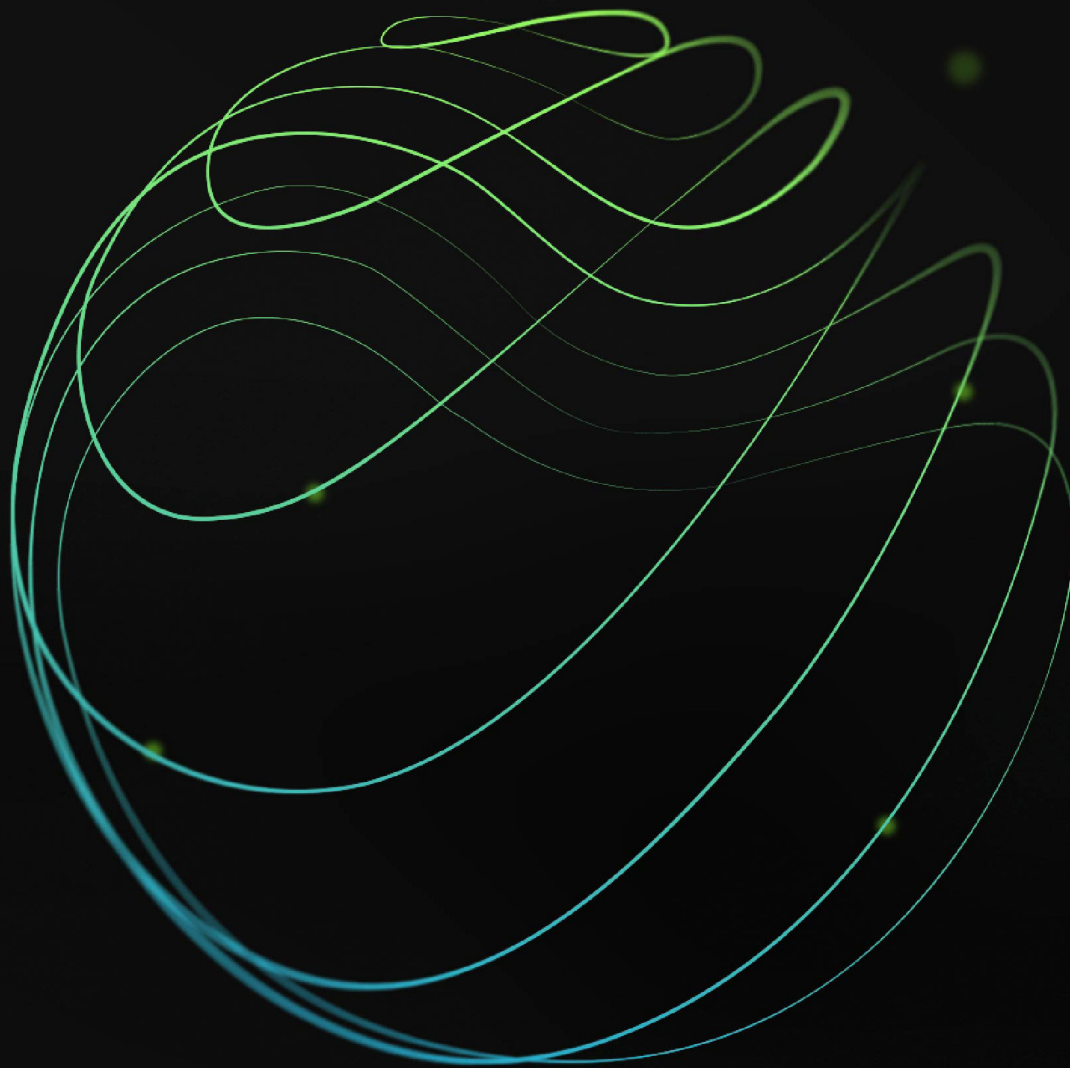


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The four faces of a *Transformation leader*

Inside the Chief Transformation Officer role

The four faces of a *Transformation executive*

There is no single playbook for leading Transformation. The remit of a Chief Transformation Officer (CTrO) or any Transformation executive varies widely depending on industry, organizational maturity, and the ambition of the change at hand. Some transformations are narrow and time-bound, others span years or become ongoing capabilities embedded in how the organization operates. The transformations we're talking about here are not "projects" – they are bold, enterprise-wide efforts that reshape how organizations create value.

