

## *Data & AI Leadership Exchange*



# *2025 AI & Data Leadership Executive Benchmark Survey*

*Leadership, Transformation, and Innovation in an AI Future*

*Executive Summary of Findings*

*Survey and Findings Authored by Randy Bean*

*With a Foreword by Thomas H. Davenport and Randy Bean*

*2025 Executive Survey Conducted in Partnership with DataIQ*

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## Foreword

What's the state of data and AI in companies? Is generative AI still driving enterprise technology planning and investment? Gartner is arguing that GenAI is past the "peak of inflated expectations" and sliding toward the "trough of disillusionment." We know that there's a hype cycle for information technology, but will GenAI's path be different?

According to the great majority of data and technology leaders within 125 organizations, the AI boom is still flourishing. In terms of investment, 98% of data and AI leaders who responded to this year's survey say their companies are increasing investment into data and AI—up from 82% last year. Investments in data and AI are a top organizational priority for 91% of companies, up slightly from 88% last year. AI is having a "halo effect" on data, with 94% of respondents agreeing that interest in AI is leading to a greater focus on data.

And generative AI is being put into production to a much more substantial degree. Last year, only 5% had put the technology into production at scale; this year 24% have done so. Early-stage production has also increased, from 25% to 47%. Only 29% are just experimenting with GenAI, versus 70% in the 2024 study.

These data and AI leaders are also positive about GenAI's business value. Almost half, 46%, say that the business value is either already high or significant and growing; another 32% say it is "modest but increasing." Most—58%—feel that the primary value is coming from "exponential productivity gains" or efficiencies.

In short, this does not appear to be a technology that is sliding into widespread disillusionment. There are, however, two cautionary messages from the survey about the impact of AI and GenAI on organizational cultures and structures. Last year we were amazed at the doubling—from mid-20 percent to mid or upper-forties—of respondents who said their organizations were data-driven or had a data- and AI-driven culture. We suggested in [this article](#) that GenAI was the primary driver of the change.

But in this year's survey, those percentages fell back again into the mid-30s — still more than the historical average, but about 10% less than last year. That suggests a bit less optimism that GenAI—or probably any technology—can have a major and lasting impact on organization and culture. Consistent with that, 92% of respondents believe that the primary barrier to establishing data- and AI-driven cultures is people and organization change-based, and only 8% thought technology was the culprit.

The other cautionary result of the survey involves the primary respondents—Chief Data Officers (CDOs), perhaps also responsible for analytics and sometimes AI. As in previous years, the incumbents of the role are growing in numbers, but not in perceived success. The percentage of respondents feeling that the CDO role is "very successful and well-established" in their organizations fell from 51% last year—the highest-ever percentage—to 48%.

There has been some progress, however. Just over half—51%—of respondents now feel that the CDO role is well-understood within their organizations, a modest improvement over previous years, and 65% believe that the role is moving in a positive direction. Though GenAI has probably

helped the reputation of CDOs over the past couple of years, that effect may be diminished by the one-third of responding organizations who have created a separate Chief AI Officer position.

In short, it's neither the best of times nor the worst for enterprise data and AI, but the overall perspective is positive. Clearly the most important technology in the field—AI and GenAI in particular—is evolving rapidly. We can probably expect that the management of data and AI, and the positions and perspectives by those who manage them will continue to change as well.

Thomas H. Davenport and Randy Bean

## Introduction

I first began surveying the most senior data leaders of Fortune 1000 and leading global organizations in 2012.

The survey was undertaken at the behest of a group of Fortune 1000 CIOs and data leaders who were looking to understand whether it was time to expand and accelerate data and analytics initiatives and investments within their organizations, and not view these initiatives as “just another data project”.

Much has changed over the course of these years, spurred on by the rapid emergence of AI.

The [survey findings](#) that I have published annually since 2012 have become an established industry benchmark of data & AI leadership in leading global and Fortune 1000 companies.

These findings are covered annually in publications, including Forbes, Harvard Business Review, and MIT Sloan Management Review, and were referenced this past year in The Wall Street Journal and The Economist:

- [The Necessity of Building Strong Data & AI Executive Leadership for An AI Future](#) | Forbes
- [Survey: GenAI Is Making Companies More Data Oriented](#) | Harvard Business Review
- [Five Key Trends in AI and Data Science for 2024](#) | MIT Sloan Management Review.

