

PRODUCTS
THAT
COUNT

The 2025 CPO Insights Report:

Product Leadership in a New World Order

Adapt, Innovate, and Lead. Your Path to CEO Starts Now

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Foreword by Capgemini

In today's business landscape, the role of the Chief Product Officer (CPO) has deeply evolved and is now a strong lever to generate significant business impact for companies. This transformation does not only illustrate the essential value of product leadership, but also the profound impact that CPOs have on business.

This is even more important as technology and innovation are evolving faster than ever. In this context, I believe Agentic AI will revolutionize the way we work, interact and operate, driving efficiency and innovation at scale. Unlike Generative AI, Agentic AI can autonomously perceive, reason, and act, thus transforming products, processes, organizational models, and skills. This paradigm shift will increase the importance of the CPO's role, and position them at the forefront of this technological revolution.

The CPOs will be key in the creation of new AI-based products and services. They will contribute to reshape the business model of the enterprise and amplify its competitiveness. To do so, integrating AI into the development of products and services will help them meet but also anticipate new customer needs.

Therefore, they will have to think about upskilling teams to ensure that their enterprise is equipped to thrive in an AI-driven world. This will imply to revamp the role of product managers and foster a culture of continuous learning, and to attract and hire people from diverse backgrounds to build a varied talent pool. This is essential to bring different perspectives and innovative solutions to the table.

Thank you, Products That Count, for providing a report with valuable insights into the evolving role of the CPO and the exciting opportunities that lie ahead. As we embrace this new era, the leadership and vision of CPOs will be paramount in shaping the future of business.



Franck Greverie

Chief Technology & Portfolio Officer
Global Business Lines Leader
Group Executive Board Member, Capgemini

As Capgemini's Chief Portfolio Officer since 2018, Franck Greverie is leading the Group product management and orchestration of pre-sales and solutioning through Centres of Excellence. He is also responsible for the Cloud Infrastructure Services (Cloud & Cybersecurity), Digital Customer Experience, Business Services and Insights & Data (Data & AI) Global Business Lines. In January 2025, Franck added Chief Technology Officer to his scope of responsibilities. Franck has been a member of the Group Executive Board since 2020.

Editorial Insights from our Resident CPO

After speaking with hundreds of Chief Product Officers (CPOs) this year—from early-stage startups to Fortune 100 giants like Walmart, Salesforce, and Microsoft—one theme stands out: we're at a pivotal moment for product leadership. The pace of change, primarily driven by AI, is unlike anything we've seen before. For CPOs, the challenge is clear—adapt boldly or risk irrelevance.

This marks our fourth year conducting in-depth CPO research at Products That Count, and what we're seeing in 2025 represents a true shift. In earlier years, we tracked the CPO role's rise—from just 3–4% of Fortune 1000 companies having a CPO in 2020, to over 30% just two years later. We watched product leaders move beyond internal influence games to own P&Ls, and, in many cases, step into CEO roles. **In fact, 20% of last year's award winners were promoted to CEO or President within 12 months.**

But 2025 is different. The AI revolution is no longer theoretical—it's actively reshaping how we build, lead, and compete. And it's created a real divide between three levels of CPOs: the good, the great, and the best.

■ The Good

Are experimenting with AI for things like faster PRDs, better insights, more efficient support. Valuable? Absolutely. But in a world that's moving this fast, incremental change simply isn't enough. Internal fears—whether personal or organizational—can stall deeper transformation. Without faster evolution, some of these companies may struggle to stay relevant in the years ahead.

■ The Great

Are driving organic transformation. They're not just adding AI to existing workflows—they're fundamentally rethinking how products are built. Our research shows these leaders are shipping products up to 4x faster. That kind of acceleration doesn't come from shortcuts. It comes from reinventing the structure: leaner teams, redesigned roles, and entirely new approaches from design to delivery.

■ The Best

Are setting the pace—embracing change with urgency and vision. They're acquiring AI startups, entering new product categories, and leading companies where the product isn't just one function—it's the heartbeat of the entire business. These are product-centered companies, where value creation starts with the product and flows into every other department.

Realize, too, it's not just about CPOs: the product manager role is evolving, too. After years of specialization, we're seeing a return to generalists with broad thinking—and the rise of a new kind of role: **the AI Product Manager**. This PM blends technical know-how, data fluency, and sharp strategic thinking to stay ahead of the curve.

