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DATA & AI EXECUTIVE **COMPENSATION REPORT**

2026 EDITION

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With a strong commitment to building a connected global community, we bring together data, analytics, AI, and security executives through regional and international forums, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing at the highest levels. CDO Magazine also recognizes and celebrates the most innovative companies, technologies, and thought leaders shaping the future of data-driven business.

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All responses are confidential and reported only in aggregate; no company-specific or individual compensation information is published.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report, and how to read it

Burtch Works has published salary research on data and analytics professionals for over a decade. This is our first report covering only the executives those professionals report to: vice presidents and above who run data organizations. The figures come from 243 validated responses to the 2026 Data, AI & Analytics Executive Benchmark Survey, run jointly with CDO Magazine and fielded May 20 – August 19, 2026. This is a first edition, so there is no prior year to compare against. Next year there will be.

How these numbers were produced

Every figure here comes from self-reported survey responses that were cleaned before analysis: salaries entered in thousands were normalized, impossible entries below a $10,000 validity floor were treated as non-response, and total-cash figures below base or above 3× base were excluded. Extreme values were not trimmed, every valid response is included. Of 401 raw responses, 243 met the criteria. Each table leads with the mean, as our reports always have, with the median and the 25th and 75th percentile beside it. Because extreme values are kept, the mean sits a few percent above the median in most cuts, and where the two disagree the median is the safer benchmark. Sample sizes for every segment are listed in the appendix. The full cleaning waterfall and every rule applied are documented in Section 4, and the cleaning log is published in the accompanying workbook.



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Talent solutions and managed services across data science, artificial intelligence, analytics, machine learning, data engineering, cloud engineering, cybersecurity, product, technology, market research and marketing analytics. Our domain expertise, industry focus, national reach and curated talent networks let us meet organizations wherever they are in the AI transformation journey, from a first hire to scaling a team to delivering a business outcome. We design, build and manage specialized talent programs across the full data, engineering, product and AI lifecycle.

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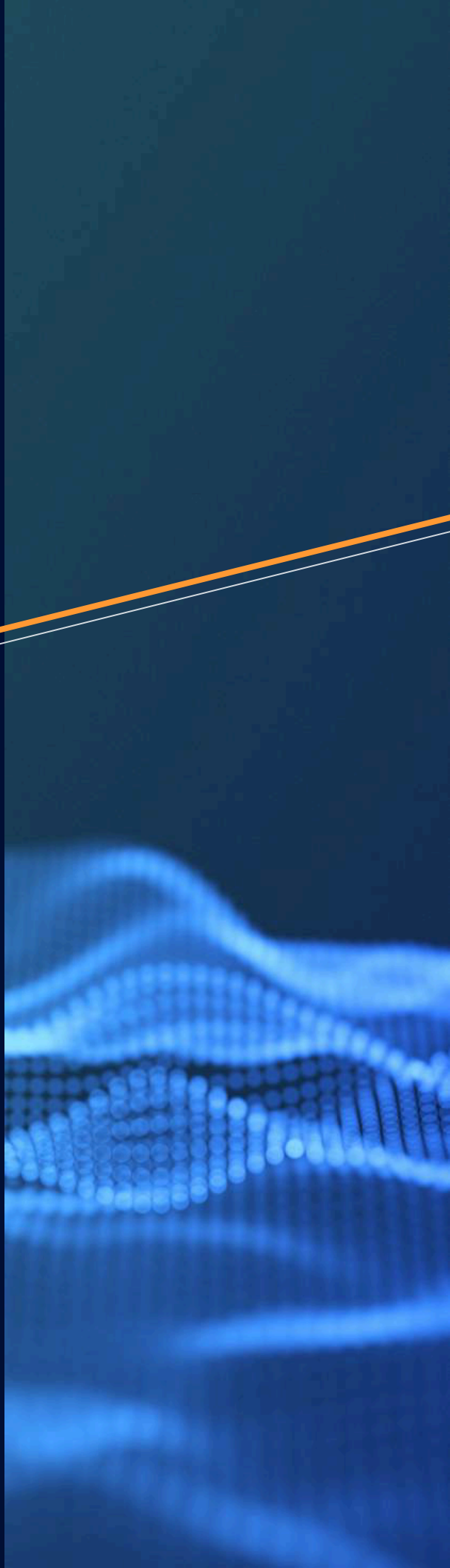
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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

The executive market in 2026, and how to read this report.



THE HEADLINE NUMBERS

Mean base salary across the full cohort is $316,995, against a median of $300,000. Add target bonus and mean total cash reaches $458,828. Two-thirds of respondents hold equity on top of that. Those headline numbers cover a wide spread, and company size explains more of it than title does.

$317.0K
MEAN BASE SALARY
243 VP+ executives

$458.8K
MEAN TOTAL CASH
Base + target bonus

67%
HAVE EQUITY
$210K median grant

91%
Say AI expanded their role in the past 12 months

70%
Carry a bonus target of 21% of base or more

62%
Negotiated and won a higher offer

SIX FINDINGS THAT SHAPE THE 2026 MARKET

Each finding points to the tables behind it.

1 Company scale prices the seat; the title barely moves it

The same chief data officer title is worth $270,185 in base at a company below $1B and $465,407 above $10B. On total cash the spread runs $362,489 to $836,715. The VP of data title climbs far less steeply across the same range. Benchmark the title against the revenue band, or the number will be wrong by a third.

TITLE AND COMPANY SCALE TOGETHER

2 The bonus target is the largest cash lever in the study

70% of respondents carry a target of at least 21% of base and 22% target 51% or more. Moving from a 21–30% target to 51%+ is worth about $306,000 in median total cash. A 1–10% target is the worst position in the study on both pay and satisfaction, below having no target at all.

BONUS AND SATISFACTION

3 Span of control beats reporting line

Number of people managed explains more variation in base salary than company stage, education, industry or gender. Who the executive reports to barely registers. What the market pays for is the size of the thing being run.

WHAT PREDICTS PAY

4 Women are paid at or above comparable men, but the estimate is not robust

Women report a median base of $310,000 against $300,000 for men. Adjusted for the characteristics of the seat the gap runs between +9% and +12%, significant in a sparse model and not significant under the full one. Women hold 27% of these seats and are more than three times as likely as men to hold one in government, education or nonprofit, which suppresses the pooled figure.

GENDER TABLES

5 Negotiating moves pay. Holding a competing offer does not

Median base is $300,000 whether the executive had no competing offer, one, or two or more. The number that moves is negotiation: $310,000 for those who negotiated and got more, $300,000 for those who accepted the first number, and $250,000 for those who negotiated and got nothing. That last group is the interesting one.

OFFERS AND NEGOTIATION

6 AI expanded the job without repricing it

91% say AI expanded their responsibilities in the past year. Those whose responsibilities expanded significantly are far more confident the role survives three years (57% very confident against 33% of those reporting no material change) and are not paid more for it. Roughly two thirds of these organizations added AI scope to an existing seat rather than funding a new one.

AI AND CONFIDENCE

WHAT CHANGED THE EXECUTIVE JOB THIS YEAR

91% of respondents say AI expanded their responsibilities in the past 12 months. 49% say the expansion was significant. Three consequences show up in the data.

Mandates are arriving before headcount

20% of respondents have held their current seat under a year, which points to a lot of newly created or newly rewritten executive roles. Span of control is bimodal: 12% manage five people or fewer while 26% manage more than 100. Two executives with the same title can be running very different organizations.