The survey is uniquely distinguished by its highly curated participation, on an invitation-only basis to the most senior AI & data leaders of Fortune 1000 and leading global organizations.

The response to this year’s survey exceeded my expectations -- with greater participation than any previous year in the survey’s history -- comprised of executives who served in the most senior data & AI leadership roles of 125 Fortune 1000 and leading global organizations during 2024.

This year, 97.6% of survey respondents identified themselves as C-executives or C-executive equivalents within their organization, with 90.6% of respondents holding the title of Chief Data Officer, Chief Data & Analytics Officer, Chief AI Officer, or Enterprise or Global Head of Data & AI.

The 2025 survey was conducted by the educational [Data & AI Leadership Exchange](#), in partnership with [DataIQ](#), a global community of data & AI leaders. This year’s survey is reimagined – focusing on leadership, transformation, and innovation in an AI future.

Thank you to all of the CDO/CDAO/CDAIO and Data & AI leaders who participated in this year’s survey.

Your experiences and knowledge have, once again, made this survey the benchmark for AI & Data leadership. I am grateful for your participation!

Randy Bean | Founder & CEO | Data & AI Executive Leadership Exchange

## Executive Summary of Findings

Notable among the principal findings of this year's survey are 7 distinct trends:

1. **Organizational Investment in Data & AI** -- The rapid emergence of AI, notably Generative AI, is fueling increased organizational investment in AI & data, with data & AI seen as a top organizational priority by a growing percentage of organizations. Overall investment in AI & data is increasing, with an increased focus on the importance of data, spurred by the recognition that great AI relies on great data.
2. **Delivering Business Value from Data & AI Investment** -- AI initiatives are at an early stage for most Fortune 1000 companies. Progress is accelerating, with more initiatives moving into production as firms are beginning to deliver measurable business value from their data & AI investments. Organizations see AI/Generative AI as delivering business value in several important ways.
3. **Organizational Adoption and Transformation** -- Organizational adoption and transformation resulting from AI is seen as steady, but gradual. A minority of organizations claim to be data/AI driven or having established a data/AI business culture. Most organizations continue to struggle with adoption and transformation, with cultural challenges noted as the greatest obstacle to progress.
4. **Responsible AI, Safeguards, and Guardrails** -- Responsible AI is seen as an increasing priority for most organizations, as they focus on establishing safeguards and guardrails to ensure responsible AI utilization. More work needs to be done. Threats of misinformation and disinformation, as well as ethical bias, are ongoing concerns, as is the recognition that more AI talent is needed, and corporate boards require greater education on AI.
5. **Data & AI Leadership Progress** -- Data & AI leadership is in high demand, with more organizations having appointed Chief Data Officers (CDO/CDAO), and a significant percentage of organizations adding Chief Artificial Intelligence Officers (CAIO). More data & AI executives are focusing on delivering business value through growth and innovation, and reporting to business leaders.
6. **Data & AI Leadership Challenges** -- The Chief Data Officer (CDO) role continues to be very much a work in progress as organizational data & AI needs rapidly evolve. The CDO role is characterized by high turnover, short tenures, and not being well understood. While CDOs face headwinds as organizational change agents, most believe that the role is evolving in the right direction.
7. **An AI Future** -- Organizations strongly believe in the transformational impact of AI, foreseeing significant opportunity for productivity and efficiency gains. Some firms are looking at AI as a growth engine. Most executives view AI as the most transformational technology in a generation, with the potential benefits clearly outweighing the potential risks.

## Participation

The 2025 survey is characterized by the largest and most diverse participation in the survey's history – reflected in the balance of industry and geographic representation, and the seniority of participants, and summarized as follows:

- The largest representation is from financial services firms, which comprise 40.2% of survey respondents – in contrast to 66.3% financial services representation 5 years ago.
- Other industries comprise 59.8% of survey respondents -- with the highest participation from healthcare and life sciences firms, and retail and consumer package goods companies -- comprising 29.1% of survey participants.
- Industry representation encompasses companies and organizations operating in energy, telecommunications, manufacturing, automotive, airlines, media, sports, entertainment, and government -- comprising 30.7% of survey respondents.
- This year, 15% of survey respondents are from companies and organizations located outside of North America, an increase from 7.4% in last year's survey.

