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YOUR RELATIONSHIP ADVISOR FOR AGENTIC AI

MEERKAT REVENUE INTELLIGENCE · FOR CROS AND SALES LEADERS

Chief Revolving Officer.

You're on the clock. So are your buyers. Now what?

The CRO's office has always had a revolving door. Four years of generative AI have made it spin faster. Here's how to future-proof your organization and your career.

By Mary Shea, PhD · Co-Founder and Chief Growth Officer, Meerkat

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76%

OF CROS IN SEAT TODAY STARTED IN THE ROLE IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS

3x

AS MANY CROS EXIT EACH YEAR COMPARED TO 2019

1 in 4

DEPARTING CROS HAVE NO NEW JOB A YEAR LATER

27x

AS MANY SELLERS EARN AI CREDENTIALS COMPARED TO 2022

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The CRO seat survived AI. The runway didn't.

New CROs get less time to prove themselves: first-year exits rose from 14% to 17%, and six-month exits from 3.3% to 5.7%.

01

The top is crowded and unstable

Revenue-executive appointments nearly doubled as a share of US hiring. Three in four sitting CROs are new since generative AI hit the workplace, and half took the seat in the last 24 months.

02

The exit is harder than the entry

A year after leaving a CRO seat, one in four leaders have no new role on record. Only one in eight hold another CRO title. Fractional and advisory work absorbs a growing share.

03

Relationships decide who lands

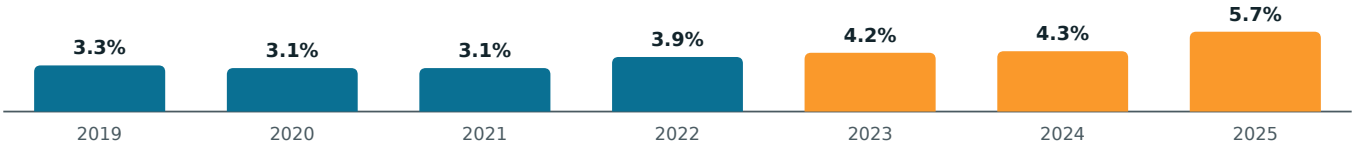
Revenue leaders with 100 or more verified relationships land a new seat within three months 63% of the time. For leaders with fewer than 10, the figure is 51%. A verified relationship is one Meerkat can evidence: a shared employer, a shared board or a recommendation.

Why read this report

This report reads US career records from November 2022 to October 2026 to show what changed, what to expect in the next 6-12 months and what to do today. Each AI year in the report runs November to October.

The shrinking runway: new CROs out of the role within six months

By year appointed; years run November to October; amber marks the years since generative AI hit the workplace



How this report was made

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Mary Shea, PhD, Co-Founder and Chief Growth Officer, Meerkat. Mary set the research questions, directed the analysis and is responsible for the conclusions.

DATA

Meerkat's relationship graph: 600 million professional profiles and 2.7 billion evidence-backed relationships, including about 112 million US profiles. Extracted November 16, 2026.

BUILT WITH CLAUDE OPUS

Claude Opus is an AI model from Anthropic. Under Mary's direction, Claude queried the graph, ran the calculations, drafted the text and produced the charts.

01

PART 01

Four AI years.
What changed.

THE FOUR AI YEARS

What changed after November 2022

Four signals from the sales profession, year by year.

EACH NUMBER IS A COUNT OF PEOPLE IN US CAREER RECORDS

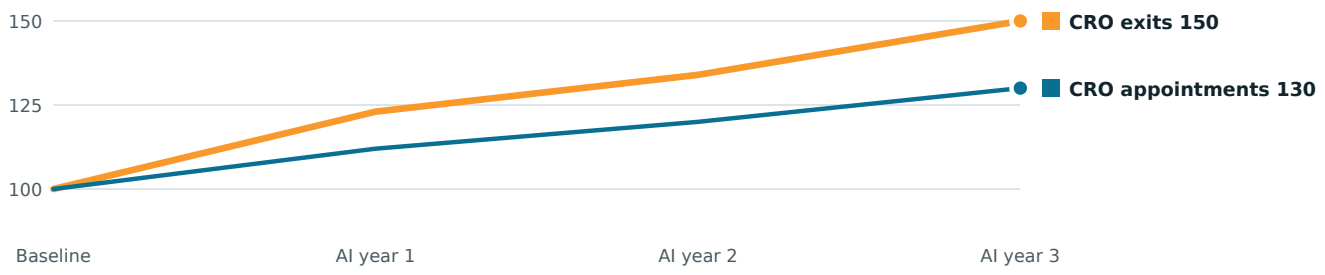
	Baseline	AI year 1	AI year 2	AI year 3	AI year 4
	Nov 2021-Oct 2022	Nov 2022-Oct 2023	Nov 2023-Oct 2024	Nov 2024-Oct 2025	Nov 2025-Oct 2026
CROs appointed	**3,093**	**3,451**	**3,718**	**4,008**	**3,081***
CRO seats exited	**2,100**	**2,591**	**2,804**	**3,151**	**still reporting**
GTM engineers appointed	**47**	**91**	**178**	**536**	**995***
Sellers earning AI credentials	**305**	**2,212**	**5,125**	**8,164**	**7,603***

