kenso

KENSO RESEARCH · METHODOLOGY

Which C-level seat turns over fastest?

The data, the methods, every number and every limitation behind the study.

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Founder of Kenso

ABOUT THE DATA

This study uses Kenso internal data: the company, people and web records Kenso uses for sales and outreach, reused by Cristian Frunze for this study.

Aggregates only. Any group smaller than 50 people is suppressed, and no individual is named.

Figures 1 to 4 are the study page's charts, drawn from the same numbers. The methodology after them keeps the full tables.

SUMMARY

Which C-level seat turns over fastest?

The chief revenue officer. Half of CROs at B2B companies leave the seat within 27 months, sooner than any other C-level seat. CFOs stay 46 months and non-founder CEOs 64.

1.70

hazard ratio of leaving the seat for a CRO against a CFO, adjusted for company size, industry and start year. CPO 1.46, CMO 1.44.

31 months

median for B2B CMOs, not the 18 often quoted. Counting only CMOs who already left gives 24 months, which leaves out everyone still in the job.

96 vs 64

months in the seat for founder CEOs against CEOs who did not found the company, under the same sample rules.

14%

of COO exits were promotions to CEO, president, managing director or chair, against 6% or less for every other seat.

Data and method

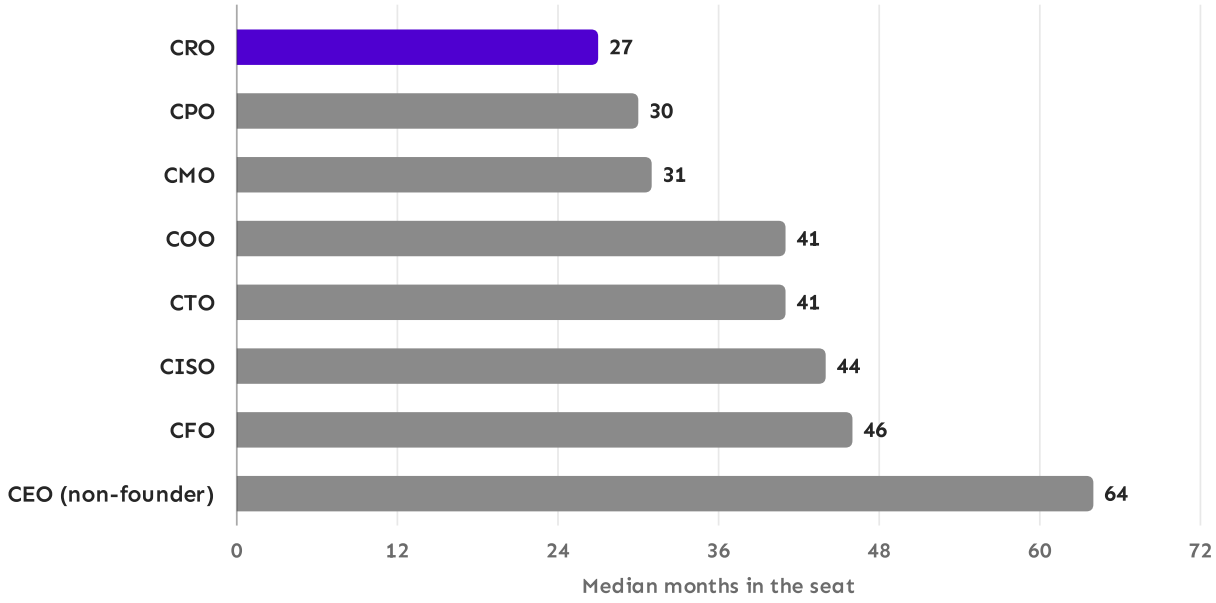
Data	Kenso internal data: the public work histories and company records Kenso uses for sales and outreach, reused by Cristian Frunze for this study. People in six countries: the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, Ireland and New Zealand.
Sample	296,409 C-level seats held by 244,502 people at 116,592 B2B companies with 10 or more employees when the seat started.
Date range	Seats started 2015 to 2025, followed to March 2026. Exit routes for exits from 2015 to 2024.
Method	Pre-registered survival analysis: Kaplan-Meier medians with 95% intervals for time in the seat, and a Cox model adjusted for company size, industry and start year. Headline numbers recomputed by an independent analysis.
Excluded	• Founders, counted apart • Interim and fractional executives • Companies with fewer than 10 employees when the seat started
Privacy	Aggregates only. Any group smaller than 50 people is suppressed, and no individual is named.

