

From 1000 to 10000

How High-Performing CPOs Use 100 Day Plans to Achieve Escape Velocity

By
Len DeCandia and
Edmund Zagorin



INTRODUCTION

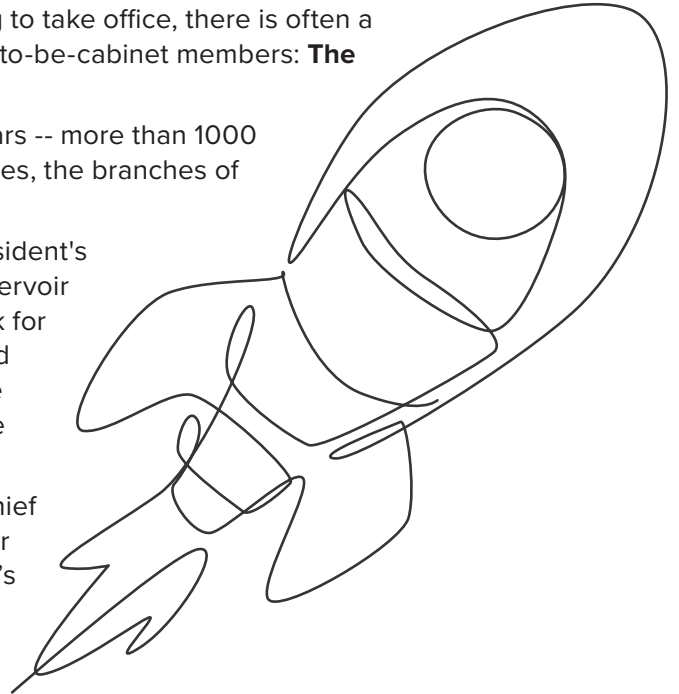
Let's Get Ready to Blast Off

When the newly elected leader of the United States is preparing to take office, there is often a singular focus of the team of advisors, campaign staff and soon-to-be-cabinet members: **The 100 Days Plan.**

The reason for this is simple. While a president's term is four years -- more than 1000 days -- the first 100 days set the pace with Congress, the agencies, the branches of the military and the ranks of public servants around the world.

Setting the pace of change can determine how much of the president's agenda actually gets enacted and can be used to build up a reservoir of goodwill and positive momentum that can lay the groundwork for more ambitious, longer-term projects. Those projects often need a tremendous amount of momentum to become a reality. It's like a large rocket that needs to build up overwhelming thrust on the launch pad to achieve escape velocity from Earth to reach orbit.

Utilizing this same dynamic, this eBook focuses on creating a Chief Procurement Officer's First 100 Days Plan for current, aspiring, or soon-to-be transformational CPOs. Drawing from Len DeCandia's deep leadership experience at Johnson and Johnson, it offers practical advice and leadership tactics for effective change management and teamwork in procurement transformations.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**Len
DeCandia**

Len DeCandia is a 4-time CPO and leader of one of the largest global corporate transformations of procurement at Johnson and Johnson, responsible for over \$40 billion in spend. Len's team of hundreds oversaw the manufacturing and distribution of a product portfolio that ran the gamut from Band-Aids to oncology drugs, incorporating tens of thousands of suppliers. He also played a role in Operation Warp Speed to rapidly develop and manufacture a lifesaving COVID vaccine at massive scale during the pandemic.



**Edmund
Zagorin**

Edmund is the founder & Chief Strategy Officer of Arkestro, and is a globally recognized thought leader and Forbes contributor on the emerging role of AI/ML in procurement and supply chain. Edmund serves on the Thought Leadership Committee of the Institute for Supply Management (ISM), the Advisory Board of the Sourcing Industry Group (SIG) and was named a "Pro to Know" by Supply & Demand Chain Executive.



In the age of AI, the role of the CPO has expanded dramatically. Industry conferences on AI have shifted from theoretical discussions to practical applications, as demonstrated by Toyota's "AI transformation" of their IT service center, incorporating specific AI investment clauses in vendor contracts. This evolution signifies a pivotal shift in procurement, moving from human-dependent services to AI-delivered solutions, leading to enhanced operating efficiency and cost reductions.

Advanced technologies like Statement of Work automation, negotiation chatbots, and Predictive Procurement Orchestration (PPO) are already making

profound impacts. This new era not only promises operational improvement but also significant financial benefits, offering CPOs powerful tools to elevate their function's impact on profitability.

In this eBook, we provide a window into successful strategies and pitfalls, aiming to help new CPOs build their starter playbook and assist existing CPOs in developing a 100 Days Plan for transformation projects. The ultimate goal is to deliver impressive results, inspire and motivate AI transformation, and create momentum for your team to reach its full potential.

