THE
HUMAN
CIO

**CIO audience insights from
Octopus Group in partnership
with Brightfire and HubSpot**

HubSpot **BRIGHTFIRE**
THE INBOUND MARKETING COMPANY

OCTOPUS
GROUP

INTRO

THE HUMAN CIO

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Tech Heads is all about understanding the ways IT decision makers find, consume and digest the information that informs their purchasing decisions.

We're technology specialists here at the Octopus Group, so the better we understand CIOs and the comms sources that influence their decisions, the better we can help our clients.

That's why we've teamed up with HubSpot and Brightfire on Tech Heads this year. We want to delve deeper into the buying cycle of the CIO and measure how content and branded communications at each stage can lead to tangible leads and sales.

In 2012, when we first launched Tech Heads, we discovered the 'Retro CIO'. Technological saturation and financial pressures forced this group to lean on tried and tested comms channels, such as IT publications and events.

Then, in 2013, our study revealed the 'Disruptive CIO' – avant-garde individuals willing to experiment and try new solutions to meet their organisation's business needs.

Now, as Tech Heads enters its third year, we've found that the world of the CIO has changed once again. With the work anywhere, anytime culture, today's CIO is always on, gathering information from a huge array of sources at any time of the day.

This new CIO makes fluid, ambient, socially-influenced decisions. The style and length of content they need is different at every stage of the procurement process. And this new CIO doesn't want to be treated like just another sales prospect.

These are the 'Human CIOs'

CONTENT(S)

ALWAYS ON

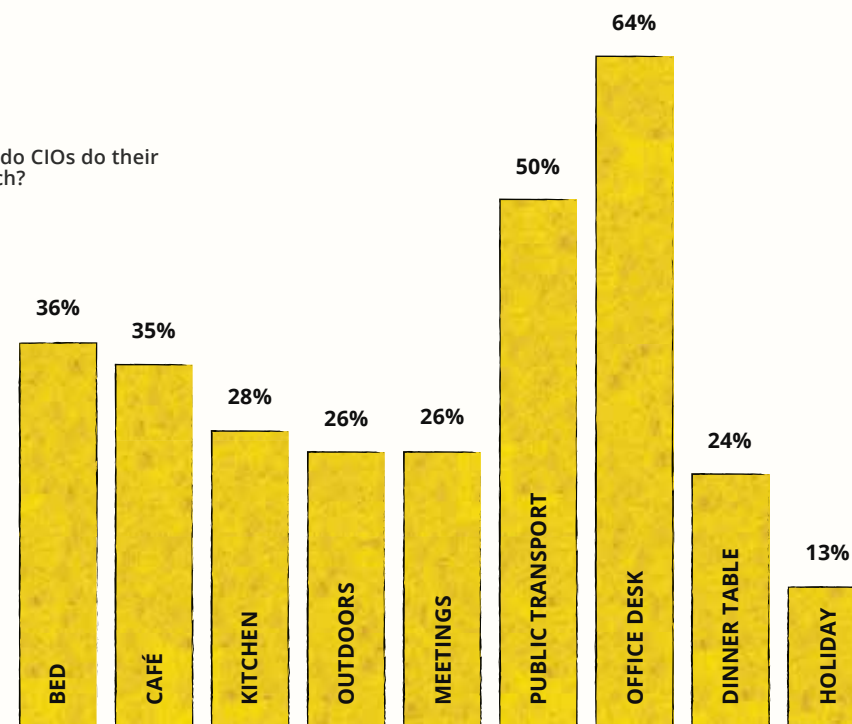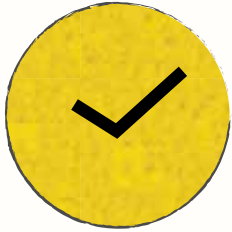## COLLECTING INFORMATION WHENEVER, WHEREVER

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Today's CIO spends almost half of the working week away from the office – with one in three working remotely more than two days a week. Public transport is the most popular location to research IT products and services, followed by bed (36%) and then cafés (35%), showing a clear appetite for content, whatever the location.

Fig.1

Where do CIOs do their research?