Exhibit A | Survey Participation Breakdown by Industry

<b>Industry Participation</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Financial Services</b>	<b>66.3%</b>	<b>60.0%</b>	<b>57.3%</b>	<b>50.9%</b>	<b>40.2%</b>
<b>Healthcare   Life Sciences</b>	<b>21.8%</b>	<b>21.0%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>
<b>Retail/Consumer Goods (CPG)</b>		<b>8.0%</b>	<b>9.7%</b>	<b>11.1%</b>	<b>12.6%</b>
<b>All Other Industries</b>	<b>11.9%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>16.9%</b>	<b>23.2%</b>	<b>30.7%</b>

Exhibit B | Survey Participation by Organizational Role

<b>Respondent Role</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Data/Analytics/AI Leaders   CDO   CDAO   CAIO</b>	<b>76.0%</b>	<b>77.0%</b>	<b>84.6%</b>	<b>89.8%</b>	<b>90.6%</b>
<b>Technology Leadership   CIO   CTO</b>	<b>12.0%</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>
<b>Business Leadership   CEO   COO</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
<b>Digital Leadership   Chief Digital Officer</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
<b>Other Executive</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>

Exhibit C | Survey Participation by Geographical Location

<b>Geography</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>North America</b>	<b>92.6%</b>	<b>85.0%</b>
<b>International</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>15.0%</b>

## The State of Data & AI in 125 Fortune 1000 and Global Leadership Brands

<u>Financial Services</u>	<u>Financial Services</u>	<u>Health Care   Life Sciences</u>	<u>Retail   Food   Goods</u>	<u>Telecommunications</u>
ADSS	JP Morgan Chase	Bristol-Meyers Squibb	Albertsons	AT&T
AIG	KeyBank	Cleveland Clinic	Belcorp	T Mobile
Ally Financial	M&T Bank	Eli Lilly	Carrefour	Verizon
American Century	Marsh	Health Care Services	Colgate Palmolive	
American Express	Mastercard	Ipsen	Costco	<b><u>Energy</u></b>
Amica	MetLife	Lurie's Childrens Hospital	Danone	
Apollo	MFS	Mayo Clinic	John Lewis Partnership	Delek
Bank of America	Mizuho	Medtronic	Just Eat Takeaway	Exxon Mobil
Berkshire Hathaway	Morningstar	NYC Health & Hospitals	Kenvue	National Grid
BNP Paribas	New York Life	Orlando Health	Kroger	Oceaneering
BNY Mellon	NFU Mutual	Otsuka	McDonalds	Schneider Electric
CapitalOne	NXT Capital	Parexel	Pepsico	
Carlyle Group	Phoenix Group	Pfizer	Procter & Gamble	<b><u>Technology</u></b>
Centene	Prudential	Sanofi	Rich Products	
Cerberus	Regions Bank	Thermo Fisher Scientific	Schnucks Markets	Analog Devices
Chubb	Reinsurance Group RGA	UCLA Health	Starbucks	Fortive
Cigna	Scotia Bank	Zoetis	Walgreens	Hewlett-Packard
CitiGroup	StoneX			IBM
Citizens Bank	TD Bank	<b><u>Media/Entertainment</u></b>	<b><u>Aviation   Automotive</u></b>	Open Text
City National Bank	USAA			VistaPrint
Equifax	Vanguard	CNN	Bentley	
Experian	VISA	Consumer Reports	Boeing	<b><u>Other</u></b>
Fidelity Investments	Webster Bank	Creative Artists Agency	Car Gurus	
First Citizens Bank	Wolters Kluwer	Hearst	Emirates	Colliers
Freddie Mac	Zions Bank	ITV	Heathrow Airport	Royal Carribean
Grupo InterCorp		LEGO	Nissan	University of Phoenix
The Hartford	<b><u>Government</u></b>	NFL		Anonymous
Hudson Bay Capital		NBC Universal		
Huntington Bank	UK Government	Sony Pictures		
Invesco	US Coast Guard	Universal Music Group		

Executives served in senior data & AI leadership roles with these firms during 2024.

## Finding 1 | Organizational Investment in Data & AI

The rapid emergence of AI, notably Generative AI, is fueling increased organizational investment in AI & data, with data & AI seen as a top organizational priority by a growing percentage of organizations. Overall investment in AI & data is increasing, with an increased focus on the importance of data, spurred by the recognition that great AI relies on great data.