To every product leader reading this: **This is your moment**. Yes, the science of product is evolving quickly. But your art—your judgment, your instincts, your ability to lead through ambiguity—remains essential. AI won't replace that. If anything, it is making your skills more important than ever.

We're only at the beginning. The future belongs to those ready to lead boldly.



Renée Niemi

Resident Chief Product Officer
at Products That Count

Good CPOs experiment with AI

- **Incremental gains:** 10-20%
- **Use AI** for efficiency: PRD writing, customer insights, support automation, etc
- Face significant resistance to change internally
- **Fear:** job loss

Great CPOs transform with AI

- **Massive benefits:** 4X faster product time-to-market
- **Use AI** for organic growth: rapidly transform workflows
- Caught in a race to minimize customer chum
- **Fear:** competition

Best CPOs seize the business

- **Exponential gains:** 1 order-of-magnitude change and M&A for talent and IP
- **Use AI** for inorganic growth: Reimagine the business, create new product categories
- Leading the disruption
- **Fear:** none!

Executive Summary

The 2025 CPO Insights Report is the latest dispatch in an ongoing research series by Products That Count, the premier resource for Chief Product Officer insights and a global network of 500,000+ product managers and leaders. This report, based on surveys of 1,000+ Chief Product Officers and year-long conversations, provides a roadmap for forward-thinking product and business leaders.

Here are the **five “do-or-die” shifts** that the best CPOs are embracing right now.

- 01 Brace for chaos—from internal pressures to market uncertainty**
CPOs face internal and external roadblocks that threaten innovation. Budget constraints limit smaller companies, while legacy tech and cross-functional misalignment slow larger ones. Market competition, economic uncertainty, and regulatory changes combine to make a complex picture in which agility and strategic investments are critical for success.
- 02 Hire for adaptability as AI redefines product roles**
AI is transforming product management—automating workflows, accelerating decisions, and blurring traditional role boundaries. Generalist “Super” PMs who can think across functions and build without full teams are in high demand. In sectors from B2B SaaS, to FinTech, to Retail, adaptability, data fluency, and a sustainability mindset aren’t optional—they’re essential.
- 03 Own M&A—It’s not just growth, it’s survival**
Mergers & Acquisitions are no longer just for expansion—they’re a survival strategy and a way to maintain exponential growth in the AI era. FinTech and SaaS companies leverage M&A for tech and talent acquisition, while Retail focuses on vertical integration. The challenge? Seamless product and cultural integration, making CPOs pivotal in ensuring post-M&A success.
- 04 Recalibrate product success metrics**
Revenue is still king—but it’s not the whole story. Speed, adaptability, and rapid experimentation are now essential. Metrics like retention, satisfaction, and time-to-value are rising fast. Product-first companies focus on engagement and ROI, while sales-first zero in on conversion. Key here is aligning metrics with long-term growth strategies and customer impact.

05 Seize the future to fast-track your path to CEO

More organizations are shifting from sales-first to product-first models, empowering PMs to drive business strategy. As companies invest in AI training, the future belongs to those who adapt fast. This shift reshapes career trajectories, with CPOs stepping into CEO, COO, and board roles. Companies with a CPO outperform financially. The message is clear: Product leaders deserve the top job. *Go claim it.*

From first establishing a place in the C-suite, to navigating tech challenges, to now driving business strategy and innovation in the age of AI, the CPO has emerged as a pivotal leader with a clear path to the very top of companies.

The trajectory is accelerating. Based on the findings in this report, Products That Count predicts that **by 2030, companies that do not have a CPO will become obsolete.**

Part 1: Brace for chaos and win

Topline takeaway: *The product leaders who embrace disruption—investing in people and AI rather than cutting costs—will win in the AI era.*

Product leaders are under intense pressure. From budget constraints and economic shifts to AI's rapid evolution, CPOs navigate constant disruption from both internal and external forces.

