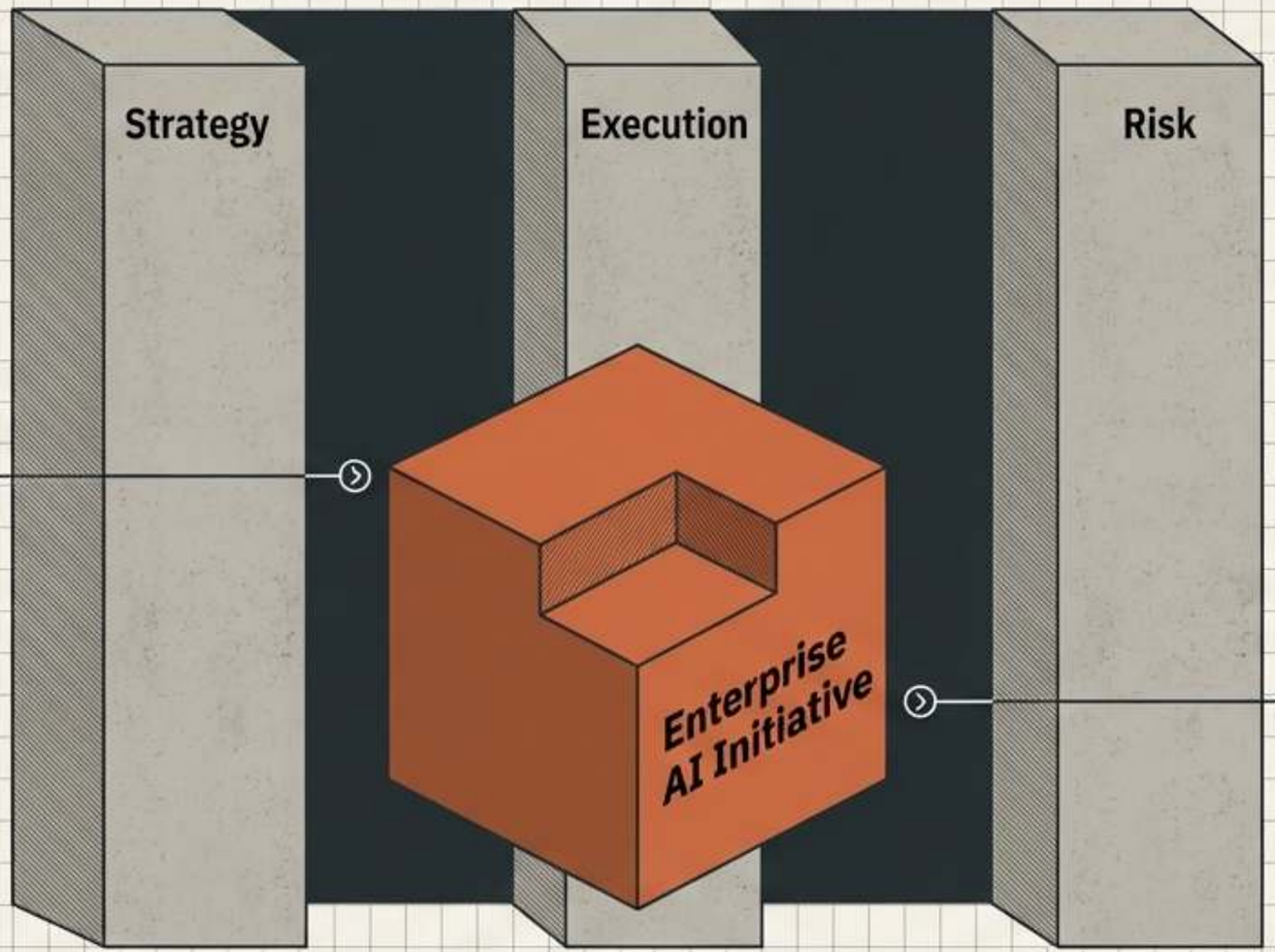


Architecting AI Accountability

The Executive Operating Model for Scaling Enterprise AI

NotebookLM

The Diffusion of Responsibility Trap



The Trap: Everyone is vaguely accountable, so nothing actually gets done.

