

Shawn Gifford

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CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

Visionary technology executive with comprehensive leadership experience advancing business strategy, enterprise systems, and data-driven culture across nonprofit, insurance, and consulting sectors. Adaptable problem solver with proven ability to apply deep expertise in cloud technologies, IT service delivery, and IT governance to drive results that serve organizational mission and fiscal accountability.

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy & Agentic Adoption at the Enterprise Level:** Authored and secured board approval for an organization-wide AI policy incorporating industry regulations and security policies to enable secure, productive use of emerging technologies.
- **Infrastructure Modernization & Cloud Transformation:** Architected a 10x datacenter reduction paired with a 12x increase in compute and storage capacity through strategic migration to AWS and Azure, strengthening network operations and internal controls while substantially improving system resilience and competitiveness.
- **IT Budget Leadership & Cost Optimization:** Identified opportunities to reduce cost while expanding organizational capabilities, including contract negotiation, vendor accountability, and lifecycle management across business solutions and legacy platforms.
- **Data Culture & Analytics Enablement:** Established a data-first culture with broad stakeholder buy-in, building analytics frameworks that reinforced data integrity for client interactions, KPI measurement, and executive reporting that informed CEO and board-level strategic decisions.

IT Leadership | Budgeting | Financial Management | AI/ML Integration | IT Service Management (ITSM) | Cybersecurity
Database Management | Vendor Management | Security Monitoring | User Experience Improvement | Troubleshooting
Technology Roadmap Design | Strategic Sourcing | Process Mapping | Project Planning | Desktop Support

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Baby Fold, Normal, IL

April 2023 – May 2026

CIO / IT Director / VP, Information Systems

Directed all aspects of daily operations involving the establishment of a data-first culture, the execution of a three-year IT strategic plan, and agency-wide technology modernization through cloud migration, AI adoption, and process innovation. Reported directly to the CEO and participated in board committee meetings while serving as the strategic and operational leader for all information systems and enterprise applications. Coordinated and coded finance activities including accounts payable and invoice management. Negotiated and managed vendor contracts with a focus on relationship-based accountability.

- **Achieved an 11x increase in compute and storage capacity and drove a 900% reduction in physical infrastructure footprint** through implementation of a data center consolidation initiative that also delivered significant reductions in operating expenses.
- **Secured board approval for the organization's first formal AI policy** and led agency-wide AI projects that brought secure, productive use of agentic tools to every level of the organization.
- **Replaced legacy solutions with modern SaaS platforms** and migrated infrastructure from on-premise to AWS and Azure environments for improved system performance and reduced technical debt.
- **Built a suite of analytics for client interactions and established KPIs across the operational spectrum** to enable measurable improvements in organizational decision-making capabilities.
- **Developed performance reporting tools for the CEO and board** while actively participating in board committee meetings to support governance and strategic oversight.
- **Improved IT service quality** by creating and enforcing SLAs for incident response, as well as introducing AI-assisted sentiment analysis to sharpen ticket reporting and resolution tracking.
- **Boosted operational efficiency** by standing up an analyst team focused on scalable process automation and by incorporating Agile project management practices across IT operations.
- **Implemented a new POS system for the DPR team** to enable reliable payment processing at major events.

- **Applied Six Sigma principles in driving the adoption of continuous improvement methodologies** for standardizing processes and minimizing operational waste.
- **Enabled the organization to move away from paper-based workflows** through targeted process modernization and digital transformation efforts across multiple departments.
- **Established a Center of Excellence** to support ongoing staff development and cultivate a high-performance team culture dedicated to innovation, ownership, and employee satisfaction.

Illinois Mutual Life Insurance, Peoria, IL

October 2015 – April 2023

IT Infrastructure Manager

Led all infrastructure, storage, virtualization, and cloud administration functions for the company. Managed the distributed systems portfolio while overseeing operational budget and coordinating IT modernization and development programs.

- **Designed and implemented a cloud-first hybrid multi-cloud data replication and failover architecture**, which increased system resilience by supporting 24/7/365 uptime requirements.
- **Broke down siloed team structures and established a DevSecOps operating model** between information systems departments for greater cross-functional collaboration and delivery speed.
- **Founded the company's first Center of Excellence and introduced an RPA program** designed to drive process improvement and scale toward machine learning capabilities.
- **Established a dedicated Data Management team** responsible for database professionals and administrators across the enterprise for stronger data governance.
- **Elevated employee skill sets** through structured professional development, building a team capable of architecting data-driven improvements and identifying process gaps collaboratively.
- **Optimized infrastructure performance** through hyper-converged infrastructure upgrades and virtualization improvements across company datacenters.
- **Reduced business continuity risk** by creating formal DR/BCP procedures backed by regular testing cycles and the deployment of highly available systems architecture.

Heart Technologies, East Peoria, IL

January 2004 – January 2014

IT Manager / IT Team Lead

Provided IT consulting, project leadership, and CIO-level advisory services to clients across Illinois and surrounding areas. Delivered compliance consulting across multiple regulatory frameworks and managed network lifecycle projects for clients in healthcare, education, and other sectors. Supported healthcare clients through EMR conversions. Managed school grant upgrades to help educational clients maximize the impact of available funding for technology infrastructure improvements.

- **Architected the Heart-Cloud SaaS platform**, which delivered a unified, client-centered infrastructure solution scalable across multiple industries.
- **Strengthened client security posture** by conducting security audits and penetration testing that identified vulnerabilities and informed targeted remediation strategies.
- **Bolstered client compliance readiness** through advisory services covering SOX, HIPAA, and PCI regulatory requirements and frameworks.
- **Augmented infrastructure reliability** through the design and implementation of POS systems, MS Active Directory, clustering, Exchange, SQL, VMware, and backup and archive solutions across client environments.
- **Created a comprehensive network procedure documentation** covering server lifecycle, identity and access management, and business continuity.

ADDITIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Systems Administrator | Pearl Technology, PTC Select
SAN/VMware Network Administrator | Consulting for Morton Community Bank
IT Manager/Senior Network Engineer | Heart Technologies, Inc.

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bachelor of Science (BS), IT Management | Western Governors University – Salt Lake City, UT (expected Dec. 2026)
Coursework in Business Administration | University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign – Urbana-Champaign, IL

CERTIFICATIONS

Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE) | Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator (MCSA)
 Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) | Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP)
 Cisco Certified Design Associate (CCDA) | Certified Internet Webmaster (CIW)
 CompTIA A+ | CompTIA Security+ | CompTIA Server+

OTHER SKILLS

Strategic Planning | Communication Skills | Executive Leadership | Analytical Thinking | Team Leadership Skills