Three titles, one job

Chief data officer, chief data and analytics officer, and chief data, analytics and AI officer are converging on the same remit. Grouped together they cover 41% of respondents at a $325,000 median base. Where a firm lands among the three says more about its naming conventions than about the scope of the role.

Candidates still rank base salary first

Asked to rank six parts of the package at time of hire, respondents put base salary at the top (average rank 1.32 of 6), followed by annual bonus, then equity. Equity and title do not compensate for a base that lands below market.

> *"The premium is going to executives who can put AI into production and show what it returned, not to those who can describe what it might do."*
>
> BURTCH WORKS, FROM 2026 EXECUTIVE SEARCH ACTIVITY

AI is becoming part of the price of admission

With 91% reporting expanded AI responsibilities, AI is becoming part of the core mandate rather than a specialty. For sitting data executives, AI fluency is no longer enough; the job is to show how AI changes business performance. For those aiming at these seats, the opportunity is in connecting data, analytics and AI to operating outcomes rather than specializing narrowly in one of them. Employers should be as careful. Adding AI to a role without adding decision rights, resources or access to the business creates accountability without the means to deliver.

SECTION 2

COMPENSATION

Base salary, total cash, bonus and equity for the VP+ cohort.



WHO IS IN THIS STUDY

This report benchmarks on title. Each respondent chose the title that best characterizes their role; those answers group into the eight families below, and every compensation table is cut on them.

Chief Data Officer (CDO, CDAO, CDAIO)	CDO, CDAO, CDAIO, enterprise ownership of data, analytics and increasingly AI as a single mandate.
CIO / CTO	Technology leadership where data and AI sit inside a wider infrastructure remit.
Chief AI or Analytics Officer	CAIO, CAO, a dedicated AI or analytics chief, separate from the data office.
SVP / EVP of Data / Analytics / AI	Divisional or business-unit leadership below the chief title.
VP of Data / Analytics / AI	Functional leadership across multiple teams or departments.
Head of Data Science / Engineering / Analytics	Practice leadership over a named discipline.
Director of Data / Analytics / AI	Director-titled leaders who report VP-level oversight.

The 2026 executive sample

The analytic sample is 243 executives. 82% work in the United States, the rest mostly in Canada, the U.K. and other international markets. The group is experienced (76% have more than 20 years behind them) and enterprise-weighted (63% are at organizations above $1B in revenue). Salary figures are annual and in U.S. dollars, and base salary means cash only. Mean base salary across the cohort is $316,995 and mean total cash is $458,828. Respondents also reported the scope they oversee; only those at vice-president level or above are included, that question is the entry gate for the study and is not used as a reporting cut. The definitions are in the appendix.

WHAT EACH TITLE PAYS

Base salary by title group, in U.S. dollars.

TITLE	MEAN	25%	MEDIAN	75%
CIO / CTO	**$360,474**	$314,000	$360,000	$420,500
Chief Data Officer (CDO, CDAO, CDAIO)	**$354,159**	$250,198	$325,000	$400,000
Chief AI or Analytics Officer (CAIO, CAO)	**$354,145**	$258,750	$317,500	$357,500
SVP / EVP of Data / Analytics / AI	**$313,562**	$265,000	$300,000	$350,000
Head of Data Science / Engineering / Analytics	**$313,333**	$295,000	$320,000	$335,000
VP of Data / Analytics / AI	**$288,075**	$242,500	$285,000	$326,500
Director of Data / Analytics / AI	**$203,300**	$180,250	$205,000	$248,000
All VP+ (executive cohort)	**$316,995**	**$243,500**	**$300,000**	**$365,000**

The spread differs by title as much as the mean does. SVP/EVP and CIO/CTO packages cluster tightly around their means, while the chief data officer title carries the widest spread of any group, because it is handed out at every company size from a $50 million firm to a global bank. That is why the next page crosses title with company revenue before saying what a CDO is worth.

THE CUT THAT EXPLAINS THE MOST

Every other table holds one variable at a time. This one crosses the two that matter: the title on the door and the size of the company behind it. The three deepest title groups are shown; the rest do not have enough responses in each revenue band to report separately. Counts are in the methodology.

TITLE	UNDER $1B	$1B–$10B	$10B+
Chief Data Officer (CDO, CDAO, CDAIO)	$270,185	$355,835	**$465,407**
VP of Data / Analytics / AI	$289,167	$279,826	$298,600
CIO / CTO	$320,333	**$405,143**	—

Mean base salary, USD.

TITLE	UNDER $1B	$1B–$10B	$10B+
Chief Data Officer (CDO, CDAO, CDAIO)	$362,489	$517,576	**$836,715**
VP of Data / Analytics / AI	$369,384	$361,550	$424,085
CIO / CTO	$383,810	**$670,034**	—

Mean total cash, base plus target annual bonus.

What this changes

The same chief data officer title is worth $270,185 at a company below $1B and $465,407 above $10B. On total cash the gap is wider still: $362,489 against $836,715. The VP of data title climbs far less steeply over the same range. Company scale is doing more of the work than the title is, which is why we benchmark on both together. For anyone planning a career, that matters: the move from VP to CDO can be worth less than the move from a narrow function to a larger enterprise, a broader mandate or more material outcomes. A lateral move into a substantially bigger seat can beat a title promotion into a smaller one, and employers should not assume a familiar title tells them what the seat they are creating is worth.

TOTAL CASH, BONUS TARGETS & EQUITY

Total cash (OTE) = base + target annual bonus, validated responses only.

TITLE, TOTAL CASH (OTE)	MEAN	25%	MEDIAN	75%
Chief Data Officer (CDO, CDAO, CDAIO)	**$548,456**	$336,208	$450,000	$655,559
CIO / CTO	**$517,244**	$393,143	$473,000	$660,059
Chief AI or Analytics Officer (CAIO, CAO)	**$459,645**	$363,750	$445,000	$516,250
SVP / EVP of Data / Analytics / AI	**$427,062**	$309,029	$400,000	$500,000
VP of Data / Analytics / AI	**$385,323**	$295,000	$366,000	$462,500
Head of Data Science / Engineering / Analytics	**$375,000**	$350,000	$350,000	$387,500
Director of Data / Analytics / AI	**$279,932**	$244,286	$280,312	$317,054
All VP+ (executive cohort)	**$458,828**	**$300,000**	**$400,000**	**$522,500**

70% of respondents carry a target bonus of at least 21% of base, 47% at least 31%, and 22% target 51% or more. One in ten report no bonus target at all. Equity sits on top for 67% of the cohort, at a median grant of $210,000 and $500,000 at the 75th percentile.

The compensation model should reflect the value model

The weight of variable pay says these seats are being treated as operating leadership roles, which is an opening for both sides to be explicit about the value the role is expected to create. For executives the question is not only what the bonus percentage is but what outcomes earn it. The best plans reward results the executive can materially influence: growth, margin, productivity, risk reduced, customer outcomes, measurable value from data and AI. Plans tied mainly to activity, such as programs launched, models deployed or governance milestones met, tend to buy activity rather than enterprise performance.