The Result: Initiatives stall, risks go unmanaged, and accountability diffuses into the organizational void.

AI projects rarely fail because of technology. They fail because no single executive owns the outcomes.

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Fragmented Experimentation vs. Orchestrated Execution

Piecemeal Adoption

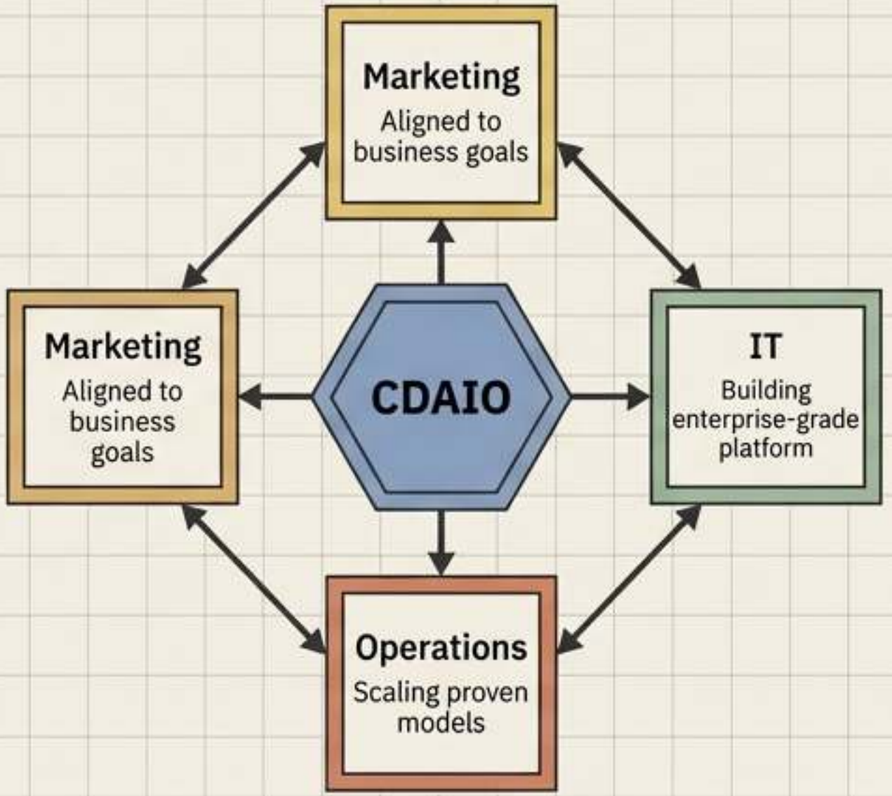
Marketing
Trying generative tools

IT
Experimenting with chatbots

Operations
Testing predictive maintenance

No cohesive strategy, undefined ROI, maximum risk exposure.

Structured Operating Model



Coordinated vision, shared infrastructure, centralized governance.

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Evaluating the Enterprise AI Approach

	✗ Piecemeal Adoption	✓ Structured Operating Model
Momentum	Stalled beyond basic automation.	Scalable, enterprise-wide deployment.
Risk Management	Explicitly no one’s job; high exposure.	Embedded governance and compliance frameworks.
Accountability	Diffused across siloed departments.	Designated ownership across executive functions.
ROI Impact	Incremental, localized improvements.	Target of genuine 10x or 100x operational gains.