Generative AI hits the workplace, November 2022

*Year 4 is understated: career records fill in as people update their profiles.

Exits grow faster than appointments

CROs, indexed to the baseline year = 100



WHAT IT MEANS

AI didn't empty the sales floor. It changed who gets hired above it, how long they last and what they're expected to know. Exits are growing faster than appointments, so more revenue leaders are in the market at any moment than at any point in this data.

Source: Meerkat relationship graph, US career records (about 112 million US professional profiles), extracted November 16, 2026.

FINDING 01

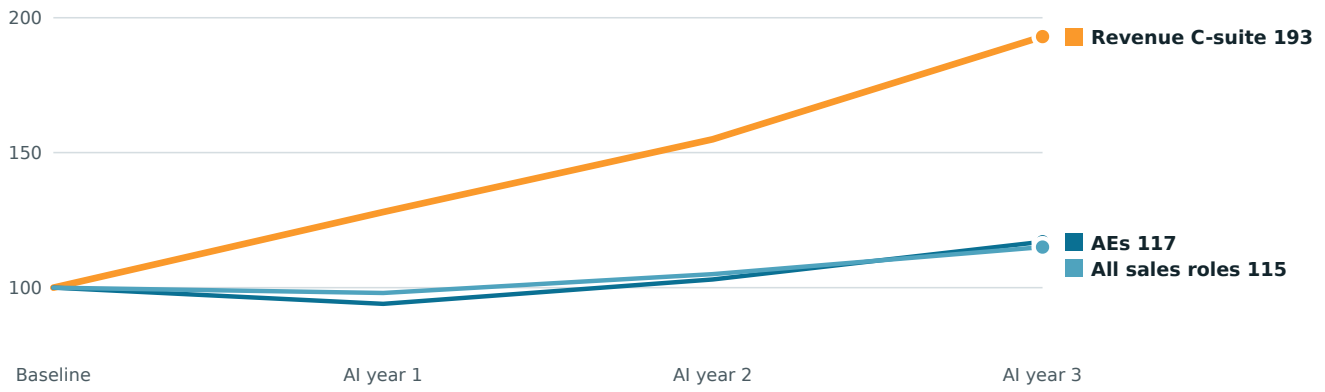
01

The top of the revenue org is crowded

Revenue executives are the fastest-growing part of sales hiring since generative AI hit the workplace.

Share of US job starts, indexed to the baseline year = 100

Revenue C-suite: CRO, Chief Growth, Chief Commercial and Chief Sales Officer



Frontline hires per revenue executive appointed, by role

Baseline year compared with AI year 3

	BASELINE YEAR	AI YEAR 3
SDRs	7.5	4.1
AEs	20.3	12.4
Sales managers	21.3	11.5

Hiring on record fell across the whole US market after 2022, and sales held its share. The shift is in the mix. For every 10,000 US job starts, revenue-executive appointments rose from 3.0 to 5.7.

Fractional and interim titles grew from 2.5% to 4.2% of those appointments.

WHAT IT MEANS

More people now hold a revenue-executive title, so more of them compete for the next seat when one opens. Companies also hire fewer frontline people for each executive they appoint, so the executive's own relationships carry more of the number.

Combined, frontline hires per revenue executive fell from 48 to 28; the combined figure counts each person once. Job starts estimated from a 1% sample of US profiles. Source: Meerkat relationship graph, US career records (about 112 million US professional profiles), extracted November 16, 2026.

