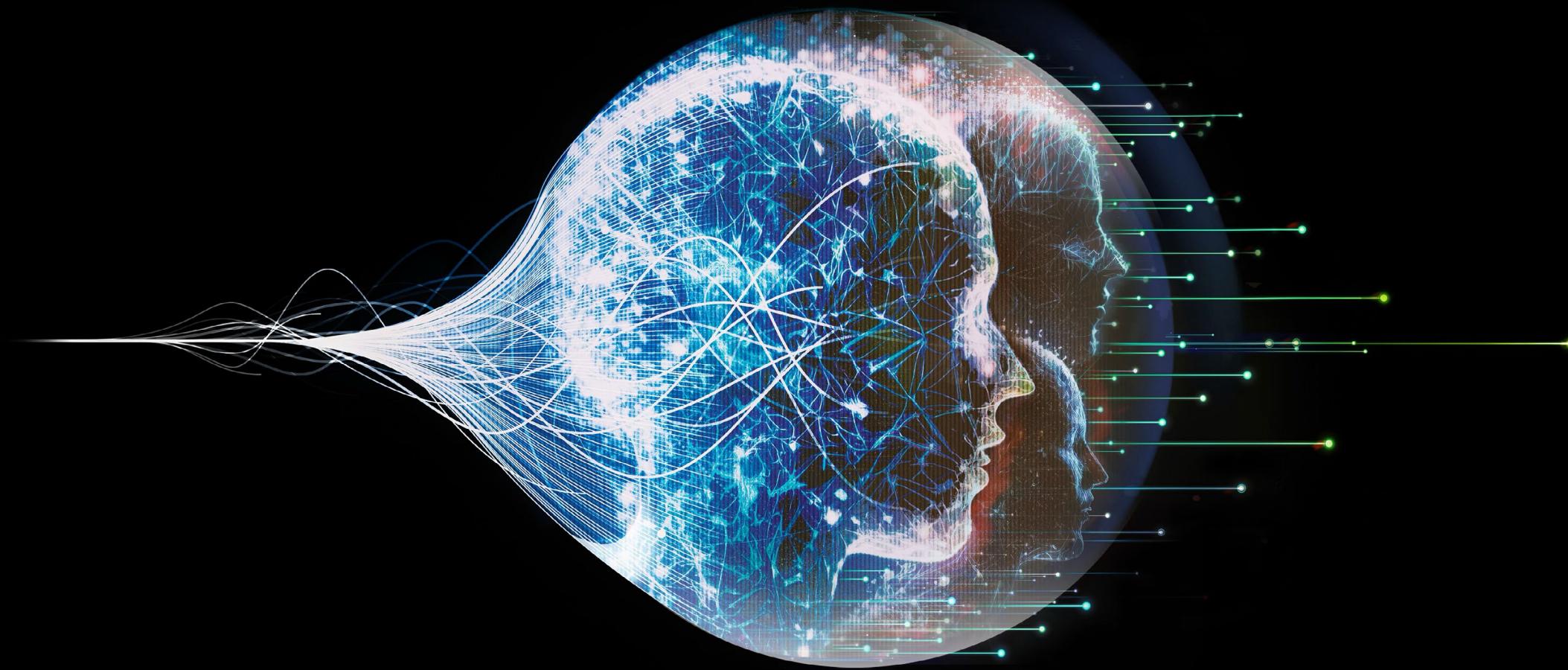


Deloitte.



Chief Data Officer survey

2025

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01 Introduction

Executive summary – overview

The Chief Data Officer (CDO) is a pivotal strategic leader responsible for driving value from an organisation's data assets to enable overall organisational success

Tasked with harnessing the full potential of their organisation's data, CDOs require a blend of strong business acumen and a deep understanding of organisational objectives that will enable them to translate data capabilities into tangible business outcomes.

A CDO should bring strategic thinking and drive consistency on how data is managed and governed to ensure accuracy and accessibility to deliver insights to empower confident, data-driven decision-making.

Success in the CDO role, as defined by our Deloitte framework, hinges on three core factors:

1. Having a **vision** that is directly aligned with overarching business objectives
2. Having significant **control** over how data is gathered, managed and delivered across the wider organisation
3. Having a material **influence** over the aspects of data that are beyond their direct control – through building strong internal relationships

Our observations

Throughout our interactions with CDOs, we've learned there's no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to success, given the role's depth and data's varying role within organisations. Despite diverse approaches, some commonalities emerge:

- **Vision** – All CDOs recognise the need for a strong data strategy, regardless of operational model (e.g., centralised/decentralised).
- **Control** – There's an increasing need for budget to expand teams and tooling. CDOs should be mandatory approvers in IT governance to ensure projects align with the data strategy and drive the wider data agenda.
- **Influence** – Strong executive backing and stakeholder relationships are crucial to secure data budgets and maximise outcomes.

01 Introduction

Key findings from the 2025 CDO survey



Vision

51% of CDOs state data governance is a top priority for the year ahead.

73% of CDOs are investing in data management and governance technology to ensure their data remains relevant in the future.



Control

54% of CDOs have seen an increase in size of their team over the past year, with 63% anticipating further growth next year.

43% of CDOs report that their budgets have increased in the past 12 months, and 56% identified an overall increase in data spend.



Influence

57% of CDOs currently report into their CIO or COO, up from 39% in 2024.

54% of CDOs believe they are less influential than other C-suite stakeholders but expect to see a shift over the next 5 years.



Success

47% of CDOs outline that competing organisational priorities hinders their ability to realise the full value of data.

48% cite budget and resource limitations are a key challenge in driving AI adoption.



Four faces

CDOs are **increasing the executive and leadership aspects to their role** by continuing to trend towards Catalyst and Strategist and away from Operator and Technologist.



01 Introduction

Background and objectives

We are excited to present our fourth annual Chief Data Officer (CDO) survey.

This 2025 report marks the fourth year of our annual CDO survey, offering a unique longitudinal perspective on the evolution of the leadership role. Since our inaugural survey in 2022, the CDO's journey has been one of continued transformation. Initially focused on compliance and data governance, the CDO role has expanded to encompass strategic leadership, data-driven innovation, and the responsible implementation of emerging technologies like AI and GenAI.

This year's survey explores the changing data budgetary landscape, more diverse data teams, and the need for a stronger emphasis on demonstrating the tangible business value delivered by data initiatives. We explore the key trends, challenges, and opportunities shaping the CDO role in 2025, providing valuable insights for data leaders and executives alike.

The 2025 CDO survey

This report, drawing upon insights from CDOs and senior data leaders across industries and geographies, provides an in-depth exploration of the evolving CDO role. Our objective is to illuminate key priorities, opportunities, and challenges faced by CDOs.

This year, we have also included findings on:

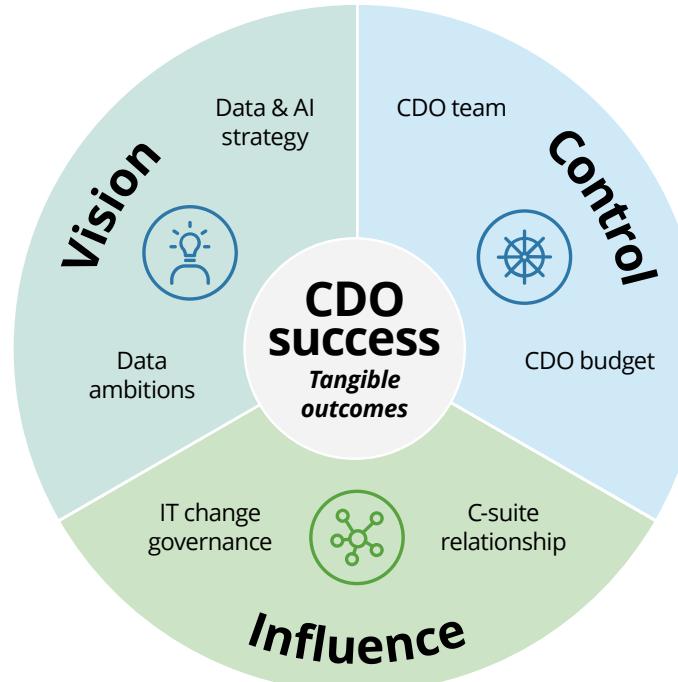
1. The role of the CDO and their team
2. The priorities of the CDO
3. The role of the CDO in delivering artificial intelligence
4. Measuring the value of the CDO

To discuss the detailed data underpinning this report, please connect with our team to learn more ukcdocommunity@deloitte.co.uk.

01 Introduction

CDO success framework

The CDO serves as a key leadership figure, responsible for translating data into tangible value by strategically aligning data initiatives with business objectives.



Our perspective

We believe that a CDO's impact on business performance is driven by three core factors:

1. Having a **vision** that is directly aligned with overarching business objectives
2. Having significant **control** over how data is gathered, managed and delivered across the wider organisation
3. Having a material **influence** over the aspects of data that are beyond their direct control – through building strong internal relationships

Ultimately, a CDO's impact and success are best evidenced by the tangible value they deliver, directly contributing to the achievement of core business objectives.

01 Introduction

Survey methodology

Building on the success of the last four years, the 2025 CDO survey took a similar approach to previous iterations.

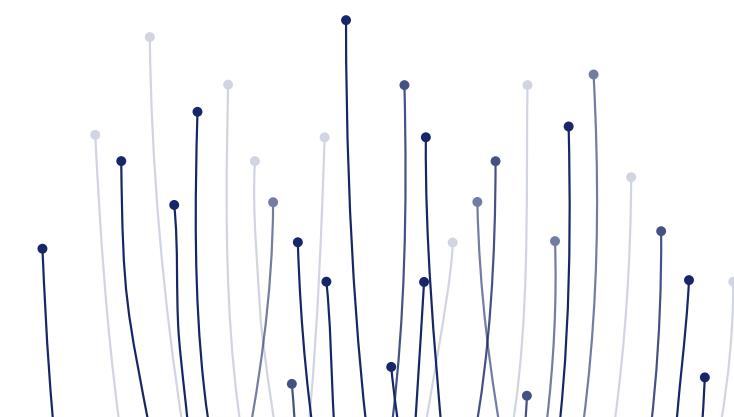
We invited a diverse group of CDOs from across all major industry groups including Financial Services, Government & Public Sector and Corporates to participate.

Note: Corporates refers to organisations in the private sector including but not limited to: Telecommunications, Media and Technology, Energy, Resources and Industrials, Health Care and Life Sciences and Consumer (including travel, leisure, retail and services).

Our analysis of the survey responses informed the trends, observations, and insights discussed in this report. While the report primarily uses the title "CDO" it acknowledges the participation of senior data leaders with similar responsibilities but different titles, such as "Director of Data" and "Head of Data."

To provide deeper insights, this report segments organisations based on data maturity and data culture. The classifications utilise self-reported rankings (on a scale of 1 to 5) provided by CDOs within the survey. It's important to note that these groupings are based on individual perceptions and haven't undergone formal evaluation.

This report includes year-on-year analysis derived from the annual survey data. While these insights offer valuable perspectives, it is important to note that variations in the respondent pool each year may influence the observed trends and should be considered during interpretation.



01 Introduction

Partner foreword

“Over the past four years, Deloitte has partnered with a diverse range of CDOs across industry groups, gaining invaluable insights into the challenges and opportunities of harnessing data’s full potential. This collaboration has allowed us to understand the unique obstacles faced by CDOs and to empower them in overcoming these hurdles.

Our 2025 CDO survey builds upon this multi-year analysis, providing crucial market trends and insights. This year’s report focuses on the burgeoning impact of AI and the strategic management of budgetary constraints within the data landscape.

We are committed to ongoing exploration of the CDO role and to supporting the CDO community in navigating both present and future challenges. We extend our deepest gratitude to all survey participants whose contributions have made this report possible. Their insights are invaluable in shaping our understanding of this dynamic field and we look forward to continuing to explore and investigate these trends in future years.”



Andy Whitton

Partner

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Roald Waaijer

Partner

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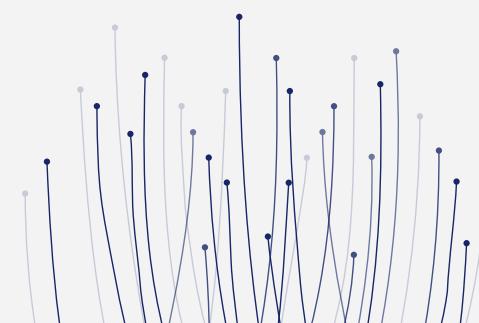


Over the past four years, our CDO survey has provided critical insights into the shifting priorities of the CDO role and the key tools empowering them to achieve their strategic goals.

What do we mean by vision?

It is important for CDOs to outline a clear direction of travel for data within their organisation, to enable a cohesive approach to data and avoid common challenges that we often see with siloed operations and duplicated effort.

A clear, documented and shared vision is therefore a key tool, enabling CDOs to articulate how data should be used in their organisation to drive performance and achieve the organisation's strategic objectives.



Our perspective

CDOs who effectively articulate and embed a clear, shared data vision across their organisations are better positioned to secure crucial buy-in, successfully implement data-driven initiatives, and ultimately deliver significant value against business objectives.

This clarity provides a common understanding of goals, priorities, and expected outcomes, thereby facilitating collaboration, optimising resource allocation, and enhancing accountability while reducing ambiguity and resistance to change.

Furthermore, a well-communicated vision cultivates a robust data-driven culture, empowering employees at all levels to contribute to the data strategy and maximise the impact of data-driven decision-making.