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### Exhibit D | State of Organizational Data & AI Investment

<b><u>State of Data &amp; AI Investment</u></b>	<b><u>2024</u></b>	<b><u>2025</u></b>
<b>Our Organization is Increasing its Investment in Data &amp; AI</b>	<b>82.2%</b>	<b>98.4%</b>
<b>Investments in Data &amp; AI are a Top Organizational Priority</b>	<b>87.9%</b>	<b>90.5%</b>
<b>Interest in AI is Leading to a Greater Focus on Data</b>		<b>93.7%</b>

Exhibit D illustrates the increase in organizational investment in Data & AI initiatives -- an increase of close to 20% from 82.2% in 2024 to a near-unanimous 98.4% in 2025.

The Exhibit also shows that an increasing percentage of organizations are viewing investments in Data & AI as a top organizational priority – up from 87.9% in 2024 to a strong 90.5% in 2025.

There appears to be a broad consensus on the importance of Data & AI within the largest global organizations, as evidenced by these increases.

Further, as a consequence of the rapid increase in interest and commitment to AI investment, a growing percentage of organizations are now focusing on their data initiatives as well. It is increasingly understood that the quality of AI is largely dependent upon the quality of the data that is available.

The survey respondent data strongly suggests that organizations are seeing Data & AI become central to their business plans, now and in the years ahead.



## Finding 2 | Delivering Business Value from Data & AI Investment

AI initiatives are at an early stage for most Fortune 1000 companies. Progress is accelerating, with more initiatives moving into production as firms are beginning to deliver measurable business value from their data & AI investments. Organizations see AI/Generative AI as delivering business value in several important ways.

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### Exhibit E | State of AI Implementation Efforts

<b>State of AI/Generative AI Implementation Efforts</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Early Stage: Experimentation, Testing, Planning &amp; Design</b>	<b>70.2%</b>	<b>28.7%</b>
<b>Early Stage: Implemented in Limited Production</b>	<b>24.7%</b>	<b>47.4%</b>
<b>Implemented in Production At Scale</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>23.9%</b>

### Exhibit F | Delivery of Business Value from Data & AI Investments

<b>Delivery of Measurable Business Value from Data &amp; AI Investments</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>High Degree of Measurable and Transformational Business Value</b>	<b>18.1%</b>
<b>Significant and Rapidly Growing Level of Business Value</b>	<b>28.3%</b>
<b>Modest but Increasing Amount of Incremental Business Value</b>	<b>32.3%</b>
<b>Minimal Amount of Measurable Business Value So Far</b>	<b>15.0%</b>
<b>No Measurable Business Value So Far</b>	<b>6.3%</b>

### Exhibit G | State of Organizational Data & AI Investment

<b>Primary Business Value Created by AI/Generative AI</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Achieve Exponential Productivity Gains   Efficiency</b>	<b>49.1%</b>	<b>57.5%</b>
<b>Liberate Knowledge Workers from Mundane Tasks</b>	<b>23.6%</b>	<b>15.7%</b>
<b>Improve Customer Service and Experience</b>	<b>22.6%</b>	<b>17.3%</b>
<b>Deliver Business Growth   Other</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>

Exhibit E illustrates that AI implementation efforts are still at an early stage for most organizations -- 76.1% in experimentation, testing, and limited production. At the same time, organizations have made considerable progress during the past year, evidenced by an increase of those in limited production -- from 24.7% in 2024 to 47.4% in 2025, and an increase in those implementing AI in production, at-scale -- up from 4.9% in 2024 to 23.9% in 2025.

Exhibit F shows that 46.4% of organizations report a high or significant level of business value from their data & AI investments. Exhibit G confirms that organizations see business value coming mostly from productivity gains, while a few see potential to drive business growth from data & AI.

### Finding 3 | Organizational Adoption and Transformation

Organizational adoption and transformation resulting from AI is seen as steady, but gradual. A minority of organizations claim to be data/AI driven or having established a data/AI business culture. Most organizations continue to struggle with adoption and transformation, with cultural challenges noted as the greatest obstacle to progress.