Digital Transformation vs. AI Transformation

	DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION	AI TRANSFORMATION
PEOPLE	<p>Flexible & Accountable Collaboration</p> <p>Centralizes digital collaboration, enables hybrid/remote employees and creates persistent performance and reporting framework for shared accountability and management</p>	<p>Dramatic Task Reduction</p> <p>Reduces number of steps for data entry, analysis and selection decision by completing tasks that would normally have to be performed by a human user</p>
PROCESS	<p>Democratizes Access</p> <p>Enables scalable many-to-many decentralized processes, democratizes access to instant reports</p>	<p>Amplifies Value</p> <p>Recommends best next steps, scales and amplifies units of value per employee</p>
TECHNOLOGY	<p>System of Record & Enablement</p> <p>Success is often measured on user adoption. Apps create an interface for administrative management, process control, and reporting</p>	<p>System of Autonomy & Best Practice</p> <p>Success is measured based on impact and faster cycles. Best next steps can be embedded in any system or process for intelligent autonomy</p>

So, let's get started.

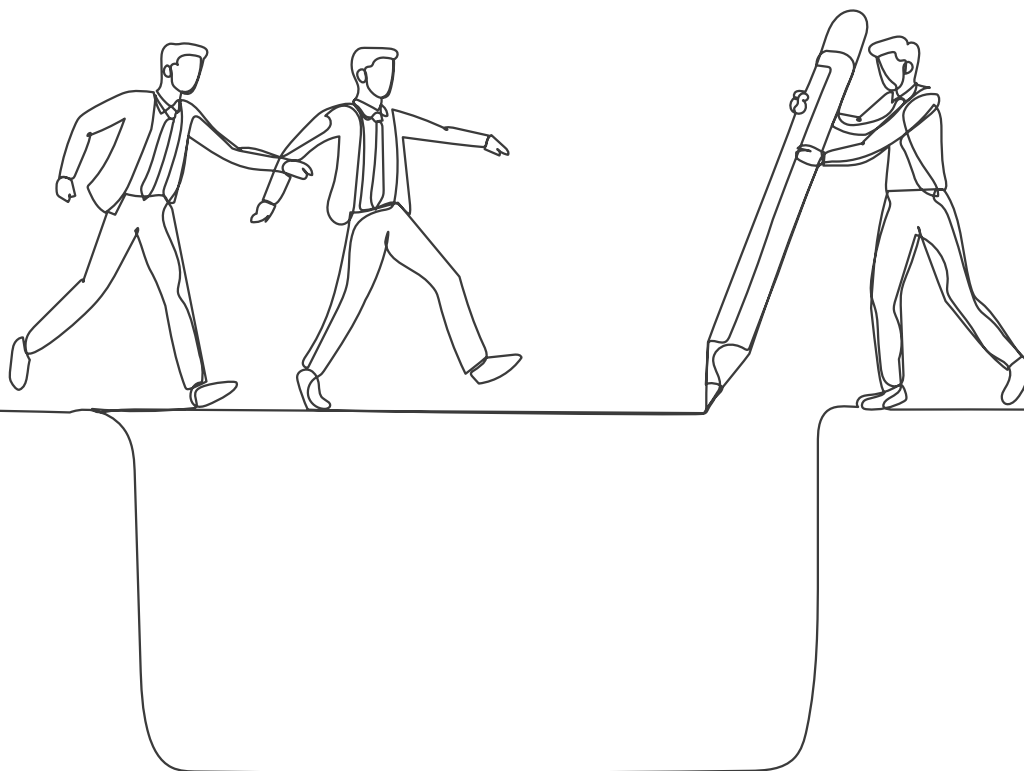
Meet us on the launch pad and we'll look at a few best practices to help your AI transformation blast off and achieve escape velocity.

CHAPTER ONE

Earning Your Launch Crew's Trust By Sharing Your CPO Persona

Procurement leaders are often tasked with addressing problems in unfamiliar areas. This highlights a core principle of procurement: the ability to manage third-party and strategic supplier relationships effectively. These skills are transferable across industries and business functions. Successful leaders can adapt templates and tools to craft strategies tailored to specific situations. This process begins with introspection: understanding the type of CPO you are and identifying the skills needed in your team to develop a 100 Days Plan for achieving escape velocity. While procurement executives vary in leadership style

and focus, their most relevant experience often relates to the size and maturity of their organization. For instance, Len's vast experience in global manufacturing supply chains may not align perfectly with the needs of a 5,000-person software company. However, if Len were to come out of retirement to be a CPO of a 5,000-person company, he would adapt by leveraging his network, seeking advisors, and building a competent team. Despite differences in scale, effective procurement leadership can transition seamlessly by drawing on diverse experiences and industry connections.





O-1: Early Stage CPO

The 0-1 CPO is actually quite rare for the simple reason that most companies that have procurement teams tend to be larger companies, and larger companies typically started their procurement functions years or even decades ago. Therefore, there is an existing procurement organization in place when you take over as CPO.