02 Vision

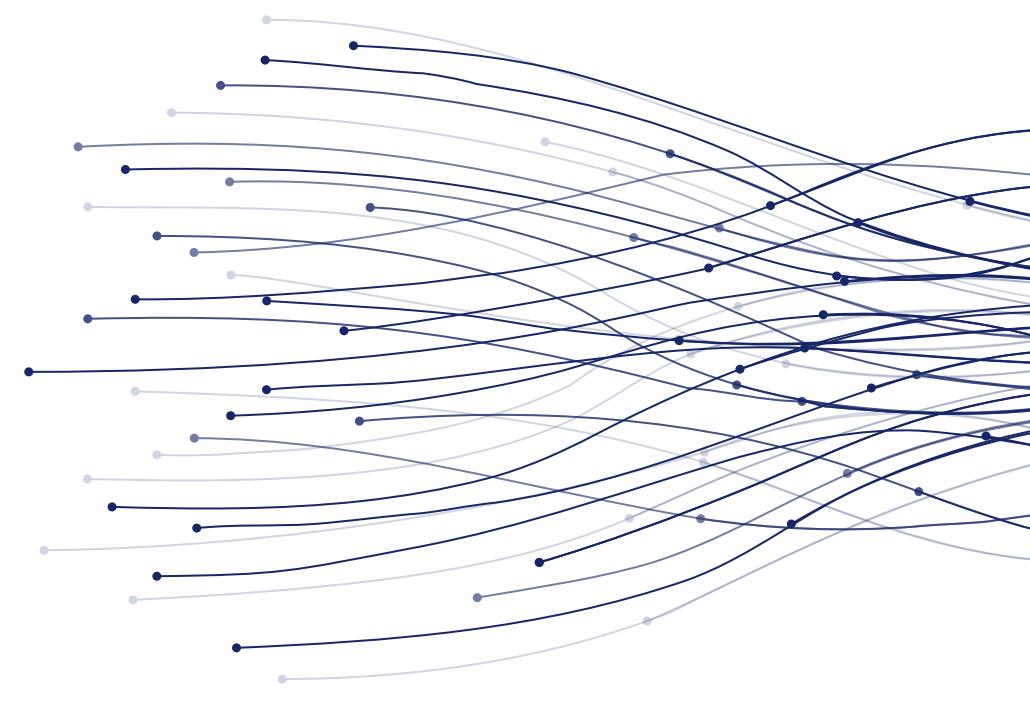
The priorities of the CDO

CDOs are not only building the critical data foundations that businesses require but are also leading their organisations' data-driven journey by staying strategically and technologically ahead of the curve.

CDOs exhibit varied priorities: some focus on establishing foundational capabilities for future data use through prioritising data governance (51%) and data quality (31%), while others aim to maximise data value through AI and GenAI (43%). Data Strategy (35%) also emerges as a key priority, bridging foundational capabilities with future applications (e.g., AI/GenAI) by setting direction and aligning with organisational strategic objectives.

Industry differences are also evident, with Government and Public Sector (GPS) demonstrating the greatest focus on data governance, Financial Services on AI/GenAI and Corporates on Data Products.

Data can be seen on the next page



02 Vision

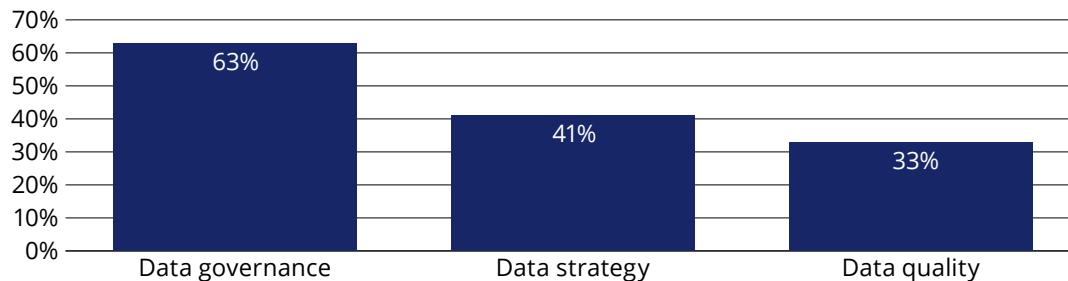
The priorities of the CDO

Click on below components to filter and view data for each industry group:

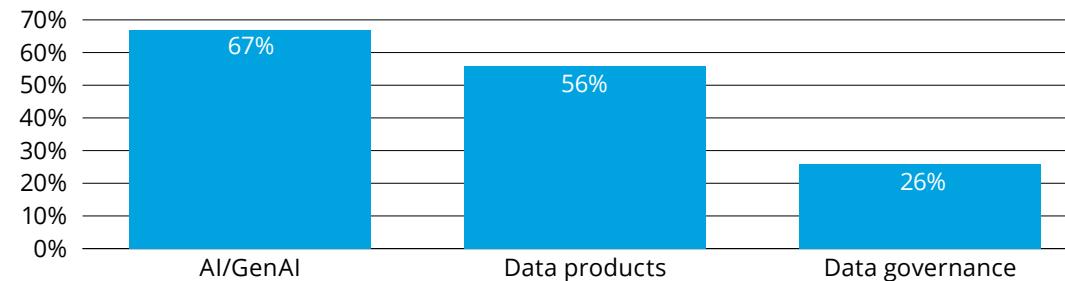
02 Vision

The priorities of the CDO

The 2025 survey highlights how an organisation's perceived data management maturity influences the strategic priorities of the CDO.

Top three priority areas selected by CDOs with low data maturity

For CDOs operating in organisations with lower perceived data management maturity, we observe a primary focus on establishing fundamental data capabilities. Data governance is identified as the top priority with 63% of CDOs flagging it as a priority, indicating a critical need to define policies, roles, and processes for data management. This is closely followed by data strategy (41%) and data quality (33%), highlighting a foundational effort to build reliable, well-managed data assets.

Top three priority areas selected by CDOs with high data maturity

In contrast, CDOs in organisations with higher perceived data management maturity demonstrate a strategic shift towards leveraging data for business value. Their leading priority is AI/GenAI, cited by 67% of respondents, reflecting a drive to exploit cutting-edge technologies. This is closely followed by the development of data products (56%), underscoring an emphasis on creating tangible, value-driven offerings from their data assets. While data governance remains a consideration, only 26% of CDOs flagged this as a priority.

02 Vision

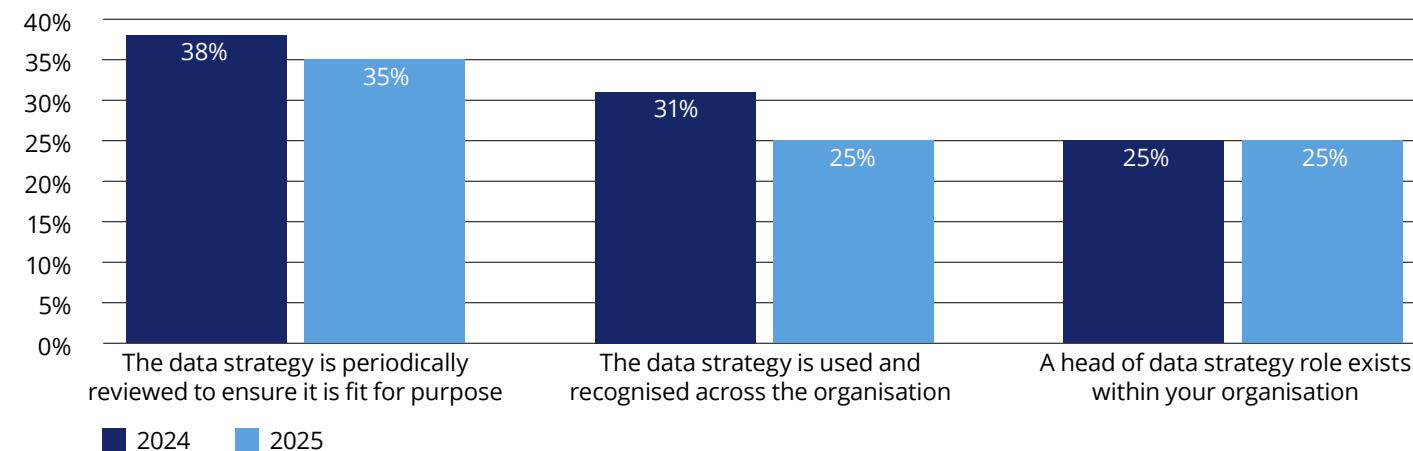
Bridging the skills and culture gap for data strategy adoption

Data strategy remains a top priority for CDOs, reflecting its crucial importance, [REDACTED] however, implementation is hampered by cultural [REDACTED] barriers, lack of organisational support, and a significant skills gap.

The majority (75%) of CDOs have a data strategy in place, and a large proportion (69%) are actively sharing it across their organisation, demonstrating how CDOs are focused on developing and using their strategies to communicate their vision.

When comparing priorities to last year, around one third of CDOs listed data strategy as a top priority, with a similar proportion acknowledging it as one of their three key priorities in 2025. This consistency reflects the continued importance of data as a strategic asset for an organisation to gain competitive advantage and remain at the forefront of digital transformation.

Data strategy maturity comparison to last year



02 Vision

Bridging the skills and culture gap for data strategy adoption

Implementing a data strategy has challenges. Organisational culture was cited as the most significant adoption challenge for Corporates (69%) and Financial Services (52%) CDOs, whilst GPS CDOs stated that organisational support and buy-in (51%) was their biggest deterrent.

Click on below components to filter and view data for each industry group:

35% of CDOs cited that a persistent skills gap is one of the key challenges in adoption of data strategy. This indicates that organisations need to invest significantly in upskilling their workforce to successfully implement and benefit from their data strategies.

02 Vision

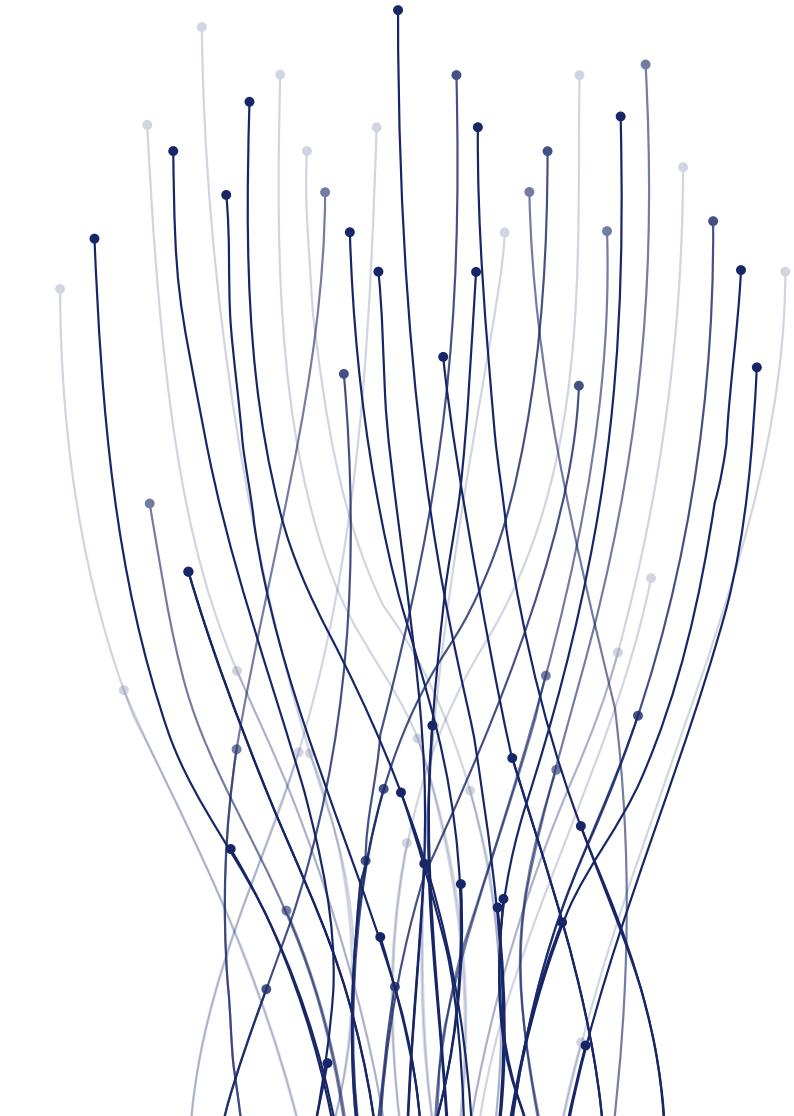
Future-proofing data

CDOs are prioritising investing in data management, AI, and data literacy to ensure data usability in the future.

CDOs face the challenge of ensuring data is not only fit for purpose and usable now but also in the future. CDOs have indicated that they currently do this through key investment areas such as foundations, with 73% selecting data management and governance technology; innovation, with 70% focusing on AI strategy and capabilities; and skills, with 66% prioritising data literacy.

Corporates (85%) and Financial Services (79%) are both prioritising the development of data products and self-serve capabilities, whilst CDOs from Government and Public Sector indicated that investing in data management and governance technology was the best investment to support scalable data foundations.

