



A Changing Mandate: **THE EVOLUTION IN A CSSO'S ROLE IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS**

Abstract

Chief Shared Services Officers (CSSOs) have a critical role to play when it comes to the smooth running of SSCs. These business leaders are expected to don several hats – right from displaying leadership skills to efficiently managing the resources at hand. However, their role is expected to become even more important in the near future as technology takes center stage. This article analyzes the ways in which the CSSO role is likely to evolve over the next five years.



Introduction

Modern-day businesses are highly dependent on Shared Service Centers (SSCs) in more ways than one. These SSCs cater to several needs of the business, including taking care of numerous processes, improving efficiencies, as well as reducing costs. They are also viewed as an important contributor to the business's bottom line. The major responsibility of the SSCs rests with Chief Shared Services Officers (CSSOs), who tend to have multifaceted roles. They often head huge

data centres, are responsible for leading large teams, and are also expected to provide valuable inputs related to the overall direction of the organization on a regular basis.

However, the role of CSSOs is not stagnant but continues to evolve on a consistent basis. This is especially true due to the increasing integration of the latest technologies within SSCs. Today's CSSOs are not only expected to lead the operations of SSCs but are also seen as

technology enablers who make the most of digitalization to improve the overall efficiency of the business. In the future, this aspect of the role is expected to evolve even more as CSSOs become an integral part of the corporate-level strategy of the company. Thus, it becomes important for business leaders to understand the current expectations relating to the role of a CSSO and how it's likely to evolve over the next five years.

Donning different hats

While looking to understand the evolving role of a CSSO, it is also important to note that even the current role of CSSOs is not unidimensional. These leaders are expected to strengthen the security of SSCs, provide timely support, ensure complete integration, as well as increase efficiencies. Also, in today's world, CSSOs are not merely viewed as the head of outsourcing. Instead, they play an important role in terms of driving overall operational gains, acting as

a bridge between the parent organization and the SSC. Thus, they are responsible for the seamless linking of processes that are undertaken at SSCs on behalf of the parent company. They also take care of hiring and firing activities, in addition to undertaking contract management activities.

At present, CSSOs are also expected to define the key goals associated with the SSCs and ensure that all operational staff in the SSC are aligned with these goals. They

also take charge of the way new processes are incubated within the SSC and ensure the smooth functioning of the same. CSSOs also provide valuable inputs related to the future growth of the SSC and the potential investments that would be needed. Clearly, the current role of CSSOs entails a lot of different characteristics and is not one-dimensional by any means. However, it is also true that this role will evolve rapidly over the next five years.

How will the role change

It is not unlikely that CSSOs will have to take on even more responsibilities in the future. This is because their role is becoming highly focused on technology, and inexorably over time SSCs will likely become more complex and even more technology driven. Therefore, CSSOs would need to have a very strong grip on the latest technology trends so that they are better positioned to improve efficiencies. A prime example of this is Blockchain. As this technology starts to play a vital role in business processes, CSSOs will only be able to make the most of it if they have a substantial understanding of its workings and of how blockchain ledgers work.

Similarly, another way in which the role of CSSOs will change is that they would

be expected to step out of their primary responsibilities relating to the SSC and play a much more strategic role within the larger company. At present, these CSSOs are often asked for their opinions related to strategic initiatives, and they provide their input regularly. However, in the future, CSSOs will have to step out of their box and provide key inputs related to technology even before being asked. Such an approach could go a long way in terms of making them champions of continuous process improvement rather than being viewed as just the head of the SSC.

Finally, the CSSO role will also change in terms of handling end-to-end contract management rather than leaving contract decisions to the board of directors. This

implies that the CSSO will become more independent in the future, as well as take more ownership of the decisions that they make. Organizations around the world are becoming more and more decentralized, and this trend is likely to accelerate in the near future. This also means that a higher degree of the onus will be placed on the shoulders of CSSOs – who will be expected to lead the company's processes in a much more holistic manner. Thus, CSSOs of the future will have to become multitaskers, technology champions, and strategic contributors at the same time. This will also mean that they will likely command a higher degree of importance within businesses.



The bottom line

In summary, it is evident that CSSOs are extremely important pillars of modern businesses. They take care of all major aspects of SSCs and ensure smooth coordination between all parties. Their

role continues to evolve at a rapid pace, and it will completely transform over the next five years. The CSSOs of the future will be required to have a much stronger grip on technology trends and inculcate

these within their SSCs. They will also have a much more strategic role to play, making major contributions to the overall growth of businesses.

* For organizations on the digital transformation journey, agility is key in responding to a rapidly changing technology and business landscape. Now more than ever, it is crucial to deliver and exceed on organizational expectations with a robust digital mindset backed by innovation. Enabling businesses to sense, learn, respond, and evolve like a living organism, will be imperative for business excellence going forward. A comprehensive, yet modular suite of services is doing exactly that. Equipping organizations with intuitive decision-making automatically at scale, actionable insights based on real-time solutions, anytime/anywhere experience, and in-depth data visibility across functions leading to hyper-productivity, [Live Enterprise](#) is building connected organizations that are innovating collaboratively for the future.

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