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Exhibit H | Organizational Transformation Resulting from Data & AI

<b>Progress of Data and AI Initiatives</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Created a Data &amp; AI Driven Organization</b>	24.0%	26.5%	23.9%	48.1%	37.3%
<b>Established a Data &amp; AI Organizational Culture</b>	24.4%	19.3%	20.6%	42.6%	32.5%

Exhibit I | Organizational Impediments to Transformation from Data & AI

<b>Principal Challenge to Becoming Data/AI-Driven</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Cultural Challenges   Change Management</b>	92.2%	91.9%	79.8%	77.6%	91.2%
<b>Technology Challenges</b>	7.8%	8.1%	20.2%	23.4%	8.8%

Exhibit H reflects the challenges that organizations continue to confront when attempting business transformation. Efforts to establish data & AI driven organizations with data & AI organizational cultures have progressed little over the course of the past 5 years, as illustrated by the survey data.

Over 90% of Fortune 1000 companies are legacy firms that were founded over a generation ago, with many firms dating back well over a century. These firms have historically transformed their operations over time, taking a gradual approach to mitigate business risks. Many of these firms operate in regulated industries with deep customer franchises, and approach transformational initiatives with an abundance of caution. For these firms, transformation comes at a gradual and deliberate pace, as reflected in the data.

Exhibit I shows that cultural challenges continue to represent the greatest impediment to organizational transformation. These impediments are largely due to human factors relating to people – business process change, organizational alignment, talent and skills, change management, resistance to change.

Technology is not viewed as an impediment to business transformation. It is available in abundance and is a tool to be used in transformation efforts.

The survey consistently shows that cultural challenges are the principal impediment to data & AI transformation with the data remaining largely unchanged over the past 5 years.

## Finding 4 | Responsible AI, Safeguards, and Guardrails

Responsible AI is seen as an increasing priority for most organizations, as they focus on establishing safeguards and guardrails to ensure responsible AI utilization. More work needs to be done. Threats of misinformation and disinformation, as well as ethical bias, are ongoing concerns, as is the recognition that more AI talent is needed, and corporate boards require greater education on AI.

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### Exhibit J | State of Investment in Responsible AI

<b><u>The State of Investment in Responsible AI</u></b>	<b><u>2024</u></b>	<b><u>2025</u></b>
<b>Investment in Responsible AI is a Top Corporate Priority</b>		<b>73.5%</b>
<b>Responsible AI Safeguards and Guardrails for Governing AI Must Be In Place</b>	<b>99.0%</b>	<b>97.5%</b>
<b>Responsible AI Safeguards and Guardrails for Governing AI Are In Place Today</b>	<b>62.9%</b>	<b>77.6%</b>
<b>Talent is in Place to Ensure Responsibly AI Implementation</b>	<b>50.5%</b>	<b>56.5%</b>

### Exhibit K | Primary Business Threats Resulting from AI

<b><u>Primary Business Threat Posed by AI</u></b>	<b><u>2024</u></b>	<b><u>2025</u></b>
<b>Spread of Misinformation or Disinformation</b>	<b>44.3%</b>	<b>53.2%</b>
<b>Ethical Bias</b>	<b>23.6%</b>	<b>19.8%</b>
<b>Job Loss and Job Displacement</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>26.4%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>

As shown in Exhibit J, organizations are increasingly prioritizing Responsible AI to establish the necessary safeguards and guardrails that will ensure secure AI adoption and organizational transformation. This reflects a growing consensus that there is a need for Responsible AI adoption, and a recognition of the gap between the present state and the goal.

Progress toward Responsible AI is illustrated by the improvement from 62.9% in 2024 to 77.6% in 2025 in organizations having implemented Responsible AI safeguards and guardrails. Talent continues to be a limiting factor, with 43.5% of organizations currently falling short in their efforts to recruit the talent required to ensure Responsible AI implementation.

Exhibit K identifies the spread of misinformation and disinformation as the greatest perceived threat and risk factor posed by AI, up from 44.3% in 2024 to 53.2% in 2025.

## Finding 5 | Data & AI Leadership Progress

Data & AI leadership is in high demand, with more organizations having appointed Chief Data Officers (CDO/CDAO), and a significant percentage of organizations adding Chief Artificial Intelligence Officers (CAIO). More data & AI executives are focusing on delivering business value through growth and innovation, and reporting to business leaders.