Impact of AI on product organizations

100%

of best CPOs
work in product-first
culture

2:1

PM: Engineer ratio
shranked from
10:1 pre-AI

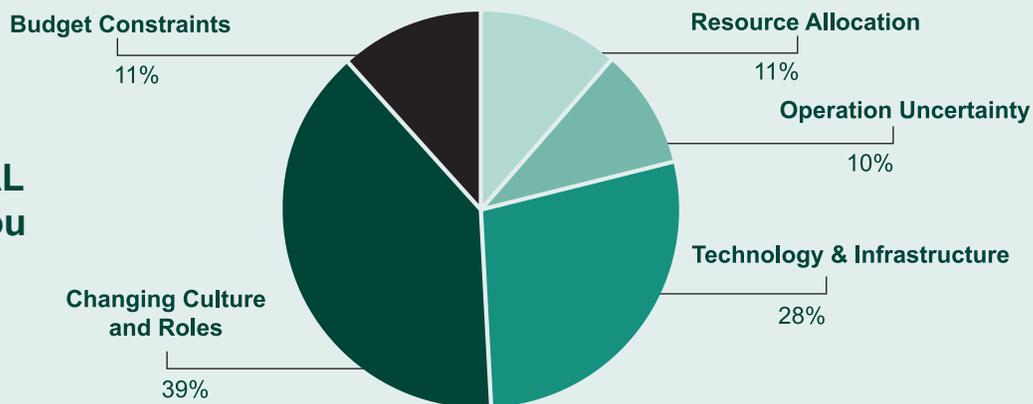
4X

Increase
in time-to-market for
new products

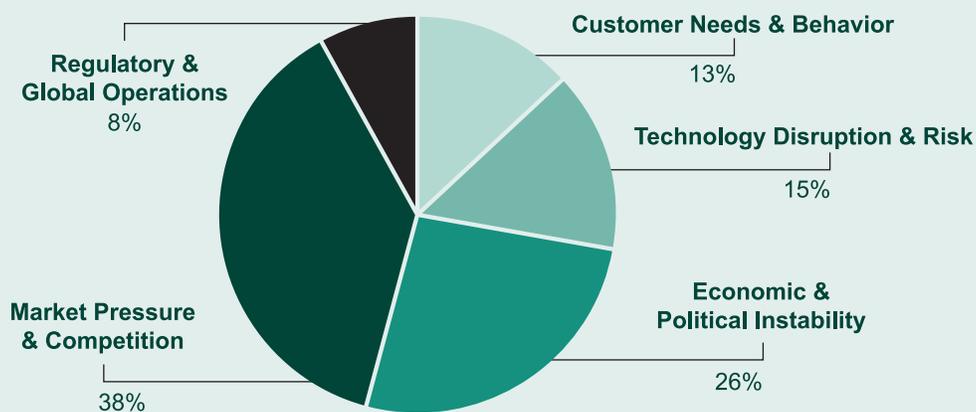
Internally, the top challenge cited by CPOs is changing culture and roles—from talent management to resistance to change. While 38% of our respondents report having achieved a product-led culture, most are still in transition. Technology concerns like legacy systems and tech debt ranked high among internal challenges as well, slowing innovation and time to market.

Externally, nearly **40% cite fierce market competition as their biggest hurdle, reinforcing that innovation waits for no one, especially in the age of AI.** As AI removes the barriers to entry for challengers and upstarts, incumbents are threatened.

What is the number 1 INTERNAL challenge facing you over the next year?



What is the number 1 EXTERNAL challenge you anticipate facing over the next year?



Consider two approaches to AI adoption, from two hypothetical business leaders. Leader X cuts costs, using AI to downsize staff. Leader Y reinvests AI-driven efficiencies into hiring, education, and product growth.

A year later, Leader X's company, lean but stagnant, is falling behind. Leader Y's team, empowered and growing, is pulling ahead.

This is AI's real impact on product teams—**not mass layoffs but radical transformation**. The traditional 10:1 engineer-to-PM ratio is shifting, giving PMs the leverage of an entire team.

The key question: will there be 10x fewer engineers or 10x more PMs?

Our research suggests the ratio will go from ten engineers for every product manager to two-to-one. Based on the qualitative results of our 1000+ CPO survey, we can conclude that software engineers will soon become software architects as the ratio shifts in favor of product managers. In other words, **AI won't shrink the product workforce—it will supercharge it**. Product teams will move faster, create, test, and iterate, all in a fraction of the time it used to take. Just as industrialization in agriculture freed humans to build new possibilities in past centuries, AI will expand opportunities and future horizons.

In the chaos of intense market competition, the best product companies will win by reinvesting in their people. Those that don't? They won't stay the best for long.