Data can be seen on the next page



02 Vision

Future-proofing data

Click on below components to filter and view data for each industry group:

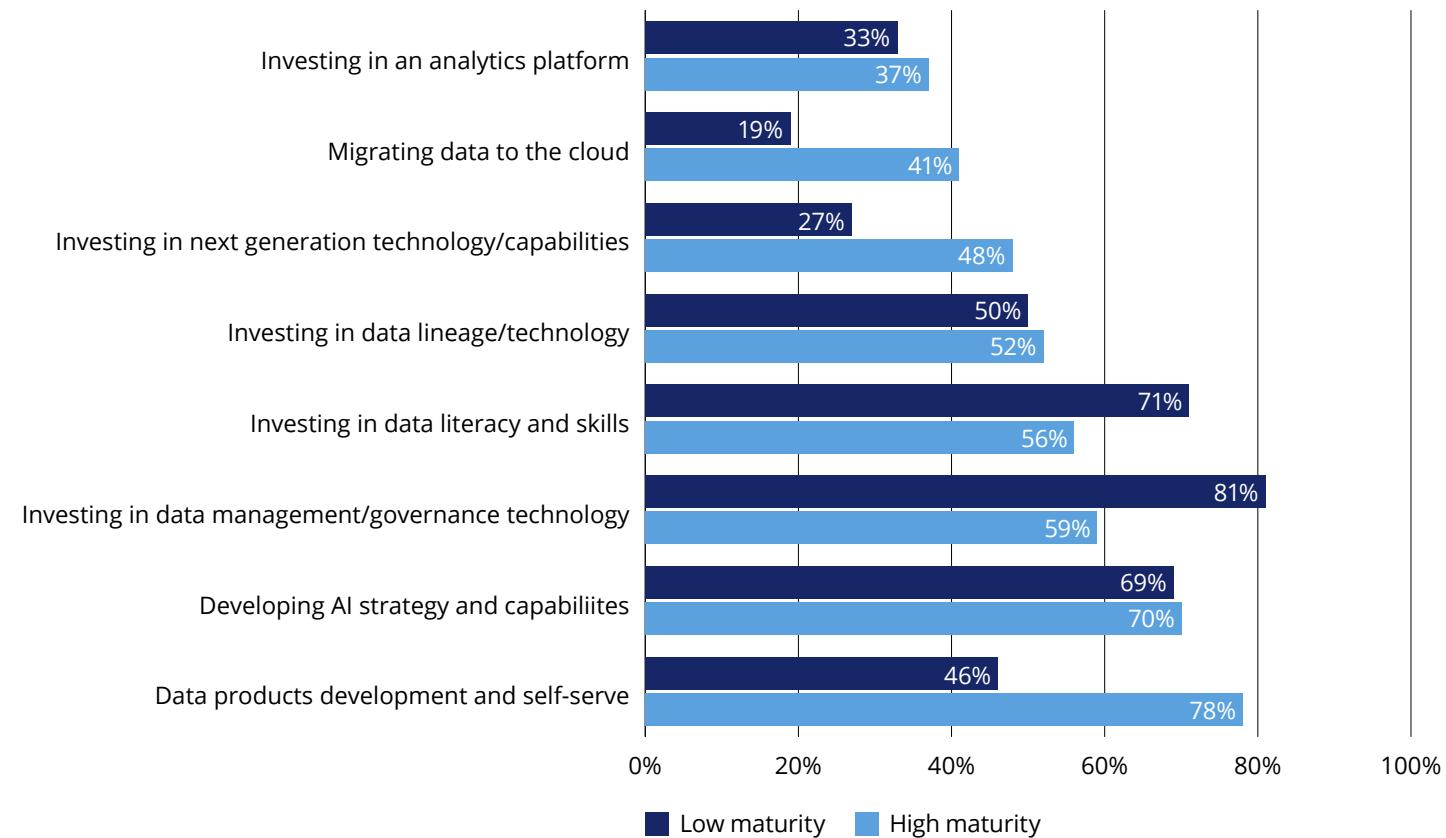
02 Vision

Future-proofing data

We see that the areas of focus vary dependant on the data maturity of the organisation.

CDOs from organisations with lower maturity have outlined that they are prioritising data literacy and management, whilst CDOs from organisations with higher data maturity have indicated greater focus on investing in data products and AI capabilities.

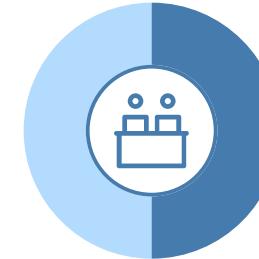
Which areas are CDOs prioritising to ensure their data remains relevant?



02 Vision

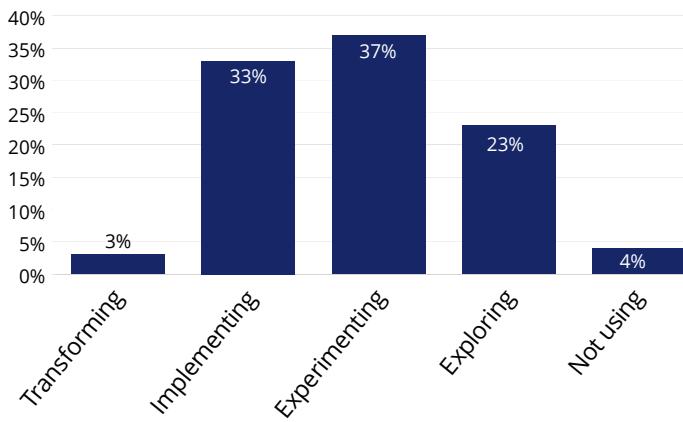
AI Adoption – the pivotal role of the CDO

73% of CDOs have AI deployments or AI experiments live now.



50% of CDOs interviewed said they were either accountable or responsible for AI/GenAI in their organisations.

How are organisations currently using AI solutions?



Organisations are actively engaging with AI, 70% of respondents are either implementing AI solutions or conducting experimental proof-of-concept projects to understand its potential, demonstrating significant interest in this area.

Whilst few CDOs indicate that AI is transforming their organisations currently – the data provides a positive indication that CDOs are looking to move towards utilising AI and further development of AI capabilities are therefore required to drive this.

Our perspective

The question of where AI accountability resides – with the CDO or other executives – doesn't have a single right answer and largely depends on the organisation. We are seeing an increase in roles such as Chief Data and AI officer, indicating a shift towards one person being accountable for both data and AI. Whereas other organisations are focusing more on the technological or governance considerations and may have other accountable executives responsible for AI.

Either way, the CDO plays a pivotal role, responsible for the foundational data upon which AI systems are built. Their focus on data governance and quality contributes to ethical AI use across the organisation.

02 Vision

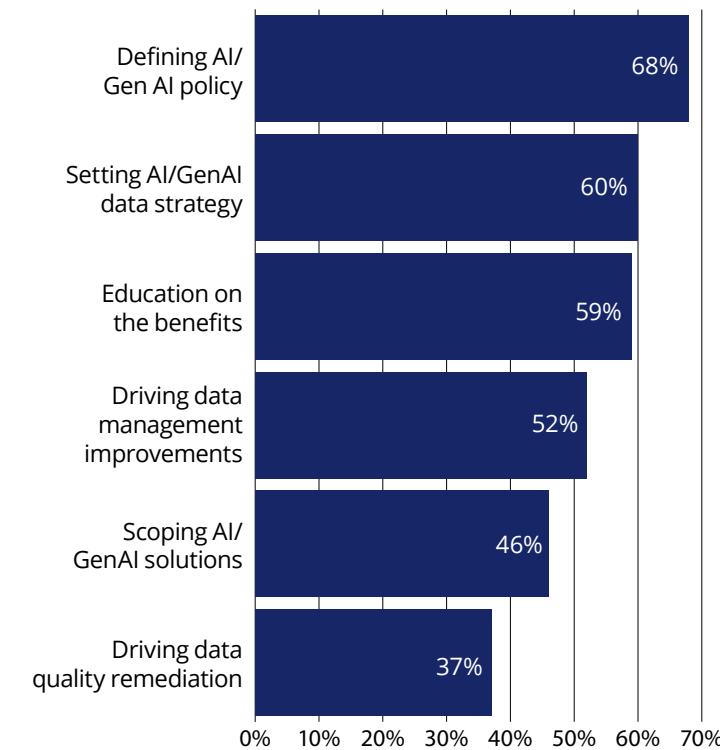
How are CDOs using AI in their roles?

CDOs are demonstrating that they are looking to leverage AI to unlock business value, identify new opportunities, and drive innovation through establishing strong foundations for future AI/GenAI initiatives.

CDOs are heavily focused on establishing a strong foundation for AI/GenAI initiatives as a significant majority (68%) are currently focused on defining AI/GenAI policy to enable their business to take advantage of AI/GenAI opportunities.

Furthermore, a substantial portion are setting AI data strategies (60%), educating on the benefits (59%) and driving data management improvements (52%), highlighting the importance of data quality, culture and infrastructure. While fewer CDOs are directly scoping AI solutions (46%), the emphasis on policy, strategy, and data management suggests a proactive approach to ensuring successful AI implementation.

How are CDOs enabling your business to take advantage of AI/GenAI opportunities?



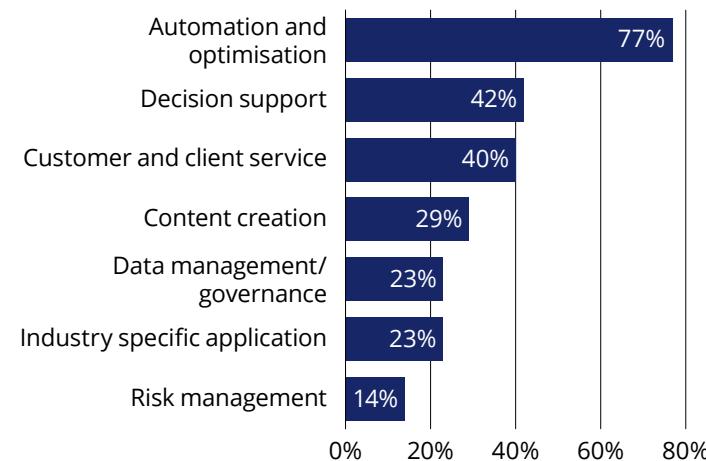
02 Vision

The rise of AI for data teams

AI is transforming the data landscape, and the focus of the CDO has been changing to reflect this. From automating and optimising complex processes to enabling risk management, CDOs are considering where they could implement AI in their business.

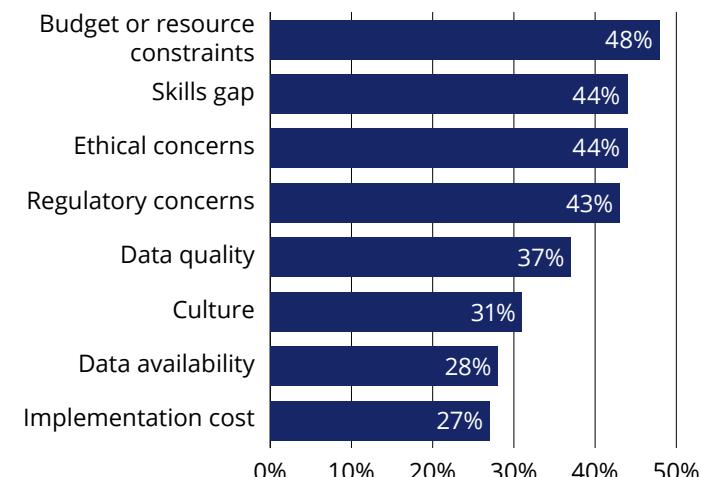
Over three quarters (77%) of CDOs are interested in the use of AI for process automation and optimisation, reflecting a focus on improving operational efficiency. The next most popular use case was in decision support (42%), followed by customer and client service (40%), highlighting a trend of exploiting AI's power for innovation and customer engagement.

What are the main AI use cases?



However, CDOs have outlined a range of challenges around driving AI adoption. CDOs state that budget or resource constraints are the most significant hurdle impacting driving AI adoption, affecting 48% of CDOs, followed closely by skills gaps and ethical concerns at 44%.

What challenges are CDOs facing in driving AI adoption?



02 Vision

The anticipated benefits of AI and GenAI

The widespread benefits of AI and GenAI are no longer a distant prospect, CDOs expect to see tangible benefits within their organisations as early as this year.



CDOs are anticipating productivity gains as the most immediate benefit of AI/GenAI within the next year. Looking further ahead, they also expect to see sustained improvements in customer engagement, data-driven decision-making, and cost reduction.

CDOs who highlighted AI/GenAI as a core priority anticipate their organisations will realise benefits significantly faster than those not prioritising these technologies. For instance:

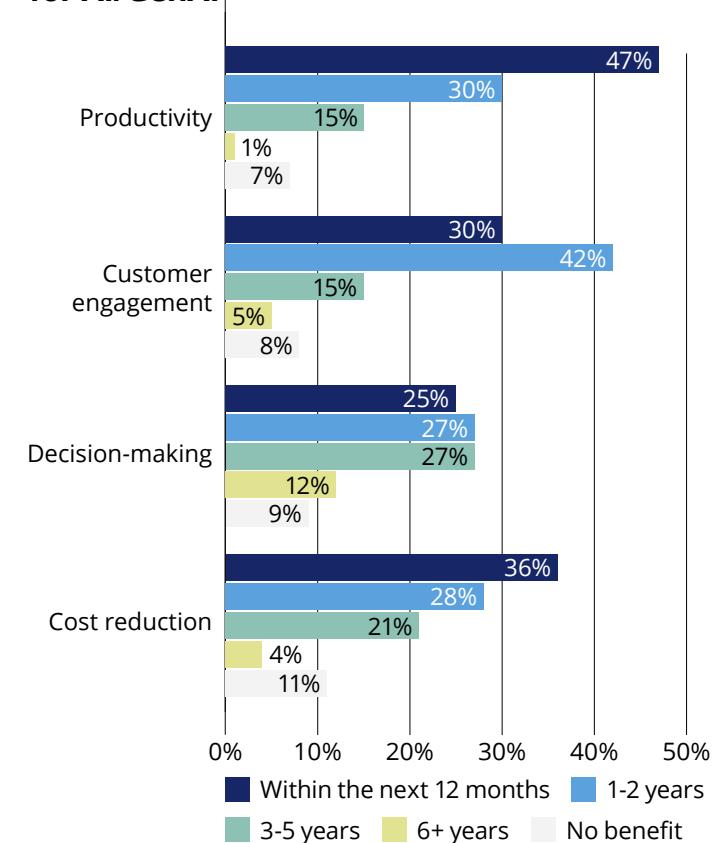


Productivity: 51% of CDOs who prioritise AI/GenAI expect improved productivity within the next 12 months, compared to just 43% among those not focused on AI/GenAI.