COMPENSATION BY INDUSTRY

INDUSTRY	MEAN	25%	MEDIAN	75%
Financial Services / Banking / Insurance	**$316,484**	$246,250	$317,500	$383,000
Healthcare / Pharmaceuticals / Life Sciences	**$371,985**	$295,000	$317,647	$400,000
Consulting / Professional Services	**$341,850**	$200,000	$252,500	$352,500
Retail / E-Commerce / Consumer Goods	**$340,450**	$247,500	$329,000	$424,500
Technology / Software / SaaS	**$283,734**	$210,000	$315,000	$350,000
Manufacturing / Industrial	**$281,556**	$250,000	$280,000	$303,750
Education / Nonprofit	**$260,083**	$202,500	$235,000	$303,750
Other	**$368,167**	$250,000	$305,000	$377,500
Government / Public Sector	**$214,769**	$159,675	$175,725	$233,500
Telecommunications / Media	**$292,143**	$267,500	$295,000	$325,000
Transportation / Logistics	**$250,857**	$195,500	$250,000	$312,500
Energy / Utilities	**$325,099**	$302,599	$335,000	$357,500
Real Estate / Construction	**$308,250**	$286,250	$309,000	$331,000
All VP+ (executive cohort)	**$316,995**	**$243,500**	**$300,000**	**$365,000**

Financial services supplies 32% of the respondents, more than any other sector. Retail and technology now sit at roughly the same level, so the usual financial services premium is not visible here. The clearer gap is at the other end, where government comes in at $175,725.

> **Industry experience matters most when it is experience with complexity**
>
> Sector knowledge has value, but the more portable asset is experience operating in hard environments: regulated markets, fragmented data estates, high-risk decisions, businesses where poor information has material consequences. For candidates, that argues for assignments that raise the complexity of the problems they can credibly claim to have solved. For employers, an adjacent-industry candidate who has handled comparable regulatory, operational or data complexity deserves a closer look than a sector filter usually allows.

THE FINANCIAL SERVICES PREMIUM IS A SIZE EFFECT

Financial services is the deepest cohort in the study and sits near the top on raw median base. It also has the most respondents at the largest revenue band, which is most of the reason. The question raised in review was whether financial services actually underpays for an equivalent seat once scale is removed. It does not, but the picture is not flat either.

COMPANY REVENUE	FINANCIAL SERVICES	N	OTHER PRIVATE INDUSTRIES	N
Under $1B	$250,000	19	$255,000	47
$1B–$10B	$350,000	26	$310,147	58
$10B+	$335,000	27	$332,500	38

Median base salary within revenue band. Government, education and nonprofit excluded from the comparison group.

Financial services sits below other private industries only in the under-$1B band, where it has the fewest respondents. In the two bands where most financial services executives actually work it is level or slightly ahead. The honest version of this finding is that the raw premium is a scale artifact, not that the sector underpays.

Government, education and nonprofit

On raw medians this group trails the private sector by about 31%. Every respondent in it works at an organization under $10B in revenue, so that comparison is measuring scale as much as sector. Within the under-$1B band they are actually ahead of private peers.

COMPANY REVENUE	GOV / NONPROFIT	N	PRIVATE	N
Under $1B	$275,000	8	$250,000	66
$1B–$10B	$245,000	4	$322,500	84
$10B+	—	0	$335,000	65

Both cells are small. Directional only; we would not publish a headline on it.

COMPENSATION BY GEOGRAPHY

By U.S. Census region, plus the international cohort.

REGION	MEAN	25%	MEDIAN	75%
Northeast	**$338,559**	$270,750	$318,500	$375,000
Midwest	**$321,719**	$222,000	$300,000	$350,000
South	**$309,841**	$248,750	$310,000	$364,000
West	**$376,719**	$253,750	$310,000	$378,750
Outside U.S.	**$254,110**	$170,000	$235,000	$324,000
All VP+ (executive cohort)	**$316,995**	**$243,500**	**$300,000**	**$365,000**

On the median, the four U.S. regions fall within about 6% of one another. The West's higher mean comes from a handful of large packages rather than a broadly higher market. For a function that was heavily coastal a decade ago, that is a meaningful flattening, and it fits what we see in searches: the employer sets the band, not the metro. The international gap is a different matter. Respondents outside the U.S. report a median base of $235,000 against $307,500 inside it, a difference of $72,500.

COUNTRY GROUP	MEAN	25%	MEDIAN	75%
United States	**$330,515**	$250,000	$307,500	$370,000
Canada	**$219,250**	$147,500	$180,500	$224,750
United Kingdom	**$357,092**	$270,000	$333,776	$463,138
Other international	**$242,420**	$170,000	$235,000	$310,000
All VP+ (executive cohort)	**$316,995**	**$243,500**	**$300,000**	**$365,000**

The executive market is becoming less geographically constrained

Narrow regional differences and a small independent effect of work arrangement argue for a wider search. For candidates that expands the realistic market. For employers it raises the cost of location requirements that exist mainly out of habit. A seat that genuinely needs on-site leadership should be designed that way; requiring it by default shrinks the pool without buying better leadership.

COMPANY SIZE, WORK MODEL & REPORTING LINE

ORGANIZATION HEADCOUNT	MEAN	25%	MEDIAN	75%
Under 1,000 employees	**$265,565**	$202,250	$250,000	$310,000
1,001–10,000 employees	**$309,715**	$225,000	$300,000	$350,000
10,001–50,000 employees	**$365,795**	$276,000	$327,500	$411,250
50,001+ employees	**$338,534**	$275,000	$310,000	$368,776
All VP+ (executive cohort)	**$316,995**	**$243,500**	**$300,000**	**$365,000**

WORK ARRANGEMENT	MEAN	25%	MEDIAN	75%
Fully in-office / on-site	**$340,426**	$200,000	$325,000	$400,000
Hybrid (mix of remote and in-office)	**$312,750**	$241,638	$300,000	$357,500
Fully remote	**$305,442**	$253,750	$300,000	$352,500
All VP+ (executive cohort)	**$316,995**	**$243,500**	**$300,000**	**$365,000**

REPORTING LINE	MEAN	25%	MEDIAN	75%
Reports to CEO / Board	**$281,306**	$200,000	$255,000	$355,000
Reports to another C-suite executive	**$334,893**	$250,000	$320,000	$371,250
Reports to a VP / SVP	**$276,000**	$198,750	$282,500	$327,500
Other reporting line	**$306,875**	$123,750	$227,500	$296,250
All VP+ (executive cohort)	**$316,995**	**$243,500**	**$300,000**	**$365,000**

Company size produces the widest spread of any variable we measured. Work arrangement matters less: fully on-site respondents report a median $25,000 above fully remote ones, a real gap but a smaller one. The reporting-line result runs against intuition. Executives who report to another C-suite leader out-earn those who report to the CEO or board. The likely reason is composition: CEO-reporting data leaders cluster in smaller organizations, where the ladder is shorter and the budget is smaller.

OFFER DYNAMICS & NEGOTIATION

76%
negotiated their compensation package

62%
negotiated and received a higher offer

41%
had at least one competing offer in hand

76% of respondents negotiated their package, and 62% of the whole cohort came away with a better offer. Only 24% took the first number. Most were negotiating without an alternative in hand: 59% had no competing offer at the time.

For hiring teams

Three in four candidates at this level will negotiate, competing offer or not, and most of them will get something. Approving a range with that margin already in it is cheaper than losing a finalist and restarting a search.

WHO GETS EQUITY, AND WHAT IT IS WORTH

67% of respondents hold equity, at a median grant of $210,000 when they were hired. It does not appear to trade off against cash. Respondents with equity report higher total cash than those without, not lower.