Part 2: Rise of the Super PM

Topline takeaway: *AI is turning product managers into high-leverage generalists, making adaptability the most valuable skill in product leadership.*

“A computer science background was pretty important 20 years ago, but that’s not the case at all anymore. Only one of the PMs on my team now has a software engineering background.” (B2B SaaS CPO with over 20 years of experience)

In 1782, Scottish engineer James Watt boasted that his steam engines had the pulling power of more than 10 horses, in effect inventing the term “horsepower.” Nearly 250 years later, and long after the combustion engine, we still use that word to the point of absurdity: a SpaceX Starship is measured at 58 million hp.

Technology reshapes how we measure capability, and AI is about to do the same for intelligence. Just as horsepower became a relic of industrial progress, IQ may soon feel outdated. Product management is already experiencing this shift.

AI is not a replacement for intelligence but a force multiplier; think of it as a time divider helping PMs get to results quicker, so they can do more. Wharton business professor Ethan Mollick calls it “co-intelligence,” a tool that elevates human thinking to new levels. In his bestselling book, he describes AI as something fundamentally new:

“We have invented technologies, from axes to helicopters, that boost our physical capabilities; and others, like spreadsheets, that automate complex tasks; **but we have never built a generally applicable technology that can boost our intelligence....** You should try inviting AI to help you in everything you do, barring legal or ethical barriers.”

One CPO we spoke with at a global retail chain views generative AI as a powerful tool changing how product managers work. Following the co-intelligence model, he wants his PMs to embrace and integrate AI into all aspects of their work—and they are getting results. He notes, “Our product managers leveraging our internal generative AI platform are almost doubling their efficiency.”

For years, the idea of the “super PM” referred to the promise of product generalists who could seamlessly move across different roles and product types. **AI is making the rise of the generalist PM a reality.**

The best CPOs will prioritize adaptability as AI redefines product roles. The next generation of product leaders won’t be judged by how much they know—but by how well they work with AI.

This is only the beginning. By 2030, PMs won’t just shape what gets built—they’ll be the ones building, testing, and launching products, powered by AI and co-intelligence tools.

Part 3: Owning M&A and the Speed of Innovation

Topline takeaway: *With innovation moving too fast to build everything in-house, M&A is now a survival strategy, not just a growth tactic.*



I recommend every CPO and product VP do the following disruption exercise:

If we had to disrupt ourselves, what would we do? Then we ask, Why aren't we doing it? What would have to be true to make it the right time to invest? What signals should we be watching? When do we need to go all in?

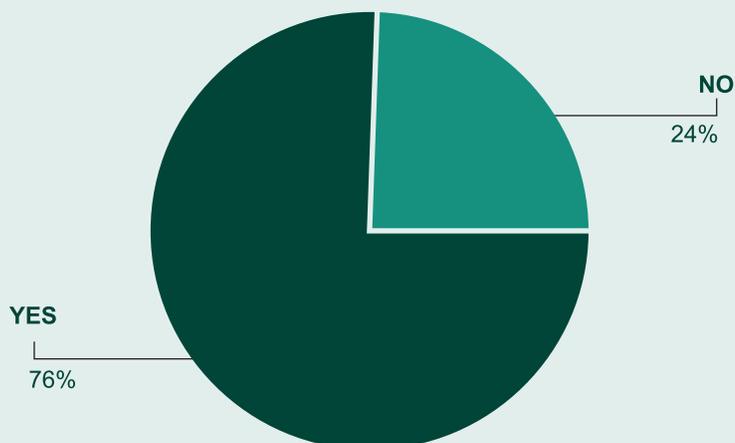


B.J. Boyle

Chief Product Officer
at PointClickCare

The speed of innovation right now is unprecedented, and no company can build fast enough alone. That's why mergers and acquisitions are becoming essential. Over 75% of surveyed CPOs call M&A "very important" for growth in the next 1-3 years, primarily to acquire AI-driven technology, market access, and scarce talent.

Do you believe that mergers and acquisitions will be a very important part of your growth in the next 1-3 years?



Acquisitions enable companies to scale quickly. As one CPO put it, "M&A will accelerate our ability to bring new products to market and acquire AI talent that is otherwise difficult to hire." Another stated, "M&A is essential for growth—whether it's acquiring tech, talent, or customers."

The role of M&A varies by industry:

- FinTech and SaaS companies acquire specialized technology and talent to stay competitive.
- Retail companies use M&A to enhance omnichannel capabilities or vertically integrate.
- GovTech and regulated sectors leverage acquisitions to gain new customer segments and core technologies in industries where organic growth is slow.