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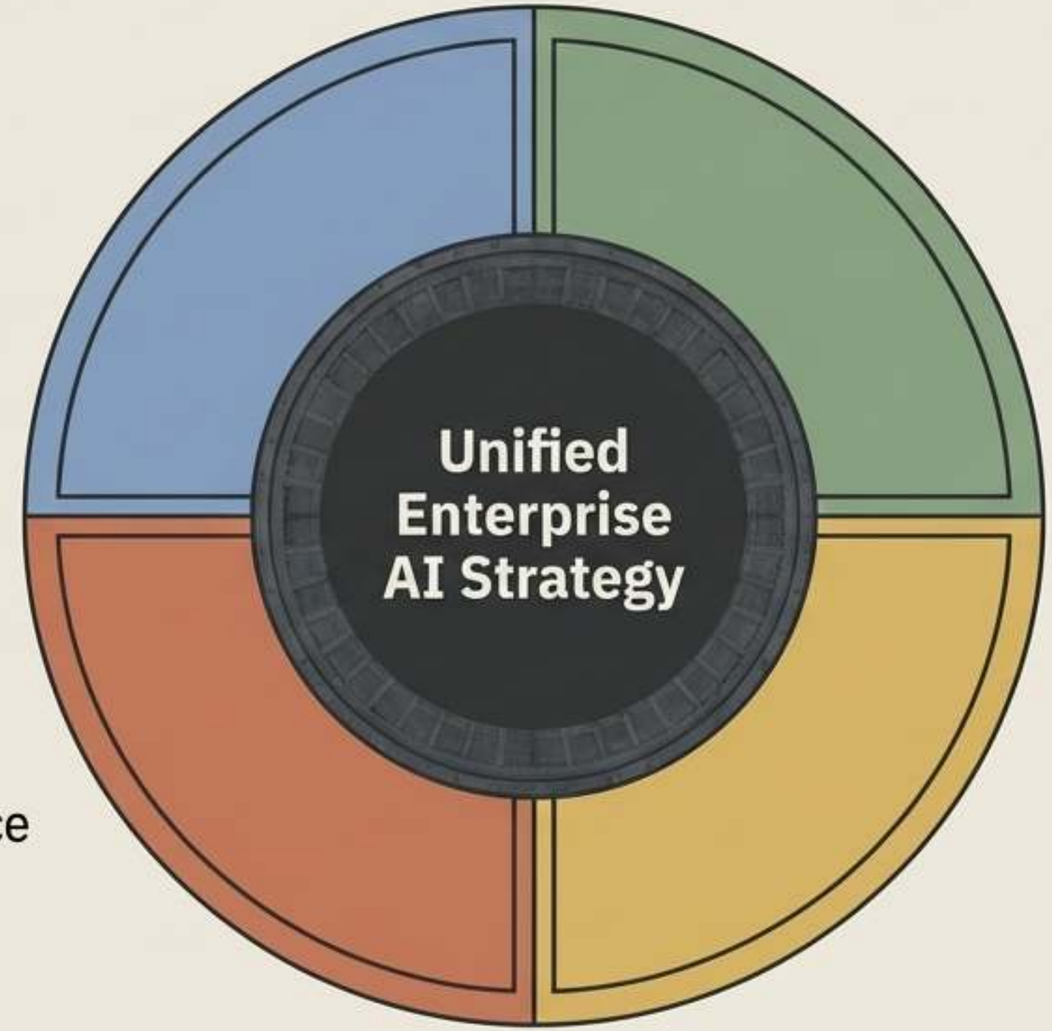
Anatomy of the AI Operating Model

The Visionaries

Defining strategy, success, and governance.
(CEO, Board, CDAIO)

The Guardians & Enablers

Managing legal risk, workforce upskilling, and adoption.
(General Counsel, CHRO)



The Operators

Integrating AI into core workflows and driving ROI.
(COO, Business Unit Leaders)

The Technologists

Building infrastructure, security, and standards.
(CIO/CTO)

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The Visionaries: Strategy & Governance

CEO & Board

IBM Plex Sans

Mandate

Set the vision and align AI with strategic business priorities.