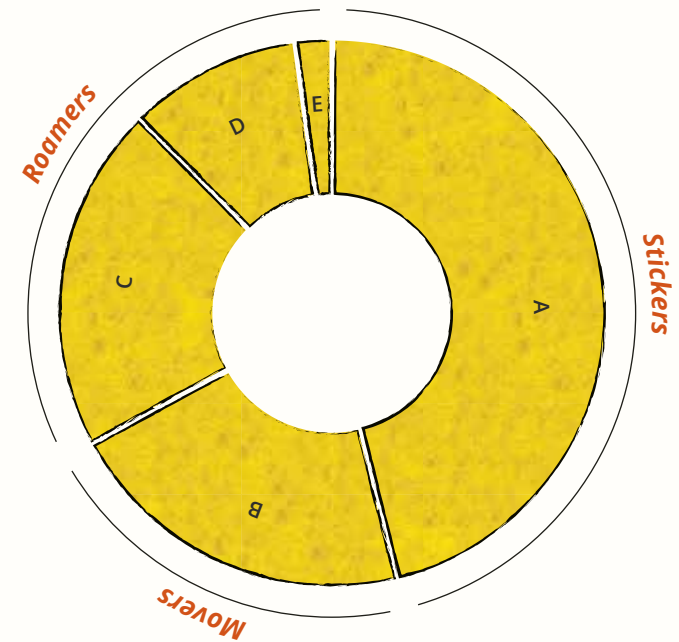| Location	%
BED	36%
CAFÉ	35%
KITCHEN	28%
OUTDOORS	26%
MEETINGS	26%
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	50%
OFFICE DESK	64%
DINNER TABLE	24%
HOLIDAY	13%

CIOs are consuming more information than ever before. An average of 3 hours, 24 minutes is spent following industry news and developments each week, compared to 2 hours, 48 minutes in 2013. And when it comes to researching specific products, services and suppliers, CIOs dedicate even more time - 4 hours, 30 minutes, almost an hour more than in 2013 (3 hours, 42 minutes).

Small business CIOs pressed for time

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The CIOs of smaller businesses (50-249 employees) appear to have less time to research IT products and services than the CIOs of larger organisations (1000+ employees).

73% of SME CIOs spend 3 hours or less researching industry news, compared to 64% of CIOs working in a larger business. Similarly, 59% of SME CIOs spend 3 hours or less researching new products, services or vendors, compared to 46% of CIOs or larger businesses.

So what's happening? The truth is, mobile connectivity means that CIOs are gathering information everywhere and all the time – on the way to work, in the park, during dinner, even in bed or on holiday.

21% increase in the time spent consuming content online.

There is a generational shift as well. CIOs who are 35 and over are more likely to research new products, services and vendors at their desk (69% compared to 57% of under 35s) but less likely to do so in a café (31% compared the 41% of under 35s) or in bed (31% compared to 45% of under 35s).

(A)	Less than 25%	47%
(B)	25% to 49%	20%
(C)	50% to 74%	20%
(D)	75% to 90%	11%
(E)	More than 90%	2%

Fig.2
Time spent away from the office.

37% of a CIO's working week is spent away from the office. This equals 15 hours each week.

THE GROWING INFORMATION CONSUMER

ABSORBING INFORMATION FROM AN INCREDIBLE ARRAY OF SOURCES

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The subversive CIO

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75% of CIOs already have a good idea of the product or service they'll purchase before talking to the vendor.

Publications, supplier websites, conferences, seminars, product reviews, analysts, white papers, online videos, webinars, blogs, social media channels, eBooks – there have never been more channels or sources of information to help the CIO in the procurement process.

Rather than drown in the cavalcade of information, however, nearly half of CIOs (46%) engage in ambient information gathering, absorbing information like a sponge from these varied sources. The same number don't even distinguish between researching a supplier, short-listing and purchasing, further indicating that today's CIO is always-on and always gathering information.

This attitude to information gathering dramatically affects the decision-making process– 76% of CIOs already have a good idea of the product or service they'll purchase before starting their research. Three quarters (75%) value vendors who publish their own content over those who don't.