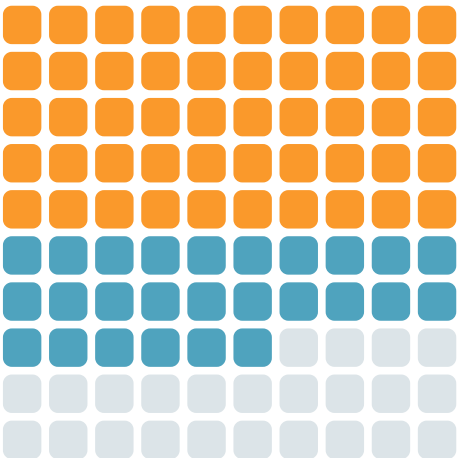
FINDING 02

Three in four CROs are new since generative AI hit the workplace

The leaders running revenue today have never led it in any other era.

Every 100 sitting US CROs

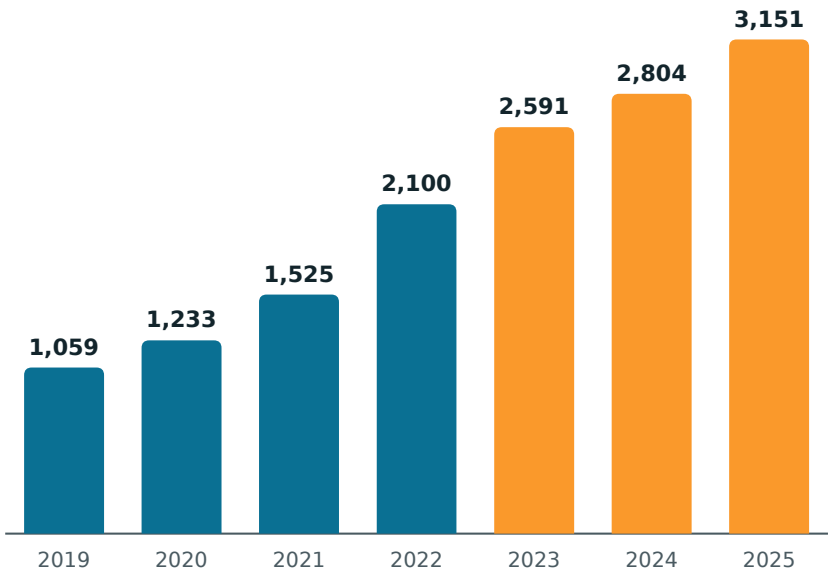
11,919 people currently in a CRO role



50 took the seat in the last 24 months
26 more since November 2022
24 predate generative AI

CRO seats exited each year

Years run November to October; amber marks the AI years



CRO exits tripled from 2019 to AI year 3. Appointments doubled. One in four sitting CROs took the seat in the last 12 months.

The pattern holds across the revenue C-suite: 78% of Chief Growth Officers and 74% of Chief Commercial Officers are new since late 2022.

WHAT IT MEANS

Your peer group turned over almost completely in four years. Institutional memory of how accounts were won, and who knows whom, left with the people who held those seats. Assume your own seat follows the same clock.

A sitting CRO has a current CRO role with no end date. Source: Meerkat relationship graph, US career records (about 112 million US professional profiles), extracted November 16, 2026.