One product leader said, “In healthcare B2B SaaS, AI and data are fast becoming the central focus. Organizations will start selecting from a smaller set of partners who can own the end-to-end workflows driving their business models. M&A will be critical to assembling that solution suite.”

The best product leaders know this is a buyer’s market. **“Great CPOs must know how to acquire, how to be acquired—and how to make 1+1 > 3,”** said one respondent. But success isn’t just about the deal—it’s about seamless integration. Poor alignment can slow innovation and erode value.

CPOs are uniquely positioned to drive M&A, ensuring acquisitions align with business goals and product strategy. Their role includes:

- Identifying strategic acquisition targets that align with company goals.
- Evaluating product and technology fit.
- Developing integration strategies for products, technologies, and teams.
- Addressing overlaps and synergies between the acquiring and acquired companies.
- Navigating cultural differences to ensure smooth collaboration.

“As CPO, I am the sponsor of acquisitions,” one respondent noted, underscoring product leaders’ growing role in M&A. Those who master this will define the future—because in today’s market, **M&A isn’t just a growth tool. It’s a survival strategy.**

Part 4: Beyond revenue, measuring holistic value

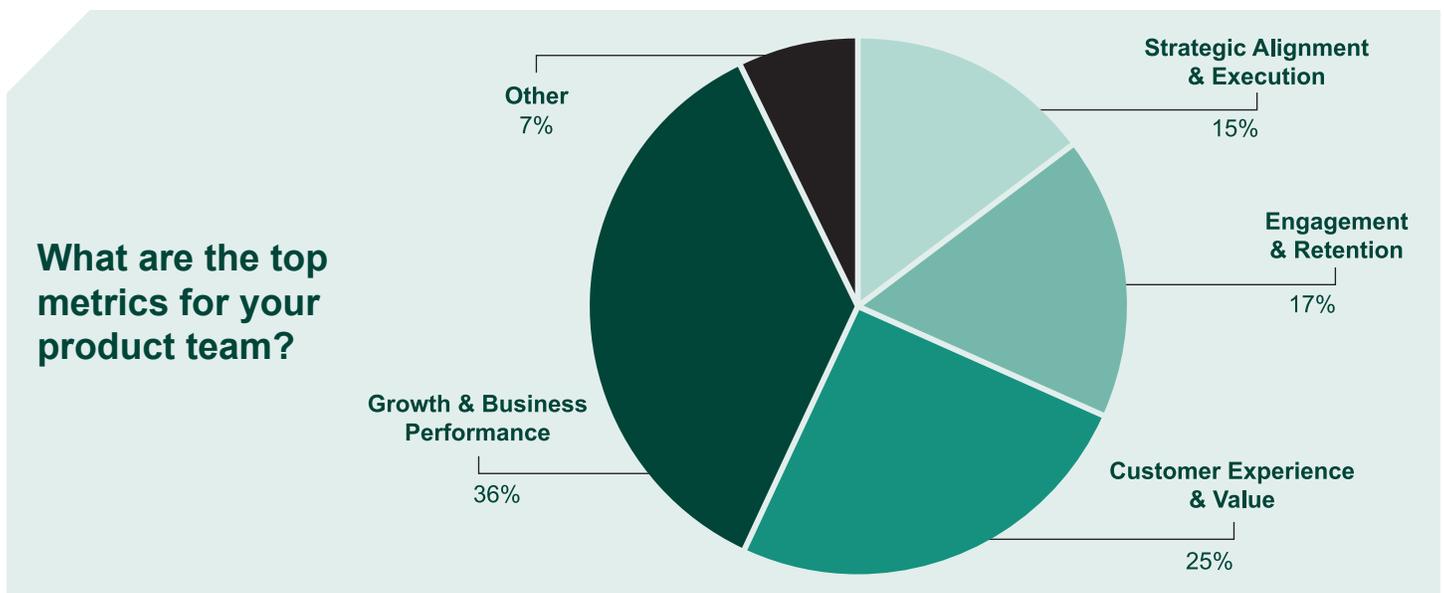
Topline takeaway: Revenue still rules, but product success is increasingly tied to retention, customer value, and long-term business impact.

Checkr CPO Ilan Frank captures a core reality: **“At the end of the day, most of us are working for a for-profit company. If that’s the case, then the metric is profit. That’s what we’re here to drive.”**

Revenue remains the ultimate North Star, but product success is increasingly measured by long-term sustainability, customer value, and alignment with business strategy. While NPS and CSAT can gauge satisfaction, they don’t provide a complete business picture. “NPS won’t tell me if we have the right pricing or packaging,” Frank explains, emphasizing the need for a broader business perspective.