FIGURES

The study's charts

FIGURE 1

CROs leave the seat sooner than any other C-level executive

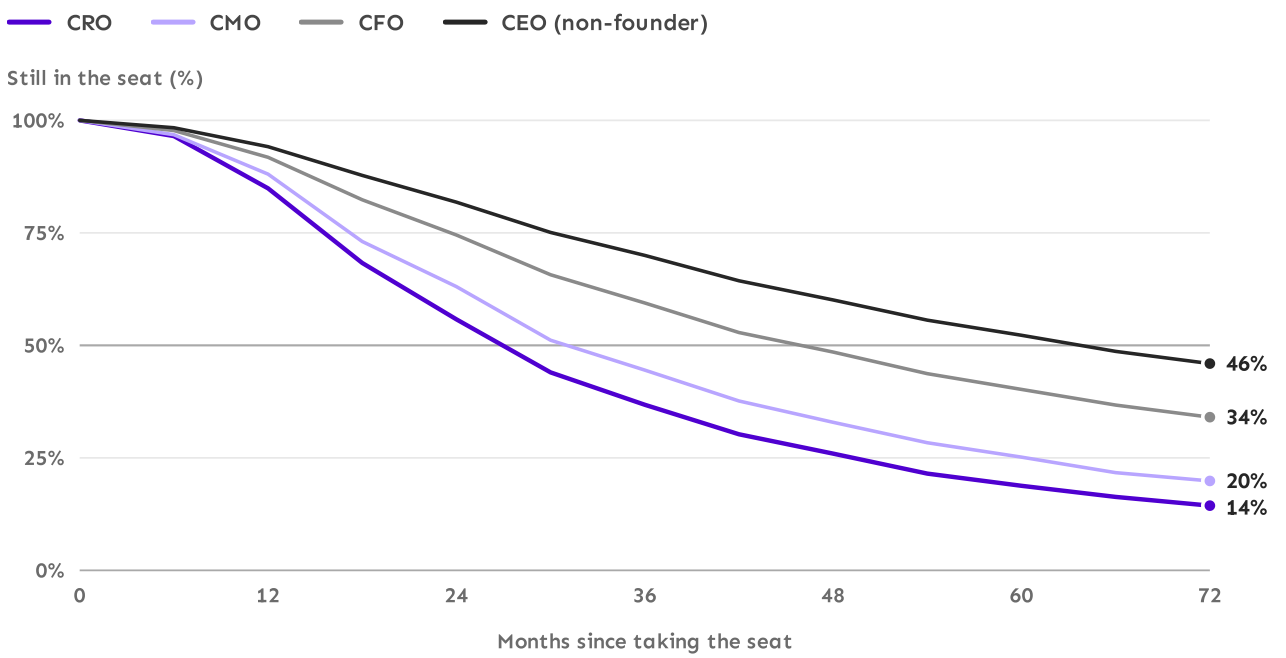


Median months in the seat (Kaplan-Meier) for seats held by non-founders at B2B companies with 10 or more employees at the start, started 2015 to 2025 and followed to March 2026.

Source: Kenso internal data (company and career records Kenso uses for sales and outreach), analysed by Cristian Frunze.

FIGURE 2

Half of CROs are gone by month 27, half of CFOs by month 46

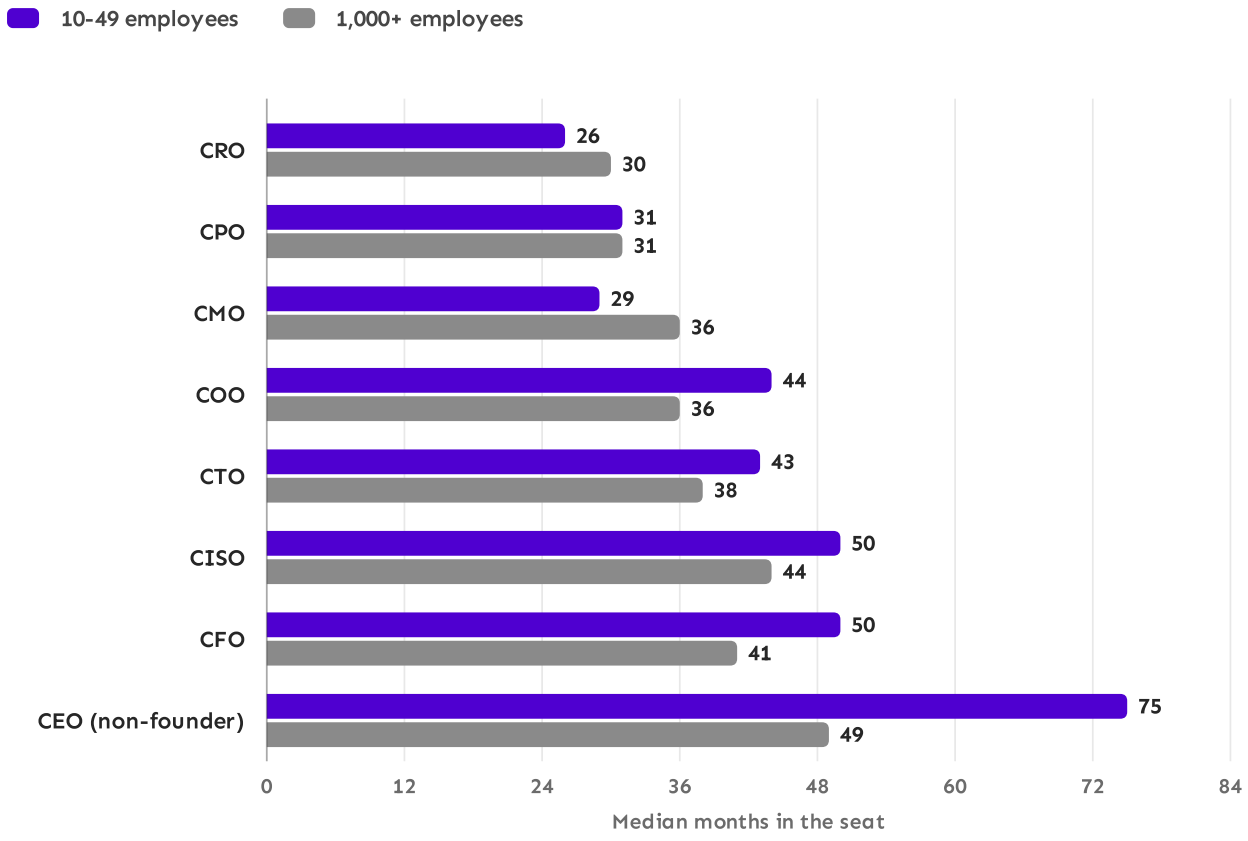


Share of executives still in the seat by months since they took it (Kaplan-Meier), for four of the eight seats. The line at 50% marks the median.

