

# THE **ENTERPRISERS** PROJECT

## From CIO to CTO: My transition

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Have you ever wondered what it would be like to become a CTO? [Aptean's Jenny Peng](#) made the jump from CIO to CTO in January, 2017. In Part One of a two-part interview with The Enterprisers Project, Peng explained [how to foster innovation for the long term](#) in your organization. In Part Two, she talks about her transition from CIO to CTO, and the differences between the two roles.



## Q&A

### **The Enterprisers Project (TEP): What has it been like making the transition from CIO to CTO at Aptean?**

**Jenny Peng:** As Aptean's CIO, my customers were internal – our users and business units. In the CTO role, my customers are external. Instead of improving bottom line (increasing profitability), the focus is developing strategies to increase company's top line revenue.

The transition from CIO to CTO has been smooth for me, primarily because R&D had been my domain, so returning to it was easy. Having the opportunity to serve in the CIO role was a tremendous experience and gave me a different perspective.

### **TEP: What are the biggest similarities between the two roles?**

**Peng:** As a CIO or a CTO, you are still responsible for leveraging technology to enable the business. In the end, CTOs must expand their view. Take time to explore the needs of the business (whether for internal customers or external customers) and focus on technology-enabled business innovation.

For instance, we saw an internal need for predictive analytics to help our sales team identify and make actionable decisions within our CRM solution. Since we use our own products, we were able to use our environment as proof of concept and gather first-

hand user feedback. It gives us the ability to improve our business and improve our customer's business at the same time.

**TEP: How did your position on the company's leadership team change?**

**Peng:** Here at Aptean, both CIO and CTO roles are tasked to be technology thought brokers in the enterprise, helping to figure out how to leverage technology to enable the business. The difference with the CTO role is that I am looking to commercialize and monetize technology. In the CIO role, I focused more on optimizing, streamlining, and allowing employees to be more productive with tools to get their job done more quickly and easily.

**TEP: What advice would you give other women interested pursuing a CTO position?**

**Peng:** I have always focused on my expertise and my passion for technology. The advice I would give is to always look for opportunities to build your repertoire, and be a mentor and offer a leadership example through your actions. I feel that because I don't focus on age, gender, or ethnicity, I allow my work to speak for itself. The more important focus is to push yourself beyond your comfort zone and grow.