

# One-on-One Interview Series

## CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER



**ODGERS BERNDTSON**  
Search Intelligence



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## Chief Information Officer

Odgers Berndtson is the 6th largest executive search firm world-wide. Our CIO practice leadership in the region is a reflection of our 15 years of achievements across Asia Pacific.

This interview series will take you inside the mind of Asia's most forward-looking Chief Information Officers. They will share their personal views on their impact on society, the evolution of their role, the new technological trends and their experience with the millennials.



## Steve Walker

**CHIEF INFORMATION  
OFFICER**  
ASIA PACIFIC  
DHL SUPPLY CHAIN

An international mind with roots in the UK and in South Africa, Steve has worked in a variety of supply chain roles across a number of different industry sectors. In 1999, he joined a third party logistics provider in a global systems strategy role and then held various senior IT positions across the business. In 2005 he was appointed Supply Chain Solutions Director EMEA for DHL and then promoted to Vice President, Global Logistics Solutions. He is currently their Chief Information Officer, Asia Pacific. He shares with us his vision of customer experience, the management of the millennials and the proximity of the CIO role with the board.



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*“As a citizen of the world and a business leader I have a responsibility to think about the wider impact of what I do”*

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### **A GREAT CIO'S VISION CONSISTS OF...**

It is about figuring out how to add value to the business through IT. It sounds very simple, and of course it's not as simple as it sounds. I am a firm believer that IT is a strategic enabler for the business and I think that we have to demonstrate more and more that we are a truly integral part of the business, driving real business value through the use of IT.

### **DO YOU THINK THAT THE CIO CAN HAVE AN IMPACT ON SOCIETY AT LARGE?**

I think that more and more that's the case. As we are moving into the Internet of Things, I think by its nature information technology is going to have an impact on society, on all of us really, in one way or another. If you take the workforce around us, the impact CIOs can have on the workplace and on the individual can be significant. I like to think about the wider impact of what I do because I think as a citizen of the world and a business leader I have a responsibility to do that

### **DO YOU SEE THE ROLE OF THE CIO CHANGING FROM A SUPPORTING ROLE TO A MAIN ROLE?**

I have to say that a lot of this has to do with the individual and how you position yourself personally as opposed as to the role - Making sure that you have influence with fellow board members is critical, I see myself as an equal person on my board and I have lots to say not just about IT and I think I get the credibility that goes along with that.

### **WHAT ABOUT THE CDO?**

We don't have one here so I am expected to play that role within what I do. I personally think it's tough to operate in an environment where there is a CDO and a CIO because there is a high degree of overlap. You could argue that the interesting things are being done by the CDO and the less interesting things are being done by the CIO. I don't know which one I would rather be in that case! But it does depend on the type of business: B2B is different from B2C in that respect.



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*“There is nothing like actually talking to customers yourself and hearing their challenges and their needs first hand.”*

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### **TELL US ABOUT THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE...**

We have an IT customer solution team across the organization that focuses on understanding what the customers want in order to articulate the right solutions to them. That organization is in every single country in which we operate, supported by regional and global structures. That way, we insure that we can learn from each other and maintain consistency in the solution that we are providing to our customers.

We are encouraging people more and more to have direct relationships with our customers. I personally sponsor three customers in Asia Pacific and I meet with them regularly, this provides fantastic insight to truly understand what our customers are asking for. Of course you can hear all the aggregated messages from various places but there is nothing like actually talking to customers yourself and hearing their challenges and their needs first hand.

### **MILLENNIALS CREATE A DIFFERENT SET OF CHALLENGES. IS THAT AFFECTING YOUR BUSINESS AND HOW YOU CAN DELIVER IT?**

By nature, very large organisations are very well organized around their IT: they lock everything down. You give people a laptop and they can't do much with it other than what they are asked to do specifically for work. The impact of that on the millennials is that they say, “What?! I'm used to doing everything I want to do on this device and suddenly you don't want to allow me to do it?” We are thinking all the time about how to deal with that.

Regarding their attention span and seeming impatience, we see that the most acutely in China. We are bringing young graduates into the organisation and literally if you don't give them a new job within 12 months then may well go. And as an organisation, traditionally we would struggle with that. There seems to be an impatience that I certainly never saw previously, but also there used to be fewer opportunities. In a country like China they just have to cross the street to get another job and probably more pay, so that's probably adding to it. We do realize that we need different approaches to how we develop those people, because the traditional approach of slowly traversing the organisation isn't going to work and my colleagues on the board agree. Really it seems like it has come to the fore in the last 12 to 18 months. As a board we are very aware of it and developing new approaches to address the challenge.



In Asia, getting the right people is probably the biggest challenge that most organizations face so I think it's a general issue. In this organization, I personally believe, it's all about development from within and we are working on a number of innovative staff development programs to address that.

### **DAVID HALL USED TO BE CIO OF JETSTAR AUSTRALIA; HE IS NOW CEO.**

I think it's fantastic. It's really, really good. You do see it more than you would 10 years ago. There are a couple of things to note: CIOs often actually don't come from IT (myself included), so I think they have a broader background anyway; it's part of their knowledge base. Secondly, as a CIO you get a fantastic understanding of the whole business - so you understand how it all functions, which not all parts of the business get visibility to. It is also a position of influence where you can demonstrate how you can add value to the business, and that positions you well to go into a kind of CEO role in the future. I think the more that it happens, the better, because I think it helps advance the whole idea of the CIO being an important, integral part of the business. CIOs should be able to advance to the CEO role as easily as any other C-suite executive.



## **Eduardo de Barros**

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Eduardo de Barros is a Consultant in the Singapore office focused on CIO, CTO, CSO, CDO roles, part of the regional Information Technology team operating across South East Asia. He studied I.T. during 6 years and started his career in 2005 as the Chief Editor of an Information Technology magazine. His passion for recruitment appeared while building a team within a start-up, thus leading him to join a global recruitment firm. He then founded his search firm in Geneva, where he built his reputation in recruiting technology experts for private banks. Of Portuguese origins, he is raised in France and has learnt business in Switzerland.



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