Customer Engagement: 34% of CDOs who are prioritising AI/GenAI foresee improved customer engagement within 12 months (versus 26% for non-prioritising CDOs), with an additional 51% expecting it within 1-2 years (compared to 35% for non-prioritising CDOs).

Expected benefits and realisation timelines for AI/GenAI



02 Key observations

Our perspective



CDOs with well-resourced teams and adequate budgets, as well as a clear vision for data strategy and the ability to exert control over key areas like data governance and AI ethics, are better positioned to drive data innovation in their organisations.

What do we mean by control?

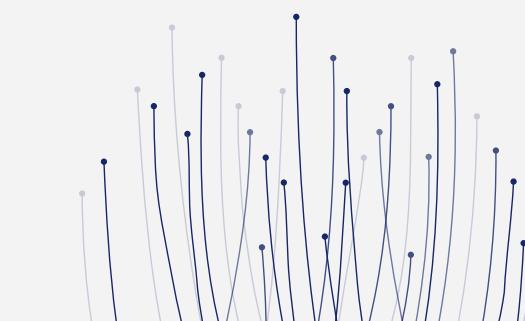
Every role within an organisation will use data in some way or other. So, it is important that a CDO has control and the power to ensure that data is used responsibly, effectively, and ethically to benefit the wider organisational objectives.

Control from CDO's perspective is the collective of the resources, dedicated teams, budget, and relevant organisation authority they can command.

Our perspective

To drive meaningful change and innovation, CDOs need more than just a vision – they need a well-equipped team and the resources accompanied with budget to match.

A strong and skilled team rich in diverse data expertise will equip CDOs to tackle complex challenges inherent in any transformative initiative. Coupled with a dedicated budget, CDOs can invest in new technologies, upskill their teams, and pilot innovative ideas, transforming aspirations into tangible solutions, enabling them to build robust data and AI capabilities to leverage to the full value of their data.



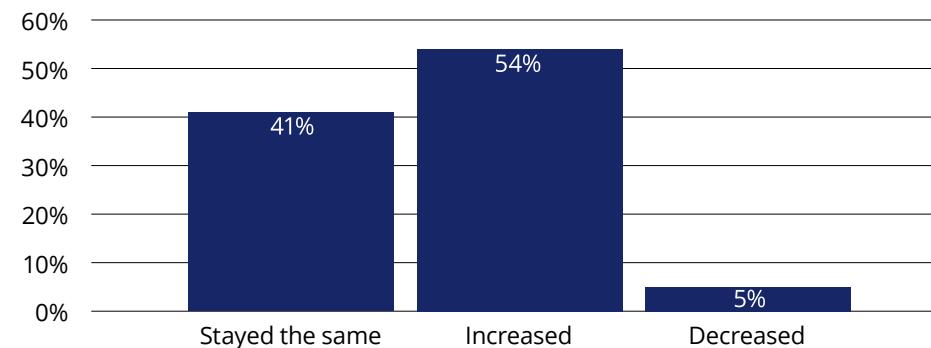
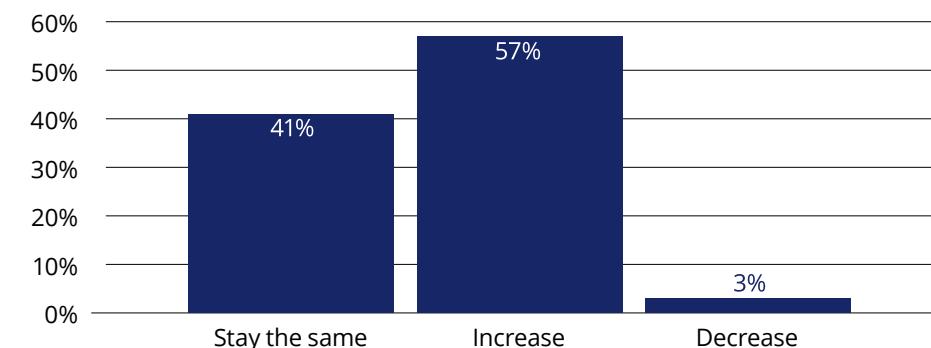
02 Control

Data teams – size

CDOs continue to demonstrate broad range with regards to their data teams and span of data capabilities.

Of the 54% of CDOs that have seen growth in the past 12 months, 69% of them are expecting to see continued growth next year too.

All of the CDOs who saw a decline in their team sizes last year are expecting to see an increase this year.

How has the size of the CDO's data team changed over the past 12 months?**How is the size of the CDOs data team expected to change over the next 12 months?**

On average, CDOs have a central data team of 76 people and have nine direct reports.



CDOs have reported significant growth in their data teams, with 54% stating that their team size increased over the last year.

02 Control

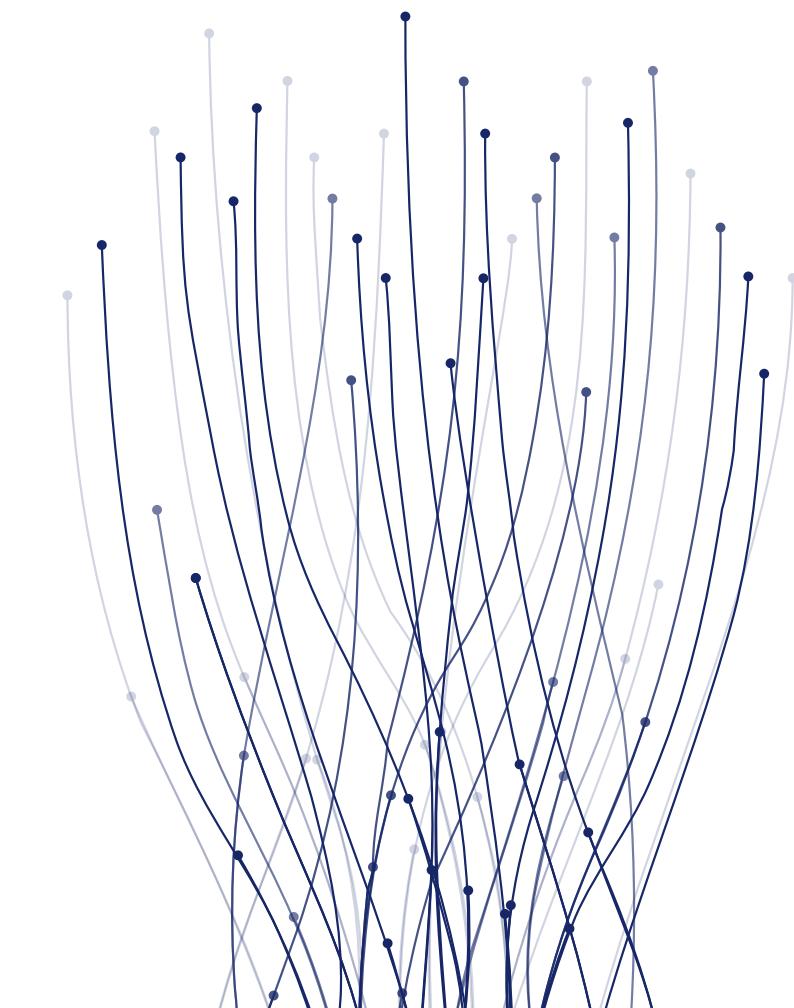
Data teams – skills

CDOs recognise that the right data skills help to deliver impactful data insights for their organisations, as a result, they are strategically prioritising hiring talent to support their key ambitions.

Across all organisations, we see a cluster of skills (data architecture, data governance and data science) where organisations are confident that they have existing skills but there is a desire to build these capabilities further.

- For organisations with high maturity, we see a focus on hiring more AI/GenAI and Machine Learning skills to establish technical capabilities, as well as Communication to be able to sell to the wider organisation. In line with last year, this is an indication of the CDO's team already having foundational skills like data governance, project management and data architecture.
- For organisations with low maturity, we see a clear area of focus on hiring change management, data engineering and data culture skills which provides an indication of the further transformation that may be underway on their journey towards achieving higher data maturity.

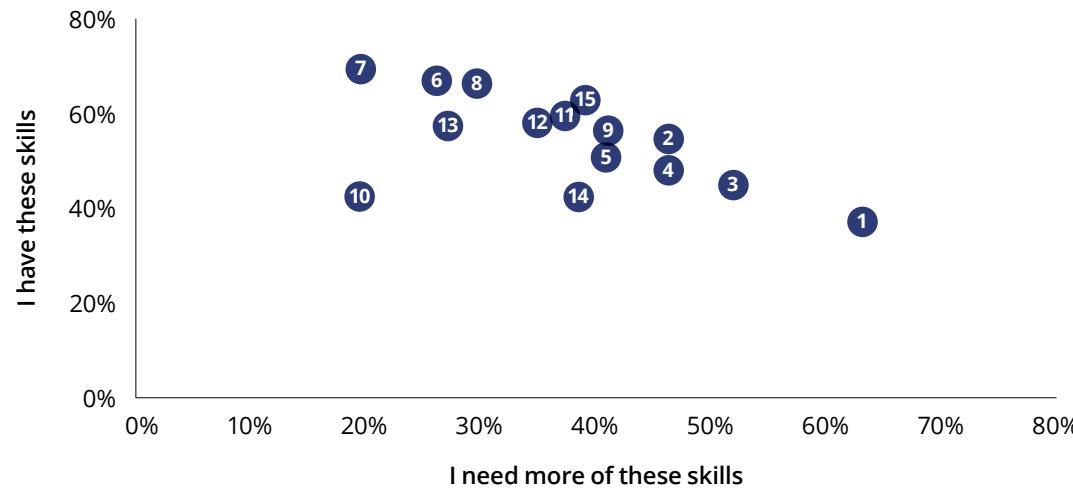
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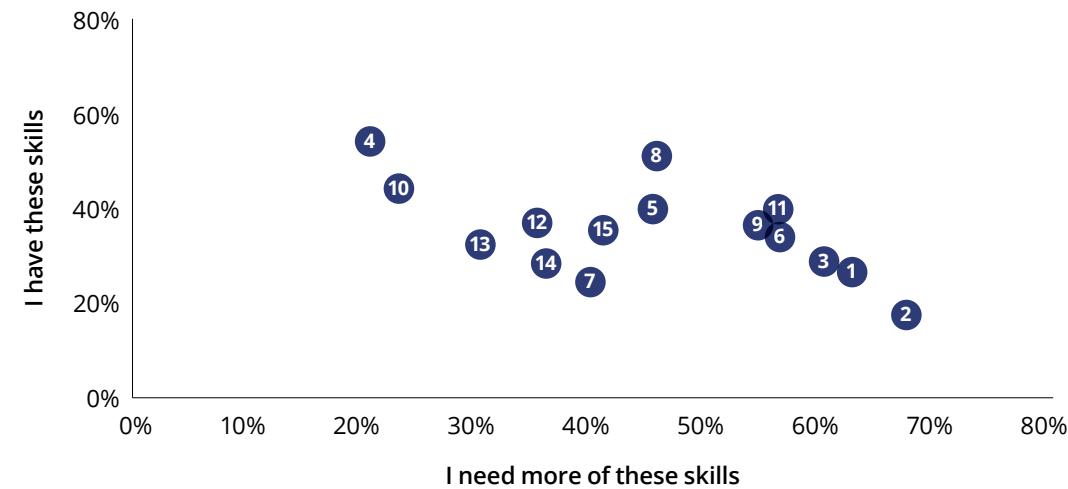
02 Control

Data teams – skills

Skills overview (high maturity)



Skills overview (low maturity)



- 1 Artificial Intelligence (AI)/Generative AI (GenAI)
- 2 Change management/transformation
- 3 Communication/storytelling
- 4 Data analysis/visualisation
- 5 Data architecture
- 6 Data culture
- 7 Data engineering/cloud management/technologies
- 8 Data governance
- 9 Data literacy/training
- 10 Data privacy
- 11 Data quality
- 12 Data science
- 13 Data warehousing/extract transform load
- 14 Machine learning
- 15 Project/programme management

02 Control

The responsibilities of the CDO within the wider organisation

There is not a one-size-fits-all approach for the CDO, organisations are shaping the role to fit their needs.

CDOs need to be part of the wider IT change governance as a mandatory approver to drive the data agenda across the organisation and ensure that the IT change and transformations programmes are well aligned to it.

We observe variability in the responsibility of the CDO within the IT change governance process. Nearly half (48%) of CDOs are consulted as part of the process only on an ad hoc basis, whereas 35% play a more significant role, either as an approver or providing SME input with 19% of CDOs as a mandatory approver compared to 15% in 2023.