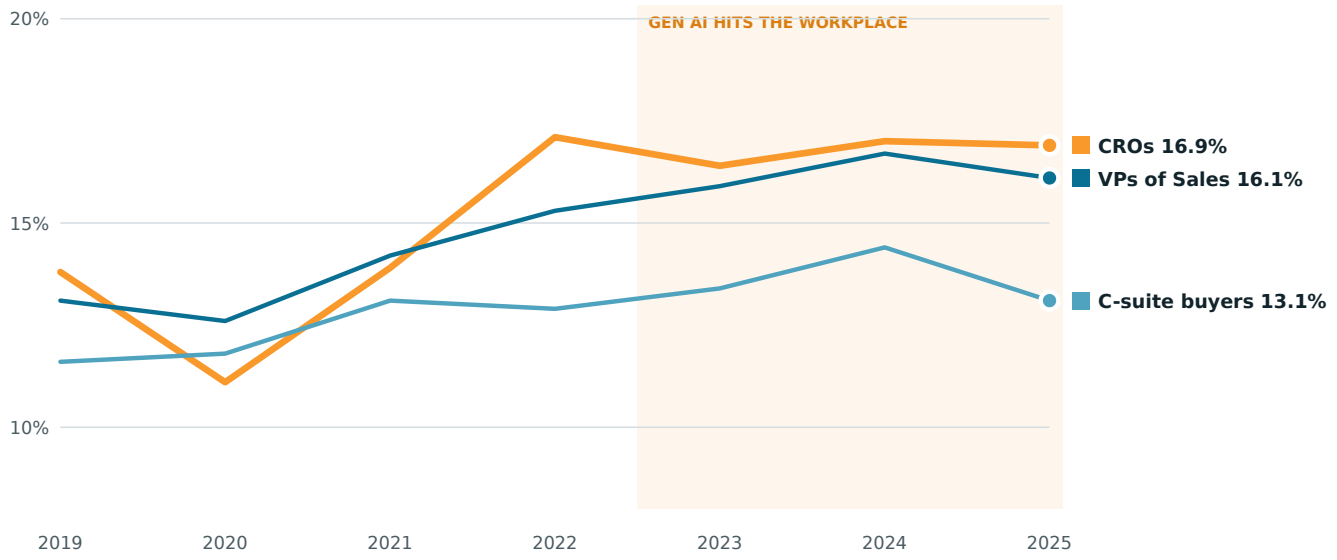
FINDING 03

Turnover reset higher, and quick exits are rising

More revenue leaders now leave inside their first year, and inside their first six months.

Share who left the role within 12 months, by year appointed

Years run November to October



5.7%

Of CROs appointed in AI year 3 were out within six months, up from 3.3% of the 2019 class

43%

Of CROs appointed in 2023 had left the role within 24 months

1 in 6

New CROs are out of the role inside the first year

WHAT IT MEANS

A first-year exit rate of 17% is now the baseline, and it hasn't come back down in any year since late 2022. Boards and CEOs give a new revenue leader less time than a large enterprise sales cycle takes. Plan your first 180 days, and your next move, on that clock.

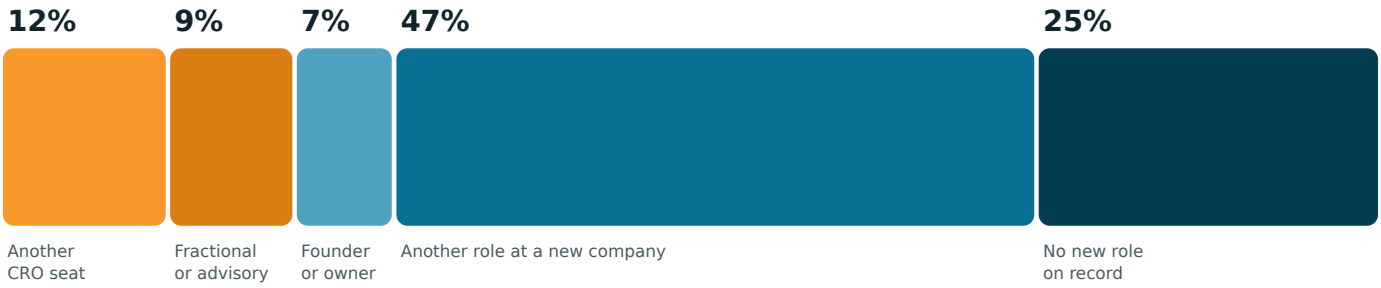
Leaving the role includes promotions and moves within a company. Recent classes are understated, since some people haven't updated their profiles. Source: Meerkat relationship graph, US career records (about 112 million US professional profiles), extracted November 16, 2026.

FINDING 04

The exit is harder than the entry

Where leaders stood 12 months after a CRO seat ended, for 3,151 exits in AI year 3.

Every 100 CROs who left a seat, one year later



Share of departing CROs in a role at a new organization

3,151 CRO exits in AI year 3



79%

Of CROs who land a new seat within a year land it within three months of leaving. The next job is arranged before the exit

9% to 12%

Fractional or advisory share of next roles, baseline year to AI year 3

3x

As many CROs left a seat in AI year 3 as in 2019

WHAT IT MEANS

One in eight former CROs get the title back within a year. One in four show no new role at all. The leaders who land do it fast, which means they built the path while they were still employed. Starting to network after the exit is starting late.

New roles are roles at a different organization starting up to one month before the exit or within 12 months after. Some people with no new role on record haven't updated their profiles. Source: Meerkat relationship graph, US career records (about 112 million US professional profiles), extracted November 16, 2026.