Insights from our research reveal that CPOs track a mix of product and business metrics, including:

- Growth & Business Performance – revenue, ROI, conversion rate, market share
- Customer Experience & Value – NPS, CSAT, time-to-value, CLTV
- Engagement & Retention – active users, user retention
- Strategic Alignment & Execution – OKRs, goal alignment, other custom KPIs



The right metrics depend on product maturity. Early-stage products track adoption and usage, while mature products focus on retention, ARR, and market growth.

Culture also plays a role. Product-first companies prioritize user engagement and customer satisfaction, while sales-driven organizations focus on conversion rates and revenue. Both approaches contribute to growth. **“If we build a product that meets our audience’s needs, the business will grow,”** says Marissa Zanetti-Crume of Bloomberg Media.

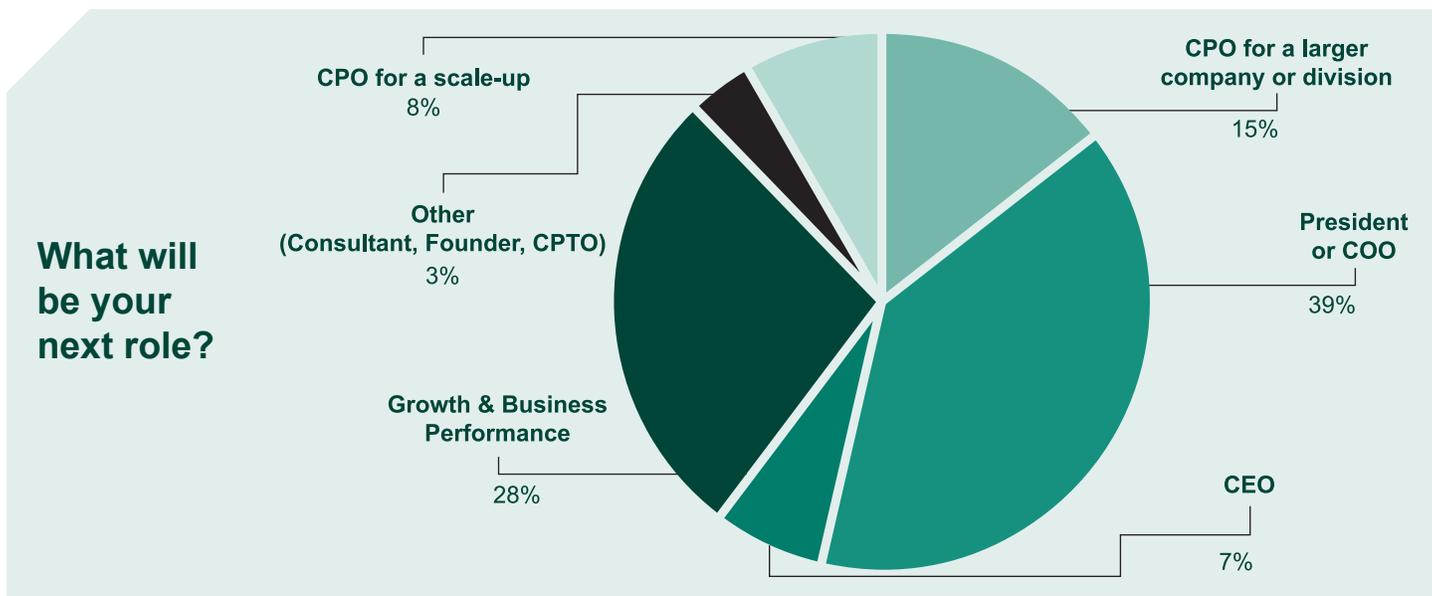
The best CPOs balance financial and customer metrics, aligning product, engineering, and go-to-market strategies. Sustainable success is about long-term growth, customer retention, and real market impact.

Part 5: The road to CEO

Topline takeaway: *The era of the CPO-to-CEO pipeline has arrived, as companies recognize that product leaders drive both strategy and execution.*

Now that CPOs have become critical members of the c-suite at leading companies, our research reveals that they are moving into CEO roles at a rapid pace. We stand by [our prior prediction](#) that by 2027, 30% of Fortune 1000 CEOs will be former CPOs, up from 5% last year.

