The CINO’s Team #4 - Innovation Specialists

by Bill Poston

During the initial stages of innovation transformation there will be many roles that need to be filled to drive change within the organization. If the company is large enough and the job big enough, it will pay to invest in some number of specialists that can lead and support certain aspects of the transformation.

I have seen a number of models that work well. If the capability leaders we wrote about earlier are responsible for improving business disciplines and competencies, the innovation specialists jump in as consultants to assist with execution of transformation initiatives. They are much more task-focused and short-term in their orientation. These subject matter experts can advise innovation teams on acceleration of projects, manage the people aspects of change, take over critical programs that are faltering, and manage new strategic “big bet” innovation initiatives.

While it is often difficult to justify creating a permanent team to perform what may be viewed as transitory responsibilities, I believe that there is always room for capable change agents within an organization that is committed to driving growth from innovation. My advice is to acquire the talent and not worry about how it will be deployed over the long-term.

As you build your team, these roles might present a good opportunity to blend in a number of people from outside the organization to bring in new blood and new ideas. This internal team of consultants will accelerate the development and improvement of competencies while creating a pool of talent that will help deliver on the promise of innovation.

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For the past 30 years, Bill has helped executives in technology-driven industries transform their competencies to deliver results. He is a highly regarded consultant, speaker, and writer on the topics of innovation strategy, product development, portfolio management, technology commercialization, and the software systems that enable innovation. Keep up with Bill’s latest research and thoughts on innovation and the rising role of the Chief Innovation Officer at www.TheChiefInnovationOfficer.com.