



When **Stuart Packham** of Michael Page Technology met **Julia Warrack**, Group Chief Information Officer at the Tata Group of Beverage Companies, technology was not number one on her agenda.

Julia Warrack is the Group Chief Information Officer at the Tata Group of Beverage Companies. Julia has progressed her career from Information Analyst to CIO, working for leading global companies at Board level. It is clear that people are at the heart of Julia's IT strategy. Julia's passion and drive were clear from the outset, demonstrating her natural leadership ability..



The Tata Tea group is the world's second largest global branded tea operation with a presence in over 60 countries. The prominent companies in the group are Tata Tea, the UK-based Tetley group and Tata Coffee. Set up in 1964 as a joint venture with the UK-based James Finlay and Company, the Group has operations in branded tea, bulk tea, coffee and other beverages, and also has plantations. The Tata Tea brand leads in volume market share in India while the Tetley brand is the second-largest teabag brand in the world.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT BUSINESS PRIORITIES?

We are creating a globally integrated beverages business for the first time. Traditionally, there has been lots of small businesses with an 'I do tea' and 'I do coffee' mentality. We are a consumer-led business, and the transition to an integrated FMCG business model is vital.

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO THIS SUCCEEDING?

The culture of the overall business not changing in line with the strategy; There are currently 39 legal entities and associated Boards with emotional connections to specific brands. As an organisation, there is a need to continue developing a bigger picture, global mindset.

WHAT DID IT MEAN TO BE THE FIRST GROUP CIO?

This was an opportunity for me to use all my previous experience and create a high performing IS organisation, acting as a change agent for the wider business transformation that was under construction. It was clear that this would be a challenge, as the IT organisation was separated by both geographical and cultural borders. A united approach would be a whole new way of doing business.

HOW DID YOU SPEND THE FIRST 3 MONTHS AS CIO?

The most important element was to get the people working together. I organised a CIO workshop within two weeks of starting, which was the first time some of the global IS leaders had met each other. The workshop was a forward looking, future orientated exercise. It created the essence of a function, and also an identity for IS within the broader business. We created a brand identity - Group Information Systems.

WHAT WERE YOUR KEY OBJECTIVES IN THE EARLY STAGES? DID YOU ACHIEVE THEM?

Creating a new IS organisation is similar to starting a new business; you need vision & values, followed by focus & direction. We achieved both. Our vision for IS was clear – 'Renov8 + Innov8 to Liber8'. Once we had the vision, the team then created our core values that are fundamental to our organisation. The technology piece does not become important until you have built trust and started dismantling barriers. The Group IS strategy was then delivered to the Board within my first 100 days – though not through Powerpoint! The team worked with an agency and created a DVD. This enabled them to convey the emotion and belief in their organisational vision and values, whilst ensuring the focus on delivery was clear to the executive team.



Michael Page
TECHNOLOGY

Specialists in Technology Recruitment

152 offices in 32 countries | www.michaelpage.co.uk/technology

HOW DID THE BUSINESS RESPOND TO THIS 'NEW' IS ORGANISATION?

It has certainly been a journey! Some of my peers felt that there was not enough obvious progress early on. For the first time the IS leadership team were challenging the business and saying 'no' to requests that were not aligned to the Group IS Strategy. High levels of visibility from myself and my team have been critical - establishing weekly calls, joining business workshops, and ensuring that we stay focused on the end goal.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE ROLE OF THE CIO?

My job is all about change management and getting the team to care about performance. We are selling and marketing technology. My role is 80% people, 20% technology.

AS A FEMALE CIO OF A GLOBAL BUSINESS, WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO ASPIRING WOMEN IN IT?

Don't consider that you are any different than your male counterparts. If you think you are different in some way, you open the door for others to do likewise, and it may not always be positive, so tread down this avenue with caution. Self-doubt leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy; men never doubt their ability to get to the top and so women in business should learn from this. If you don't get the promotion or the new job you were after, don't blame it on your gender, look to yourself and consider what competencies or skills you may not have demonstrated and seek to grow in these areas so you are better equipped for the next opportunity that presents itself. Above all, BELIEVE in yourself and people will be compelled to believe in you!

WHAT IS THE FUTURE FOR THE CIO?

The CIO will become the Chief Executive's best friend. A strong CIO will enable brilliant CEOs to drive businesses more effectively than ever before.



CONTACT



Stuart Packham is the Director for Michael Page Technology. For a discussion on the marketplace or for support with IT recruitment, call **020 8742 5963**.

“
**MY ROLE IS 80% PEOPLE,
20% TECHNOLOGY.**”

