



The Multifaceted Health Care CSO: Insights from the “Six Faces of the CSO” Framework

***About the authors:** Bill Laughlin and Bill Siren are leaders within Deloitte’s Health Care practice. Nick Jameson is a Principal in Deloitte’s Strategy practice and serves as the Program Leader for Deloitte’s Chief Strategy and Transformation Office Program. This editorial illustrates scenarios commonly faced by Chief Strategy Officers and offers perspectives to strategically navigate challenges.*

Introduction

In the dynamic landscape of today’s health care industry, the role of the Chief Strategy Officer (CSO) has evolved to encompass a multifaceted set of responsibilities. The “Six Faces of the CSO” framework provides a comprehensive view of the diverse roles that CSOs undertake. These roles include the Advisor, Sentinel, Banker, Engineer, Aide de Camp, and Special Projects Leader, each contributing uniquely to the strategic direction and leadership success of an organization.¹ A CSO’s ability to optimize specific capabilities in the Strategy function enable the team and overall organization to evolve in the market.

Since the development of the Six Faces framework, CSOs engaged have agreed that the framework speaks to the nature of their role – in that it is amorphous, it can change over time and over the course of their careers, and it requires a great deal of social capital and trust building to drive success in the organization.

Scenario Setup for Health Care CSOs

The rapid pace of health care – such as consolidation, regulation, and emerging technologies – require CSOs to stay agile. CSOs can flex their grasp of strategic capabilities and ability to

navigate the multiple “faces” of their role through engaging in thought exercises to probe at how they would address certain situations.

The following three scenarios illustrate how CSOs may think through different challenges by applying the “Six Faces” framework. Much like the typical experience of a CSO, the following scenarios demonstrate the necessity of CSOs remaining adaptable as different challenges require unique skillsets and CSOs to rely more heavily on one or two faces at a time.

	Scenario 1: Shifting Demographics	Scenario 2: Executive Transitions	Scenario 3: Acquisitions
SCENARIO DESCRIPTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The demographics of a regional hospital system's service area are evolving to include more young, diverse families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A national health plan is currently experiencing a period of many executive-level transitions – including a new CEO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A local regional hospital is open to acquisition and your organization, a larger national hospital system, is interested in pursuing this opportunity.
FACES OF THE CSO IN FOCUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Sentinel and the Special Projects Leader faces encourage the CSO to monitor the changing market landscape to understand the needs of the growing patient base and start initiatives to strengthen the hospital's market position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Advisor and the Aide de Camp faces position the CSO to be a stronger thought partner and influence the board and other c-suite members during this point of instability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Banker and the Engineer faces allow the CSO to catalyze enterprise goals through leading the due diligence, strategic process, and deal structuring to ensure this opportunity is a strong strategic choice.
PROBING QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentinel: What are the emerging opportunities and threats in the market that we need to be aware of <u>in light of</u> the demographic shifts? Special Projects Leader: How can we innovate our service offerings to attract and retain patients? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisor: What immediate decisions do the new executives need to make and what is the optimal way to approach making the decisions? Aide de Camp: How can we maintain employee morale and buy-in from all departments on changes taking place during this period of executive transition? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banker: How can we optimize our financial resources to invest in growth areas and mitigate risks? Engineer: What should be considered when re-designing an operating model that connects a response to this acquisition with business processes and capabilities?

Conclusion: Putting into Practice

The evolving role of the CSO within the health care industry underscores the necessity for adaptability, strategic foresight, and multifaceted expertise. The "Six Faces of the CSO" framework adeptly captures this complexity, enabling CSOs to navigate diverse challenges with agility and insight. It should also be taken as a reminder that there is no “right” way to organize your strategy team or functions. Rather, what you do is based on the circumstances of your organization. An effective CSO understands what the organization is trying to achieve and how to “activate” the necessary “face” to support those broader organizational efforts. Lastly, the CSO role is not static but dynamic, creating an imperative to evolve and scale up or down capabilities as needed. Thus, the Six Faces framework not only empowers CSOs to master their current roles but also prepares them to lead through future transformations with confidence and clarity.

Please reach out to Bill Siren, Bill Laughlin, or Nick Jameson with any questions.



Bill Siren
Managing Director
Deloitte Consulting LLP
bsiren@deloitte.com



Bill Laughlin
Principal
Deloitte Consulting LLP
blaughlin@deloitte.com



Nick Jameson
Principal
Deloitte Consulting LLP
njameson@deloitte.com

Contributors:

Carly Arfman, Julia Kenney, Erin O'Toole, Tanuka Raj

Sources:

1. [The Making of a Successful Chief Strategy Officer](#)