0-1 CPOs often must build a procurement organization from scratch, with no existing headcount, systems, or processes. In this section, we'll provide questions to help determine your CPO persona based on your prior experience and offer tips on when to "phone a friend" or what roles you need to hire to create a high-performing team. Whether you have been a CPO before or not, these questions will help identify the roles needed in your core team. You can score yourself out of 10, where **10 indicates a strong yes** and **1 indicates a strong no**.

QUESTION	SCORE OUT OF 10
I have experience working for more than a year in a team or department of fewer than 5 people.	
I am comfortable creating process documentation.	
I am the person who makes the reservations OR drafts the first version of the trip itinerary when taking a vacation.	
I have come up with the name, mission statement or slogan for an organization or team.	
I feel comfortable voicing disagreement or contradictory opinions.	
I feel comfortable neutrally following up with someone to complete a task that is part of a larger group project.	
TOTAL	

HOW DID YOU SCORE?

Above 50 You are more than qualified to be an Early Stage CPO. Jump to the next section to see where you rank as an Established CPO.

Between 30-50 Your experience indicates that you are a potentially great fit as an Early Stage CPO.

Below 30 You'll want to phone a higher ranking CPO or search for an advisor with specific relevant experience.

1-1000: Established CPO

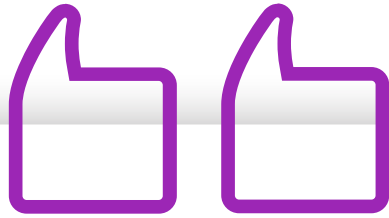
The 1-1000 CPO's initial challenge is to assess existing resources, identify allies and naysayers, and empower high-performers to lead and co-create a positive agenda. Legacy procurement organizations often see a small group of employees contributing disproportionately. These high-performers manage more spend, supplier relationships, and negotiations than their peers, yet may go unrecognized due to data limitations.

Your initial work as a 1-1000 CPO will involve assessing the team, defining the data foundation for your existing spend, identifying gaps in data, KPI tracking, and tech stack, and delivering 1-5 highly visible "quick wins" to your executive team. The following questions will help you assess your experience and determine the best way to seek advice from more experienced peers. You can score yourself out of 10, where **10 indicates a strong yes** and **1 indicates a strong no**.

QUESTION	SCORE OUT OF 10
I have worked for more than a year in a team or department of more than 5 but fewer than 100 people.	
In the past year, I have successfully eliminated or altered a process, ceremony or ritual in my professional work that was wasteful or outdated.	
I have been the person to cancel a vacation, party or social event due to an unforeseen circumstance.	
I have served on the board of a school, charity, nonprofit, neighborhood association or other community group.	
I feel comfortable delivering bad news and giving constructive feedback.	
I feel comfortable delegating a task to someone and then giving them feedback on their overall key performance reporting.	
TOTAL	

HOW DID YOU SCORE?

- Above 50** You are more than qualified to be an Established CPO. Jump to the next section to see where you rank as a Transformational CPO.
- Between 30-50** Your experience indicates that you are a potentially great fit as an Established CPO. Eliminate ineffective practices before introducing new initiatives.
- Below 30** You'll want to phone a higher ranking CPO or search for an advisor with specific relevant experience.



Always ask, "What can we stop doing today to free up time for new initiatives?" This question will be key to your success in driving meaningful change.

LEN DECANDIA

Many legacy procurement teams are bogged down by outdated processes that drain productivity. If a process seems redundant but has support, consider an experiment: pause it briefly to see if it's truly necessary. Often, processes no one values remain unquestioned. Identify high performers

by crowdsourcing input on what to stop or pause. Eliminate excess meetings by opting for result updates via email or an app, followed by a quick survey to gauge feedback. Cutting recurring meetings can significantly improve team morale and free up time for transformative initiatives.

1000+: Transformational CPO

The 1000+ CPO role already exists at many large companies, and we recognize this eBook may be less relevant for highly experienced individuals who have been CPOs multiple times. However, lifelong learning is crucial, as the CPO scope and technology landscape continuously evolve. The biggest challenge for a 1000+ CPO is to operate effectively at scale, prioritize ruthlessly, and focus on a few key initiatives to deliver meaningful wins. Inspiring and mentoring direct reports and their extended teams is essential to driving success.

The key is to "win with the willing." You won't always have the perfect team, and you can't wait to hire all the right people before delivering results. Big companies often have strong cultures with underutilized high performers. Your job is to identify these individuals, empower them, and unlock their potential. Seek their input frequently and give them leadership opportunities. These high performers are your force

multipliers who will drive transformation. However, you will encounter naysayers and disengaged employees. It's essential to focus on those who are motivated and capable of helping you achieve early wins in your transformation agenda.