Key Functions

Define enterprise success metrics.
Allocate funding and resources.

Chief Data and AI Officer (CDAIO)

IBM Plex Sans

Mandate

Own the overarching AI strategy and governance frameworks.

Key Functions

Manage ethical dimensions of model development and deployment.
Coordinate heavily with legal and IT for cross-initiative compliance.

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The Operators: Workflow Integration & ROI

Chief Operating Officer (COO)

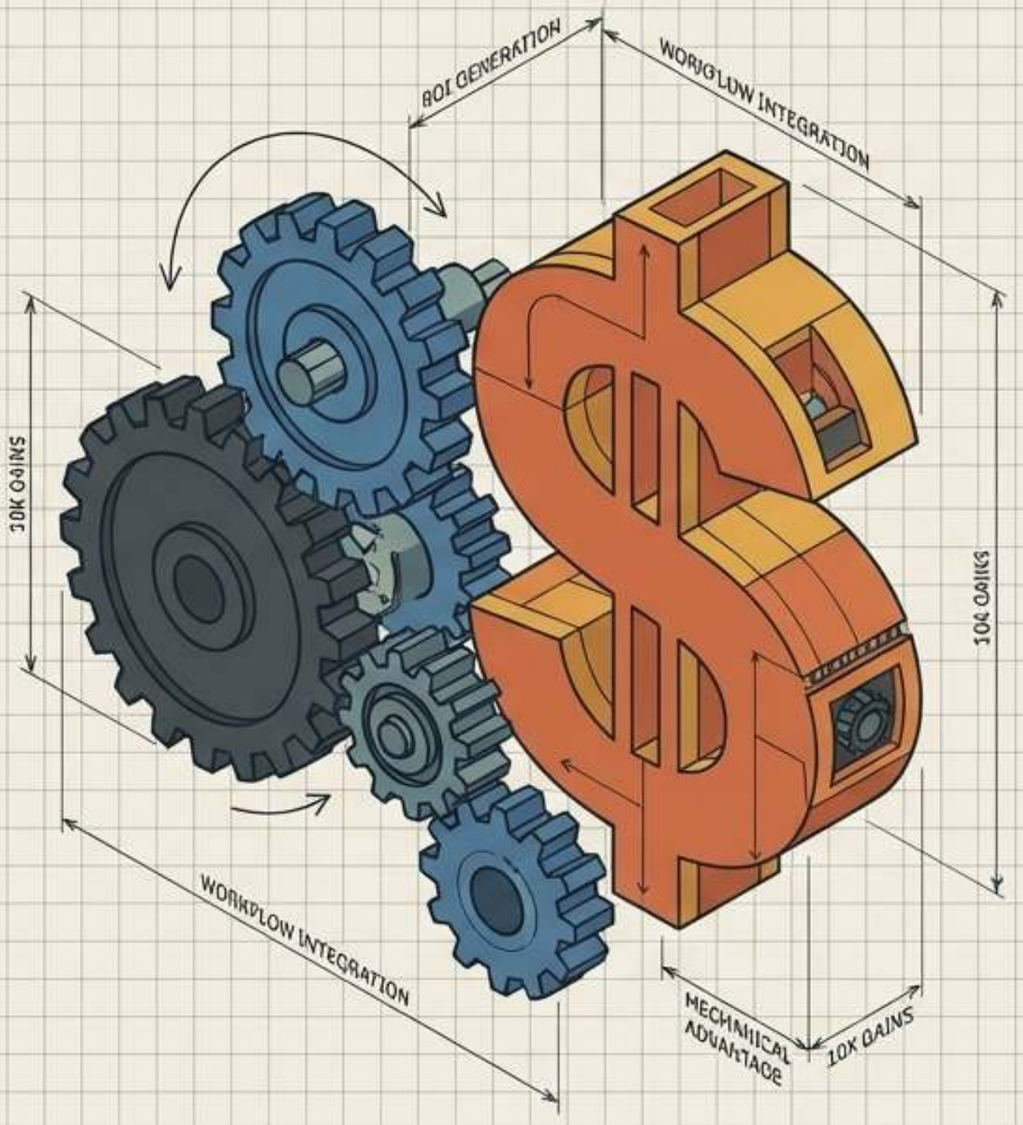
Mandate
Integrate AI into core business workflows and manage process redesign.

