



**FOCUS ON:** Matt Hennessey,  
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## What are the key qualities a person needs to become a CAO?

*A strong sense of curiosity and the ability to see the need behind the want. As the car manufacturer, Henry Ford is reported to have said, "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses". Many analytical projects may succeed in answering the question but not addressing the underlying need.*

*Personal resilience: the pace of technological development and the ever-increasing accumulation of data means that analytical successes can be short-lived; the analytical backlog stretches out in front of you like the Penrose Stairs; and you have to get used to continually containing stakeholder expectations. The combination of these can test your resilience and energy.*

*Communication: The ability to make the complex simple through effective story telling and imagery. Channel your inner Jonathon Van-Tam and use metaphor, simile and allegory to land the complexity of analysis in familiar territory for your audience.*

*It helps if you know a thing or two about statistical and analytical techniques but I wouldn't actually put this top of the list*

## What is the future for a CAO? What changes do we need to consider?

*I think the future for a CAO is a really positive one because respect for those that know data has never been higher. However, to realise that positive future the CAO must work tirelessly to ensure we keep the focus on the actionable insight from data and not the acquisition and presentation of data itself. #DataSaveLives...but only if someone does something useful with it.*

*With the advances of AI, the CAO will need to become the 'conscience of analytics' – monitoring and challenging potential systemic bias in AI driven analyses and constantly checking the ethics – just because I can do an analysis, doesn't mean I should. I recently refrained from undertaking an analysis of health data to look at predicting certain outcomes because I was not clear exactly how to handle the potential results. Engagement with the public about the ethics of analysis will become increasingly important.*

*Finally, there is a professional leadership role for the workforce and ensuring the workforce is skilled and competent in the tasks of tomorrow and not the tasks of today.*

### **How the role will be transformed by AI?**

*As a strategic leader, a CAO has the job of estimating the intelligence requirements of an organisation into the future and ensuring that the workforce and the tools are capable of meeting those requirements. In the past this has been a relatively 'linear' estimation - what was our development over the last 5 years and what is the straight line forecast for the next 5? AI turns this development forecast into a much more exponential one.*

*In the next 6 months, AI will help me produce more intelligence outputs than I achieved in the previous 5 years so how does one go about estimating where we'll be in 5 years from now? The role will become more about actively managing and synthesising a new wealth of information rather than the production of it.*

*AI will force the CAO to think deeply about the suitability of our existing health data and analysis safeguards? For example, for those that use social media platforms extensively there can be as much health data about them freely accessible on the internet as in their NHS held records. And for those who don't use these media platforms highly complex AI driven analysis allows us to impute and infer with increasing accuracy their health status too.*

### **How to keep a work-life balance while being a CAO?**

*I'm a believer that learning and growth are at the heart of a happy and healthy life and this can happen both inside and outside of the work environment. So for me the work-life balance isn't about the amount of effort and time spent in work relative to outside work; it is about the amount and quality of learning and growth opportunities that you are able to take from work or non-work activities at any given time; and appreciating these opportunities for what they are.*

*I guess the important thing for someone whose day-to-day job is analysing and asking questions is to make sure they create the space where they can suspend this curiosity, take time away from the screen, develop perspective and focus on maintaining their physical health.*

*For me, when I'm not in the office this means travelling when I can, practising breathwork, yoga and the occasional bouldering.*