Understandably, there are reasonable and respectable reasons for naysayers in corporate procurement. Your rocket has a weight limit, and naysayers require ten times the rocket fuel to propel. You might bring one or two along and show them how beautiful Earth looks from space, but loading your rocket with naysayers will prevent achieving escape velocity. Successful procurement transformation is a team sport, and no one wants to be on a team with naysayers, especially high performers. Therefore, be clear-eyed about who is excited and who isn't, so in your first 100 days, you can "win with the willing" and demonstrate tangible progress.



1000+: TRANSFORMATIONAL CPO, CONTINUED

Your initial work as a 1000+ CPO will be to assess the organizational structure, harness high performers, and align the executive team on procurement priorities. Identify gaps in people, process, and technology, then develop an operating plan with a new budget for achieving key wins. Use the following questions to assess your experience and determine if you need additional expertise. You can score yourself out of 10, where **10 indicates a strong yes** and **1 indicates a strong no**.

QUESTION	SCORE OUT OF 10
I have previously worked for more than a year in a team or department of more than 100 people.	
I have successfully co-created a document with more than 5 authors that identified quantitative goals and core initiatives in the past year.	
I have proposed a vacation or party idea to someone else who then made the reservations or plans incorrectly, and then patiently helped them revise the plans.	
I have joined a dysfunctional organization for the express purpose of improving its performance.	
I have had to tell a person who believed their performance was excellent that they did not meet expectations.	
I lean on a group of people from previous roles who I pull in as advisors when I begin a new assignment.	
TOTAL	

HOW DID YOU SCORE?

Above 50 You are more than qualified to be a Transformational CPO. You are seasoned in your knowledge of all levels of the CPO role.

Between 30-50 Your experience indicates that you are a potentially great fit as a Transformational CPO. You should seek out Early Stage and Established CPO advisors to help challenge you.

Below 30 You'll want to phone a higher ranking CPO or search for an advisor with specific relevant experience.

WHAT CPO PERSONA ARE YOU?

No matter what your rank, continually ask how to reduce scope, eliminate meetings, and simplify steps. Build your circle with diverse experiences to improve your first 100 days. Remember, people support what they help create, which is crucial for stakeholder buy-in and executive visibility, as we will discuss next.

CHAPTER TWO

People Endorse What They Help Create: Crowdsourcing To Ignite Your Booster Rockets

Regardless of the challenges you face as a Chief Procurement Officer, success hinges on building a team of enthusiastic supporters, endorsers, and advocates.

0-1:

Early Stage CPO

This might include executive peers who will endorse your plan for adding resources.

1-1000+:

Established CPO

Your team may encompass leaders in strategic sourcing, analytics, and key category managers with strong supplier relationships.

1000+:

Transformational CPO

Your team will likely involve budget owners and key departmental contacts who benefit directly from procurement's efforts.

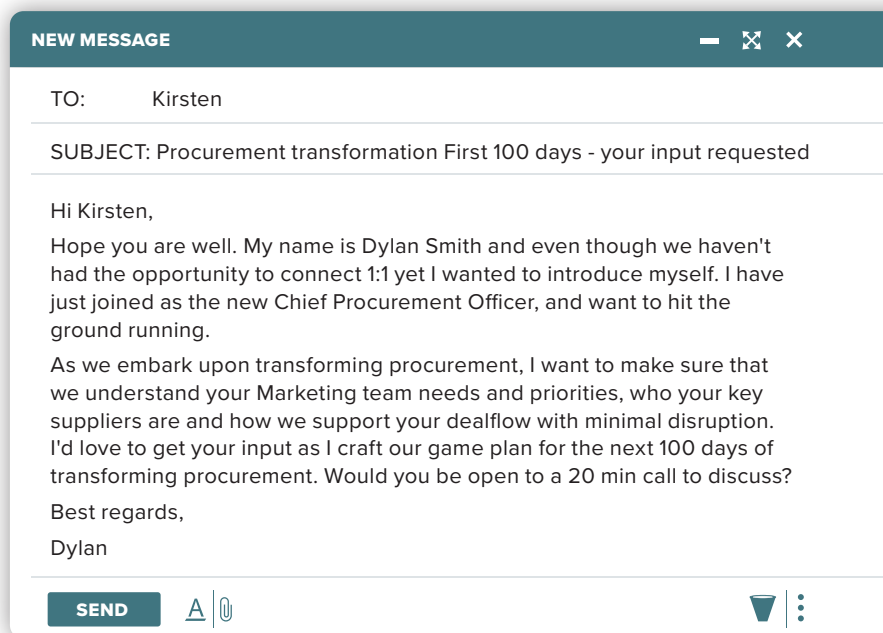
Make Friends and Influence Spend

Every CPO needs to be a data-driven relationship builder with clear goals. Depending on your organization's size, these goals may include creating a new organization, improving a legacy one, or redirecting an established organization. Align with key stakeholders like the CEO, CFO, department heads, and procurement team members. Conduct listening sessions to understand and prioritize their concerns, ensuring stakeholder priorities shape your First 100 Days. Use stakeholder-WIIFM ("What's in it for me?") propositions to make meetings valuable and aligned with business plans. Although meeting in person is ideal, leverage hybrid or remote settings to build relationships and gather feedback. This transparency helps reframe procurement's value and inspires your team.

