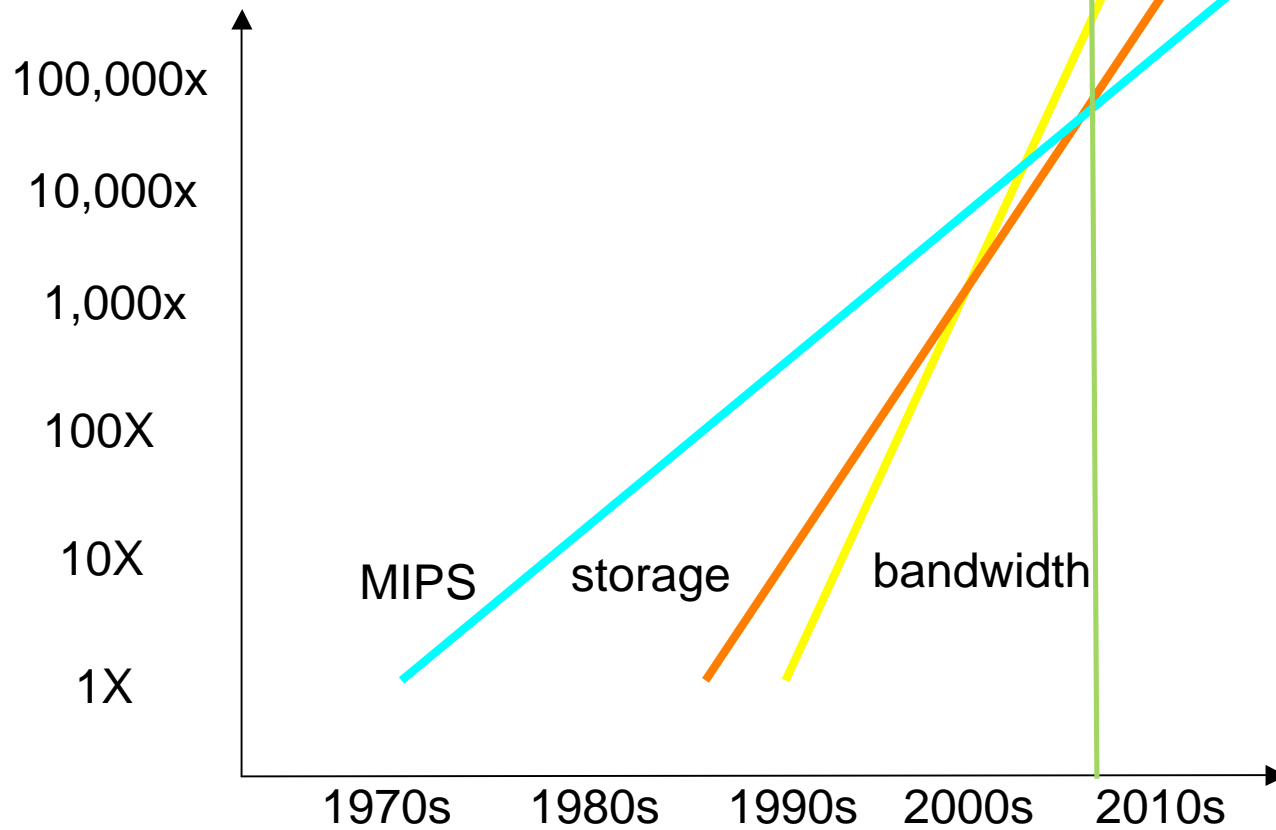
Evolutionary paradoxes

- Enabled by "unlearning" as much as by "learning'
  - Giving up old agricultural practices
  - Giving up on blood letting as a universal panacea
  - Giving up your Betamax
  - "Unlearning" Token Ring & IPX
  - "Unlearning" your old database package or OS
- Often means unlearning a "better" mutation
- Giving up on old standards

Evolving paradigms

100,000x

10,000x

1,000x

100X

10X

1X

MIPS   storage   bandwidth

1970s   1980s   1990s   2000s   2010s

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Here IT, there IT, everywhere IT, T

- IT is the nervous system of any sizeable:
  - Company, industry, country or civilization
- From our houses to our cars
- From medicine to education
- From work to leisure
- IT is a set of ubiquitous, yet invisible layers that enable life as we know it.
- Invisible yet absolutely essential