Target
Champion the shift from incremental tweaks to genuine 10x or 100x operational gains.

Business Unit Leaders

Mandate
Act as primary subject matter experts for departmental AI application.

Target
Identify high-value use cases; Own the specific ROI of AI projects within their respective domains.



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The Technologists: Infrastructure & Security

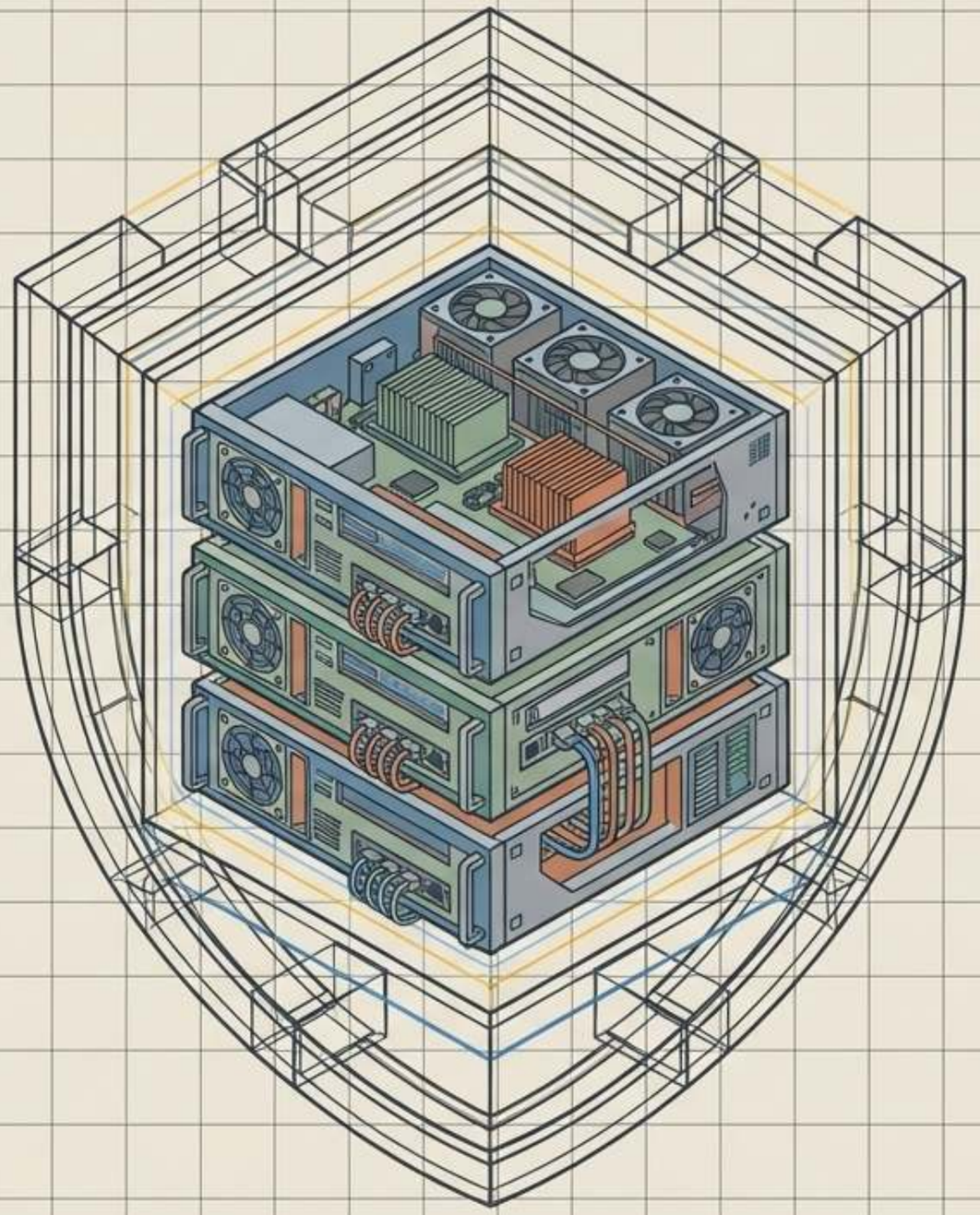
Chief Information / Technology Officer (CIO/CTO)