$515K
mean total cash, executives WITH equity

$394K
mean total cash, executives WITHOUT equity

67%
of the cohort hold equity

Total cash, with and without equity

EQUITY STATUS, TOTAL CASH (OTE)	MEAN	25%	MEDIAN	75%
Has equity	**$514,784**	$354,774	$450,000	$584,571
No equity	**$394,364**	$225,000	$320,000	$450,000
All VP+ (executive cohort)	**$458,828**	**$300,000**	**$400,000**	**$522,500**

Grant value by organization size

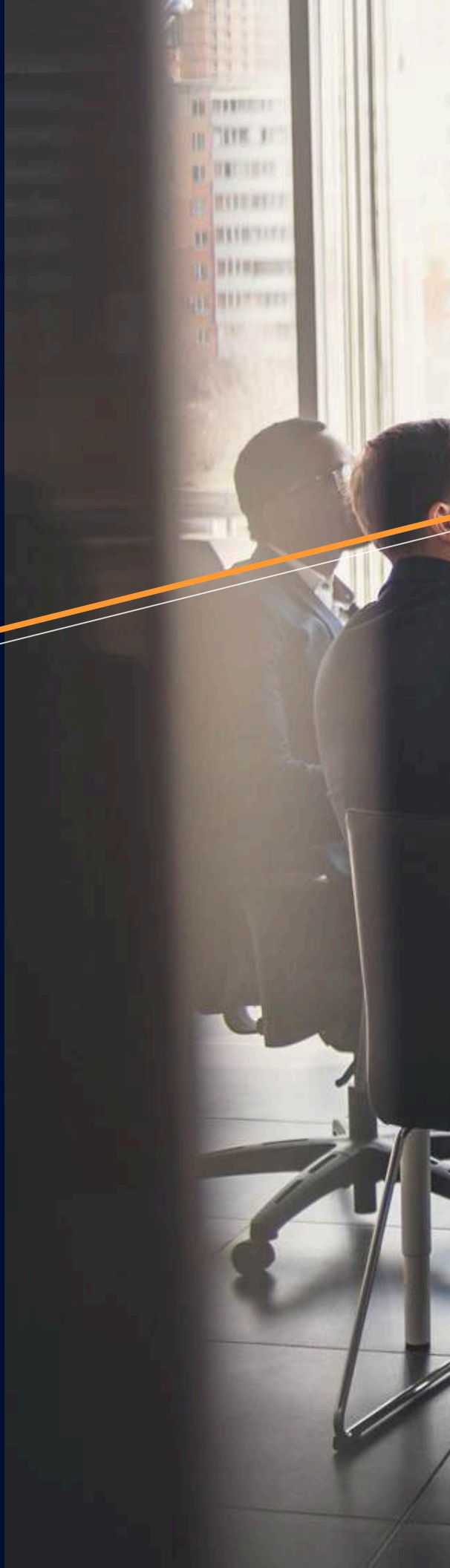
ORGANIZATION HEADCOUNT, EQUITY AT HIRE	MEAN	25%	MEDIAN	75%
Under 1,000 employees	**$395,977**	$0	$56,466	$300,000
1,001–10,000 employees	**$340,478**	$0	$25,000	$222,500
10,001–50,000 employees	**$389,290**	$43,750	$200,000	$425,000
50,001+ employees	**$326,834**	$60,766	$200,000	$412,500
All VP+ (executive cohort)	**$365,860**	**$0**	**$100,000**	**$357,500**

Equity tables cover executives who reported holding equity. Grant value is the full award at the time of hire as reported by the respondent, not an annual slice of a multi-year vest. Equity is additive here rather than a substitute for cash: the executives who hold it also report the higher total cash. For a private employer competing with a public one, the grant as a multiple of base (0.93× at late-stage private against 0.58× at public companies) is the argument to make out loud. A further breakdown by title is published in the accompanying segment-tables workbook.

SECTION 3

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE & MARKET ANALYSIS

Who holds the seat, what determines the pay, and what it means.



EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

Highest degree earned

EDUCATION	MEAN	25%	MEDIAN	75%
Bachelor's degree	**$283,476**	$191,250	$270,000	$343,750
Master's degree	**$321,058**	$250,000	$300,000	$357,500
Doctorate	**$351,982**	$223,750	$330,000	$382,500
Other / professional degree	**$300,333**	$217,500	$302,500	$379,250
All VP+ (executive cohort)	**$316,995**	**$243,500**	**$300,000**	**$365,000**

79% hold a graduate degree, split 67% master's and 12% doctorate. The doctorate carries a modest premium at $330,000 against $300,000 for a master's and $270,000 for a bachelor's. The spread across all three is narrower than the spread produced by company size alone, which suggests the credential functions as an entry requirement at this level rather than a differentiator once you are in the room.

Years of professional experience

EXPERIENCE	MEAN	25%	MEDIAN	75%
Under 15 years	**$256,300**	$165,000	$237,500	$300,000
15–20 years	**$281,428**	$230,000	$300,000	$333,750
20–25 years	**$331,506**	$245,000	$305,000	$371,250
25+ years	**$330,413**	$250,000	$310,000	$384,000
All VP+ (executive cohort)	**$316,995**	**$243,500**	**$300,000**	**$365,000**

76% of respondents have more than 20 years of experience, and pay rises only gently past that point. The under-15-years group (median $237,500) confirms that fast-tracked executives exist, but they are paid a full band below their more tenured peers. Years of experience is a weaker predictor here than it is in our practitioner research.

> **At some point, experience has to become enterprise experience**
>
> Education and tenure matter, but the larger pay differences in this report sit elsewhere. Past a certain stage, another certification, technical credential or year inside the function is unlikely to substitute for having owned larger outcomes: budgets, people, business cases, transformation programs, product decisions, operating metrics, executive-level tradeoffs. Technical credibility opens the door. Enterprise credibility decides how far the role can go.

GENDER

71% / 27%
male / female share of VP+ seats in the sample

$354K
female mean base salary

$304K
male mean base salary

GENDER	MEAN	25%	MEDIAN	75%
Male	**$304,117**	$235,000	$300,000	$362,000
Female	**$353,731**	$260,000	$310,000	$384,000
All VP+ (executive cohort)	**$316,995**	**$243,500**	**$300,000**	**$365,000**

Read this one by level, not in aggregate

At VP level women report a median base well above men. At SVP/EVP the two are level. At C-suite men are ahead. Averaging those three into a single cohort figure produces a number close to parity that describes none of them accurately. The level breakdown is the finding here.

Representation is the wider gap

Women hold 27% of the VP-and-above seats in this sample: 33 of 115 at VP, 19 of 68 at SVP/EVP, 13 of 55 in the C-suite. The share falls as the seats get bigger. The female 25th percentile ($260,000) sits above the male ($235,000), so the women who are in the sample are less likely to hold the lowest-paid roles. Whether that reflects the market or who chose to answer is a question this data cannot settle. What it can say is that the bigger gap is access to the larger seats, not the pay inside them. Respondents identifying as non-binary or preferring not to say are counted in cohort totals but not reported separately; see the methodology for the reporting threshold.

The bigger question is who gets access to the larger seats

Pay equity matters. So does equity in access to the assignments that build the credentials for the top data seats: large teams, major transformations, enterprise AI programs, commercial initiatives. Organizations that want a more diverse executive bench should look at who is being given those assignments, because they are what the highest-paying roles are filled on.

SCOPE OF ROLE & OUTLOOK

Span of control

Total reports managed, direct + indirect. 26% manage more than 100 people and 41% manage more than 50. At the other end of the range, 12% run teams of five or fewer. That second group is worth watching. In our searches it usually corresponds to a newly created AI leadership role where the remit arrives before the budget. On reporting lines, 23% report to the CEO or board and 66% report to another C-suite executive.

AI's impact on the executive role

91% say AI expanded their responsibilities over the past year. Confidence in the role tracks with that: 56% are very confident it still exists in its current form in three years, 30% expect it to change but survive, and 3% expect it to be consolidated away. Compensation satisfaction is more divided. 51% are satisfied, 25% are not. In a market where 41% of these executives arrived holding a competing offer, that second number is a retention signal.

