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## The Chief AI Officer is Driving AI Uniformity Amid Workforce Restructuring

By Pete Janny, Associate, [EMM Research](#), and Audrey Symes, Partner, Head of Research

The rise of Chief Artificial Intelligence Officers has created an inflection point for the future of C-suite leadership. These seasoned leaders possess a deep understanding of workplace restructuring and business goals alongside the necessary technological credentials to understand the AI-related compliance risks. Demand for these leaders has skyrocketed over the past year in line with enterprise-wide AI implementation; according to a report from IBM's Institute for Business Value (IBV), 76% of participating organizations in their study said they have a CAIO in 2026, an increase from 26% in 2025.

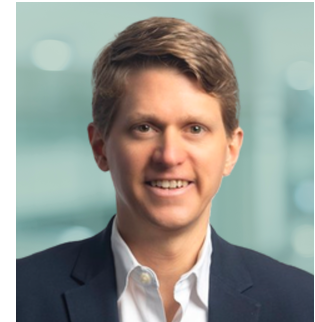
The nature of the CAIO role is shaped by size of company, industry, and the level of sophistication of AI infrastructure within a firm. Companies in the technology, financial services, and healthcare industries have placed a premium on the nascent role. The CAIO role serves a different function depending on industry context. The value in tech is evident, given that AI has become essential to their product suite. Financial services firms prioritize fraud detection and financial crime protection as well as decision augmentation and revenue creation, while healthcare firms focus on drug discovery and clinical decision support.

Companies in these three categories (Technology, Financial Services, Healthcare) tend to offer the highest salaries for CAIOs. Additionally, non-industry specific data reveal CAIO base averages of \$353,000 (Glassdoor), \$260,000 (Comparably), and \$244,000 plus a \$39,000 bonus (Salary Expert). Salaries tend to be higher at large institutional companies, as these companies have more capital resources as well as more complex technological infrastructures and cost decisions requiring specialized oversight.

Across industries, a CAIO must be able to offer sound growth strategies backed by data-driven predictions, typically reporting directly to the CEO. Depending on the company, some are merging the responsibilities of the CAIO with those of the sitting Chief Technology Officer or Chief Operating Officer who have the requisite leadership skills and are keenly aware of the impacts of AI on all business units.

A key executive decision must be made: Either promote from within, prioritizing institutional knowledge, or hire C-level counterparts with no previous company ties who may not understand the unique needs of the firm.

“This confluence of new technology and practical application is driving the creation of new positions that will be filled only by talented leaders who can adapt to change and deliver promising returns on AI-driven investments,” says **Frick Jones**, Senior Managing Partner, Head of Investment Banking at Jackson Lucas and President of EMM Research. “We are beginning to see a significant increase in AI administrators or C-level hiring in the white collar services industry.”



The Chief AI Officer reinforces the importance of human leadership in a time where AI has raised concerns for the future of human capital. That leadership is augmented by the ability of AI to condense, summarize, and process information, enhancing analytic and judgment ability.

Whether it's the CAIO or CTO at the helm, this leader serves as the bridge between driving real business value and gaining lasting competitive advantages amid a changing workforce.

A promotional graphic for EMM Research. The background is dark blue with green accents. The text reads: "FROM THE GROUND UP: How EMM Research Turns Proprietary Data into Workforce Intelligence". Below this is a small portrait of Audrey Symes, a woman with dark hair, smiling. To the right of her portrait is the text "Presented by Audrey Symes Partner, Head of Research". At the bottom left is the EMM RESEARCH logo, and at the bottom right are three green chevrons pointing right.

Earlier this month, our Head of Research, **Audrey Symes**, broke down how EMM Research’s proprietary suite of products helps clients make the most of AI throughout the talent stack, ensuring roles are poised for augmentation rather than automation. [Click here](#) to watch and type passcode: **k=1CU^BM**