Invisible but essential…

- Ever increasing percentage of GDP
- Fostering higher productivity and enabling
  - Lasting economic growth with low inflation
- Trough fully informed manufacturing cycles
  - Supply chain, ERP, E-commerce, CRM
- Through upward aggregation of data
  - Company, area, region, national
  - Enables economic stimulus, pullback
- Shortens and shallows recessionary periods
  - Into unprecedented economic stability

Quarterly GDP Growth over last 28 years
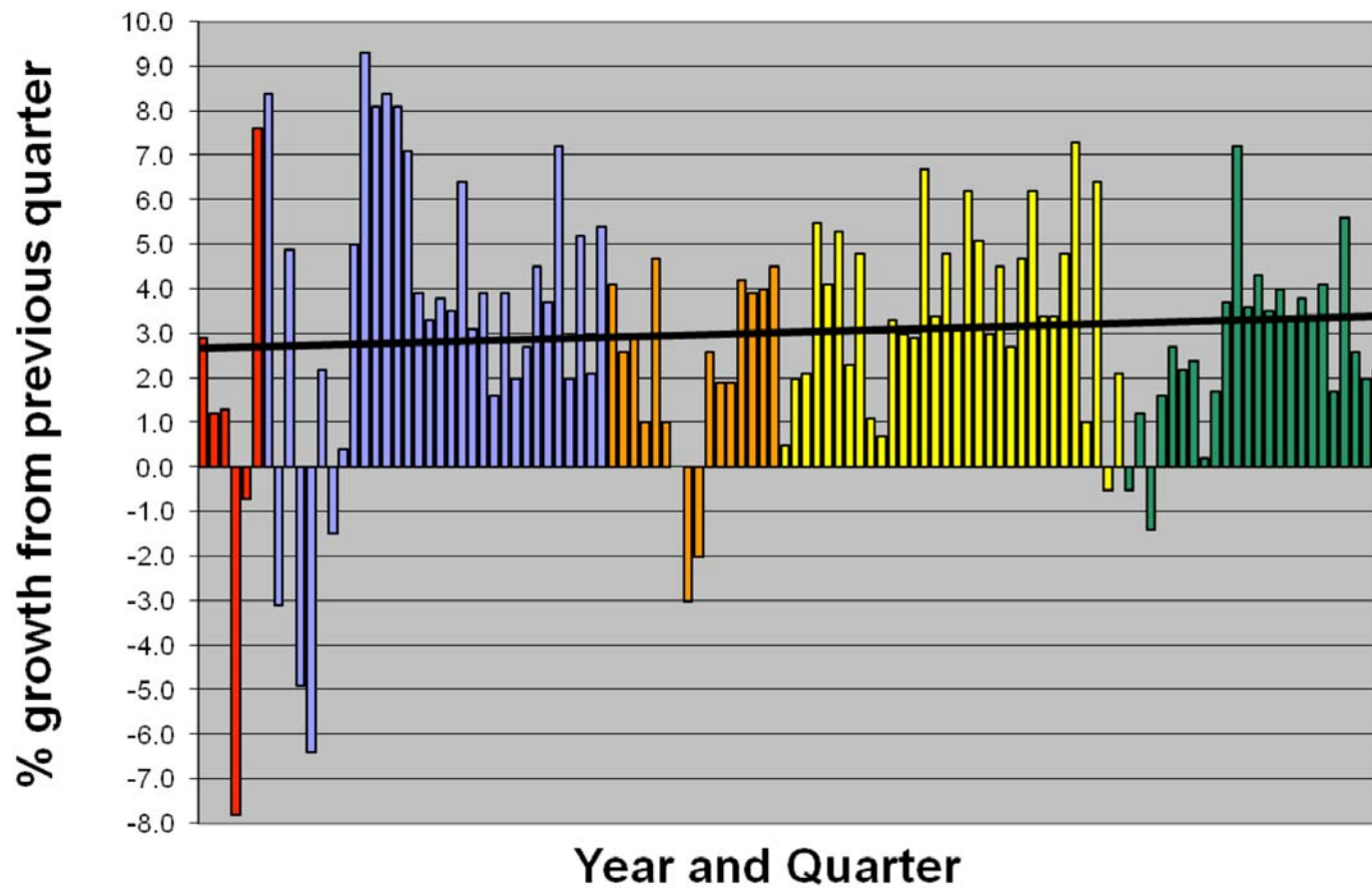
The CEO/COO mountain is moving