26%
manage more than 100 people

91%
say AI expanded their responsibilities

25%
are not satisfied with their compensation

LEVERAGE, NOT LEVEL

Every table before this one holds one variable at a time. This section asks a harder question: when all of them compete, which actually carries information about what an executive is paid? We fit the model on ln(base salary) against nine characteristics of the seat, then removed each in turn to see how much unique explanatory power it held.

RANK	FACTOR	ON ITS OWN	UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION
1	Number of reports managed	16.9%	9.1%
2	Industry	8.8%	5.6%
3	Geography (region)	10.3%	5.5%
4	Company revenue	14.0%	5.0%
5	Executive level	5.1%	4.2%
6	Years of experience	5.8%	2.6%
7	Reporting line	5.6%	1.2%
8	Company headcount	8.7%	0.2%
9	Work arrangement	0.0%	0.1%

OLS on ln(base salary), n=235, R^2 = 0.47. HC3 robust standard errors. The two columns answer different questions and neither sums to 100%.

The headcount trap

Employee headcount looks like a real driver on its own (8.7% of variation) and collapses to almost nothing (0.2%) once revenue and span of control are known. It is a proxy for scale, not a price signal. Span of control carries roughly 51 times its unique information, company revenue about 28 times. Benchmarking to “a 20,000-person company” is benchmarking to the wrong number.

THE STRONGEST SINGLE FACTOR

Number of people managed, direct and indirect, is the one characteristic that holds its explanatory power against every other variable in the study.

REPORTS MANAGED	N	MEDIAN BASE	MEDIAN TOTAL CASH
1–5	26	$247,500	$326,327
6–15	47	$270,000	$360,000
16–30	37	$295,000	$350,000
31–50	32	$297,500	$392,456
51–100	37	$325,000	$411,038
100+	62	$377,975	$578,954

Smaller bands omitted.

Executives managing more than 100 people report a median base 53% above those managing one to five. No other cut in this study produces a spread that wide, including executive level. The measure will get harder to read. Executives are increasingly responsible for a mix of people, automated processes, data products, AI agents and machine-made decisions, and a leader may soon oversee fewer people while influencing far more of the enterprise. Future editions may need to capture span beyond headcount.

What the model says about title

Executive level does carry unique information, it ranks fifth of nine, but well below span and revenue. The practical reading is that SVPs are not paid more because they are SVPs. They are paid more because SVP seats in this sample tend to be larger jobs. Where they are not larger, as in the sub-$1B market, the premium disappears entirely.

And about reporting line

Reporting line ranks seventh of nine, and no reporting relationship shows a meaningful adjusted difference. The organization-design section takes this up in full.

> **A note on what these numbers are**
>
> These are associations in observational survey data, not causal effects. A factor ranking high means it carries information about pay, not that changing it would change pay. Percentages are shown so the reader can judge the strength of the evidence; the ranking is what we would ask anyone to act on.

INDUSTRY, BEFORE AND AFTER SCALE

Financial services is the deepest cohort in this study and sits near the top on raw median base. It also has the largest share of respondents at enterprise scale, which is most of the reason. Holding revenue, span, level and geography constant changes the picture, though not as far as it was put to us in review.

INDUSTRY	VS. FINANCIAL SERVICES	P
Healthcare / Pharmaceuticals / Life Sciences	+25.1%	0.014
Other	+13.9%	0.313
Consulting / Professional Services	+7.0%	0.617
Manufacturing / Industrial	+6.6%	0.465
Retail / E-Commerce / Consumer Goods	+3.4%	0.712
Technology / Software / SaaS	+0.9%	0.900
Energy / Utilities	-1.9%	0.908
Real Estate / Construction	-5.2%	0.659
Transportation / Logistics	-8.9%	0.509
Education / Nonprofit	-11.2%	0.489
Telecommunications / Media	-16.2%	0.450
Government / Public Sector	-23.3%	0.226

Adjusted for revenue, span of control, level, geography, experience, reporting line, headcount and work arrangement. Financial services is the reference category.

What holds and what does not

Healthcare, pharmaceuticals and life sciences is the only industry with a statistically meaningful premium over financial services. Every other difference sits inside the noise, and several are negative. So the raw financial-services premium is a company-scale artifact, that much is solid. The stronger claim put to us, that every industry pays at or above financial services for an equivalent seat, is not supported by this sample.

PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND THE PAY MIX

Public companies show the highest raw median base in the study. Adjusted for the characteristics of the seat, the sign flips: about -11% (p = 0.06), which is marginal rather than conclusive. The unambiguous difference is not in the level of pay but in its composition.

COMPANY STAGE	N	MEDIAN GRANT ÷ BASE
Late-stage private	31	0.93×
Not applicable	8	0.63×
Public company	79	0.58×

Equity holders only. Every startup-stage cell is too small to report.

Late-stage private companies grant about 0.93 times base against 0.58 times at public companies. A private company competing for an enterprise executive is not usually winning on base; it wins on the multiple. That is the part worth saying out loud in an offer conversation, and it runs opposite to how these packages are usually pitched.

Government, education and nonprofit

On raw medians this group trails the private sector by roughly a third. Every respondent in it works below $10B in revenue, so that comparison is measuring scale as much as sector. Adjusted, the gap narrows substantially but does not vanish, and the cells are small enough that we would treat it as directional rather than settled.

A FINDING THAT DEPENDS ON THE SPECIFICATION

This is the result we have handled most carefully, because it moves a great deal depending on how it is modelled and because it will be quoted. We are publishing the sensitivity rather than a single number.

SPECIFICATION	BASE	P	TOTAL CASH	P
Span + revenue only	+12.2%	0.022	+10.7%	0.117
+ level	+12.5%	0.019	+11.1%	0.091
+ level + industry	+11.7%	0.065	+15.2%	0.046
+ level + region	+10.3%	0.052	+9.1%	0.164
+ level + region + industry	+10.3%	0.090	+14.4%	0.059
Full nine-factor model	+9.2%	0.202	+11.2%	0.189

Female coefficient, same data and outcome, controls added one block at a time.

The point estimate stays positive throughout, between about +9% and +12% on base. Its significance does not: it is comfortably significant in a sparse model and disappears under the full specification. A premium in the 13–18% range, which was put to us in review, does not reproduce here at any specification we tested.

LEVEL	FEMALE MEDIAN	N	MALE MEDIAN	N
VP	$310,000	33	$272,500	82
SVP / EVP	$350,000	19	$350,000	49
C-Suite	$280,000	13	$300,000	42

What we will say

Women in this sample are paid at or somewhat above comparable men, the effect is concentrated at VP level, and it reverses in the C-suite. Women hold 17% of their seats in government, education or nonprofit against 5% of men, which suppresses the pooled figure. We are not attaching a causal story to any of this. With women holding roughly a quarter of these seats, a selection effect is plausible and untestable with the variables we collected.

AI REPRICED THE JOB DESCRIPTION, NOT THE JOB

91% of respondents say AI expanded their responsibilities over the past twelve months. It is the most agreed-upon answer in the survey. What did not happen alongside it is the finding.

HOW AI CHANGED THE ROLE	N	% VERY CONFIDENT THE ROLE PERSISTS	MEDIAN BASE
Significantly expanded my responsibilities	119	57%	$305,000
Somewhat expanded my responsibilities	103	48%	$280,000
No material change	18	33%	$347,500

Smaller categories omitted.