Source: Kenso internal data (company and career records Kenso uses for sales and outreach), analysed by Cristian Frunze.

FIGURE 3

Small companies keep their CEO longer, and their CRO shorter

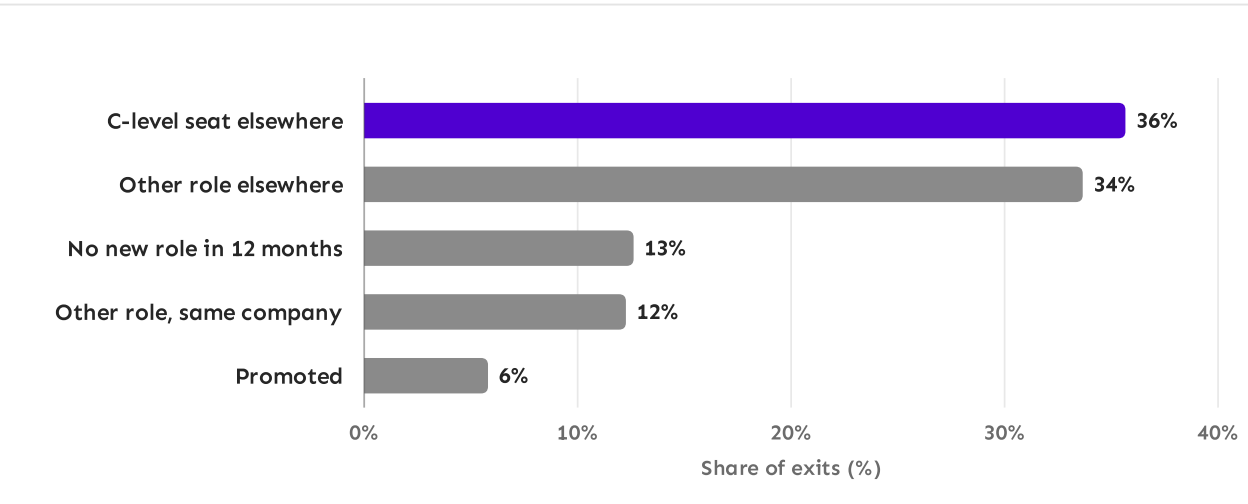


Median months in the seat by company size when the seat started: 10 to 49 employees against 1,000 or more.

Source: Kenso internal data (company and career records Kenso uses for sales and outreach), analysed by Cristian Frunze.

FIGURE 4

Most executives who leave the seat move to another company



Next role on the profile, starting from 2 months before to 12 months after the exit, for 129,174 exits from the eight seats between 2015 and 2024.

Source: Kenso internal data (company and career records Kenso uses for sales and outreach), analysed by Cristian Frunze.

FULL METHODOLOGY

The data, the methods and every number

Data: Kenso internal data, Kenso's dataset of public professional profiles, work histories and company records.

1. Summary

Among 296,409 C-level seats held by 244,502 people who did not found the company, at 116,592 B2B companies with 10 or more employees at the start of the seat (seats started 2015-2025, followed to 2026-03), the Kaplan-Meier median time in the seat was: CRO 27, CPO 30, CMO 31, COO 41, CTO 41, CISO 44, CFO 46, CEO 64 months. The CRO seat turns over fastest, also after adjusting for company size, industry and start year (hazard ratio 1.70 against the CFO seat). Founder CEOs stay 96 months against 64 for non-founder CEOs under the same rules. 69% of exits go to another company within 12 months and 6% are promotions. Correcting for executive jobs left off profiles lowers the medians by 3 to 13 months and leaves the CRO the fastest seat. All numbers describe people who live in the US, UK, Canada, Australia, Ireland and New Zealand.

2. Question and pre-registration

Question. How long do CEOs, CFOs, CTOs, COOs, CMOs, CROs and CPOs stay in the seat at B2B companies, by company size and start year? The Kenso Research study *The 18-month VP of Sales is a myth: the median is 32 months* covers VPs of Sales; this compares every C-level seat (CISO added, as in the study brief).

Pre-registration. The hypotheses and plan were pre-registered on 2026-10-20, before any data was read; before that, only the list of data tables, their sizes and their column schemas were looked at. The hypotheses and the scored results are in Section 9.