PLUGGED INTO SOCIAL
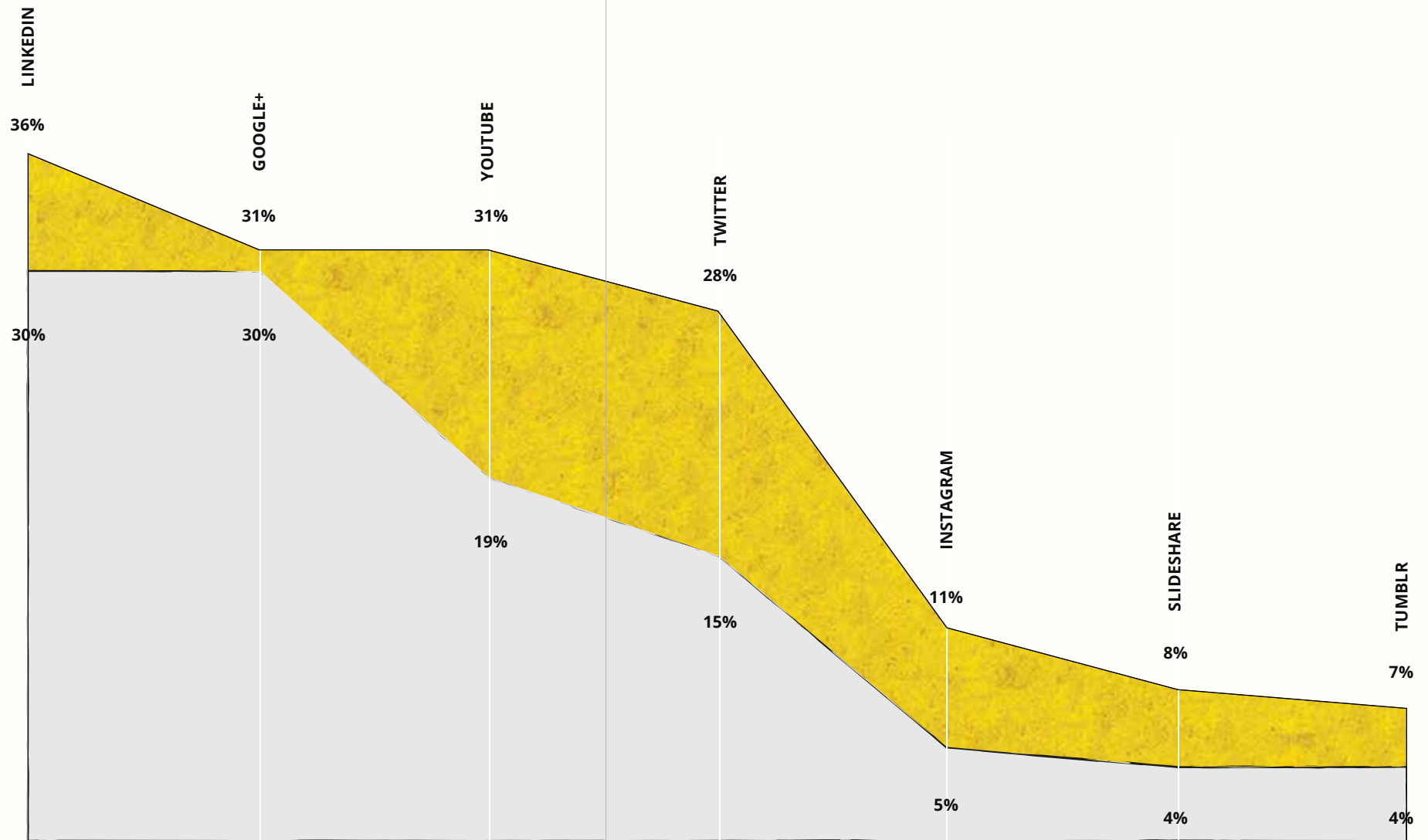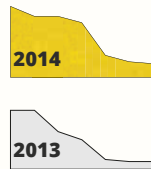
SOCIAL MEDIA BECOMES AN INVALUABLE RESOURCE

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Social networks are becoming an increasingly important part of the procurement process, certainly from an information-gathering perspective, with 69% of CIOs using online channels to find out about IT products, services and suppliers.

68% of CIOs use online channels more then they did a year ago to inform buying decisions. Indeed, more are using LinkedIn (36% this year compared to 30% in 2013), Facebook (36% this year compared to 20% in 2013), Google+ (31% this year compared to 30% in 2013), Twitter (28% this year compared to 15% in 2013) and YouTube (31% this year compared to 19% in 2013) to inform the procurement process.

Just as social networking is becoming increasingly valuable to the CIO's day-to-day role, it is also impacting how they communicate, 63% use social media to disseminate content about products and services to their own network.

Many CIOs use LinkedIn (26%), Twitter (23%), Google+ (20%) and YouTube (15%), to share content about IT products & services, with their network. Understandably, this is most prevalent with the under-35 CIOs (79%), but over half (53%) of 35+ CIOs are still very active online.

Twitter packs a punch

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Even the least important source of social information, Twitter, was still considered important to the procurement process by 44% of CIOs.

Fig.3

More CIOs are using social media than in 2013.

2014

2013

LINKEDIN

GOOGLE+

YOUTUBE

TWITTER

INSTAGRAM

SLIDESHARE

TUMBLR

36%

31%

31%

28%

11%

8%

7%

30%

30%

19%

15%

5%

4%

4%

PEOPLE, NOT NUMB3RS

LOOKING FOR A PERSONAL APPROACH

—

#1

Who am I?