Adjusted for the characteristics of the seat, executives whose responsibilities expanded significantly earn about +9% on base (p = 0.15) and +12% on total cash (p = 0.11). Both are directionally positive and neither is statistically reliable. The honest statement is that AI scope is not yet consistently priced into these packages, not that it is rewarded, and not that it is penalised.

The finding underneath the finding

Roughly two thirds of these organizations added AI accountability to an existing data leadership seat rather than funding a separate one. Right now that works, because nobody wants AI missing from their job description. It will not work for long. Once an executive has built the AI track record on the current employer's budget, the pay for it is available elsewhere. A material AI addition should trigger a review of compensation, authority, resources and success measures together, not be booked as a scope change that costs nothing.

AI IS STRENGTHENING THE SEAT, NOT THREATENING IT

The executives absorbing the most AI scope are the most confident about the role surviving. 57% of those whose responsibilities expanded significantly are very confident their role exists in its current form in three years, against 33% of those reporting no material change. Whatever else AI is doing to this function, the people closest to it do not read it as a threat to their own seat.

External corroboration: the EY Chief Data Officer Role Study (second edition, April 2026) reports that only 33% of CDOs hold full authority over AI while 80% share the responsibility, and that AI-related titles now account for 31% of data leadership roles against 26% still titled Chief Data Officer. Scope has moved faster than structure, and structure has moved faster than pay.

What this means

For employers: an expanded AI mandate without a matching change in authority, resources or pay is a retention exposure, not a saving. If AI is important enough to put in the job description, it is important enough to redesign the job. For executives: the strong position is to own the outcome, not the technology. Connect AI to the data, the decisions and the business results it depends on, and the seat becomes hard to break apart. Adding AI as one more tool in the portfolio does the opposite. For hiring organizations the corresponding choice is whether to appoint separate executives for data, analytics and AI or one leader accountable for how they work together. Either can work. Ambiguous accountability usually does not.

WHAT YOU CONTROL BEATS WHO YOU REPORT TO

Reporting line is the question these executives ask most often and the one the compensation data answers least. It ranks seventh of nine factors, and no reporting relationship carries a meaningful adjusted difference.

REPORTING LINE	MEAN	25%	MEDIAN	75%
Reports to CEO / Board	**$281,306**	$200,000	$255,000	$355,000
Reports to another C-suite executive	**$334,893**	$250,000	$320,000	$371,250
Reports to a VP / SVP	**$276,000**	$198,750	$282,500	$327,500
Other reporting line	**$306,875**	$123,750	$227,500	$296,250
All VP+ (executive cohort)	**$316,995**	**$243,500**	**$300,000**	**$365,000**

Median base salary by reporting line, descriptive.

Descriptively the result is sharper than the model: the reports-to-CEO group posts the lowest median base of any reporting line here. That is composition, those seats skew to smaller organizations, where the chief title exists but the scale does not. Either way, both views agree that proximity to the CEO is not what prices the seat.

The EY Chief Data Officer Role Study reaches a compatible conclusion from a different direction: it finds organizational structure and role clarity correlate more strongly with data-office performance than technology does. Read together, the two say reporting line predicts whether an executive can execute, and span of control predicts what they are paid. For a candidate weighing a role, the questions that matter are decision rights, budget, headcount and authority over the data and technology needed to deliver. Access is useful. Authority is what the market pays for.

Who each title reports to

TITLE	CEO / BOARD	ANOTHER C-SUITE EXEC	VP / SVP	OTHER
CIO / CTO	58%	32%	11%	0%
Chief AI or Analytics Officer (CAIO, CAO)	30%	60%	0%	10%
Chief Data Officer (CDO, CDAO, CDAIO)	27%	69%	2%	2%
Director of Data / Analytics / AI	20%	60%	10%	10%
SVP / EVP of Data / Analytics / AI	18%	76%	0%	6%
VP of Data / Analytics / AI	3%	81%	16%	0%

Share of each title by reporting line. Only 27% of chief data officers report to the CEO or the board.

WHAT ACTUALLY MOVES AN OFFER

This is the analysis we are least willing to state firmly, and the reason is worth showing. The descriptive and adjusted views point in different directions, and the sample cannot separate them.

NEGOTIATION OUTCOME	N	MEDIAN BASE	MEDIAN TOTAL CASH
Yes, I negotiated and received a higher offer	151	$310,000	$420,000
No, I accepted the initial offer	58	$300,000	$397,456
Yes, I negotiated but the offer stayed the same	34	$250,000	$317,202

ADJUSTED EFFECT	OUTCOME	DIFFERENCE	P
Held a competing offer	base	+6.8%	0.272
Held a competing offer	total cash	+10.5%	0.170
Negotiated and won	base	+5.9%	0.316
Negotiated and won	total cash	+9.9%	0.164

Why we are not making a recommendation here

Descriptively, holding a competing offer makes no difference at all, median base is $300,000 with none, one, or several. Adjusted, a competing offer is worth about +7% on base and +10% on total cash, but neither reaches significance, and negotiating shows a similar-sized effect on the same test. We cannot support “come with an offer, do not bother negotiating” on this evidence. What is solid: the group that negotiated and got nothing sits $50,000 below the group that simply accepted, which reads as selection. Executives in weaker positions push hardest and still lose. The practical lesson is to widen what gets negotiated. Scope, headcount, budget, bonus opportunity, equity, reporting relationship, decision rights and the measures of success all move career value more than base does, and a candidate who asks about them is also testing whether the organization has thought about what it wants the role to achieve.

DISSATISFACTION TRACKS THE SEAT, NOT THE SALARY

We measured each respondent against what the model predicts for their seat, then grouped by how satisfied they said they were. Satisfaction tracks pay relative to the job, not pay in absolute terms.

REPORTED SATISFACTION	N	GAP VS. MODEL-EXPECTED TOTAL CASH
Very satisfied	33	+30%
Somewhat satisfied	90	+2%
Somewhat dissatisfied	48	-3%
Neutral	56	-10%
Very dissatisfied	8	-35%

Median residual from the total-cash model. The very dissatisfied cell is small, treat the magnitude as directional.

The gradient is clean and it is usable. An executive reporting real dissatisfaction is, on average, materially below what their seat predicts, which makes it a reasonable early signal of retention risk when paired with an external benchmark. Bonus leverage matters here too: dissatisfaction concentrates almost entirely below a 21% target. Retention problems in this market usually begin as role creep. The job grows, the package does not, and nobody notices until the counter-offer. An annual review of scope, authority, incentives and resources will catch it earlier than an annual compensation review alone.

DESIGNING AN OFFER THAT LANDS

Five things the data supports, drawn from the tables in this report and from the searches we run against them.

1 Benchmark on revenue band first, level second

Below $1B the chief title carries almost no premium in this data. Anchoring an offer to the title rather than the scale of the organization is how ranges drift. Start from the revenue band, then adjust for span of control.

2 Design the bonus target before the base

The bonus band is the largest cash lever in the study and where dissatisfaction concentrates. A 1–10% target performs worse on both pay and satisfaction than no target at all. For a lean organization, a well-built target closes a total cash gap without adding fixed cost. If you cannot fund real leverage, pay base and say so plainly. Either way, tie the target to outcomes the executive can move, not to activity like models deployed or programs launched.

3 If you are private, compete on the equity multiple

Base is close to level between public and late-stage private companies at the same revenue. The grant relative to base is where private companies actually win, and it is worth naming explicitly in the offer conversation rather than leaving the candidate to work it out.

4 Budget the negotiation into the range

76% of these executives negotiated. Most who did got more. Approving a range that already contains the negotiation margin costs less than losing a finalist at the last step.

