

## Wall Street Journal

### Interim CIOs fill specialized requirements and skills gaps, placement firms say

The pandemic supercharged the market and drove demand for skilled technology talent. This week, CIO Journal reported that [demand for interim CIOs, CTOs and CISOs grew 83%](#) between 2020 and 2021, according to research from Business Talent Group, a subsidiary of executive-search firm Heidrick & Struggles.

Staffing firms are increasingly focusing on IT roles. A survey of 151 staffing firms by research firm Staffing Industry Analysts found that in February 2022, median IT staffing revenue was up 23% over the prior year.

Interim CIOs are often brought in through third-party firms that specialize in C-Suite talent. The advantage of an interim CIO over a consultant is that they can affect change more quickly, agencies say.

“They have decision making capabilities within the organization, they're taking a named role, so they are kind of embedded within the team,” said Olivia Wagner, co-founder and president of **InterimExecs**, a Chicago-based executive search firm focusing on interim talent. “What we often see in the consulting world is you get a lot of good strategy, but you may not get that implementation that an interim provides.”

**Bright Line Eating**, a Rochester, N.Y.-based company that offers customers diet and weight-management programs, [sourced its interim chief technology officer through InterimExecs](#).

David Mitchelhill, who became Bright Line Eating's chief technology officer on an interim basis in September 2021, said a seasoned, interim technology leader can focus on standing up a new program and creating a framework for a permanent technology lead to follow.

“To give a comparison, you would hire a [permanent] CTO for a company as basically the maintenance man as you would in a building,” he said. “If you're going to build a completely new building, you need an architect, but you don't want an architect as a maintenance man.”

Traditionally, interim CIOs were brought as “gap fills” – when a CIO leaves or is being exited – but increasingly, they're being hired to use niche skill sets to help launch large-scale initiatives, said Kersty Bletso, a partner at London-based executive search and interim management firm **Savannah Group**.

“An interim can be brought in for 12 to 18 months to do the strategy, restructure and reorganization and then transition to a [full-time, permanent] CIO with a growth rather than restructure profile.”

— *Suman Bhattacharyya*

<https://cio.createsend1.com/t/ViewEmail/d/CCB6D14E9578F8E52540EF23F30FEDED/4D7F37D911034BB425D77A725F39070E?alternativeLink=False>