The role of the CDO does vary across organisations.

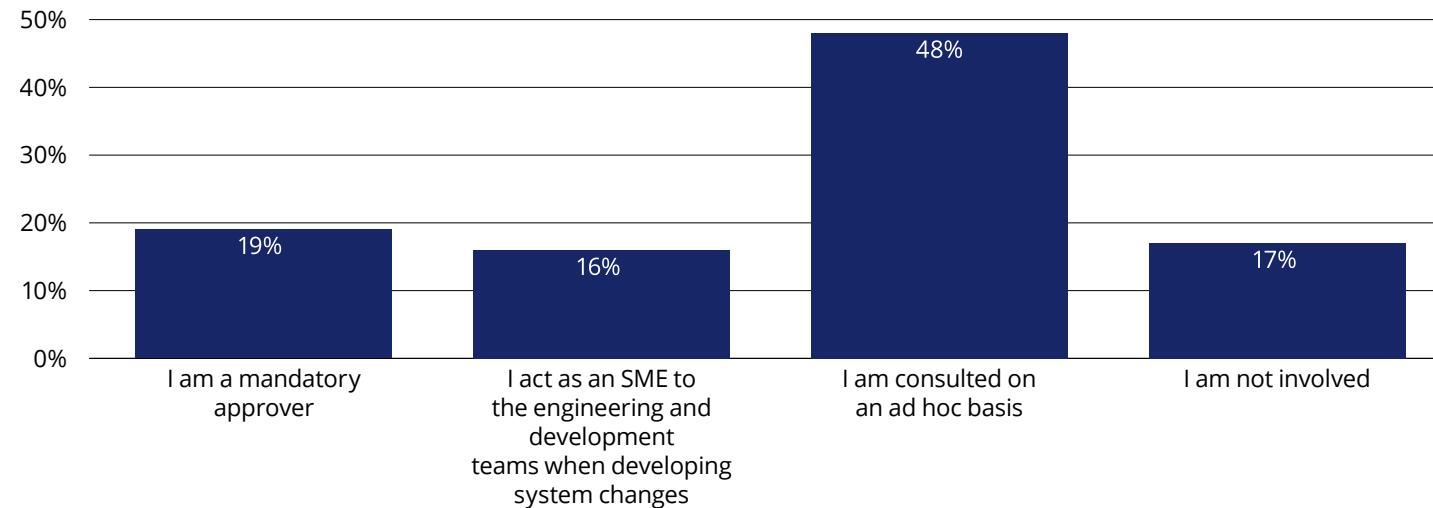


The majority (**70%**) of CDOs take a traditional approach, serving as the sole executive responsible for data strategy and governance across the entire organisation.



The remaining **30%** of CDO's function as coordinators for decentralised CDOs across different divisions. On average, a group CDO manages eight decentralised data leaders.

Role of the CDO in IT change governance

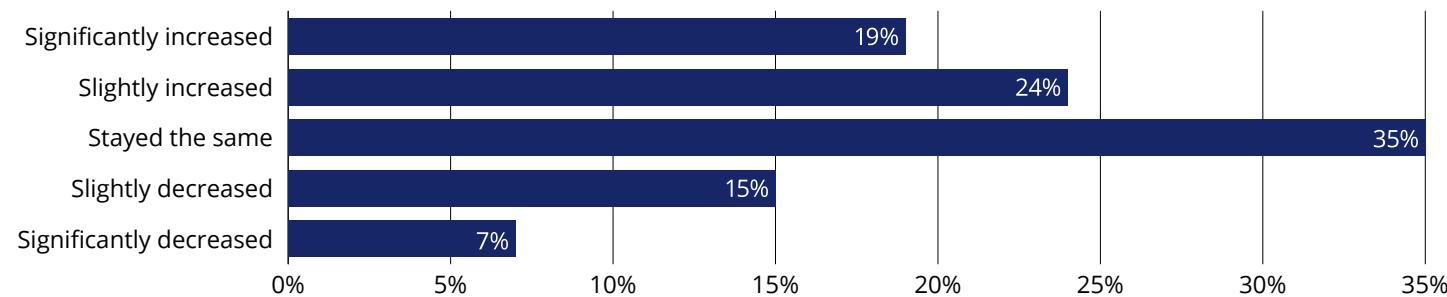


02 Control

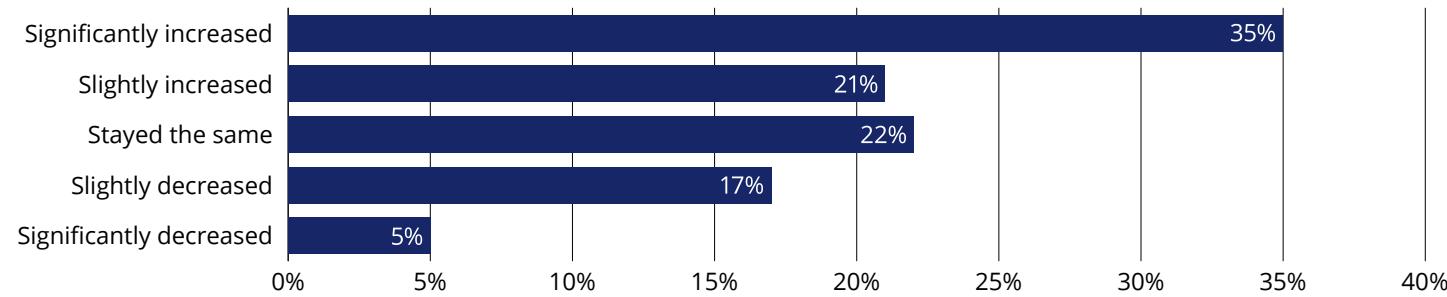
How are data budgets changing?

35% of CDOs report their organisations data spend has significantly increased over the past 12 months.

How has the CDO budget changed?



How has the overall data budget changed?



We see variation in how the CDOs budget has changed over the past 12 months, with the largest proportion demonstrating that budgets have remained the same. However, there is disparity between changes in the CDO budget and the overall organisational data budget.

While a significant portion of respondents reported that their CDO budget remained the same, a larger percentage indicated an increase in their overall data budget. This suggests a shift towards a more federated approach to data spending. Instead of a centralised budget controlled solely by the CDO, data investments are likely being distributed across various departments and teams within the organisation. This emphasises the importance of relationships the CDO needs to have with key stakeholders across the organisation, which we discuss further on pages 34-35.

02 Control

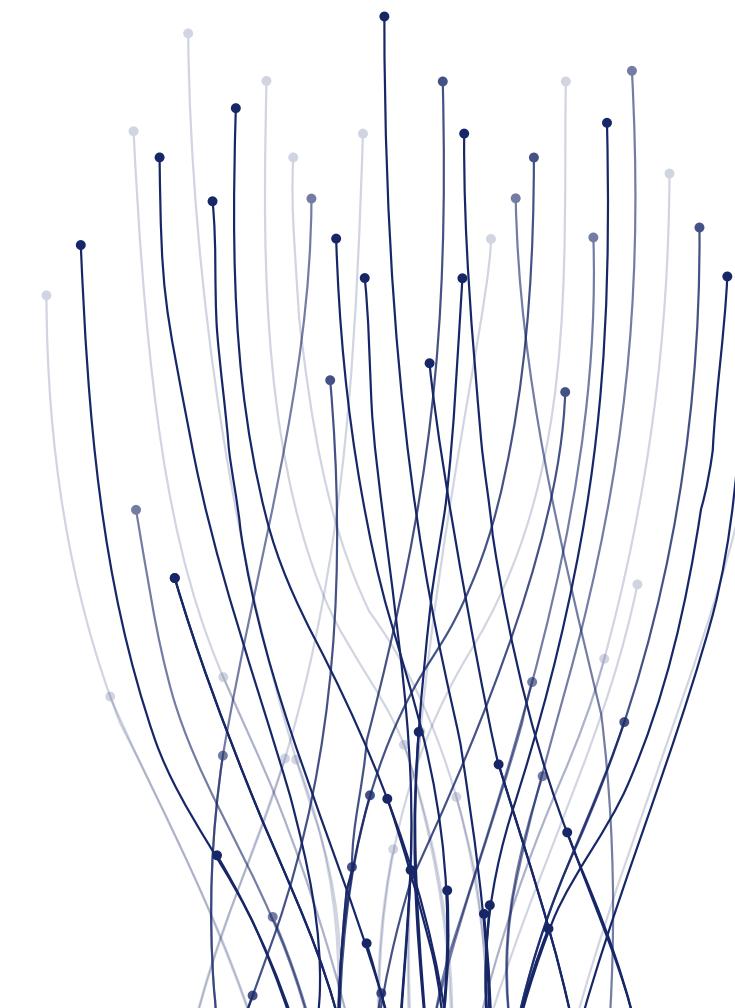
Looking ahead, where do CDOs anticipate requiring the most budget?

CDOs indicate that they are prioritising AI and data governance, and anticipate these areas will require the largest budget in coming years.

CDOs identify AI as the highest priority area (45%) requiring the most significant investment. This prioritisation likely reflects the early stage of many CDOs' AI journeys, demanding greater upfront investment compared to other areas operating under business-as-usual conditions and exhibiting more stable resource needs.

Conversely, CDOs are also looking to invest heavily in Data Governance, with 37% of CDOs identifying this as an area that they anticipate requiring the most budget. This reflects a continuing awareness of the critical role that robust data governance plays in supporting AI initiatives and ensuring the responsible and ethical use of data, mitigating risks associated with data quality, compliance, and security.

Data can be seen on the next page



02 Control

Looking ahead, where do CDOs anticipate requiring the most budget?

CDOs indicate that they are prioritising AI and data governance, and anticipate these areas will require the largest budget in coming years.

Click on below components to filter and view data for each industry group:

02 Key observations

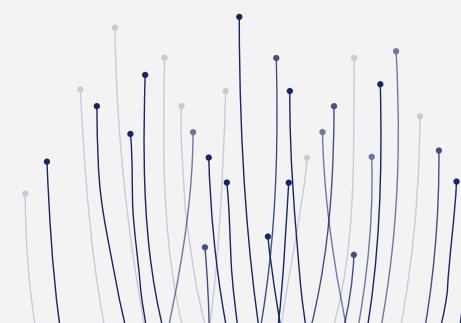
Our perspective



A CDO's success hinges on their strategic influence and leadership, fostering a thriving data culture through effective communication and cross-departmental consensus-building. Their ability to navigate organisational structures and manage change is crucial for successful data initiatives and achieving their objectives.

What do we mean by influence?

A CDO's influence is their ability to drive data-driven decision-making across the organisation, inspiring and motivating others to embrace data. However, achieving this requires strong executive sponsorship to overcome resistance to change and build a data-driven future, with the level of support needed varying depending on the organisational structure and the CDO's existing influence.



Our perspective

CDOs need senior stakeholders and business unit leaders to buy into their vision and initiatives to realise the benefits. A CDO's ability to cultivate a data-centric culture and drive impactful change hinges on their capacity to influence, which is built through strategic networking, fostering strong cross-functional relationships, demonstrating the tangible value of data initiatives and demonstrating how data serves as a strategic asset directly contributing to business objectives.

As organisations increasingly rely on data-driven decision-making, CDOs must navigate the ethical and regulatory landscape, ensuring responsible data usage and compliance. This balance between innovation and responsible data governance is paramount for achieving sustainable, impactful, and ethically sound data-driven success.

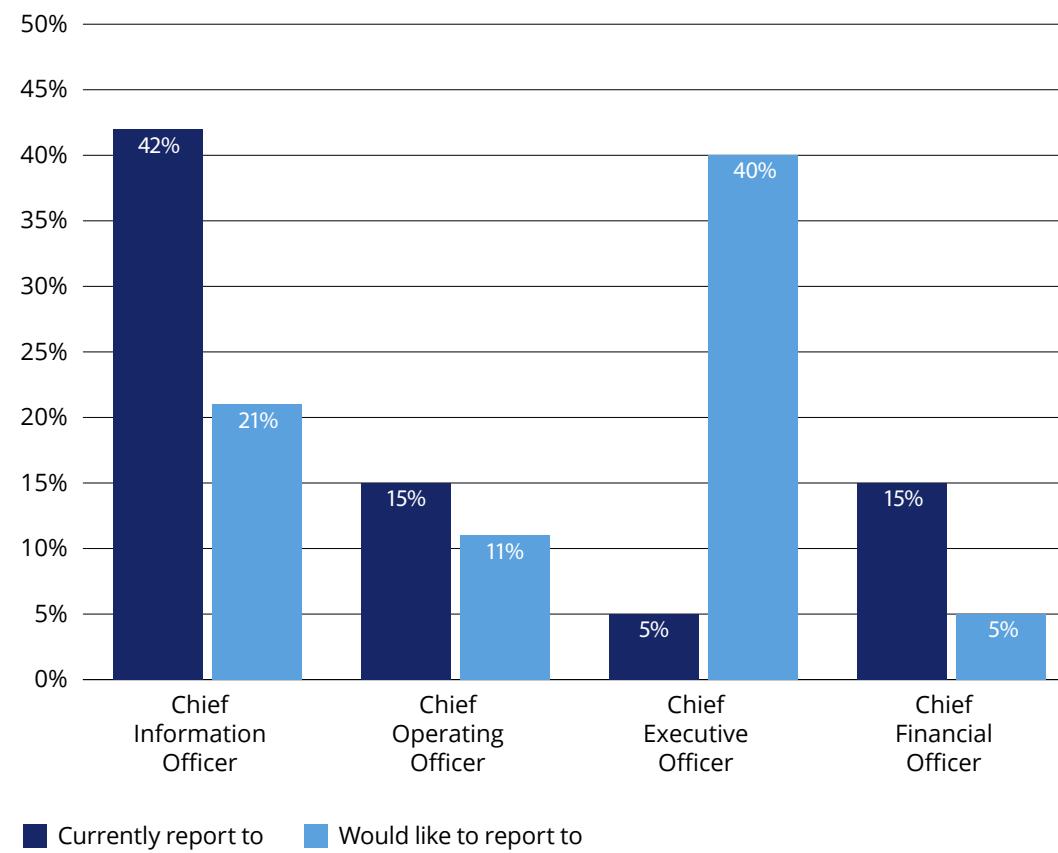
02 Influence

The evolving CDO reporting structures

84% of CDOs state that they report directly to a G-suite executive, although the specific role they report to varies by organisation.