Here's an example of an email that you could write to a stakeholder, in this case Kristen who is the C-level leader for Marketing, to seek her input on your First 100 Days:

During the meeting with Kristen, prioritize active listening. Use curiosity, ask open-ended questions, and practice active listening to build relationships. This approach shows that you respect their supplier relationships and are not imposing a one-size-fits-all strategy.

Understanding stakeholders' business challenges and their use of suppliers enables you to identify shared priorities and potential quick wins. Avoid a one-dimensional cost focus; instead, emphasize procurement as a supportive service that enhances supplier relationships, thereby dispelling negative stereotypes about procurement being solely cost-driven.



Stakeholder Advisory Boards

You can use the following questions to quell the fears that you are not going to come between Kristen and her key suppliers, nor create more administrative work for her team. Understanding stakeholders' challenges and supplier use helps identify shared priorities and potential quick wins. Emphasize procurement as a supportive service to dispel stereotypes of being solely cost-driven. Propose the concept of a Stakeholder Advisory Board to include key relationships and executive team members.

Each member of the Stakeholder Advisory Board should commit to the following activities:

- Quarterly meeting to review progress and prioritization of key procurement initiatives
- Complete and champion surveys to measure stakeholder NPS
- Provide the annual written 360 reviews of the procurement organization using "Stop, Start,

Continue" framework for continuous organizational improvement

The Stakeholder Advisory Board will offer three core benefits that all procurement organizations need to be successful in transformation:

1. Outside perspective to measure and validate the benefits of your procurement transformation versus the baseline you started with at the outset of the 100 days
2. Hard numbers and attributed quotes to measure and report on the business impacts of a better procurement experience for both stakeholders and suppliers
3. Ambassadors for procurement's value in their relevant teams and organizations, which will help procurement get invited to join projects early and often

One exercise that you can do with your Stakeholder Advisory Board is to ask for their help in setting the metrics and functional priorities for procurement. For example, you can ask your stakeholders to prioritize the following metrics for different procurement engagements:

When procurement partners with your team for a Supplier Selection process, please rank the following criteria in order of importance:

- Supplier market dynamics
- Supplier selection process
- Supplier relationship management
- Supplier issue management

Please rank the following aspects of a best-in-class procurement process in order of importance to you and your team:

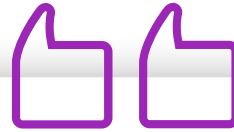
- Low administrative burden
- Cycle time from need to selection
- Best-in-class pricing
- Compliant with corporate policies
- Negotiates extra value beyond cost
- Unlocks unexpected innovation from the supplier relationship

Laying the groundwork for stakeholder engagement should be a priority. It communicates that you are listening and attentive to their needs. This ongoing collaboration can transition relationships from transactional to strategic, changing the perception of procurement. As CPO, your role is to build a value-driven brand and a cohesive team where stakeholders

have input at your table. The Stakeholder Advisory Board is crucial for setting agendas and gathering input, creating urgency and co-ownership of the transformation agenda. Engaging stakeholders ensures they feel involved and invested in any policy changes that may impact them.

From Ground Control to Pilot Engagement

Each key stakeholder should have a single point of contact within your procurement organization to streamline communication and enhance engagement. This approach borrows from sales key account management and addresses the confusion caused by category management. Assign a contact based on their customer service aptitude, communication skills, and emotional intelligence. Not all procurement professionals need these skills, but those who possess them are essential for representing procurement positively to stakeholders.



VIPs want an individualized service experience with a consistent, reliable, trustworthy point of contact.

EDMUND ZAGORIN

30-60-90s: Show You Are Listening and Genuinely Want Your Team's Thoughtful Input



You aren't here to implement some one-size-fits-all playbook from your last job. You are here to understand the business, do a lot of listening, get curious about what makes this company unique and special, and then enable your procurement function to reach its full potential.

LEN DECANDIA

Engaging with your existing procurement team is crucial to understand what's working, what isn't, and what needs change. Conducting 1-on-1s and small group discussions will crowdsource the best ideas for your 100 Days Plan and demonstrate leadership. Utilize a 30-60-90 exercise for each team member to outline their activities and anticipated business impact over the next 90 days. This approach clarifies roles and eliminates non value-added activities, providing valuable insights for your First 100 Days. Effective leadership relies on collaboration and endorsing shared agendas to ensure swift execution and enjoyment in bringing them to life. People endorse what they help create.