5 Design the seat before you benchmark the salary

Market data is most useful once the organization has decided what it wants the executive to own. Settle the mandate, the outcomes, the span, the authority and the resources first, then benchmark. Titles are inconsistent across companies: two CDO seats can differ enormously in scope, and a CDO, a CDAIO and a CAIO can be the same job. Benchmark comparable responsibilities, not comparable business cards.

READING YOUR OWN MARKET

1 Optimize the bonus target, then the base

Moving from a 21–30% target to 51% or more is worth roughly $306,000 in median total cash. No other single change in this study moves the number that much. Ask what the target is before you argue about base.

2 Below $1B, do not trade cash for a title

The market does not reprice a chief title at that scale. Above $1B it does, and the step is substantial. Know which side of that line the company sits on before treating the title as compensation.

3 Negotiate. A competing offer is not the prerequisite

Median base is identical at $300,000 whether an executive held no competing offer, one, or several. Those who negotiated and got more report $310,000. Waiting for a competing offer before opening the conversation is waiting for something the data says does not move the median.

4 Compare offers at total cash, not base

Mean total cash for this cohort is $458,828 against $316,995 in base, and the spread between the two widens with seniority. Two offers with the same base can be $200,000 apart.

5 Build a portfolio of consequences

The spread by company size is wider than the spread across titles, so a lateral move into a bigger or more complex seat can be worth more than a promotion into a smaller one. Past a certain point another credential will not substitute for having owned a budget, a P&L, a transformation or a decision with real downside. The résumé that prices highest shows what changed because you were there.

One caution

The group that negotiated and got nothing reports a median base $50,000 below the group that accepted the first number. We read that as selection rather than penalty, but it is a real pattern and worth knowing before assuming negotiation is free.

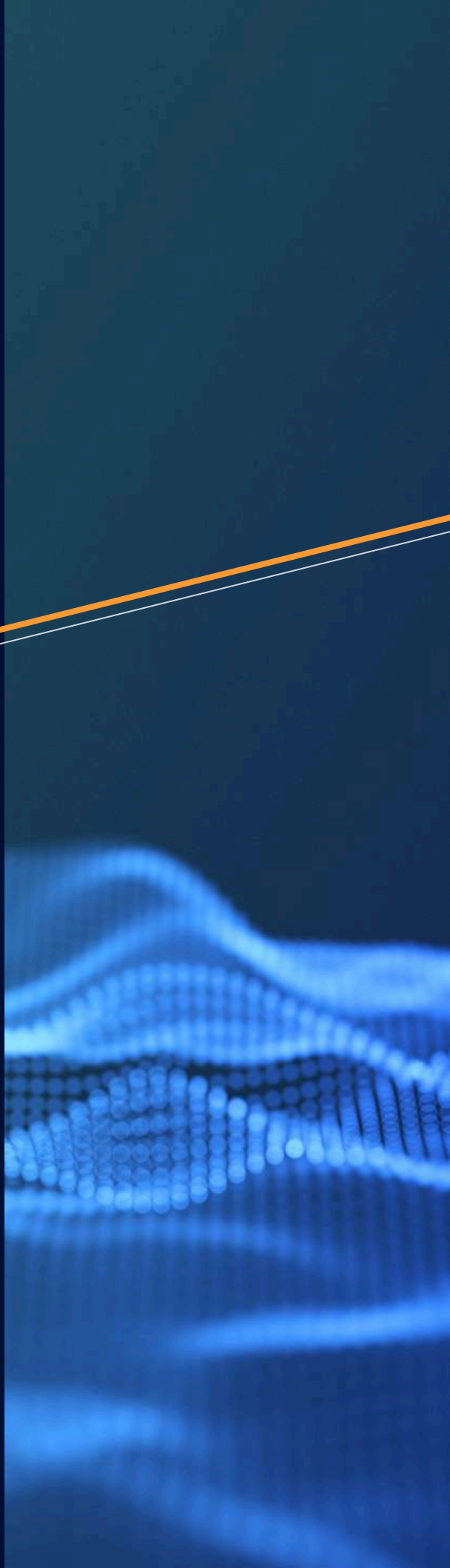
A closing observation: from functional leadership to enterprise leverage

The findings describe a profession in transition. Data leadership began around stewardship, infrastructure, governance and analytics. AI is pulling these roles toward products, processes, decisions, productivity, risk and business performance. Current executives need to show enterprise impact. Aspiring executives need experiences that prepare them to own larger outcomes. Hiring organizations need to give these leaders the authority to deliver what expanding job descriptions promise. The next generation of data and AI executives will be distinguished less by the breadth of technologies in their remit than by the breadth of business outcomes they can influence.

SECTION 4

APPENDICES

Methodology, references and the review log.



BURTCH WORKS | cdo CHIEF DATA OFFICER MAGAZINE

OBJECTIVE & METHODOLOGY

This report establishes a compensation baseline for data, analytics & AI executives at the VP level and above, a global cohort (82% U.S.-based), with all salaries collected and reported in U.S. dollars. It is a companion to the annual Burtch Works Report on salaries of data scientists and AI professionals, extending the same segmentation discipline to the executive cohort those professionals report into. Because 2026 is the first edition, no year-over-year comparisons are presented; future editions will trend against this baseline.

Data was collected through the 2026 Data, AI & Analytics Executive Benchmark Survey, conducted jointly by Burtch Works and CDO Magazine and fielded May 20 – August 19, 2026. Responses are confidential and reported only in aggregate. All figures are annual, in U.S. dollars: base salary is cash only, total cash (OTE) adds the target annual bonus, and equity is reported separately as grant value at hire.

> **Why our reports are unique**
>
> Our figures come from validated individual respondents rather than scraped postings or modelled estimates. We publish the cleaning waterfall, retain genuine outliers rather than trimming them, and list every sample size so any figure here can be checked against the base it rests on.

RESPONDENT COUNTS BY SEGMENT

Every table in Sections 1 to 3 rests on the counts below. The cohort is 243 in every cut. Segments with fewer than five respondents are printed where a real median exists and treated as directional; those with fewer than three are withheld.

TITLE	
CIO / CTO	19
Chief Data Officer (CDO, CDAO, CDAIO)	99
Chief AI or Analytics Officer (CAIO, CAO)	10
SVP / EVP of Data / Analytics / AI	17
Head of Data Science / Engineering / Analytics	3
VP of Data / Analytics / AI	67
Director of Data / Analytics / AI	10

COMPANY REVENUE	
Less than $10M	11
$10M–$50M	14
$50M–$250M	19
$250M–$1B	30
$1B–$10B	88
$10B+	65
Not disclosed	16

INDUSTRY	
Financial Services / Banking / Insurance	78
Healthcare / Pharmaceuticals / Life Sciences	34
Consulting / Professional Services	20
Retail / E-Commerce / Consumer Goods	20
Technology / Software / SaaS	19
Manufacturing / Industrial	18
Education / Nonprofit	12
Other	12
Government / Public Sector	8
Telecommunications / Media	7
Transportation / Logistics	7
Energy / Utilities	4
Real Estate / Construction	4

REGION	
Northeast	58
Midwest	48
South	60
West	26
Outside U.S.	43

GENDER	
Male	173
Female	65

EDUCATION	
Bachelor's degree	46
Master's degree	163
Doctorate	28
Other / professional degree	6

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	
Under 15 years	20
15–20 years	38
20–25 years	76
25+ years	109

ORGANIZATION HEADCOUNT	
Under 1,000 employees	64
1,001–10,000 employees	82
10,001–50,000 employees	66
50,001+ employees	31

