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[Interview] Part 3: Celso Mello, CIO of Chubb Security Systems

This is the next blog in the [continuing series](#) of interviews with leading professionals.

In this blog series, we talk with [Celso Mello](#), a leading IT leader. I had the pleasure meeting Celso at the CIO and IT Executive Summit in Montreal.

Thank you and Enjoy!
Stephen Ibaraki, [FCIPS](#), [I.S.P.](#), [MVP](#)

Celso Mello: CIO, Chubb Security Systems shares tips about: Technology Roadmaps, Leadership Challenges



Stephen: We are at the start of 2007 which provides a unique opportunity to make predictions. What do you see as the major technology roadmap trends for 2007 and in five years?

Celso: Predictions are always risky to make, but I think I can give you 3 significant trends I'm seeing right now, which I believe will change our IT world in the next few years:

1. Many of us are already involved or have already completed a server virtualization project, but there is still a lot of opportunity out there on that. There are significant cost savings in these projects, and many other benefits too. I think this will evolve into some sort of a return to the "mainframe days", where you had one massive piece of hardware running multiple logical partitions operating independently, as opposed to lots of small distributed computing environments like we have today.
2. As I said earlier, I think we will start to hear more and more about security breaches, theft of critical information, denial of service, etc. All companies, not only the large ones like today, will need an information security specialist and security strategy/policies, which would include at least an Intrusion Prevention System (IPS). I believe there will soon be a day where IPSs will be as common as anti-viruses.
3. I think businesses in general have just scratched the surface on the capabilities of mobile devices. I believe in the next few years we'll see people using their mobile devices to do everything they normally would on their home or office PC, as the performance and connectivity on those devices catches up. And business and pleasure will completely come together through those mobile devices. I believe business will have to readjust their strategy in order to gear for the strictly mobile user, such as they did when the Internet became a sales channel. Also, business will be able to use the benefits of those devices internally, to facilitate things like telecommuting or field force management.

Stephen: As CIO, what are your top leadership and management issues and how do you look to resolve them?

Celso: Here are a few that I would highlight:

- Cost-cutting/headcount-reduction pressures, (at the same time you're dealing with complex and aggressive projects): I believe I've addressed that when I talked about challenges/tips/lessons on "budget" earlier, but to recap, my approach here goes through quality improvement, as means to get more productivity.
- Outsourcing/Offshoring trend: Again, I already touched upon that when I talked about Infrastructure earlier, but essentially, I'm in favour of "selective" outsourcing in areas where you can get higher quality at same or lower cost.
- Creating a service-oriented organization (as opposed to technology-oriented): This is a bit tricky, because IT people are naturally more attracted to technology over anything else, and typically do not have that customer-focused mentality. Changing this would probably involve DNA-reconstruction, but all kidding aside, you can get some improvement on this with proper training and coaching to your team.
- Relationship IT x Business: I talked about the importance of strategic alignment earlier, but at lower levels, this relationship is defined in terms of teamwork and ownership. The issue here is that sometimes business and IT people act as "us and them", and that becomes a game of placing blame for everything that goes wrong. That of course does not help anyone or the company, for that matter. Like other issues I'm pointing out here, I don't think there is a "silver bullet" for it, but you may get some improvement here by focusing on the service-oriented organization I mentioned earlier, which has the potential of changing the perception business users have of IT, creating trust and team spirit.
- Multiple priorities: I'm sure many of your readers who run IT shops can quickly think of at least 3 simultaneous initiatives they're currently dealing with, all of which have the highest priority, scarce resources and aggressive deadlines. Once again, there is no easy solution for this, but you can mitigate it by having good people in your team with good problem-



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solving and project management skills, who could supervise external contractors if necessary (offshore contractors are very cost-effective and work well in "self-contained" cases like new application development projects for example).

Look for more with Celso in the next blog.
I also encourage you to share your thoughts here on these interviews or send me an e-mail at sibaraki@cips.ca.

Posted: Thursday, March 01, 2007 8:19 AM by [cdnimg](#)
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