Core Mandate

Handle enterprise data infrastructure, system integration, and security protocols.

Critical Functions

1. Manage tool procurement and vendor relationships.
2. Establish and enforce the technical standards required to keep the enterprise AI program coherent.
3. Ensure technical alignment with CDAIO governance frameworks.



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The Guardians & Enablers: Risk & Adoption

General Counsel & Compliance

Mandate

Own legal and regulatory obligations.

Key Mechanisms

- Maintain the central AI Risk Register.
- Enforce data privacy and ethical
- Enforce data privacy and ethical standards in partnership with IT.

Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO)

Mandate

Manage the human transition and change management.

Key Mechanisms

- Oversee workforce upskilling and training.
- Run internal ambassador programs.
- Track adoption metrics to prove technology is actually being utilized.

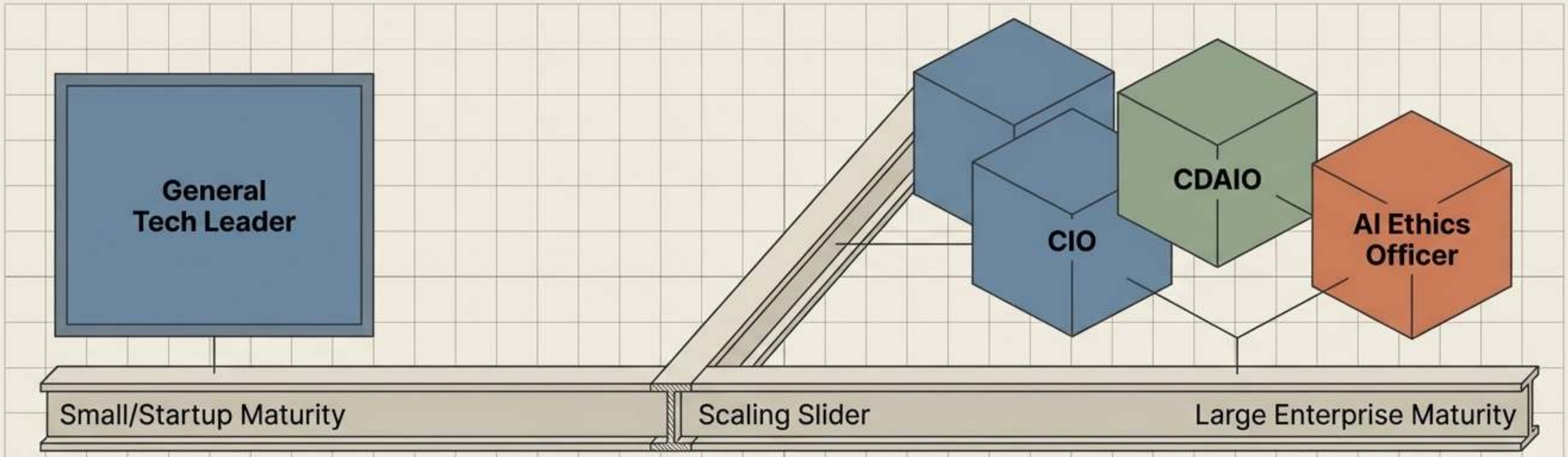
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Executive Role vs. Mandate Dashboard