It's *Our* Procurement Transformation, Not *My* Transformation

Engaging with your procurement team is crucial for understanding and implementing change. Conducting 1-on-1s and small group discussions can crowdsource ideas for your 100 Days Plan and demonstrate leadership. Using a 30-60-90 approach for each team member clarifies roles and expectations, eliminating non value-added activities and providing insights for your First 100 Days. Effective leadership relies on collaboration and endorsing shared agendas. CPOs who engage and partner with stakeholders, rather than going it alone, are more likely to be viewed as successful.

Procurement's value must be defined beyond just cost savings, focusing instead on supplier contributions to growth through innovation, reliability, and cost efficiency. Transformation projects and First 100 Day Plans help manage expectations, build relationships, and define critical metrics. By crowdsourcing your plan, building a Stakeholder Advisory Board, and defining measurable metrics, you align procurement with the overall business goals, ensuring your team's contributions are recognized and appreciated.

CHAPTER THREE

Unlocking Your Best People's Momentum To Reach Escape Velocity

There are two interrelated problems with all good plans: they probably make someone mad, and they are probably going to change. As General von Moltke once remarked: "No plan survives first contact with the enemy." Good plans force behavior change and set an agenda for groups, which can cause dissent. Some CPOs modify good plans to appease dissenters, a flawed approach known as 'Planning to Please.' This can lead to practical and logistical issues, rewarding consensus-breaking behavior and making group decision-making increasingly difficult.

Depending where you are in your CPO journey, you might leverage the following:

0-1: Early Stage CPO

Loud voices often dominate, yet their ideas may lack merit. Crowdsourcing ideas 1-on-1 is generally more effective than group settings to avoid conflicts over special interests.

1-1000+:

Established CPO

Ensure productive meetings and encourage the presentation of ideas based on merit and data.

1000+:

Transformational CPO

Adopt tactics that enhance idea generation, minimize the impact of bad ideas, and involve everyone in the procurement transformation agenda.

Fail Fast

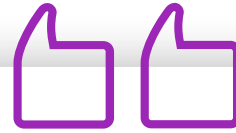
There have been many books written on failure, concluding that fear of failure leads to risk aversion. Paradoxically, taking risks is essential for learning and success. Despite its negative reputation, failure can be beneficial because it helps us overcome the fear of failure. Thus, we should minimize the costs of failure without punishing it. The main cost of failure is time spent on failing initiatives, so "fail fast" truly means to "fail cheap".

While celebrating failure might seem uncomfortable, risk-taking is crucial for effective procurement leadership and successful transformations. Therefore, as CPOs, you must become comfortable with failure to create a culture where your team feels safe to volunteer, champion, and own risks. When fear of failure prevails, people won't suggest or support the best ideas, fearing blame if they fail, and they won't champion your ideas or First 100 Days for the same reason.

The greatest way some leaders contribute to the fear of failure is by harshly chastising subordinates, disparaging colleagues behind their backs, or dismissing underperforming initiatives sarcastically.

These behaviors create a pervasive fear of failure that undermines the success of the CPO and the transformation initiative. When CPOs complain about stalled transformations, disengaged teams, or unimpactful category managers, they often overlook their own contribution to the problem. By avoiding anger, chastisement, and disparagement, and fostering candid, professional feedback, leaders can create the psychological safety needed for successful transformations.

Procurement transformations are a team effort. One CPO at a major pharma company exemplified this by starting each meeting with stories of failure inspired from a viral community event called "F%^#up Nights" which "deconstructed society's perception of failure." This built team camaraderie, provided early insights into issues, and ultimately led to a successful, well-supported transformation. Embracing failure culturally, though it may seem trivial, is crucial for a Chief Procurement Officer's effective, impactful, and enjoyable tenure.



The greatest danger is in standing still.

ANDY GROVE, CEO OF INTEL

Test and Learn

The practice of conducting Proof of Concepts and Pilots has surged, especially for AI transformations, yet many organizations struggle to adopt a "test and learn" approach in planning. This often feels awkward as it involves committing resources to potentially unsuccessful initiatives. Transformations are inherently uncertain, and at the outset, success is not guaranteed. Many CPOs, being highly organized and rule-focused, find it challenging to embrace this mindset. A failed "test and learn" project can appear as a waste of resources, time, and budget.