As a result, Transformation leadership is evolving. It is no longer defined by "running a program" but instead by continuously adapting how one leads.

Raising the *stakes*

As disruption becomes a permanent feature of the business environment, Transformation is no longer an episodic intervention. According to [Deloitte's 2025 Chief Transformation Officer Study](#), external forces such as new market entrants, advances in artificial intelligence, and macroeconomic volatility remain the primary triggers for Transformation. These forces carry structural implications that demand leaders who can reformulate strategy, navigate organizational complexity, and mobilize the enterprise, all while delivering measurable results.

At the same time, Transformation itself is scaling. Transformation programs have become larger, more central, and more demanding over the past several years. Deloitte's research shows that between 2022 and 2024, Transformation budgets increased by as much as 2.5x.¹ The share of internal vs. external resources on transformation programs rose from 63% to 75% while full-time resource allocation increased from 44% to 53%.²

What's driving this increased investment? For one thing, CEOs are putting more emphasis on business growth while also improving margin.³ This often requires fundamental changes to business models, customer experiences, and core capabilities. At the same time, technologies such as cloud and AI are enabling multiple transformations to occur simultaneously across functions, value chains, and geographies. The result is not just more change, but more *interdependent change*, unfolding at enterprise scale.

In response, leading organizations are treating Transformation less as a time bound effort and more as a business discipline; one that requires sustained leadership attention and a broader range of capabilities.

¹ Deloitte, "Deloitte 2025 Chief Transformation Officer Study", 2025.

² "Deloitte 2025 Chief Transformation Officer Study," fall 2025.

³ Deloitte, "Fortune/Deloitte CEO Pulse survey," fall 2024.

A different model of *leadership*

In this environment, successful CTrOs do not operate in a single mode. They move fluidly between four distinct leadership roles or “faces,” adapting how they engage based on what the situation demands.

Drawing on Deloitte’s experience supporting enterprise-scale transformations, as well as insights from the 2025 Chief Transformation Officer Study, four leadership faces emerge. Each reflects a different way the CTrO creates value, anchored by a defining question. These faces are not sequential and are not evenly weighted; instead they represent a set of capabilities that CTrOs must exhibit, leading differently depending on the moment.





Architect

What should we transform, and in what sequence, to create enterprise value?

As architects, CTrOs define the strategic foundation of a Transformation. This role functions as the brain of the Transformation, processing inputs from across the enterprise, setting direction and making the tradeoffs that determine where focus and investment will generate the most value. They shape the portfolio of initiatives that will move the organization forward and aligns with the enterprise strategy and specific business outcomes.

Architects:

- Identify and size opportunities across the enterprise
- Prioritize initiatives in alignment with strategic objectives
- Design and govern critical enterprise-wide efforts
- Manage a dynamic Transformation pipeline rather than a single program
- Continually reassess progress relative to competitors and market shifts

The architect's superpower is enterprise perspective and coherence; the ability to see the big picture. In organizations where Transformation demand outpaces capacity, CTrOs must sequence change thoughtfully; recognizing that adoption, leadership attention, and execution bandwidth are finite resources. The architect ensures that Transformation is not only ambitious, but also actionable, coordinated, and grounded in value creation.



Catalyst

How do we mobilize belief, commitment, and energy to make change real?

If the architect defines the direction, the catalyst brings the transformation to life. This face serves as the heart of the transformation, generating the energy, belief, and momentum required to sustain change over time. It extends beyond communication into active alignment at the top of the organization with CTROs operating not as external advisors, but as integrated members of the leadership team ensuring that Transformation is collectively owned and consistently reinforced across the enterprise.