A significant shift has occurred in CDO reporting structures. While direct reporting to the CEO remains the most desired structure (40%), a substantial increase has been observed in CDOs reporting to the CIO (42% in 2025 vs. 23% in 2024). Reporting lines to the CFO and COO remain relatively stable. The reasons behind the increased preference for reporting to the CIO and the decrease in the desire to report directly to the CEO warrant further investigation, potentially exploring the influence of AI adoption and its implications for organisational data strategies and driving greater organisational value.

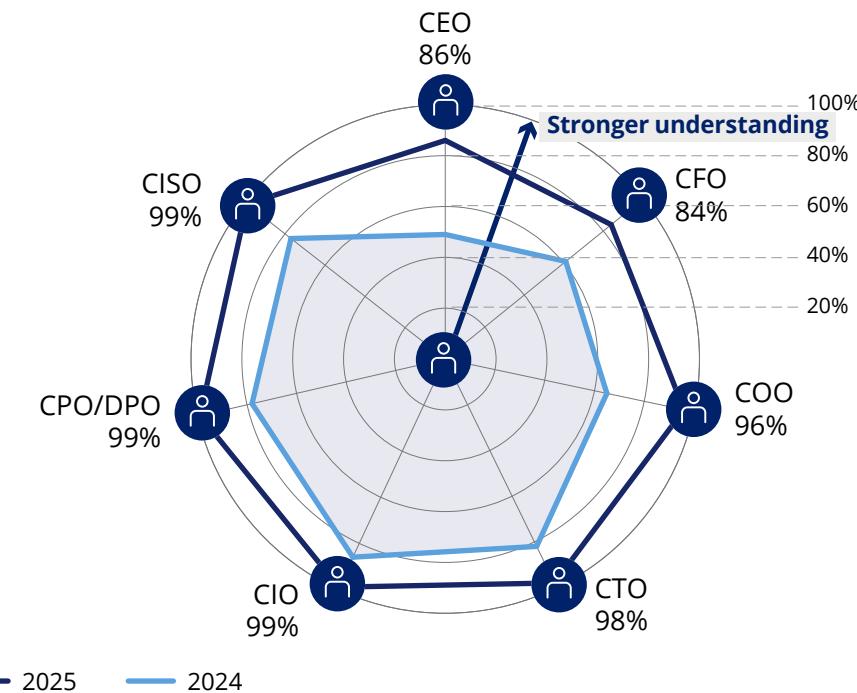
Who are CDOs reporting into?



02 Influence

How well do leadership understand the role of the CDO?

It's crucial that the executive leadership has a clear understanding of the CDO's role and their initiatives to support organisation-wide data strategies. This top-down support is essential for fostering a truly data-driven culture.



Across the C-suite, we see an encouraging increase in awareness and a better understanding of the CDO role, as well as how data responsibilities are linked to business objectives. In particular the CEO, moving from 49% in 2024 to 86% in 2025, which is encouraging as this is the most desired role for CDOs to report into.

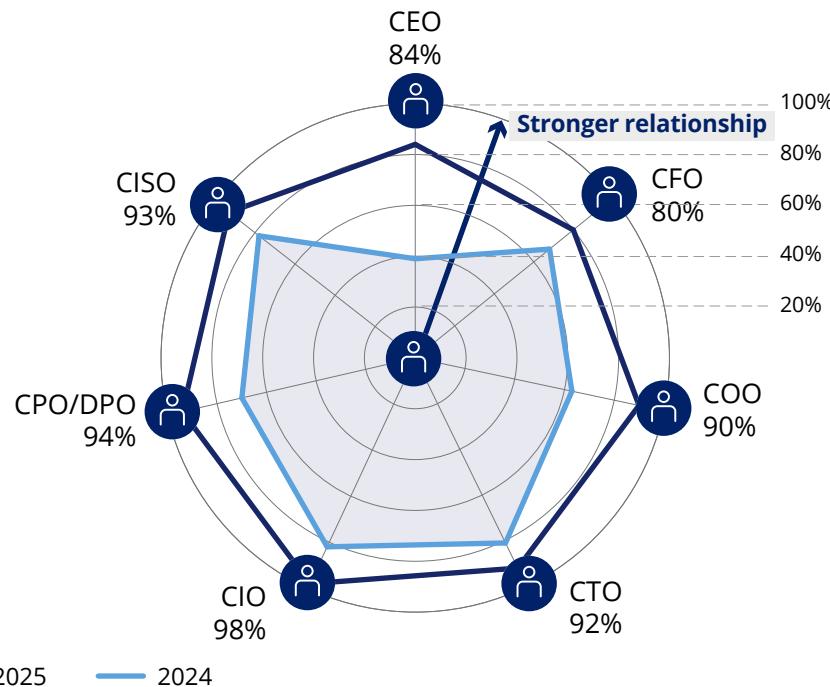
This improved understanding is crucial for effective data governance, strategic decision-making, and the successful implementation of data-driven initiatives across the organisation. The near-universal understanding among CIOs, CPOs/DPOs, and COOs suggests a strong foundation for collaboration and the successful integration of data strategies into core business functions.

CEO – Chief Executive Officer, CFO – Chief Financial Officer, COO – Chief Operating Officer, CTO – Chief Technology Officer, CIO – Chief Information Officer, CPO/DPO – Chief Privacy Officer/Data Protection Officer, CISO – Chief Information Security Officer.

02 Influence

How are leadership engaging with the CDO role?

Over the last year, there has been a strong upward trend in terms of how much the CDO engages with other C-suite stakeholders. This is a testament to a growing acknowledgement of data as a key enabler of driving business strategy, achieving regulatory compliance, and gaining competitive advantage in the ongoing era of digital transformation.



On average, 90% of CDOs noted that they are consistently engaging with other members of the C-suite. We continue to observe CDOs engaging most frequently with C-suite stakeholders from a digital or technology background such as the CTO, CISO and CIO.

A novel observation this year has been the enhanced engagement with the CPO/DPO, reflecting the importance of data for regulatory and ethical compliance, risk management, and building a robust governance framework.

CEO – Chief Executive Officer, CFO – Chief Financial Officer, COO – Chief Operating Officer, CTO – Chief Technology Officer, CIO – Chief Information Officer, CPO/DPO – Chief Privacy Officer/Data Protection Officer, CISO – Chief Information Security Officer.

02 Influence

The projected rise of CDO influence

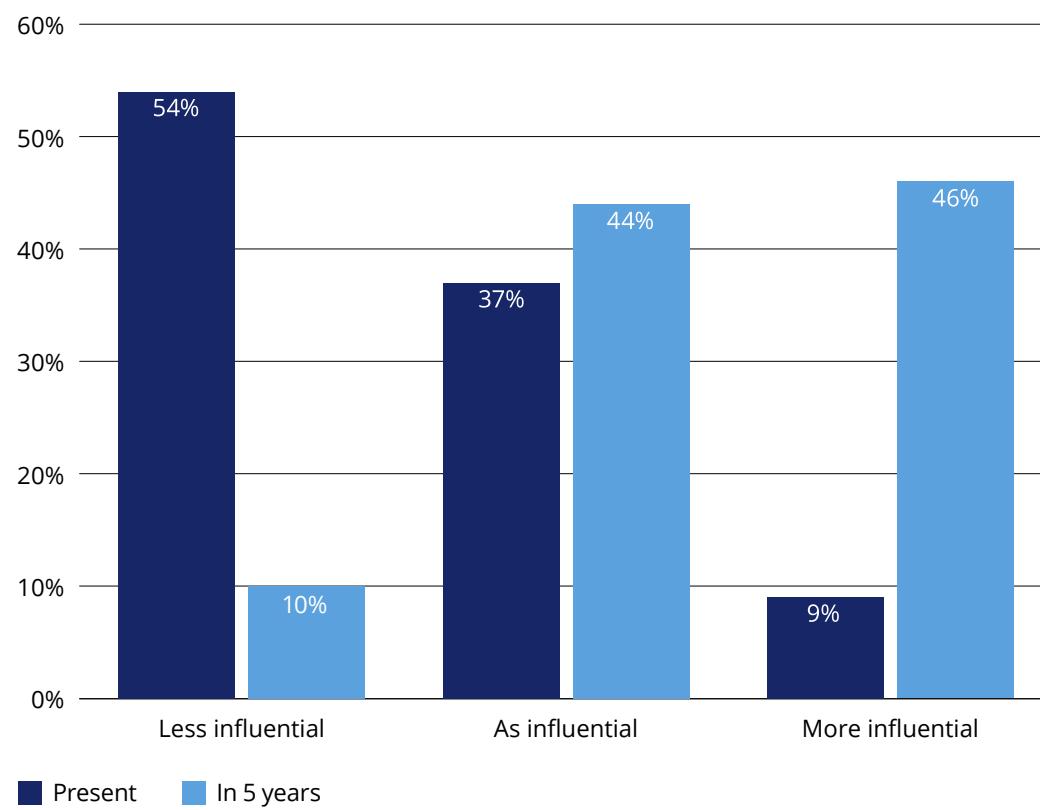
54% of CDOs this year are of the opinion that their role is currently less influential than other C-suite stakeholders.

This may be attributed, at present, to the relatively recent emergence of the CDO role, underrepresentation of CDOs on executive boards, and the inherent challenges in demonstrating the direct impact of data-driven initiatives.

However, the same CDOs are expecting this pattern to reverse in the next five years with as many as 44% of the CDOs projecting to be as influential as the other C-suite stakeholders and another 46% optimistic about becoming more influential across the C-suite.

This is in alignment with organisations rapidly increasing their data maturity and data literacy to gain crucial competitive advantage, and the CDO role becoming increasingly strategic and influential over the next five years.

How are CDOs expecting their influence to change compared to other C-suite stakeholders?



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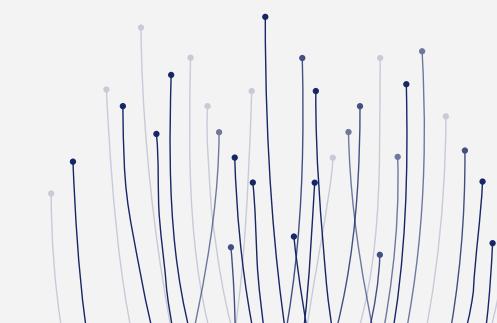
CDOs must measure and report on data initiatives to demonstrate impact, secure ongoing investment and resourcing, and foster a culture of continuous improvement. Prioritising data-driven initiatives is essential for an organisation to achieve their strategic goals and maintain a competitive edge.



What do we mean by success?

As a CDO, delivering tangible business results and reporting with transparency is paramount in championing novel data-driven initiatives.

Clarity and proactivity builds trust, accelerates executive buy-in, imparts data literacy and collaboration, and drives optimal resource and investment allocation, by demonstrating to executive stakeholders that data is not a strategic cost but a valuable strategic asset.



Our perspective

CDOs are invaluable members of the C-suite as they drive operational improvements and enhanced decision-making by optimising business workflows, automation, data accessibility, and strategic alignment, by leveraging data insights to achieve business objectives and mitigate potential risks.

CDOs play an instrumental role in keeping pace with the rapidly evolving data and technology landscape to future-proof their organisation and sustain their competitive edge by driving business objectives and ensuring strategic alignment using the power of AI and analytics. They leverage operational performance indicators to showcase the value and impact of their work, and are indeed a key advocate of continuous adaptation and innovation using data-driven insights.