Much like "fail fast," the natural biases of many new CPOs can be detrimental to effective transformations. The key to "fail fast" lies in the word "fast," necessitating a disciplined "test and learn" approach, best expressed through hypothesis testing. For instance, if your team believes that standardizing a Statement of Work (SOW)

template for top professional services can reduce repetitive corrections, you can design an experiment to validate this. Document the hypotheses, start with a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) by creating one template for one obvious, costly case, and define the success criteria, such as using the template three times in 30 days and shortening the approval process by a week. Assign a volunteer owner for the experiment and monitor progress. This "test and learn" approach helps overcome analysis paralysis and drives successful transformation initiatives.

Analysis Paralysis

It is a convenient fact for many CPOs that the words "analysis" and "paralysis" rhyme. Many successful CPOs use this phrase frequently. Why? Because no one ever says: "Wow, you know what I liked about that decision-making process? How long it took." People dislike lengthy decision-making processes, even if the results are satisfactory. Complaints about slow decision-making are common. Quick decisions are always beneficial—a clear, quick win. However, some decisions require thoughtful deliberation, due diligence, and executive alignment. The difference between "thoughtful deliberation" and "analysis paralysis" lies in setting and managing realistic expectations. During your First 100 Days, ask team members responsible for decision facilitation to create a shared document listing decisions, options, and a target decision date. Tracking these dates, even if they change, helps mitigate

"analysis paralysis" and promotes timely decision-making.

Many CPOs encounter "analysis paralysis" during their First 100 Days due to complex preconditions for decision making, often involving hiring the "right people" or resolving issues with messy procurement data. For example, they might delay decisions to understand current spend, which requires gathering and segmenting spend data to spot savings opportunities. However, this can hinder progress if the data is fragmented and error-prone. Successful procurement transformations have faced these challenges, yet many have still succeeded. To avoid paralysis, don't let perfect be the enemy of good. Utilize AI and [Arkestro's technology](#) to clean and organize data, circumventing delays caused by imperfect data, and enabling a more efficient decision-making process.



Thinking too much leads to paralysis by analysis. It's important to think things through, but many use thinking as a means of avoiding action.

ROBERT HERJAVEC, CROATIAN-CANADIAN BUSINESSMAN AND INVESTOR

Disagree and Commit

In the beginning of this chapter, we mentioned that good plans tend to make at least one person mad. But what happens to this unhappy person and how do you as a leader help them resolve their negative emotions in the context of a group decision? This



... use the phrase “disagree and commit.” This phrase will save a lot of time. If you have conviction on a particular direction even though there’s no consensus, it’s helpful to say, “Look, I know we disagree on this, but will you gamble with me on it? Disagree and commit?”

JEFF BEZOS, FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN OF AMAZON

problem has plagued teams since the early days of Silicon Valley, and in 2016 Jeff Bezos mentioned Amazon's process to overcome blocked decisions called Disagree and Commit.

In this meeting, competing viewpoints are heard, and while disagreements are expected, a decision is ultimately made that everyone commits to for a time. This commitment helps unify the team, even if it leaves someone temporarily upset. The key is professional conduct—letting go of personal grievances and focusing on the shared plan. As CPO, making and communicating these decisions is part of your role. Creating change may upset some, but it's essential for delivering success.

Quick Wins

While many discuss the benefits of "quick wins" for positive momentum and driving transformation, not everyone executes this concept well. "Quick" should mean days or weeks, not months. Specific and measurable goals are crucial for defining speed. A "win" should deliver significant value quickly; an effort should be marked by the speed of its achievement and its uncontroversial value. It's often confused with "low-hanging fruit," but the most impactful "quick wins" are hard and impressive. They should demonstrate considerable effort and result in meaningful, swift improvements that exceed expectations.

For example, a new CPO started a procurement transformation, including centralizing procurement, consolidating suppliers, and implementing new

systems. The CFO wanted faster cost savings across more spend. The procurement team managed \$700M in spend with \$10M in annual savings but needed improvement to meet its full potential.

The CPO introduced [Arkestro's Predictive Procurement Orchestration](#), using AI to generate data in supplier quotes and provide real-time feedback for best offers. Targeting transportation, freight, and logistics, the CPO collected over 200k unique AI-created offers from suppliers across 4k lanes in less than 30 days, surpassing the previous year's savings. This quick win provided the necessary momentum and budget for the broader transformation roadmap, including additional headcount.

Uncovering Standard-Bearers with Superhuman Initiative

High performers in procurement teams often handle a significant portion of the workload. They thrive on recognition and reward for their contributions, and appreciate leaders who clear obstacles for their initiatives. As a new CPO, identifying and engaging with these high performers, and rewarding their efforts,

is essential. Communicating that performance will be assessed based on contributions to the 100 Days Plan will motivate both high and medium performers. This approach fosters a high-performing team culture without creating fear of failure, ultimately leading to better overall results.