In line with that prediction, **28% of the CPOs we surveyed expect their next position to be CEO, while another 6% anticipate moving into a President or COO role.**



CPOs bring a rare blend of skills

Tech expertise, customer insight, and strategic vision—making them uniquely suited to lead. While 16% of respondents have software engineering backgrounds, many come from sales or consulting, giving them a broad business perspective.

As one CPO put it, **“Sales gave me empathy for my partners. Engineering helped me understand what’s hard to build. Both made me a better CPO.”**

The CPO Alpha Effect

Additionally, it is now clear that product-first companies outperform their peers. Call it “the CPO Alpha Effect.” Products That Count compared the performance of CPO Award winners’ companies with the SPDR S&P 500 ETF Trust (SPY)—a widely used benchmark—and we found a strong correlation between exceptional product leadership and long-term shareholder value.

Among 48 publicly traded companies with a CPO Award winner from 2022 to 2025 (out of 97 total awardees), 54% have delivered a higher annualized return than SPY since their respective inceptions.



The CPO Alpha Effect isn’t a small edge -- it’s a meaningful level of outperformance and value creation.



Hoda Mehr

CEO

at Products That Count

Zooming out beyond the S&P 500, the CPO Alpha Effect becomes even more dramatic. Research shows that more than half of all publicly listed stocks generate negative lifetime returns, ultimately losing money for shareholders ([Bessembinder, Journal of Financial Economics, 2018](#)). In contrast, **nearly 85% of companies with a CPO Award winner have delivered positive annualized returns over their lifetime.**

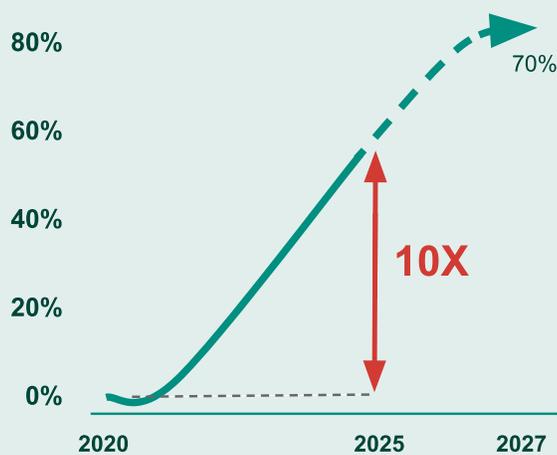
CPOs lead companies to outperform the market and have a significantly higher chance of building long-term shareholder wealth. That is why we believe that **within five years, every competitive company will be product-first.** Those that don’t make room for a CPO in the C-suite simply won’t be here.

For truly ambitious organizations, simply having a CPO is not enough. These companies believe that the best way to harness the power of product leadership is to hire a CPO as their next CEO.

Companies with a CPO dominate markets

Surging & Staggering Power

Fortune 1000 with a CPO



Significant Over-Performance

80%

35%

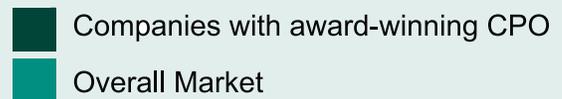
60%

40%

20%

0%

% With Annualized Positive Return



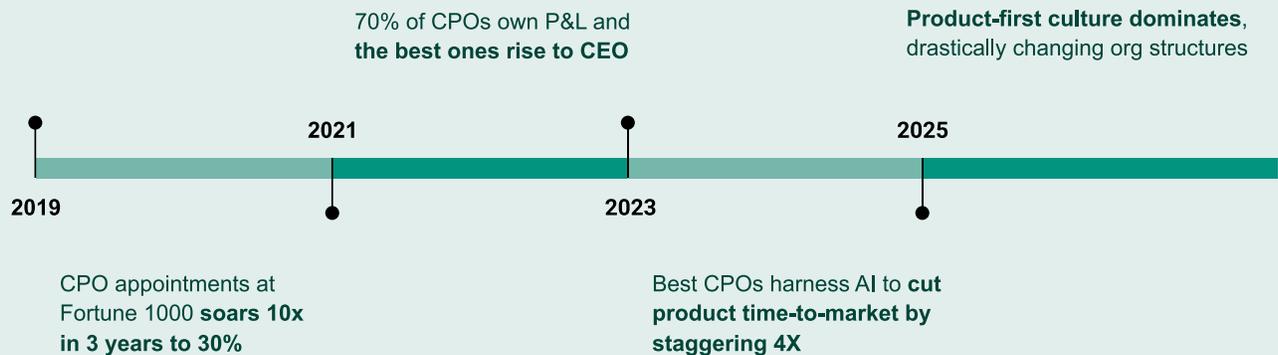
CPOs drive way more than the innovation agenda; they steer their companies towards business success and financial performance.