- IT is of ever growing importance in any company
- Today's IT projects often span the entire company
- Occasionally they transform the industry
- Few, if any, C-level have CIO's "Helicopter" view
- Globalization efforts often empower CIOs
- Today's CIO is not "your father's Oldsmobile"
- Many top CIOs already exhibit these traits
- The technology landscape has effectively brought the CEO/COO mountain closer than ever to the CIO

Behaviors for the CIO to learn

- Learn to:
  - Look beyond IT. Organizations are communities with shared goals over specific periods of time. Think big
  - Think Profit & Loss rather than cost containment. Cost center mentality while often demanded, is also often seen as strictly operational in nature and therefore limiting.
  - Even just within IT an exaggerated focus on cost containment can hurt
  - Think key business drivers for business growth across the organization and the industry
  - Understand related industries

CEO/COO Leadership style

- In non-pressure situations –
  - Relaxed and inquisitive
  - Involve & listen to others, seeking information
  - Evaluating alternatives & data, ready to change
  - They adopt and display a 'participative' approach
- In pressure situations –
  - Quicker more direct social leadership style
  - Swifter actions after shorter consultations
- In either situation, open style with strong social skills that enable them to create quick bonds, build teams and rapidly adapt to new situations

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Different thinking styles

- CIOs typically respond to external and internal pressures that require lengthy analysis and often are slower moving towards decisions.

- COOs and CEOs tend to move swiftly to action. By training and by instinct they focus and read the data on strategic issues then act.

- By definition, CEOs and COOs have more control over situations so their decisiveness is more easily understood.

- This is therefore not an insurmountable task

Emotional competencies

- **Ambiguity tolerance**
  - Learn to accept higher levels. Unlearn IT life-long attempt at the elimination of ambiguity.

- **Composure**
  - Facing adversity, never let them see you sweat. Nothing kills a career path faster than an untimely demonstration of uncontrolled emotion, even when seemingly fitting

- **Confidence**
  - Learn to project and demonstrate. No Board of Director's is going to name a leader who projects insecurity.

Social Awareness

- Primal empathy:
  - Feeling with others; sensing non-verbal emotional signals

- Attunement:
  - Listening with full receptivity; Attuning to a person during the interaction

- Empathic accuracy:
  - Understanding another person's thoughts, feelings and ultimately, their intentions

- Social cognition:
  - Knowing how the social world works

Social Facility

- **Synchrony:**
  - Interacting smoothly at the non-verbal level
- **Self-presentation**
  - Presenting ourselves effectively
- **Influence:**
  - Shaping the outcome of social interactions to your objectives
- **Concern:**
  - Caring about other's needs and acting accordingly
- Good news! You can substantially improve your social awareness and facility skills

Noblesse oblige?

- Why do you wish to become a CEO/COO?
  - Compensation?
  - Ego?
  - Having an impact?
- Beware what you wish for…
  - It is often very hot in that kitchen!
  - Unlike IT where often projects ebb and flow, in the CEOs chair there often is no respite.
  - You could be faced with some very painful decisions
  - A downfall can be very public

Where is Peter?

- **The Peter Principle – Laurence J. Peter (1968)**
  - People often rise to their level of incompetence
    - A brilliant programmer becomes a mediocre manager
    - An excellent PM is promoted to CPO and abjectly fails
    - A proven CFO is appointed CEO and doesn't change
  - In most organizations, despite acknowledged, such situations not easily undone
- **Where is one's level of incompetence?**
- **Check at every step of your career.**
- **To some degree, you CAN change your level**

Getting from here to there

- **Evolving from the CIO role**
  - Ensure that IT is in order and sufficiently standardized
  - Increasingly operate at higher levels of functionality
  - Unlearn some of your thinking styles
  - Get away from your comfort zone and really understand the company's financial, marketing and sales processes
  - Develop "real" leadership not just people and project management
  - Understand the different stakeholders going forward
- **Many dozens of CIOs have made the transition**
  - Many dozens more are ready to climb the mountain

A quick summary

- IT and Technology will continue to evolve at ever accelerating speed.

- We continually create abstraction layers that allow us to move to higher functionality levels.

- By virtue of this and their industry changing activities, CIOs are uniquely positioned to take the reins of progressive companies.

- Learn the leadership and thinking styles that both define and enable successful top officers

- There is no insurmountable reason preventing the next crop of IT leader's ascent to the Apex

Email contact
&
two book recommendations

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*Emotional Intelligence & Social Intelligence
(Daniel Goleman)*