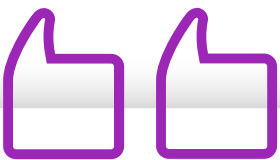
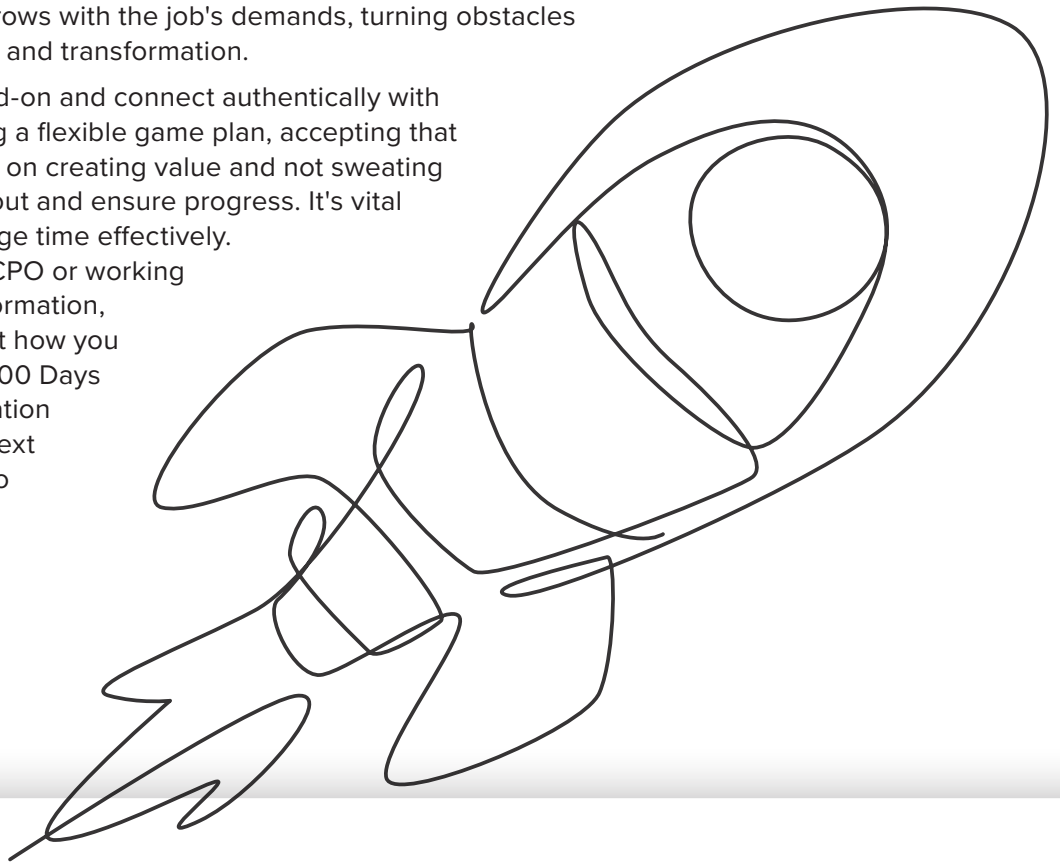
CONCLUSION

Showing Up With Passion, Purpose, and Performance Is All The Rocket Fuel You'll Ever Need

Procurement is a tough job, demanding leadership and the ability to navigate unique complexities. The role of a CPO often involves handling conflicting priorities and challenging situations, but it's this very difficulty that attracts those who thrive on challenges. Effective CPOs create significant value by tackling tough tasks at scale, becoming indispensable to their companies. The truly great CPOs share a love for their work that grows with the job's demands, turning obstacles into opportunities for momentum and transformation.

Great CPOs face challenges head-on and connect authentically with their team. This starts with having a flexible game plan, accepting that errors are inevitable. By focusing on creating value and not sweating the small stuff, you prevent burnout and ensure progress. It's vital to monitor key metrics and manage time effectively.

Whether you are an early stage CPO or working on your umpteenth digital transformation, reaching escape velocity is about how you can take the wins from the First 100 Days of your CPO tenure or transformation and lay the groundwork for the next 1000, transforming early wins into long-term achievements.



The CPOs who handle the stress and the conflict and the long hours of the job with grace, humor and humility share one thing in common above all else: they absolutely love what they do, and the harder it gets, the more they love it.

LEN DECANDIA



About Arkestro

Arkestro Predictive Procurement Orchestration (PPO) applies machine learning, game theory, and data science to help our customers identify and execute their best procurement decisions faster and across all categories of spend. By analyzing historical and live procurement data, Arkestro generates suggested prices at the item level, followed by real-time feedback to coach suppliers and increase competitive responses. The unique power of PPO enables customers to run 3 times as many events and achieve an average savings of 16% without adding headcount. And with no integration required, Arkestro customers are up and running and saving within days!

See Arkestro in action at [arkestro.com](https://www.arkestro.com).



Ready to see how real-time recommendations can amplify your procurement team's impact? **Let's talk.**

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