	Focus Area	Key Metric	Primary Deliverable
CEO	Enterprise Strategy	Strategic Alignment	Vision & Resource Allocation
CDAIO	AI Governance	Model Ethics/Compliance	Governance Frameworks
COO	Operational Workflows	10x-100x Efficiency Gains	Process Redesign
CIO/CTO	Technical Infrastructure	System Security & Coherence	Procurement & Tech Standards
Gen Counsel	Risk & Regulation	Incident Prevention	AI Risk Register
CHRO	Change Management	Adoption Rates	Upskilling & Ambassador Programs

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Maturation: Scaling the Operating Model



In smaller firms, strategy, infrastructure, and governance are often consolidated under a single executive to maintain agility.

As organizations scale and regulations shift, roles explicitly fracture to manage complexity. The addition of dedicated AI Ethics Officers prevents the diffusion of responsibility in large enterprises.

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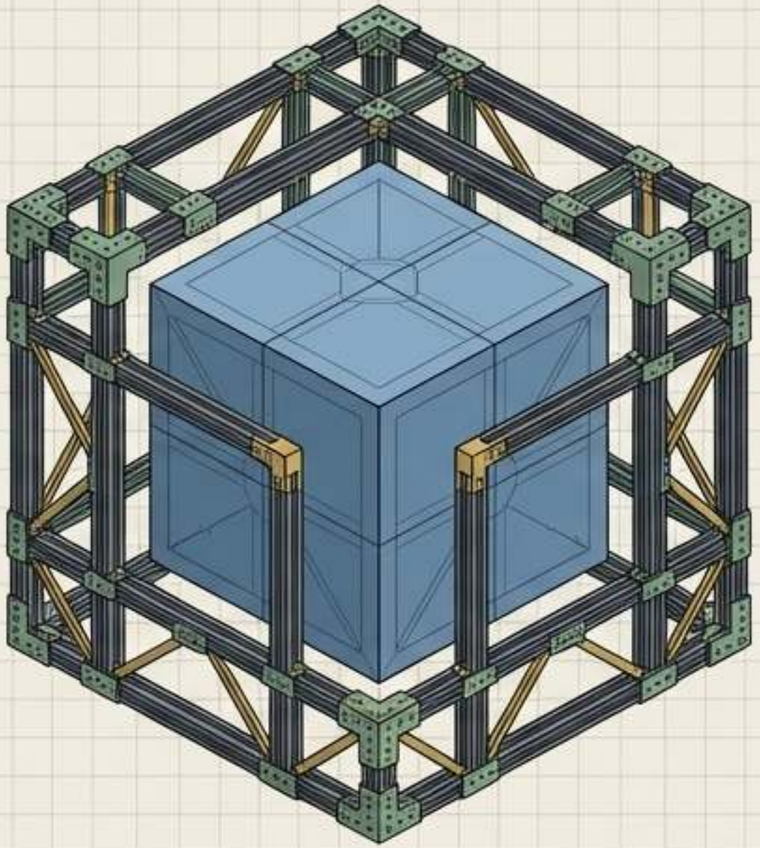
The AI Accountability Matrix

● Accountable/Owner
○ Contributor/Collaborator

Core AI Functions	Executive Roles						
	CEO	CDAIO	COO	CIO	Counsel	CHRO	BU Leaders
Strategy & Governance	○	●			○		
Legal Risk & Ethics		○		○	●		
Workforce Adoption			○			●	○
Infrastructure & Security		○		●			
ROI & Workflow Redesign			●				○

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The Human Infrastructure of AI



“AI success is not a product of technology alone. It results from people working together with clear accountability.”

Define who owns what in your AI operating model to move faster, manage risk better, and secure real enterprise results. Ensure responsibility is engineered, never diffused.

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