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### Exhibit L | Data & AI Leadership Appointments & Hiring

<b>Data &amp; AI Leadership Roles and Responsibilities</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Chief Data Officer (CDO/CDAO) Has Been Appointed</b>	12.0%	55.9%	65.0%	83.2%	84.3%
<b>Chief AI Officer (CAIO) Has Been Appointed</b>					33.1%
<b>Chief AI Officer (CAIO) Should be Appointed</b>					43.9%

### Exhibit M | Focus of Data & AI Leadership

<b>Primary Focus of Data &amp; AI Leadership (CDO/CDAO/CAIO)</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Offense -&gt; Growth   Innovation   Transformation</b>	54.6%	62.3%	80.0%
<b>Defense -&gt; Risk Management   Regulatory   Compliance</b>	45.4%	37.7%	20.0%

### Exhibit N | Data & AI Leadership Reporting Structures

<b>Data &amp; AI Leadership Reporting Structure   Reporting To</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Business Leadership   CEO   President   COO</b>	36.3%
<b>Technology Leadership   CIO   CTO   Head of Tech &amp; Ops</b>	47.2%
<b>Transformation Leadership   Chief Digital Officer</b>	11.0%
<b>Other Reporting Relationship</b>	5.5%

Data & AI leadership is in high demand, as reflected in Exhibit L. The percentage of organizations having appointed Chief Data Officers (CDO/CDAO) has risen from just 12% in 2012 to 84.3% in 2025, a new high. This is combined with the emergence of the new Chief AI Officer role. It is a testament to the surging rise of AI that 33.1% of organizations now report having filled this role, while 43.9% believe that a CAIO should be appointed.

Concurrent with this expansion of the data & AI leadership functions, organizations are moving decisively to focusing on offensive initiatives – growth, innovation, and transformation, with an increase from 54.6% 5 years ago, to 62.3% in 2024, to 80% in 2025, as illustrated in Exhibit M.

Exhibit N shows that there is still no consensus on data & AI leadership reporting. While more firms now see data & AI leadership (CDO/CDAO/CAIO) as a business role, 47.2% see it as a technology function. The CDO/CDAO/CAIO is now a peer to the CIO in many organizations.

## Finding 6 | Data & AI Leadership Challenges

The Chief Data Officer (CDO) role continues to be very much a work in progress as organizational data & AI needs rapidly evolve. The CDO role is characterized by high turnover, short tenures, and not being well understood. While CDOs face headwinds as organizational change agents, most believe that the role is evolving in the right direction.

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### Exhibit O | State of Data & AI Leadership Success

<b>The State of Data &amp; AI Leadership (CDO/CDAO/CAIO)</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>CDO Role is Very Successful and Well Established</b>	27.9%	35.5%	51.0%	47.6%
<b>CDO Role is Nascent and Evolving   Revolving Door</b>	69.6%	61.8%	42.7%	47.6%
<b>CDO Role has Been A Failure</b>	2.5%	2.7%	6.3%	4.8%

### Exhibit P | Evolution of Data & AI Leadership Roles

<b>The Evolution of Data &amp; AI Leadership (CDO/CDAO/CAIO)</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>CDO Role is Well Understood within Our Organization</b>	40.5%	48.6%	51.3%
<b>CDO Role is Still a New Role Compared to Other C-Suite Roles</b>			21.3%
<b>CDOs Need Greater C-Suite &amp; Mid-Level Organizational Support</b>			37.0%

### Exhibit Q | Chief Data Officer (CDO/CDAO) Future Outlook

<b>Chief Data Officer (CDO/CDAO) Outlook</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Average CDO Tenure is Under 2 Years</b>	24.1%
<b>Average CDO Tenure is Under 3 Years</b>	53.7%
<b>CDO Role Will Become Permanent C-Suite Role</b>	70.8%
<b>CDO Role will be a Transitional Role that Goes Away</b>	29.2%
<b>CDO Role is Evolving in a Positive Direction</b>	65.2%

Exhibit O shows that Chief Data Officers (CDO/CDAO) are continuing to struggle to be successful, with just 47.6% characterizing the role as very successful, while 52.4% see the role as nascent and evolving, a revolving door, or even as a failure – 4.8%. The role is viewed as not well understood by 48.7% of organizations in Exhibit P.