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47% of CIOs said that poorly targeted, irrelevant communications was their number one frustration with vendor content.

CIOs aren't buying off-the-shelf. They're purchasing a heavily specialised technology solution to meet a unique business need. But they're also bombarded by huge numbers of vendors across a multitude of channels.

As such, CIOs really value the personal touch. Over three-quarters (76%) want to be treated more as a person than as a sales opportunity. This desire for personalisation has sky-rocketed in just a year, with just 55% of CIOs in 2013, stating they wanted more tailored content.
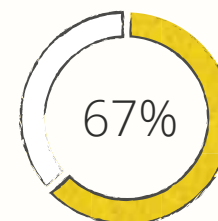
This means that CIOs want all their interactions with a vendor, whether online or offline, to be tailored specifically to them. This is considered 'critical' by 30% of under-35 CIOs and 41% of CIOs over-35.
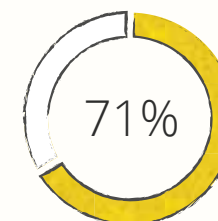
Fig.4

How do you have more impact?

61%

67%

71%
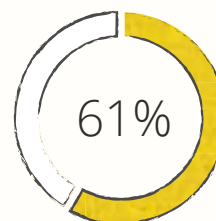
61% of CIOs believe tech vendors are essentially selling the same thing and it is difficult to differentiate on a product basis.

67% believe there are often inconsistencies in how sales and marketing from the same technology brand communicate.

71% think vendors need to use more data and research to support their content.

AMBIENT DECISION MAKING

AND WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

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As we've seen, CIOs are a changing breed, with new ways of gathering information to inform their decisions. The Human CIO requires organisations to rethink their content strategy focussing on information that engages and adds value at all times, and encourages the CIO to move down the sales funnel. The days of explicit outbound marketing are over.
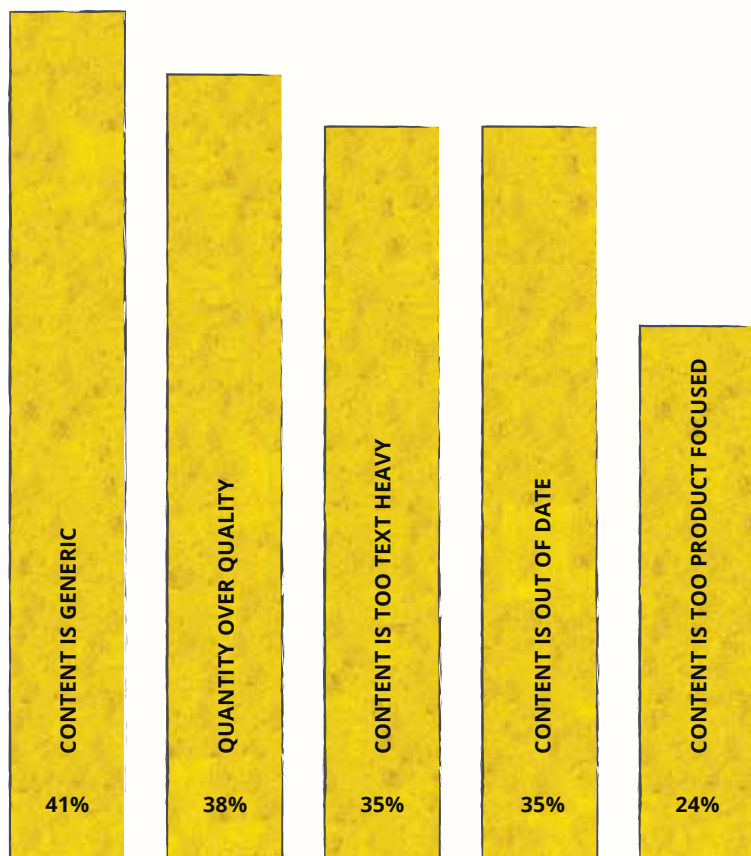
But how exactly are Human CIOs buying? How can technology suppliers target CIOs with the most effective kinds of content for each step of the purchasing cycle?

What Style?

The style of content consumed by CIOs varies at each stage of the procurement process.
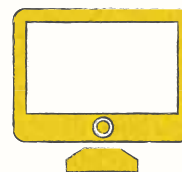
At the initial research stage, short snappy content of 150 words or less is preferred by almost two thirds (60%) of CIOs, with a third (35%) agreeing that 300 words is the ideal length. The appetite for succinct summaries is mirrored in the short-listing stage, with 55% relying on content of between 300 – 500 words.