3. Data

Source	What was used	Size
Kenso internal data, people	Every work-history entry (title, company id, start and end month, current flag) of every profile, read from Kenso's shared person-level extract (built 2026-10-16/17). The data holds people whose current country is the US, UK, Canada, Australia, Ireland or New Zealand; their earlier jobs can be anywhere. Profiles were last refreshed between 2025-11 and 2026-04.	555,053,752 entries of 171,326,491 people read; 4,584,770 people with a candidate C-level title kept with all their entries
Kenso internal data, company records	Industry label, HQ country, record type, founded year; rebuilt quarterly headcount from the same shared extract	23,338,222 records
Kenso internal data, job changes	Job changes detected in 2026-06, filtered to previous titles that name a C-level seat, and those people's current work histories (short-job check, Section 7.6)	26,654 of 1,822,157 job changes
Kenso Research VP of Sales tenure study	Published outputs, cited unchanged (Section 8.9)	-

4. Sample

- **Companies:** company records with HQ in the six countries, an industry label in one of the six B2B industry groups of the Kenso Research study *Who gets cut first in a B2B layoff? Recruiters, then SDRs* (software and IT; other

technology, telecom and media; financial services; business and professional services; manufacturing, industrial and energy; healthcare and life sciences; label map unchanged from that study), and a record type other than nonprofit, government agency, educational, self-employed or sole proprietorship. Company records carry no B2B flag; the industry groups are Kenso Research's B2B definition.

- **Seats:** a seat is one person in one C-level seat at one company. Seats started 2015-01 to 2025-12, at companies with 10 or more people in the rebuilt headcount at the end of the quarter that contains the start month (the size rule of the VP of Sales tenure study), held by people who are not founders of that company (Section 6).
- **Flow (core seats):**

Step	Seats	People	Companies
all core seats (merged, interim and fractional left out)	2,080,284	1,589,625	1,153,502
company has a record	1,643,513	1,297,592	848,327
HQ in the six countries	1,640,249	1,295,398	846,538
B2B industry group	1,079,958	873,080	555,098
operating record type	1,026,490	828,441	527,614
started 2015-01 to 2025-12	669,615	565,368	377,871
10+ rebuilt employees at the start	311,714	257,324	121,225
non-founder holder (headline)	296,409	244,502	116,592

Seat spells were dropped before this flow when the entry had no company id (2,717,808 of 5,361,520 seat spells), no start date, a past entry with no end date, an end before the start, a start after 2026-03, or an ambiguous acronym at an industry where it means another seat (Section 5).

5. Title rules

Titles are normalized as in the shared sales title taxonomy (lower case, every run of non-word characters replaced by one space). The rules are checked by 83 test cases.

- **Spelled seats.** Every "chief ... officer" span (up to 5 words between) is read word by word: executive (CEO); financial, finance, fiscal (CFO); technology, technical, tech (CTO); operating, operations, operational (COO); marketing (CMO); revenue (CRO); product (CPO); security, cyber, information security (CISO). "Chief executive" without "officer" is CEO. Phrases are read first: information security and product security are CISO, information technology is the chief information officer, product marketing is marketing, revenue cycle (healthcare billing) names no seat. A compound title such as "chief product and technology officer" counts in every seat it names.
- **Variants,** each its own seat: chief growth officer (and CGO), chief customer officer (customer, customer success, client, customer experience), chief commercial officer, chief sales officer, chief business officer, chief strategy officer, chief information officer, chief people officer (people, human resources, HR, talent, culture; CHRO), chief data officer (data, analytics), chief digital officer.
- **Acronyms.** CEO, CFO, CTO, COO, CMO, CRO, CPO, CISO, CIO, CGO and CHRO count as whole words, except when the acronym is the initials of a "chief ... officer" span in the same title ("chief risk officer CRO" is a risk officer), when the next word makes it another job ("CRO manager", "CMO relations", "CEO office"), or when the previous word does ("production technician CRO"). Ambiguous bare acronyms depend on the company: a bare CMO does not count at health and life-sciences companies (chief medical officer), a bare CRO not at financial-services companies (chief risk officer) or health and life-sciences companies (mostly chief research officer; this goes beyond the pre-registered text and was logged as a decision), a bare CIO not at financial-services companies (chief

investment officer), and a bare CPO counts only at software and IT companies. The holders' other titles back these rules.

- **Not seats:** deputy, assistant, associate and vice seats; titles that point at someone else's seat (assistant to the CEO, chief of staff to the CEO, office of the CTO); field CTOs and CISOs; regional and divisional qualifiers (regional, EMEA, APAC, Americas, North America, Europe, division, country and similar); former, retired, aspiring, student and intern titles; advisory board and non-executive titles; "CEO coach" and similar. Interim, acting and fractional seats are flagged and left out of the main build (a sensitivity row includes them).
- **Audit.** Before any tenure was computed, the most common matched titles per seat, the most common unmatched titles containing "chief" or a seat acronym, and the most common titles dropped by a negating rule were read (titles held by 50 or more people only), and the rules were fixed once. 549,415 of 898,272 distinct candidate titles name a seat. Match counts over every candidate spell, any company:

Seat	Distinct titles	Spells	People	Spells named by a bare acronym	Interim spells	Fractional spells	Titles dropped by a negating rule
CEO	241,322	3,109,458	2,585,776	2,203,461	36,709	2,158	81,291
CFO	84,158	707,886	474,649	325,964	22,527	12,928	34,746
CTO	41,996	297,044	226,520	148,668	4,815	4,814	11,180
COO	87,871	671,886	582,292	221,409	9,407	4,605	26,821
CMO	24,328	130,666	102,951	39,823	2,595	9,333	6,116
CRO	9,656	45,739	38,015	11,249	711	1,463	2,468
CPO	9,874	43,998	37,245	14,025	603	957	2,046
CISO	10,713	31,302	22,167	10,446	1,222	749	3,017
Chief Growth Officer	2,775	16,228	14,899	859	154	405	581
Chief Customer Officer	2,933	13,110	11,851	0	179	72	823
Chief Commercial Officer	3,666	28,781	25,603	0	381	188	1,092
Chief Sales Officer	1,851	11,963	11,065	0	51	82	401
Chief Business Officer	3,007	16,183	14,770	0	117	59	586
Chief Strategy Officer	7,684	38,271	35,032	0	292	249	1,603
Chief Information Officer	33,916	131,098	98,242	63,081	5,267	2,187	15,922
Chief People Officer	9,259	50,144	38,616	3,986	1,822	807	4,117
Chief Data Officer	3,251	9,241	7,966	0	239	75	815
Chief Digital Officer	2,590	8,522	7,364	0	284	64	811

6. Seats, censoring and founders

- **Merging.** A person's spells in the same seat at the same company that overlap or start at most one month after the previous one ends are one seat (the rule of the VP of Sales tenure study): earliest start, latest end, current if

the latest spell is current.

- **Tenure** in months = end month - start month + 1. Observation ends at 2026-03, the last complete quarter before the profile refreshes: seats marked current, and seats whose end month is after 2026-03, are censored there.
- **Founders** (the rule of the Kenso Research study *The first 20 hires: engineers first, a seller by hire 7*): a seat holder is a founder of the company when any of their entries there has a founder title (founder, co-founder, founding partner, owner and similar, but not job titles such as product owner), or when their earliest dated entry at the company starts before 1 January of the year after the founded year on the company record and has a C-level or managing director title. Headline comparisons use non-founder seats.

7. Methods

1. **Tenure.** Kaplan-Meier survival in the seat; the median is the first month at which the survival curve is at or below 50%, with a 95% interval from the log-log Greenwood band; shares still in the seat at 12, 18, 24, 36 and 60 months.
2. **Cuts.** Size band at the start (10-49, 50-199, 200-999, 1,000+), industry group, start year and start-year group, country of the person.
3. **Adjusted comparison.** Cox proportional hazards model on the headline core seats with seat, size band, industry group and start-year group (references CFO, 200-999, software and IT, 2015-2017), Breslow ties, robust errors clustered by person.
4. **Exits.** Headline seats that ended 2015-01 to 2024-12, so the full 12-month window after the exit ends by 2025-12. The exit is classified from the person's other entries that start from 2 months before to 12 months after the exit month, first match in this order: promoted (same company, CEO, president, managing director or chair title; for a CEO, a chair title), other move inside the company, moved to another company (C-level seat or other role), left (no new entry in the window).
5. **Start years** 2010-2025 for the series (any size, since rebuilt headcount starts in 2015).
6. **Short jobs left off profiles** (method 2 of Kenso's earlier study of sales tenure). Among executives in the June 2026 job-change data whose previous title is a core seat and whose new job is on their profile, the missing share m is the share whose profile no longer lists the previous company at all (low variant: not counted as missing when the profile lists, with no company, a title naming one of the previous title's core seats). Correction: m / (1 - m) times the number of ended headline seats is added as extra seats lasting 1-6 months (low, with the low m) or 1-12 months (high, with m), spread evenly, and each median is recomputed.
7. **Sensitivities:** observation end 2025-10; unmerged spells; bare acronyms excluded; chief growth officer in CMO and chief sales officer in CRO; founders by title only; any HQ country; interim and acting spells included; interim and acting seats alone; the VP of Sales tenure study's basis; any size at the start.
8. **Privacy.** Groups under 50 people are suppressed; published title lists hold only titles with 50 or more holders; only aggregate tables leave Kenso's servers.

8. Results

8.1 Tenure by seat (headline sample)

Seat	Seats	People	Exits	Median months (95% CI)	In seat 12 m	24 m	36 m	60 m	Completed seats only
CRO	15,812	14,002	10,017	27 (26-27)	85%	56%	37%	19%	20
CPO	9,213	8,349	5,765	30 (30-31)	88%	62%	42%	21%	23
CMO	18,642	15,869	12,238	31 (31-32)	88%	63%	44%	25%	24
COO	71,836	68,211	39,437	41 (40-41)	89%	70%	55%	36%	25

Seat	Seats	People	Exits	Median months (95% CI)	In seat 12 m	24 m	36 m	60 m	Completed seats only
CTO	31,815	28,890	17,948	41 (40-41)	90%	71%	55%	35%	25
CISO	8,682	7,255	4,829	44 (43-45)	91%	74%	58%	37%	27
CFO	80,170	65,209	42,529	46 (46-47)	92%	75%	59%	40%	26
CEO	60,239	56,117	25,434	64 (63-65)	94%	82%	70%	52%	30

8.2 Variant seats (same sample rules)

Variant seat	Seats	People	Median months (95% CI)	In seat 24 m
Chief Growth Officer	4,914	4,722	30 (29-31)	60%
Chief Customer Officer	5,490	5,136	32 (31-33)	63%
Chief Commercial Officer	9,815	9,310	32 (31-33)	63%
Chief Sales Officer	2,923	2,831	34 (32-36)	64%
Chief Strategy Officer	8,584	8,269	35 (34-36)	65%
Chief Business Officer	3,249	3,111	36 (34-38)	65%
Chief Digital Officer	2,214	2,119	36 (34-37)	70%
Chief Data Officer	2,748	2,564	37 (36-38)	69%
Chief Information Officer	14,230	12,681	47 (46-48)	77%
Chief People Officer	14,434	12,451	47 (46-48)	76%