REPORTING LINE	
Reports to CEO / Board	55
Reports to another C-suite executive	160
Reports to a VP / SVP	20
Other reporting line	8

WORK MODEL	
Fully in-office / on-site	51
Hybrid (mix of remote and in-office)	140
Fully remote	52

COMPANY STAGE	
Public company	102
Late-stage private	65
Government / Nonprofit / Education	37
Not applicable	24
Growth-stage startup (Series C+)	7
Early-stage startup (Series A–B)	4
Pre-seed / Seed	4

HOW THE DATA WAS CLEANED

CLEANING STEP	RESPONDENTS
Raw completed responses	401
Full-time role in past 6 months (Q1 = Yes)	381
VP and above (VP, SVP/EVP, C-Suite)	248
Valid base salary reported (≥ $10,000)	243
Outliers retained (no trimming applied)	243

Unit normalization and validity floor

Salary responses entered in thousands (e.g., “350” for $350,000) were scaled by 1,000. Zero, blank, and any base salary below $10,000 were treated as non-response, 5 records, all of them evident data-entry errors rather than low salaries. This is a data-quality rule and is separate from the outlier policy below.

Outlier policy: no trimming

Every valid response is retained. 7 base salaries fall outside 1.5× the interquartile range for their level; all are included in the figures reported here and are individually listed in the accompanying workbook. Because extreme values are retained, the mean runs above the median in most cuts. We lead with the mean to stay comparable with our previous reports, and print the median beside it so a reader can see how much the tail is doing.

Total cash and bonus imputation

OTE responses below base salary or above 3× base were treated as unusable. Rather than drop those respondents from the total-cash tables, each is retained with an imputed bonus so that base salary and total cash are reported on the same sample of 243. 45 of the 47 imputed records use the median bonus rate observed within the target-bonus band the respondent themselves selected; 2 gave no band and use their level median. Of the 47, 9 had selected “No bonus target” and are set to zero bonus rather than imputed. Across the whole cohort, 22 respondents (10%) report no bonus target; the other 13 gave a usable total-cash figure and needed no imputation. Any segment with fewer than five respondents is withheld.

TITLE & ROLE GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
CDO, Chief Data Officer (CDO, CDAO, CDAIO)	Owns data strategy, governance, and platforms; the founding form of the executive data seat.
CDAO, Chief Data & Analytics Officer	Extends the CDO mandate to analytics delivery and decision-support across the enterprise.
CDAIO, Chief Data, Analytics & AI Officer	Data, analytics and AI reporting to one executive. The fastest-growing title in this sample.
CAIO, Chief AI Officer	A newer seat focused on AI strategy and adoption, often alongside an incumbent CDO/CDAO.
AI Operating Partner	A fund-level executive (full-time or fractional) who owns data & AI value creation across a private equity portfolio, setting the roadmap at the GP level and scaling proven use cases across portfolio companies.
Forward-Deployed Engineer (FDE)	An engineer who embeds with a management team, learns the business quickly, maps workflows to AI use cases, builds them and reports what they returned. Scarce, and increasingly requested by name.

BENCHMARK YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Burtch Works runs retained searches for CDOs, CDAOs, CAIOs and VP-level data and AI leaders. The benchmarks in this report sit behind every engagement we take.

HIRE AI TALENT TODAY

SOURCES REFERENCED IN THIS REPORT

Where this report makes a claim about the market that its own survey does not measure, the claim is attributed. Nothing anecdotal appears without a source.

EY Chief Data Officer Role Study, second edition (April 2026)

Global study of Data, Analytics and AI leaders across Europe, LATAM, the US and APAC. Cited in this report for: the split between unified and separated Data and AI leadership; the finding that 33% of CDOs hold full authority over AI while 80% share it; the shift in role titles toward AI-inclusive naming; reporting-line distribution (CIO 23%, CEO 20%, CTO 11%, CFO 11%); and the correlation between organizational structure, role clarity and data-office performance.

Burtch Works search practice

Observations attributed to our own search activity are drawn from retained executive searches run between 2025 and 2026. They are labelled as practice observations wherever they appear and are not mixed into survey figures.

> **A note on what is measured and what is observed**
>
> Every number in the compensation and segmentation sections comes from the survey described in the methodology. The guidance sections draw on those numbers but add judgement, and are labelled as such. Where the two disagree we have kept the number and adjusted the guidance.

WHAT WE TESTED, AND WHAT HELD

This edition was reviewed by an external panel before publication. Each analytical claim raised in that review was reproduced from the record-level data. Claims that did not survive are listed here alongside those that did, because a benchmark that only publishes its confirmations is not a benchmark.

CLAIM TESTED	VERDICT	WHAT THE DATA SHOWS
Median base and total cash cross-cut by revenue band and level	CONFIRMED	Reproduces exactly from the record-level data, cell for cell.
Moving from a 21–30% to a 51%+ bonus target is worth about $306,000 in total cash	CONFIRMED	Confirmed. We compute $305,964 in median total cash between those two bands.
Financial services is the lowest-paying major private industry once scale is held constant	NOT SUPPORTED	Not supported as stated. Financial services sits below other private industries only in the under-$1B band. In the two bands where most of its respondents sit it is level or ahead. The raw premium is a scale effect, but the sector does not underpay for an equivalent seat.
Women in comparable seats are paid 13–18% more than men	PARTIAL	Direction holds, magnitude does not. Removing the public sector from both sides moves the female premium from +3.3% to +4.7%, not into double digits. The +13.8% figure is real at VP level only. The composition point behind the claim is confirmed: women in this sample are more than three times as likely as men to hold a public-sector seat.
Public companies pay about 12% less base for an equivalent seat	NOT SUPPORTED	Not supported. Within revenue band, public and late-stage private medians sit within a few percent of each other in all three bands. The real difference is the equity multiple, where late-stage private grants run 0.93× base against 0.58× at public companies.
Company revenue is the largest single predictor of base salary	PARTIAL	Partly. Span of control edges it out, and both trail the bonus target band, which is a component of pay rather than a driver of it. No factor explains more than a fifth of the variation on its own.
Equity is better expressed as a multiple of base than as a dollar grant	ADOPTED	Adopted. The multiple travels between pay levels in a way the dollar value does not. Note that every startup-stage cell is too small to report.
AI scope expansion tracks confidence that the role survives	CONFIRMED	Confirmed, with slightly softer numbers than first reported: 57% of those whose responsibilities expanded significantly are very confident, against 33% of those reporting no material change.

"Confirmed" means we reproduce the same figure from the cleaned record-level data. "Partial" means the direction holds but the magnitude does not. "Not supported" means the claim is not supported. Full detail, including the arithmetic, is in the Review Log tab of the accompanying segment tables workbook.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was produced jointly by Burtch Works and CDO Magazine. The people below shaped the survey, tested the analysis against the record-level data, and reviewed the findings before publication. The conclusions, and any errors, remain the authors' own.

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Molly Baab is an experienced product and operational leader. She thrives in growth stage businesses where she focuses on empowering teams to innovate, building iterative processes that empower scale, and balancing long term vision with near term business gains. Previously she was Chief Product and Operations Officer of business.com, a digital content service which helps small and growing companies to buy the products they need for their growing operations. Earlier she served as a product leader at companies across a variety of digital industries, including the consumer division of Purch, a multinational media company with teams in the US, UK, and Europe, and Rue La La, an ecommerce fashion site. Molly also launched the first two ecommerce businesses for TripAdvisor. She lives near Boston, Massachusetts with her husband and daughter.

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