Catalysts:

- Align the C-suite on priorities, tradeoffs, and transformation outcomes
- Build and sustain commitment across senior leadership, key stakeholders, and the broader organization
- Translate strategy into a clear, human-centered case for change
- Oversee ongoing change management and communications

Transformations rarely fail because of poor planning or lack of logic; they falter when belief erodes. As Catalysts, CTROs help leaders and employees understand not just what is changing, but why it matters and how they contribute.





Orchestrator

How do we deliver at enterprise scale across fragmented ownership and interdependencies?

The orchestrator is the operational backbone of Transformation, ensuring execution is coordinated across functions, geographies, and business units. While the catalyst operates at the leadership level to drive alignment and belief, the orchestrator focuses on how work gets done; managing interdependencies, connecting initiatives, and keeping delivery on track.

Orchestrators:

- Drive delivery across multiple initiatives and domains
- Connect efforts that span organizational boundaries
- Manage interdependencies and points of friction
- Resolve conflicts between competing priorities

The role exists because Transformation is rarely linear. Momentum in one area can create bottlenecks in another. Without active orchestration, complexity slows progress. As orchestrators, CTROs enable enterprise speed while maintaining alignment, ensuring that execution remains coordinated even as scale increases.



Steward

How do we ensure Transformation delivers value responsibly, credibly, and sustainably while it is happening?

Stewardship is often viewed as governance or oversight, but in practice this face plays a more dynamic role. The steward functions as the immune system of the transformation, protecting value, managing risk, and ensuring that change strengthens rather than destabilizes the organization. This role focuses on sustaining performance while transformation is underway.

Stewards:

- Track value realization and return on investment
- Embed governance, decision rights, and accountability to drive empowered decision making
- Manage risk across financial and operational dimensions
- Safeguard business continuity while change is ongoing

In this face, CTROs balance ambition with discipline. They provide confidence to the C-Suite, Board, and investors, that transformations are being managed responsibly and will deliver on the promised value.

Leading across the *four faces*

The four faces are not a progression. CTROs move between them as the situation demands. Deloitte's research suggests that CTROs spend the largest share of their time operating as architects, followed by catalysts, orchestrators, and stewards. However, the balance shifts constantly based on context, phase, and organizational maturity.⁴

Other leaders within the transformation ecosystem may naturally align to one or two faces. Program leaders may gravitate toward orchestration, while functional leaders may emphasize stewardship. What distinguishes effective CTROs is not mastery of a single face, but the ability to move intentionally between them.

The Four Faces framework provides a shared language for navigating this complexity. It helps leaders assess where they are focused, where the organization may be over- or under-weighted, and how leadership needs to adapt.

The question is not whether these faces exist, but which ones are most visible and which are less developed when they are needed most.

- Are initiatives being sequenced against enterprise capacity, or prioritized in isolation?
- Is belief in the transformation strengthening, or beginning to fade?
- Where are interdependencies actively managed, versus assumed?
- Are we realizing the anticipated value from our investment?

In an era of continuous disruption, Transformation leadership is no longer about managing change. It is about shaping how the enterprise evolves, again and again, with clarity, credibility, and conviction.

The ability to move fluidly across architect, catalyst, orchestrator, and steward may ultimately determine whether Transformation becomes a source of enduring advantage or another initiative that falls short of its promise.

In response, leading organizations are treating Transformation less as a time bound effort and more as a business discipline; one that requires sustained leadership attention and a broader range of capabilities.

⁴. Monitor Deloitte, "2022 Chief Transformation Officer Study," 2022.

Authors and contacts



Anne Kennedy

US Business Strategy and Transformation Leader and CTrO Program Lead
Managing Director, Deloitte Consulting LLP

annekennedy@deloitte.com



Maddie Wasser

US Business Strategy and Transformation Senior Manager
Deloitte Consulting LLP

mawasser@deloitte.com



Mary Beth Neville

Director
Center for Strategy & Operations Leadership
Deloitte Greenhouse@

mneville@deloitte.com

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