8.3 Founders and non-founders

Seat	Basis	Non-founder people	Non-founder median	Founder people	Founder median	Founders in seat at 60 m
CEO	10+ employees at the start	56,117	64	7,960	96	65%
CEO	any size at the start	111,745	112	148,427	not reached	82%
CFO	10+ employees at the start	65,209	46	1,218	46	41%
CFO	any size at the start	82,194	50	7,390	92	61%
CTO	10+ employees at the start	28,890	41	1,950	49	42%
CTO	any size at the start	45,146	46	25,817	72	55%
COO	10+ employees at the start	68,211	41	2,407	47	41%
COO	any size at the start	103,965	48	22,193	81	58%
CMO	10+ employees at the start	15,869	31	436	35	25%
CMO	any size at the start	22,344	34	4,796	61	50%
CRO	10+ employees at the start	14,002	27	498	36	26%
CRO	any size at the start	17,076	28	2,115	55	45%
CPO	10+ employees at the start	8,349	30	635	39	32%

Seat	Basis	Non-founder people	Non-founder median	Founder people	Founder median	Founders in seat at 60 m
CPO	any size at the start	10,404	32	3,593	56	48%
CISO	10+ employees at the start	7,255	44	<50	suppressed	
CISO	any size at the start	8,148	46	321	115	67%

Under the headline rules most founder seats drop out, because a founder's seat starts when the company is small; basis (b) compares all seats at frame companies started 2015-2025.

8.4 Company size at the start (median months)

Seat	10-49	50-199	200-999	1,000+
CRO	26	26	27	30
CPO	31	30	30	31
CMO	29	30	34	36
COO	44	40	38	36
CTO	43	40	39	38
CISO	50	42	43	44
CFO	50	44	44	41
CEO	75	61	58	49

8.5 Industry group (median months)

Industry group	CRO	CPO	CMO	COO	CTO	CISO	CFO	CEO
Software and IT	25	30	26	35	38	40	37	52
Other technology, telecom and media	29	31	29	37	43	46	42	56
Financial services	31	30	39	44	42	48	54	69
Business and professional services	26	30	37	45	42	55	49	70
Manufacturing, industrial and energy	32	31	34	42	46	45	49	71
Healthcare and life sciences	30	36	29	37	41	46	39	55
Consumer, public sector and the rest (contrast, not B2B)	28	29	30	38	39	44	43	59

8.6 Start years

Share still in the seat at 24 months, by start-year group:

Seat	2015-2017	2018-2020	2021-2023	2024-2025
CRO	61%	60%	52%	57%
CPO	67%	65%	58%	64%
CMO	65%	64%	61%	63%
COO	71%	71%	69%	72%
CTO	72%	73%	70%	72%
CISO	76%	75%	72%	73%
CFO	77%	76%	72%	76%

Seat	2015-2017	2018-2020	2021-2023	2024-2025
CEO	83%	84%	80%	82%

Share of seats that ended within 6 months, by start year (frame, any size, non-founders; Kaplan-Meier):

Start year	CRO	CPO	CMO	COO	CTO	CISO	CFO	CEO
2010	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
2011	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
2012	4%	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%
2013	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
2014	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%
2015	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
2016	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%
2017	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%	1%
2018	4%	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%
2019	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	1%
2020	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%
2021	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%
2022	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%	1%
2023	4%	3%	5%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%
2024	4%	3%	5%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%
2025	4%	4%	5%	3%	4%	3%	3%	2%

8.7 Country of the person (median months)

Seat	US	GB	CA	AU	IE and NZ
CRO	27	25	28	24	28
CPO	30	31	32	30	31
CMO	32	29	33	31	31
COO	42	37	44	35	39
CTO	41	39	41	37	43
CISO	44	43	47	39	53
CFO	48	42	48	40	49
CEO	68	56	75	51	63

8.8 Exits

Seat	Exits	Promoted	Other move inside	Moved: C-level seat	Moved: other role	Left	Moves into a founder title
CEO	20,281	2%	12%	35%	33%	17%	11%
CFO	35,331	4%	9%	47%	27%	13%	4%
CTO	14,712	2%	14%	31%	41%	11%	12%
COO	32,236	14%	15%	25%	34%	12%	9%

Seat	Exits	Promoted	Other move inside	Moved: C-level seat	Moved: other role	Left	Moves into a founder title
CMO	10,276	2%	12%	38%	36%	12%	11%
CRO	7,815	6%	11%	36%	38%	9%	10%
CPO	4,579	4%	15%	32%	40%	9%	14%
CISO	3,944	0%	10%	41%	39%	10%	6%
All core seats	129,174	6%	12%	36%	34%	13%	9%

With a same-company role held at the exit and continuing after it counted as an internal move:

