



## Women CIOs: How to Smash the Glass Ceiling

By Anna Maria Virzi

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Do women have a decent opportunity of getting promoted to chief information officer?

Though statistics on the number of women CIOs are hard to come by, one thing is certain: There are not all that many. "It's still a pretty small number, but it seems to be growing," says David Leighton, president of Women in Technology International, an organization focused on providing role models for women and helping businesses understand the value of female leaders. That value, Leighton says, includes the ability to excel at cross-departmental or horizontal leadership.

Women are severely underrepresented in all top corporate leadership positions, according to a July 2006 report by Catalyst, a nonprofit organization that is working to increase the proportion of women in all top jobs. Although the group did not break out CIOs in its numbers, it found that women occupied 9.4% of all jobs higher than vice president at *Fortune* 500 companies in 2005, up from 7.9% in 2002.

Don't let the numbers spook you, say five women interviewed by *Baseline* magazine, including three CIOs, an executive recruiter and a global consultant. More important, don't give up on yourself.

These executives offered the following tips for rising up to the CIO's position:

- **Manage by facts:** Cora Carmody, CIO of engineering and technology services firm SAIC
- **Be someone who people want on their team:** Loyola University Chicago CIO Susan Malisch
- **Understand power and politics:** Ogilvy CIO Atefeh Riaz
- **Learn from mentors:** Judy Artech-Carr, consultant to global companies
- **Know Your Incompetencies:** Judy B. Homer, executive recruiter

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