Chief Data Officer or Bust

By Chris Pehura

The Chief Data Officer, also known as the CDO, is responsible for the data management and data leadership in our organization. They establish the needed culture, data office, and data strategies (aka Big Data, Business Intelligence, analytics, reporting, data warehouse and ETLs) to ensure that data meets the needed business outcomes for revenue growth. The CDO establishes and leads data governance by extending corporate governance to include data and direct data management and data capital to reinforce and multiply the returns of the traditional strategies.

Through the data office the CDO accelerates corporate adoption of new data-driven innovations such as sensors, robotics, and algorithms to multiply the returns on human capital and multiply the returns of traditional capital investments at the strategic, operational and tactical levels.

The CDO, the Chief Data Officer, is an executive on the executive team.

That said, organizations have problems introducing the CDO into their executive team. Often a CxO adopts CDO-like responsibilities. If the CxO doesn't have enough bandwidth, a CDO is brought on to support that CxO. This often has limited success because CDO priorities often conflict with the CxO's.

Worst still, CDOs can be pushed down into the director and middle management levels making it difficult for them to establish data offices and secure stable budgets.

And worst yet, CDOs reporting to the CIO or CTO have their data strategies degrade down to traditional IT data strategies.

To avoid these CDO pitfalls and gain maximum returns on our CDO, foundational work needs to be laid down.

> 1. Redesign the executive team so the CDO fits with the team.
> 2. Restructure the organization so the data office fits with the organization.
> 3. Define data capital and specify how data capital fits within the existing procedures.
> 4. Change the culture to support data driven elements.
> 5. Align data strategies to support and multiply the returns of the traditional corporate strategies.

For our CDO to support us, we need the organization to support our CDO.

About the Author

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Chris is a management consultant with a data emphasis helping Fortune 100/1000 companies strategically evolve and reinvent their businesses to maximize their revenue growth. Through realignment, to overhauls, to rebuilding things from the top down and ground up, he integrates and solidifies leaders, strategies, and solutions into all aspects of the organization. As practice director for C-SUITE DATA, a Canadian based consulting firm specializing in data and Big Data, Chris serves as a coach, trainer, and the voice for how data is the new capital that drives, multiplies, and maximizes revenue growth.

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