03 Success

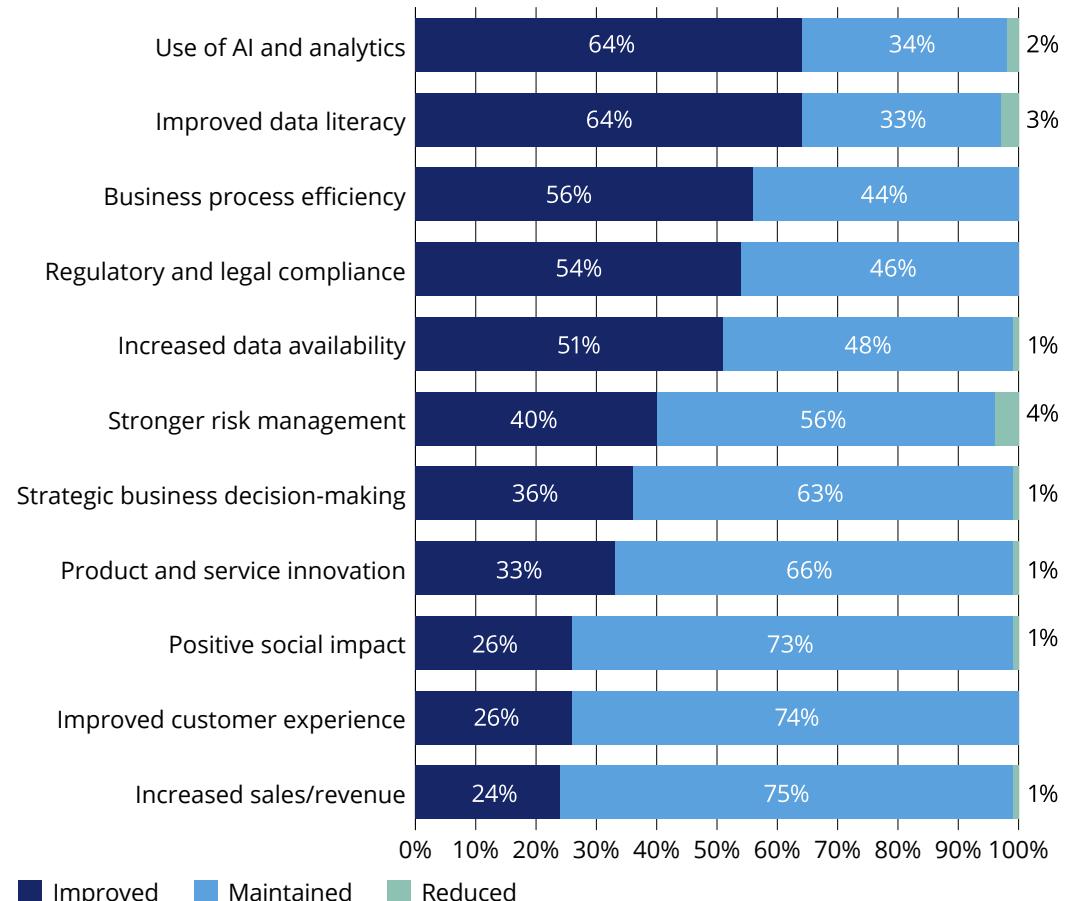
CDOs are driving change for their organisations

CDOs have demonstrated that they are significantly contributing towards driving business objectives and achieving strategic alignment.

64% of CDOs have noted a direct improvement in the impact of data initiatives on driving the use of AI and analytics over the past 12 months, as the groundwork for successful adoption by addressing critical challenges on data quality, accessibility, and governance.

CDOs are also demonstrating indirect benefits across wider strategic objectives, with 56% of the participants driving business process efficiencies and 54% improving regulatory and legal compliance. This is a testament to the breadth of value the CDO brings towards driving change and continuous improvement across their organisations.

Where have CDOs made the biggest impact for their organisation?



03 Success

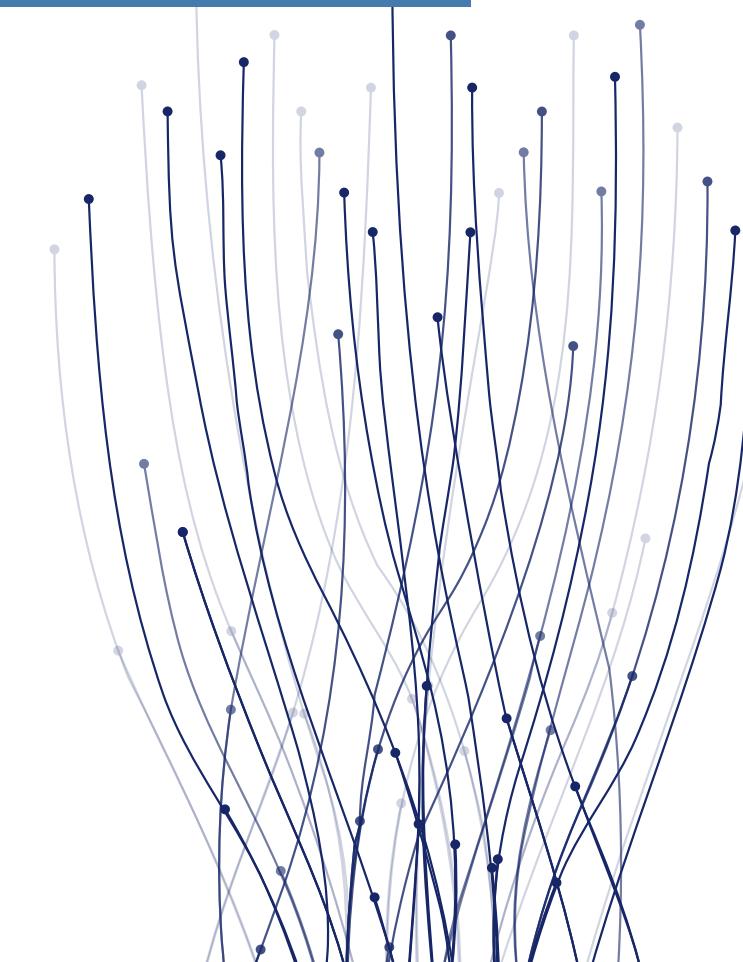
Demonstrating the value of the data and the CDO

Measuring KPIs is fundamental for CDOs to inform strategic decision-making, justify data investments, monitor data quality, and foster a culture of transparency and accountability for data initiatives.

52% of CDOs utilise operational efficiency increases as a way to demonstrate the value they deliver to their organisation, whilst others indicate sales/revenue growth (48%) and compliance scores (44%) as key indicators of impacts to their organisation. These KPIs will typically be aligned with the core business objectives of each organisation.

Interestingly, CDOs are not significantly dependent on measuring sales/revenue growth and return on investment metrics, as foundational data activities like building data infrastructures, implementing data quality controls, and establishing data governance do not directly translate into immediate growth and revenue increases, leading to a misleading performance perception.

Data can be seen on the next page



03 Success

Demonstrating the value of the data and the CDO

Measuring KPIs is fundamental for CDOs to inform strategic decision-making, justify data investments, monitor data quality, and foster a culture of transparency and accountability for data initiatives.

Click on below components to filter and view data for each industry group:

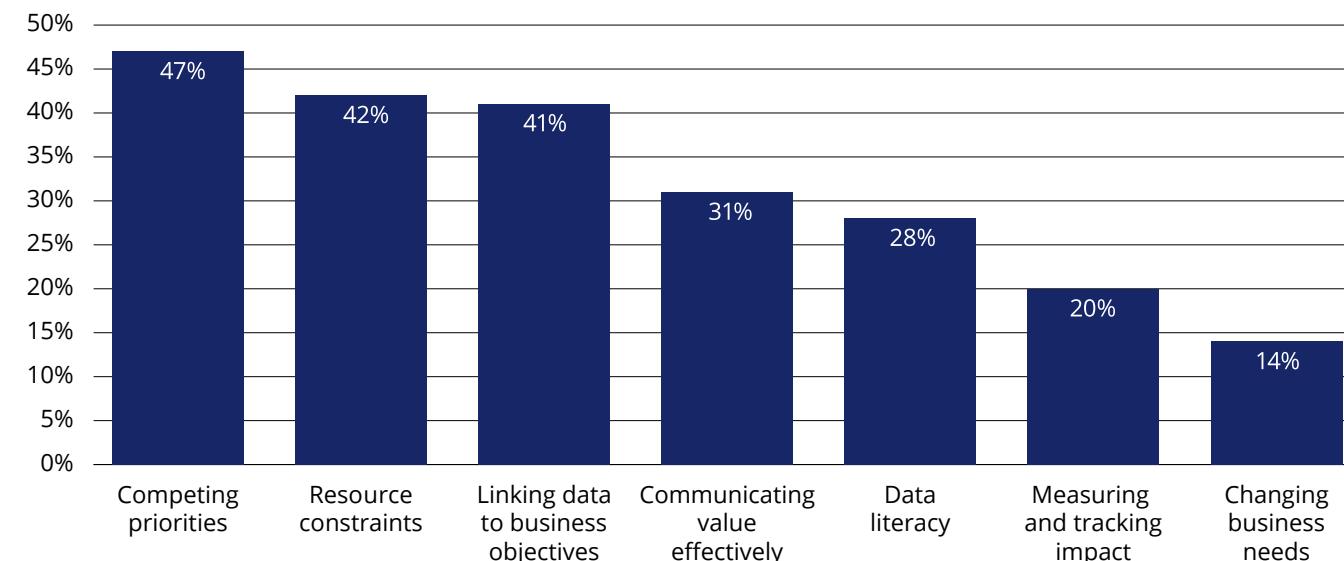
* GPS have been excluded from the Sales/Revenue growth category, given the nature of industry

03 Success

Delivering value across the business

CDOs deliver significant impact to their organisation, however they face a series of challenges that hinder their ability to maximise and drive the value of data throughout their organisation and secure executive buy-in.

What are the challenges in realising the true value of data across the business?



While CDOs are tasked with maximising the value of their organisation's data, they are faced with numerous hurdles that prevent them from realising its full potential. Competing business priorities (47%) and resource constraints (43%) were cited as the key challenges, indicating a need for strategic alignment and increased investment to unlock the true value of data.

Furthermore, 41% of CDOs highlighted the difficulty of linking data to business objectives as a key barrier to realising value. This aligns with our earlier discussion (page 40) regarding the limited number of CDOs currently measuring impact against business objectives. Improving this measurement would be crucial for gaining the attention and support of CEOs and other senior executives.

03 Focus areas

Introduction to the four faces of the CDO framework

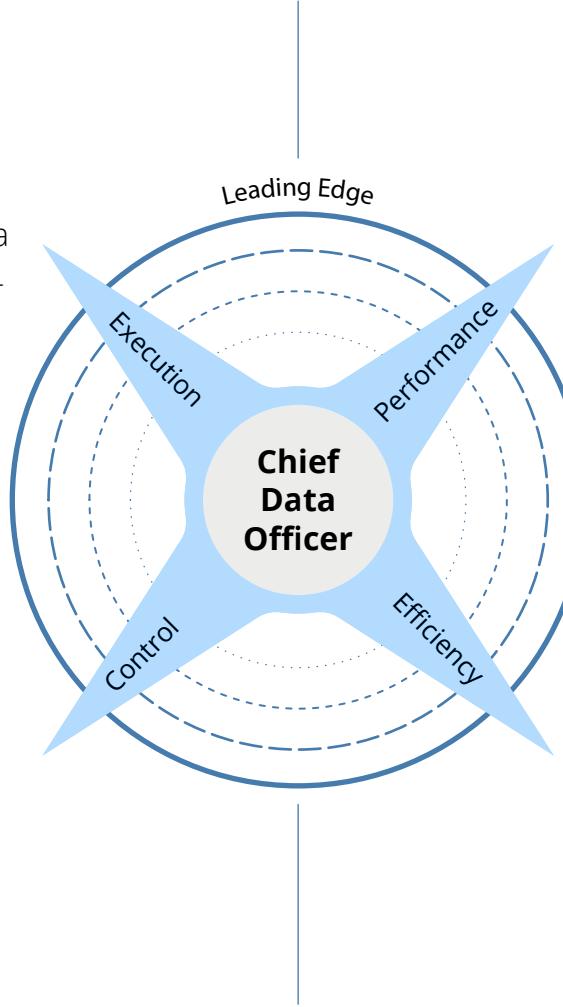
Using our four faces of the CDO framework, we asked participants where they currently spend their time and how widely this differs from their ideal agenda.

Catalyst

Championing the benefits of data, including analytics, for the organisation, influencing behaviours, and establishing a culture that adopts an insight-driven approach to strategic business decision-making.

Technologist

Assessing new data platform technologies and designing data technology platform architectures to increase business agility and manage complexity.



Strategist

Providing leadership for data activities, and partners with the business to enable the use of data and insights as a strategic asset, to help achieve corporate objectives.



Click on segments to read more

Operator

Operating and delivering efficient data services and solutions to support the business, while managing risk and protecting core assets.

03 The four faces framework

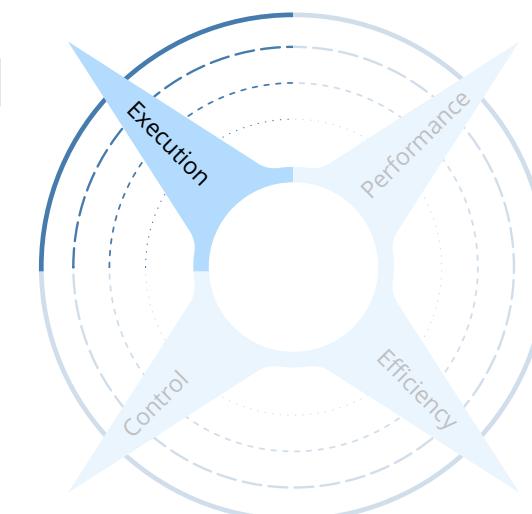
The four faces of the CDO: catalyst

The catalyst aims to champion the benefits of data, including analytics, for the organisation, to influence behaviours and establish a culture that adopts an insight-driven approach to strategic business decision-making.

