

Organisations are increasingly appointing Chief Data Officers in recognition of the importance of managing data as a valuable asset that needs careful governance and ongoing management. How do we differentiate this new role from that of Chief Information Officer?



The Case for the CDO

In his book *The Case for the Chief Data Officer* Peter Aitken writes: "Data are an organization's sole, non-depletable, non-degrading, durable asset. ... To achieve data's full organizational value, there must be dedicated individual to leverage data as assets - a Chief Data Officer or CDO who's three job pillars are:

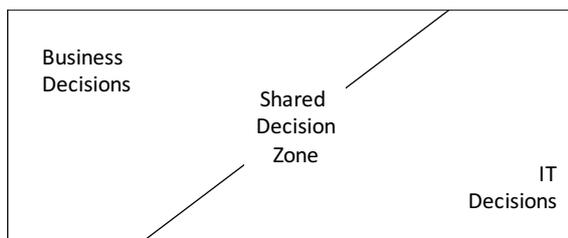
- Dedication solely to leveraging data assets,
- Unconstrained by an IT project mindset, and
- Reports directly to the business"

In the absence of someone dedicated to these three "pillars," organisations will struggle to unlock the potential value of their information assets.

One reason for this is the unfounded assumption made by many that data and information fall under the stewardship of the CIO and IT organisation.

Shared Responsibility?

The Data Management Body of Knowledge tells us that data management is a shared responsibility between business and IT and that "shared decision making is the hallmark of data governance." Decision rights are often portrayed across a spectrum:



In Robinson Ryan's view shared decision making is a recipe for continual re-litigation as points of view shift between issues. "But last time ..."

Broad consultation is definitely required to fully air points of view, but the final decision rights need to rest with a single role and stakeholders must respect the decision maker's call.

CDO vs CIO Decision Rights

While the specifics will vary from organisation to organisation, there needs to be an agreed demarcation of decision rights between the CIO and CDO in each of several domains:

- Business strategy
- Business operations
- Data / information strategy
- Data / Information operations
- Applications
- Applications design
- Technology
- Production readiness
- Financial, and,
- Human Resource

For example, in the area of Data operations the CDO's decision rights should include:

- Ownership of the enterprise and business line conceptual and logical data models
- Corporate Data Dictionary
- Data Governance policies, processes and organisational structures
- Data security standards and policies
- Data quality standards and policies
- Determination of which applications master which data subjects
- Metadata standards and policies
- Selection of tools for data management.

The CIO's decision rights in the same area should be:

- Physical data models and design
- Denormalisation of the logical and conceptual data models
- DBMS selection
- Data definition language
- Database management - tuning, query optimisation, capacity management
- Implementation of data quality, security and metadata processes and tools
- Data operations generally.

Once delineation of decision rights has been agreed, the field is open for collaboration and consultation across data and information management.