Seat	Promoted	Other move inside	Moved: C-level seat	Moved: other role	Left
CEO	2%	16%	34%	32%	16%
CFO	4%	11%	47%	26%	13%
CTO	2%	16%	31%	41%	10%
COO	14%	17%	25%	34%	10%
CMO	2%	13%	37%	36%	11%
CRO	6%	12%	36%	38%	9%
CPO	4%	16%	32%	40%	8%
CISO	0%	12%	40%	39%	9%
All core seats	6%	14%	35%	33%	12%

8.9 VPs of Sales (VP of Sales tenure study) next to the C-level seats on that study's basis

Row	People	Median months (95% CI)	In seat 24 m
VP of Sales (VP of Sales tenure study)	102,652	35 (35-36)	65%
CRO family (VP of Sales tenure study)	14,675	26 (26-27)	56%
Head of Sales (VP of Sales tenure study)	28,863	26 (26-27)	54%
Chief Sales Officer (VP of Sales tenure study)	3,288	33 (32-35)	63%
All top sales leaders (VP of Sales tenure study headline)	143,761	32 (32-32)	62%
CEO	119,384	67 (66-68)	82%
CFO	107,693	47 (46-47)	74%
CTO	39,568	40 (40-41)	71%
COO	121,161	40 (40-40)	70%
CMO	26,098	32 (31-32)	63%
CRO	17,426	27 (27-28)	56%
CPO	10,888	30 (30-31)	62%
CISO	10,737	45 (44-46)	75%

8.10 Short jobs left off profiles

Seat	Leavers in the check	Missing share	Low variant	Observed median	Corrected median, low	Corrected median, high	In seat at 12 m, high correction
CRO	716	21%	18%	27	24	23	72%

Seat	Leavers in the check	Missing share	Low variant	Observed median	Corrected median, low	Corrected median, high	In seat at 12 m, high correction
CPO	442	19%	17%	30	26	26	77%
CMO	1,177	22%	17%	31	27	25	74%
COO	3,758	20%	16%	41	36	34	78%
CTO	2,422	26%	21%	41	34	32	75%
CISO	276	14%	12%	44	40	39	83%
CFO	3,093	18%	12%	46	42	39	82%
CEO	11,326	27%	19%	64	55	51	81%

Pooled over core seats: 22,921 leavers, missing share 23.8% (low variant 17.8%).

8.11 Cox model

Term	Hazard ratio	95% CI
seat=ceo	0.71	0.70-0.72
seat=ciso	0.95	0.92-0.98
seat=cmo	1.44	1.41-1.47
seat=coo	1.14	1.13-1.16
seat=cpo	1.46	1.42-1.50
seat=cro	1.70	1.66-1.74
seat=cto	1.05	1.03-1.07
size_band=1,000+	1.10	1.08-1.12
size_band=10-49	0.87	0.86-0.88
size_band=50-199	0.97	0.96-0.99
group=business_services	0.78	0.77-0.79
group=financial	0.74	0.73-0.75
group=industrial	0.78	0.77-0.79
group=life_sciences	0.95	0.93-0.98
group=tech_media	0.89	0.87-0.91
year_group=2018-2020	0.99	0.97-1.00
year_group=2021-2023	1.04	1.03-1.05
year_group=2024-2025	1.01	0.98-1.03

8.12 Sensitivities (median months)

Sensitivity	CRO	CPO	CMO	COO	CTO	CISO	CFO	CEO
main (headline)	27	30	31	41	41	44	46	64
observation ends 2025-10	26	30	31	40	40	43	45	63
unmerged spells	26	29	31	39	39	41	43	61
bare acronyms excluded	27	30	32	41	42	45	48	63
bare CRO dropped only at financial-services companies (Plan wording)	27	30	31	41	41	44	46	64

Sensitivity	CRO	CPO	CMO	COO	CTO	CISO	CFO	CEO
chief growth officer in CMO, chief sales officer in CRO	28	30	31	41	41	44	46	64
founders by founder titles only	27	30	31	41	41	44	46	65
any HQ country	27	30	31	41	41	44	46	64
interim and acting spells included	26	30	30	40	39	42	44	61
interim and acting seats only	9	9	10	11	10	11	9	8
VP of Sales tenure study basis (all industries, any HQ, 10+, founder titles in the seat excluded)	27	30	32	40	40	45	47	67
any size at the start	28	32	34	48	46	46	50	112

9. Hypotheses

#	Pre-registered claim	Result	Verdict
1	CRO shortest median of the 8 core seats; CMO among the 3 shortest; both 6+ months below non-founder CEO	ranking CRO 27, CPO 30, CMO 31, COO 41, CTO 41, CISO 44, CFO 46, CEO 64	holds
2	CMO median above 24 months	CMO 31 months	holds
3	founder CEO median at least 1.5 x non-founder CEO median (headline rules)	96 vs 64 months, ratio 1.50	holds
4	median shorter at 10-49 than at 1,000+ employees in 6+ of 8 seats	2 of 8 (CMO, CRO)	wrong
5	24-month in-seat share lower for 2021-2023 starts than 2015-2017 in 6+ of 8 seats	8 of 8	holds
6	promotion under 10% of exits for every non-CEO seat; COO highest; moved > left for every seat	promotion CFO 3.8%, CTO 2.1%, COO 14.1%, CMO 2.4%, CRO 5.6%, CPO 3.9%, CISO 0.3%; COO is the most promoted non-CEO seat; moving to another company outnumbers leaving with no new role for every seat	wrong
7	high short-job correction moves every median by under 6 months and keeps the fastest seat	changes (high) CEO -13, CFO -7, CTO -9, COO -7, CMO -6, CRO -4, CPO -4, CISO -5; fastest after correction CRO (high), CRO (low)	wrong