Key focus	Key roles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> leading the data and analytics innovation agenda for the organisation changing organisational behaviour and establishing a value attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> acting as the champion for data and analytics of the organisation to internal and external stakeholders aligning strategic objectives and business benefits from an analytics perspective to enable better cultural adoption nurturing ways of working with data and technology across the organisation
Competencies	Critical issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> confidence adapting to disruptive technologies and suggesting new ideas business perspective, conflict management, organisational agility, and facilitation strong communication and change management skills understanding of key performance measurements to measure success of strategic initiatives strong leadership skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishing a structure of enterprise-wide accountability for results and driving execution gaining buy-in from business management for utilising data and analytics innovation maintaining the enterprise-wide momentum for innovation and staying updated on the latest data and technology trends implementing strategic initiatives while business models continue to change through extended business relationships, delivery models, and global expansion

What CDOs told us

The catalyst role, is increasingly dominating the CDO's agenda. This year, CDOs report dedicating 33% of their time to this role, up from 29% last year.



Click to return
to framework

03 Four faces

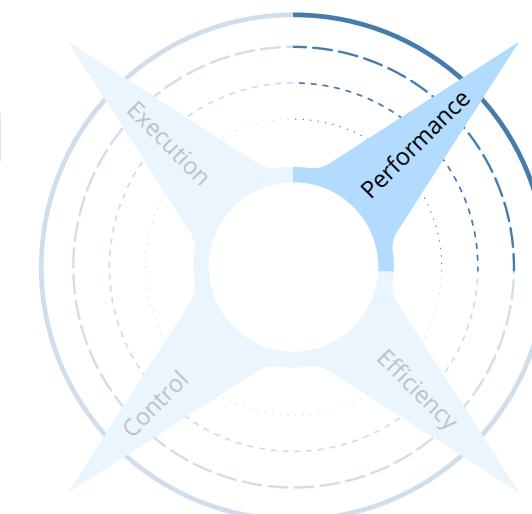
The four faces of the CDO: strategist

The strategist aims to provide leadership for the data activities, and partner with the business to enable the use of data and insights as a strategic asset, to help achieve corporate objectives.

Key focus	Key roles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> helping set the future direction of the organisation to enhance business performance and shareholder value establishing focus on the right analytics opportunities that generate business value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gaining business alignment to successfully identify, evaluate, and execute strategies being a business partner with other CxOs and business unit leaders to educate on the value of data and analytics generating cross-organisational value through data and analytics creating an analytics and AI lens to support the effective execution of the organisation's strategic initiatives
Competencies	Critical issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> critical thinking, analysis, and presentation of data global perspective, strategic agility, and dealing with ambiguity data and analytics experience strong business partnering skills strong leadership skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> silos and varying levels of analytics understanding/maturity or buy-in across the organisation's departments providing an analytical perspective on innovation, profitable business growth, and translating external trends into internal business imperatives providing necessary analytics-related information and tools for the organisation to make sound business decisions

What CDOs told us

CDOs continue to prioritise the strategist role, dedicating the most amount of time in this space with 37% of their time, up from 32% last year. CDOs continue to demonstrate desire to dedicate more time to this space with 44% wanting to increase their involvement in the future.



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03 Four faces

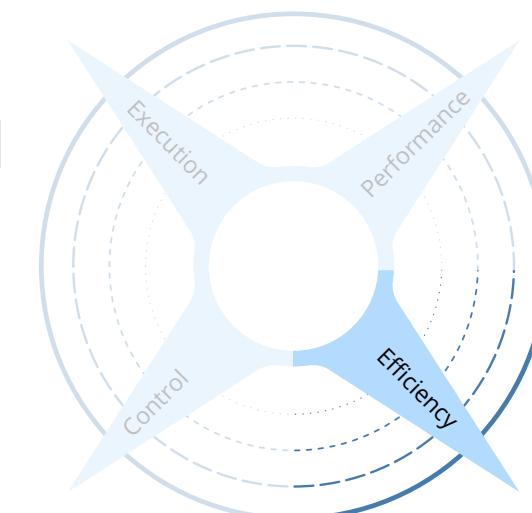
The four faces of the CDO: operator

The operator aims to run and deliver efficient data services and solutions that support the business whilst managing risk and protecting core assets.

Key focus	Key roles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of the operations of the data and analytics function adding value to the organisation and keeping a clear business case for data and analytics industrialising analytics for the business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dynamically balancing cost, risk, and service levels in delivering on the data and analytics function's responsibilities developing and managing a clear service catalogue defining and adapting the analytics operating model to deliver for the organisation at scale, integrated with the enterprise-wide data architectural direction developing data and analytics talent establishing and leading on data and analytics benefits tracking
Competencies	Critical issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> confidence adapting to disruptive technologies and suggesting new ideas business perspective, change and conflict management, organisational agility, and facilitation strong communication and change management skills understanding of key performance indicators to measure success of strategic initiatives strong leadership skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishing a structure of enterprise-wide accountability for results and driving execution gaining buy-in from business management for utilising data and analytics innovation maintaining the enterprise-wide momentum for innovation and staying updated on the latest data and technology trends implementing strategic initiatives whilst business models continue to change through extended business relationships, delivery models and global expansion

What CDOs told us

CDOs are dedicating less time to operational tasks this year, with an average of 18% of their time spent in this area, compared to 21% last year. This decline is predicted to continue in the future with CDOs reporting wanting to dedicate 10% of their time in the space.



Click to return to framework

03 Four faces

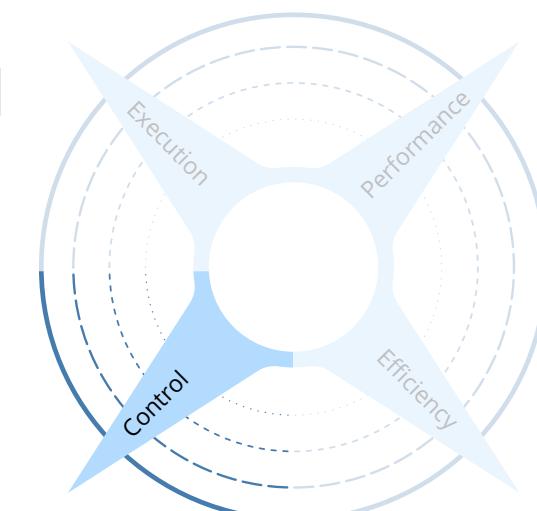
The four faces of the CDO: technologist

The technologist aims to assess new data platform technologies and design data technology platform architectures to increase business agility and manage complexity.

Key focus	Key roles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> leading the data technology innovation agenda for the organisation leading the data disruption agenda for the organisation changing organisational behaviour to use data and systems differently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> acting as the champion for data technologies across the organisation to internal and external stakeholders aligning strategic objectives and business benefits from an analytics perspective to enable better cultural adoption defining and adapting the technology operating model so that it delivers for the organisation at scale and integrates with the enterprise-wide data architectural direction
Competencies	Critical issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> confidence adapting to disruptive technologies and suggesting new ideas business perspective, change and conflict management, organisational agility, and facilitation strong communication and change management skills strong leadership skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gaining buy-in from IT, as elsewhere and the business for utilising analytics and innovative technologies maintaining the enterprise-wide momentum for innovation and staying ahead of the latest data and technology trends

What CDOs told us

CDOs are reducing their role as the technologist. They report dedicating 12% of their time to this area, down from 18% the previous year.

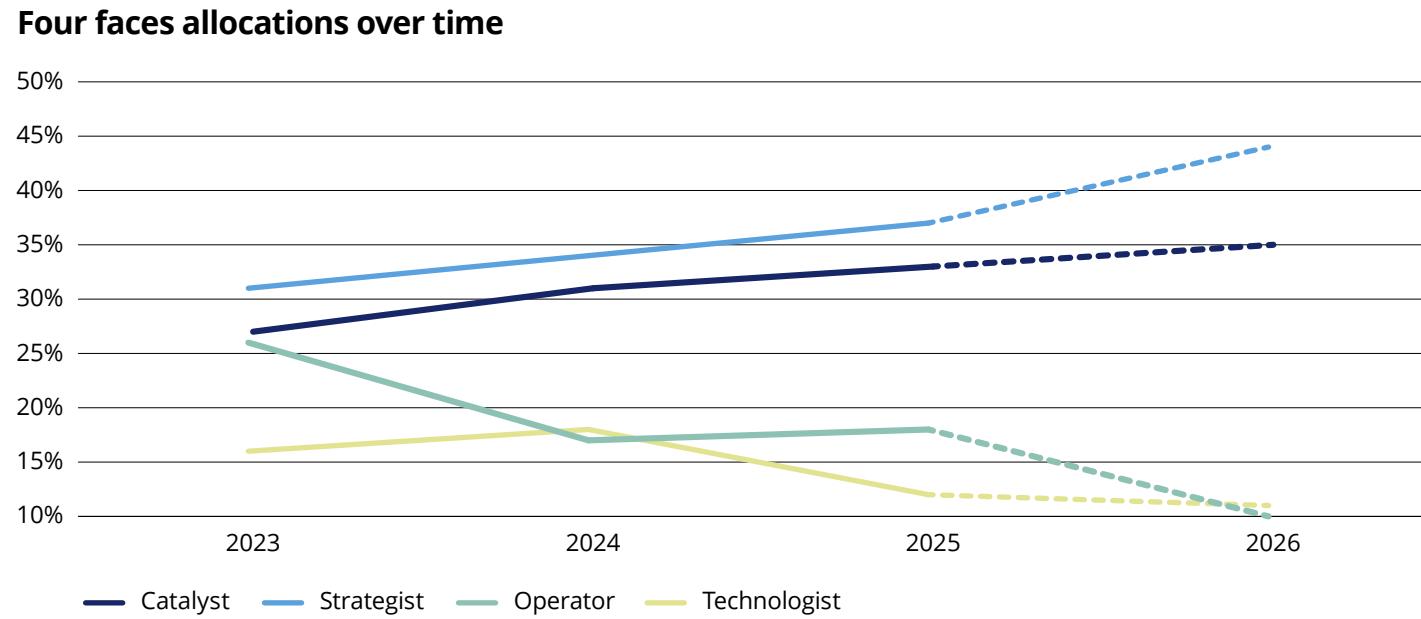


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to framework

03 Four faces

The four faces of the CDO: year-on-year comparison

While CDOs have made progress in aligning their time and budget allocation with their desired roles, opportunities for further progress remain.



Over the past three years, CDOs have adapted their priorities, shifting their time to focus on the catalyst and strategist roles and steering further away from the operator and technologist roles. This trend reflects a growing clarity of purpose and a proactive shaping of the CDO role to better align with their stated aspirations to continue the current trajectory towards greater focus on catalyst and strategist roles.

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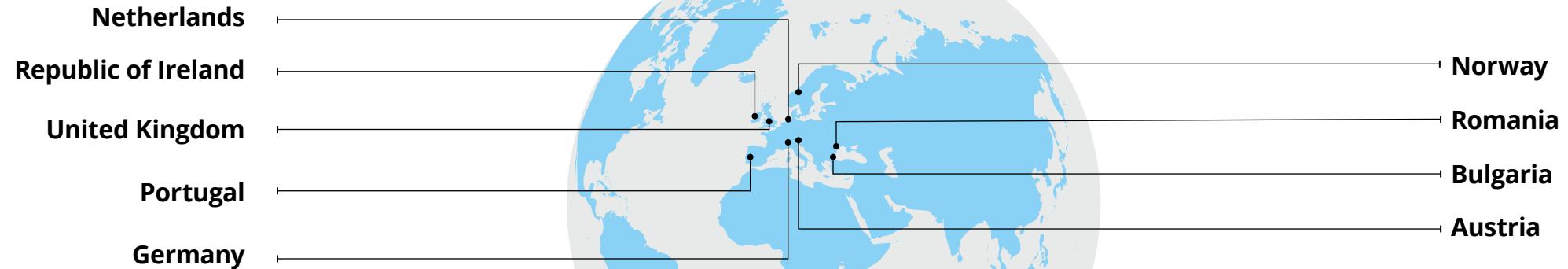
04 Approach

Acknowledgements

The 2025 CDO survey is a product of collaboration, and we are thankful to all who contributed.

We are grateful for the commitment of our authors and analysts, for their research and insight, our marketing team for their work in maximising its reach and impact, and our thought leadership for shaping its strategic vision.

Most importantly, we express our thanks and appreciation to the 81 respondents, representing 9 countries: you have been invaluable in shaping the insights of this report. By sharing your insights and thoughts you are directly forming our understanding of the evolving role of the survey, and the future of data.



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Deloitte's Chief Data Officer programme

05 CDO programme

Deloitte's Chief Data Officer programme

Our CDO programme focuses on supporting CDOs to grow and develop in their roles.

We have developed a programme of activities to support data leaders in overcoming current challenges they are facing, and defining/embedding the CDO role into organisations. The programme is intended to be driven by CDOs for CDOs – with topics of focus chosen by the group – and facilitation from Deloitte. There will be no direct attribution of any discussion outside of events. This will help foster supportive and open discussions to benefit participants.

We have categorised the CDO programme into four areas of activity:



Roundtable discussions

You will gain exclusive access to themed and industry-focused discussions that offer opportunities to network, gather insights, and hear from industry experts.



Insight papers and articles

Staying current has never been so important. These insights focus on you, your leadership, and your career path, with topics that help you keep up-to-date on current trends and ways of working.



Bespoke labs and workshops

We facilitate unique transition labs, next-generation, strategic thinking workshops, and problem-solving greenhouses to support you and help you develop in your role.



Peer-to-peer network

This programme provides a unique opportunity to establish new connections and relationships with peers across industry groups and a variety of experience levels and countries.

For current and past copies of the survey, please visit [Chief Data Officer survey](#).

If you have any feedback or would like to get in contact with the team, please contact ukcdocommunity@deloitte.co.uk. If you are based outside of the UK, we can also put you in contact with your local member firm.

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