Longer reads of 2000 words become more important to the decision-making process as CIOs reach the final choice of a vendor or solution. Almost a quarter (22%) relish this type of content when at the end of the procurement process.

Keep it quick

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CIOs in small businesses tend to prefer short-form content when conducting initial research. 63% of SME CIOs find content of less than 150 words more useful at this stage, compared to 53% of CIOs at larger organisations.

Fig.5

What frustrates CIOs about
vendor content?

CONTENT IS GENERIC	QUANTITY OVER QUALITY	CONTENT IS TOO TEXT HEAVY	CONTENT IS OUT OF DATE	CONTENT IS TOO PRODUCT FOCUSED
41%	38%	35%	35%	24%

**Online and
omnipresent**

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**In terms of the overall
purchasing decision,
82% of CIOs rely more
on online content
today than they did a
year ago.**

What Content?

Informal recommendations and advice (62%), as well as
glossaries of vendor/technology terms (39%) are more
useful to CIOs during the initial research phase.

During the short-listing, CIOs will use expert opinions
(57%) and reviews (54%) to arrive at a selection of
possible vendors.

In the final phases, CIOs will rely much more heavily on
case studies (29%) and benchmarking tools (25%) to reach
their final decision.

Which Channels?

A huge array of channels are influential at all stages
in the decision making process, with vendor websites,
highlighted as critical by 90% of CIOs.

These tech buyers expect vendors to be publishers
themselves, with 75% valuing vendors who publish their
own content over those who don't, up from 55% in 2013.

Many online channels are highly ranked by CIOs, including
video (68%), webinars (66%), eBooks (59%) and LinkedIn
groups (54%), mapping into the Human CIOs desire to
access content whilst on the move.

When segmenting the buying cycle – websites feature
highly at all stages, being the most important channel
during the final decision-making, in particular.

HOW TO TALK TO THE HUMAN CIO?
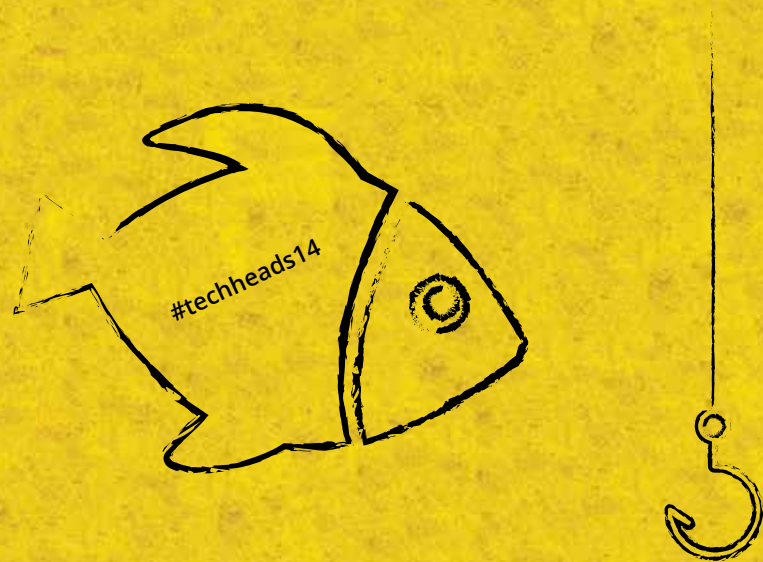
#techheads14

PRACTICAL TAKEAWAYS FOR MARKETING

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Tech Heads makes clear that the CIOs of today continually gather information wherever they are, influenced by a more ambient, flexible and increasingly social-driven mode of information gathering. So how should you engage with the Human CIO? How can you more modify your PR and marketing to more effectively drive awareness, but also importantly secure sales.

Get personal. Understand the individual CIO and create content that is tailored to their specific needs, behaviours and desires. Consider the device they are using, their location and where they are in the buying cycle, to guarantee the personal touch. *Create valuable content.* Stand out by becoming a publisher - make content engaging and fact-led – to drive more interactions with your brand and move unknown contacts to known prospects. *Plan the funnel.* Create a work-flow of content that maps into the CIO persona and aligns to their buying preferences, wherever they are in the sales cycle, to encourage them down the marketing funnel. *Timing and location.* Have an open-all-hours, emphatically integrated comms strategy. Speak to CIOs when they're listening - which is all the time. *Socialise with the C-level.* Engage with content across social channels to enable CIOs to share information about products and services. Target the right content consumers at the right time to increase sales lead quality.

THE HUMAN CIO

TECH HEADS

For more information on how Octopus Group can help you drive brand awareness and secure sales with tech buyers, please get in touch

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