Exhibit Q highlights the brief tenures of Chief Data Officers – 24.1% under 2 years, and 53.7% under 3 years. There is some positive news though. Most – 70.8% -- believe that the CDO will become a permanent C-Suite role, while 29.2% believe it will disappear. Most – 65.2% -- believe that the Chief Data Officer role is evolving in the right direction. Organizations will need strong data & AI leadership in the years ahead, in whatever form this takes.

## Finding 7 | An AI Future

Organizations strongly believe in the transformational impact of AI, foreseeing significant opportunity for productivity and efficiency gains. Some firms are looking at AI as a growth engine. Most executives view AI as the most transformational technology in a generation, with the potential benefits clearly outweighing the potential risks.

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Exhibit R | Chief Data Officer (CDO/CDAO) Future Outlook

<b>History of Using AI within Your Organization</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Less than 2 Years</b>	<b>23.8%</b>
<b>3-5 Years</b>	<b>32.5%</b>
<b>6-10 Years</b>	<b>27.0%</b>
<b>11-24 Years</b>	<b>12.0%</b>
<b>More than 25 Years</b>	<b>4.7%</b>

Exhibit S | Chief Data Officer (CDO/CDAO) Future Outlook

<b>Forecasting an AI Future</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>AI is Likely to be the Most Transformational Technology in a Generation</b>	<b>64.2%</b>	<b>89.0%</b>
<b>Generative AI Will be the Most Transformative Form of AI</b>		<b>61.0%</b>
<b>Machine Learning Will be the Most Transformative Form of AI</b>		<b>22.3%</b>
<b>Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) Will be the Most Transformative Form of AI</b>		<b>16.1%</b>
<b>Overall Impact of AI will be Beneficial</b>		<b>96.6%</b>

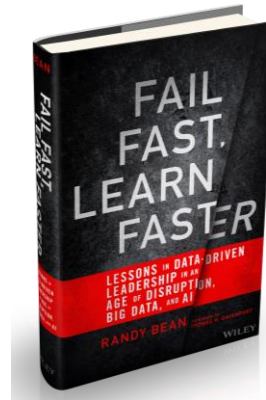
Spurred by the introduction of Generative AI in the Fall of 2022, AI has captured the imagination and attention of business leaders for the past 2+ years. AI has been around for decades however, as observed in Exhibit R. While 23.8% of organizations have been using AI for under 2 years, 76.2% have been using AI for 3 years or longer, 16.7% have been using AI for over a decade, and 4.7% have been working with AI for a quarter century. The evolution of computing power and speed, and the capture and maintenance of massive amounts of data, have helped enable the present state of AI.

What does the future look like? As noted in Exhibit S, most organizations believe that AI will be the transformational technology in a generation, akin to the Internet. The percentage of organizations that believe in a future transformed by AI rose from 64.2% in 2024 to 89% in 2025. Generative AI is expected to be the most transformative form of AI, according to 61%, but machine learning – 22.3% -- and AGI –16.1% -- have its share of believers.

Perhaps most surprising to me, techno optimism prevails. Even with fears of disinformation and misinformation, 96.6% of organizations see the overall impact of AI as beneficial.

## About Data & AI Leadership Exchange

Data & AI Leadership Exchange was established by Randy Bean to educate Data & AI Leaders, the Chief Data Officer & Chief AI Officer communities, and Fortune 1000 business leaders, on leadership, transformation, and innovation in an AI future.



## About Randy Bean

Randy Bean has been an Advisor to Fortune 1000 organizations on data & AI leadership for nearly 4 decades. He is a Senior Advisor, Author, Speaker, Founder, CEO, Innovation Fellow, and Board Member.

Randy is the bestselling author of [Fail Fast, Learn Faster: Lessons in Data-Driven Leadership in an Age of Disruption, Big Data, and AI](#), and a regular contributor to [Forbes](#), [Harvard Business Review](#), and [MIT Sloan Management Review](#). He was a former contributor to [The Wall Street Journal](#) and has been referenced and quoted on AI leadership in [The Wall Street Journal](#), [The New York Times](#), and [The Economist](#) in 2024.

Randy was previously founder and CEO of NewVantage Partners (NVP), a data and AI leadership advisory firm to Fortune 1000 clients, which he founded in 2001. NVP was acquired by Paris-based global consultancy Wavestone in 2021, where he served as Innovation Fellow until January 2024.

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