10. Verification

An independent re-analysis, written from the study plan alone without seeing our code, tables or report, recomputed 178 numbers. It received the pre-registered plan, the definitional decisions, the title rules, the industry map and the same data extracts. The recomputed numbers cover every headline median with its interval, the seat, people and exit counts, the in-seat shares, the ranking, the founder comparison, the size and start-year cuts, the exit routes, the short-job shares and corrections, two Cox hazard ratios and the medians on the VP of Sales tenure study's basis. The match rules were fixed before any of its numbers were read: counts equal, medians equal in whole months, interval bounds within 1 month, shares within 0.1 percentage point, hazard ratios within 0.01 and corrected medians within 1 month.

In the first comparison 132 of 178 numbers matched. The differences traced to this study's code or to definitions the plan left open: a tie in the current-seat flag (two exit counts off by 1), company records with a founded year after 2026 (one founder count), which spells count in an exit and which titles count as a promotion or a C-level destination (the exit-route shares), and two details of the short-job check (its base and the low variant). Each was fixed and the analysis rerun, and the independent re-analysis recomputed the 61 affected numbers under the pinned rules. Now 178

of 178 match. No headline median or interval moved in the fixes. One rule in this study is broader than the plan's text: a bare "CRO" is also left out at healthcare and life-sciences companies, where most of those titles belong to research officers. Under the plan's wording the CRO median and interval are the same (Section 8.12).

11. Alternative explanations and limitations

1. *Profiles miss short jobs, so tenure is too long.* Measured directly (Section 8.10): about a quarter of executives who changed jobs in June 2026 no longer listed the job they left. If those were short stints, the medians fall by 3 (CRO) to 13 months (CEO). The ranking of the fastest seats does not change. Limitation for the levels, not the ranking.
2. *Older cohorts look more stable because old profiles lost their short jobs.* The share of seats ending within 6 months rises with the start year, for CMOs from 1% for 2010 starts to 5% for 2025 starts and for CEOs from 1% to 2% (Section 8.6), which fits this explanation as well as a real change. The 2015-2017 against 2021-2023 comparison (hypothesis 5) is therefore read as partly a data effect.
3. *Company mix: CROs work at young software companies that churn everyone.* The Cox model adjusts for size, industry and start years and keeps the CRO hazard 1.70 times the CFO's (Section 8.11). CRO has the shortest median in every size band and every country (Sections 8.4 and 8.7), and in four of the seven industry groups, software and IT included; in the other three one seat is shorter by 1 month (CPO in financial services and in manufacturing, industrial and energy, CMO in healthcare and life sciences; Section 8.5).
4. *A new title: CRO seats skew to recent starts, which turn over faster.* CRO has the lowest 24-month in-seat share in every start-year group (Section 8.6) and the shortest median in every start year from 2015 to 2023, and the Cox model adjusts for start years.
5. *Retitling inside the company: a CRO renamed chief commercial officer or president ends the seat without leaving.* 6% of CRO exits are promotions and 11% other moves inside the company, close to the CFO's 4% and 9% and the CMO's 2% and 12% (Section 8.8). Merging chief sales officer into CRO gives 28 months (Section 8.12).
6. *Title inflation: some "CRO" or "CMO" titles are small-company or vanity titles.* The 10+ employee rule removes companies too small to have such a team; CRO and CMO have the two shortest medians at 10-49 employees, and CRO is still the shortest at 1,000+ (Section 8.4).
7. *Late reporting: people add exits months late, so recent seats look longer.* Ending observation at 2025-10 instead of 2026-03 moves each median by at most 1 month (Section 8.12).
8. *Title edits at promotion: a CRO who becomes CEO may overwrite the old title.* This shortens nothing that is visible and cannot be measured (title-change history is not in the data); the promotion shares in Section 8.8 are lower bounds.
9. *Ambiguous acronyms.* Excluding every bare acronym moves each median by at most 2 months and keeps the CRO the fastest seat, and the plan's narrower rule for a bare "CRO" gives the same CRO median (Section 8.12).
10. *Founders counted as hired executives.* Classifying founders by founder titles only moves each median by at most 1 month (Section 8.12).
11. *Profiles that exist today.* Executives who deleted their profiles are missing; if fast leavers delete more often, the levels are biased. This cannot be measured here.
12. *Six countries.* Kenso internal data holds people living in the US, UK, Canada, Australia, Ireland and New Zealand, so seats held from elsewhere are missing and rebuilt headcount undercounts companies with staff abroad. The frame is limited to companies with HQ in these six countries.
13. *Causation.* The study compares seats; it does not show why executives leave.

12. Sources

- Kenso internal data (Kenso's dataset of public professional profiles, work histories and company records), through the shared headcount history extract built for the Kenso Research study *Did AI kill the SDR role?* and two small filtered pulls (Section 3).
- The shared sales title taxonomy, built for the Kenso Research study *Who are GTM engineers, and where do they come from?*
- Other Kenso Research studies: the VP of Sales tenure study, the first 20 hires study (founder rule), the layoffs study (industry groups) and the earlier tenure study (short-job method).