SC Moatti
Managing Partner
at Mighty Capital

Part 6: The 2030 Forecast for Product Leadership

Evolution of the CPO Role



2025 Prediction: By 2030, companies without a CPO will be obsolete.

The trends highlighted in this report—AI adoption, the rise of generalist PMs, the centrality of product metrics, and the strategic influence of CPOs—have already reshaped 2025. As the lines between strategy and execution have blurred, we can see the groundwork for what comes next.

Just like our predictions from previous years, our claims are based on the position of Products That Count as the premier voice in research at the cutting edge of product management, based on thousands of conversations and years of research.

What we see now is AI is making product managers more capable than ever before, giving them the tools to ideate, build, test, and launch at speed. Where R&D used to be the “how” behind product ideas, product managers are becoming both the “what” and the “how.” This represents a massive shift in the product development process, and it reinforces the idea that the CPO role is becoming the most powerful seat in the business.

Businesses that recognize this shift will dominate their industries. Those who do not will fall behind.

If the future belongs to those who **adapt, innovate, and lead**, then it’s clear that the future belongs to product management.

Will you lead—or lag?

Congratulations to the 2025 CPO Awards winners!



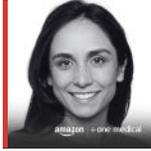
Aaron Severs
NOOM



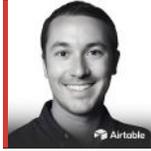
Achuth Rao
NEW YORK LIFE



Amira Youssef
LegalTech



Anjali Jameson
amazon one medical



Anthony Maggio
Airtable



Archie Mayani
GHX



Ashley Blankette
CASH



Avery Worthing-Jones
Foot Locker



Carlisha Robinson
BEYOND



Christine Dupuis
Gardiner & Theobald



Claire Vo
LaunchDarkly



Daniel Lereya
monday.com



David Meyer
databricks



David Schmaier
salesforce



Eglae Recchia
BERKADIA



Gary Daniels
Disney Experiences



Holly Shelton
OURA



Ilan Frank
checkr



Jared Wall
TOLL GROUP



Jeetu Patel
Cisco



Karandeep Anand
Brex



Karim Meghji
IBM



Kat Downs Mulder
yahoo!



Katrina Benjamin
axiom



Marissa Zanetti
Bloomberg



Monica Ugwi
Microsoft



Naveen Changani
ADT



Navya Rehani Gupta
talent.com



Praneil Ladwa
QUESTRADE



Randhir Vieira
omada



Sahir Azam
mongoDB



Saumya Bhatnagar
Innovia



Tiana Hanson-Drury
minna



Tiffany Johnson
nmi



Tim Simmons
Walmart



Todd Garner
sam's club



Naveen Changani
gusto



Trisha (Brady) Price
pendo



Vasu Murthy
COHESTY



Vinitha (Choodamani) Ramnathan
nrc



B.J. Boyle
PointClickCare



Brandon Doyle
FirstNet



Gautam Shah
carelon



Genevieve Wang
GrubMarket



Kimberly Bloomston
LiveRamp



Manoj Nair
snyk



Sheetul Agrawal
Chess



Simonetta Turek
Medallia



Yana Welinder
rafful



Yuval Kesten
Honeycomb

About Products That Count

Products That Count is the world's largest nonprofit community, engaging 500,000+ product managers and Chief Product Officers (CPOs) united by a mission: to empower everyone to build products that truly count.

In a world flooded with products, only a few ignite passion, deliver value at scale, and transform lives. Behind those exceptional products are visionary CPOs and high-performing product teams driving innovation at the most bleeding-edge companies.

We recognize these trailblazers through our coveted Awards, accelerate careers from PM to the C-suite and beyond through daily best practices, and serve as the trusted advisor to nearly all Fortune 1000 CPOs.

Our Corporate Alliance includes Walmart, Ford, Cisco, Johnson & Johnson, Amplitude, and more. The most admired product leaders across industries serve on our Advisory Council, guiding the future of product leadership.

Together, we're shaping a future where every product counts.
Learn more at productsthatcount.org

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