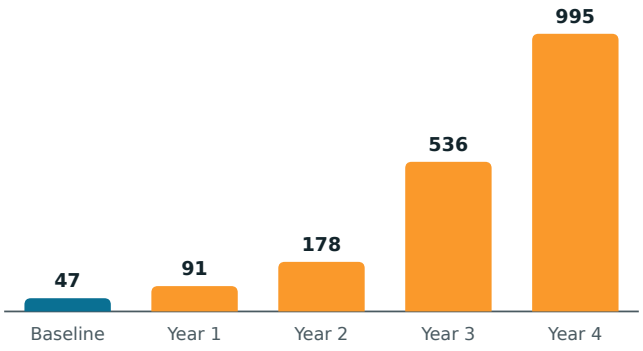
FINDING 05

AI is rewriting the roles and the résumé

New titles and new credentials are spreading fast, from a very small base.

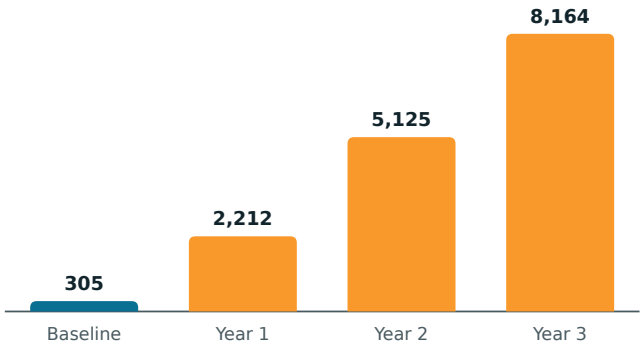
GTM engineers appointed

US, by AI year; year 4 still reporting

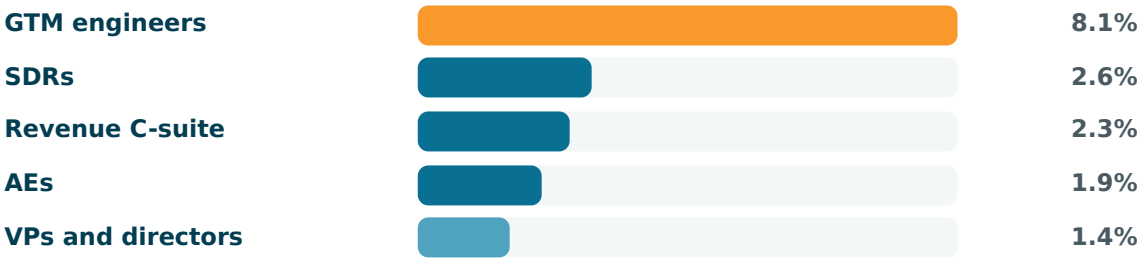


Sellers earning an AI credential

People in current US sales roles



Share with an AI credential earned since late 2022, by current role



34%

Of GTM engineers appointed in AI year 3 left the role within 12 months

2.6x

Growth in AI-named sales titles per 10,000 sales appointments, baseline to year 3

98%

Of people in US sales roles show no AI credential earned since late 2022

WHAT IT MEANS

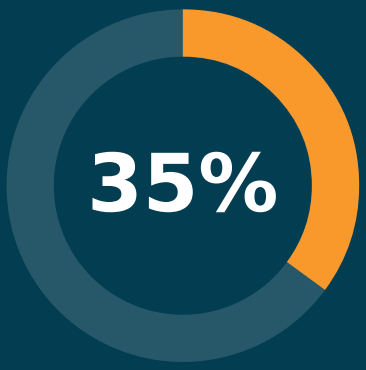
The newest revenue role is also the least stable one, and most of your team has no evidence of AI skill on record. Sales leaders have the lowest credential rate of any group here. Expect boards to ask what yours is.

AI credentials: certifications naming AI, generative AI, machine learning, prompt engineering, Copilot or similar. Source: Meerkat relationship graph, US career records (about 112 million US professional profiles), extracted November 16, 2026.

FINDING 06

Your buyers turn over as fast as you do

The executives who sign are in new seats too, and half arrive from another organization.



Of VP-and-above executives appointed at US organizations in AI year 2 left the role within 24 months.

About 239,000 VP-and-above appointments landed at US organizations with 200 or more people in AI year 3 alone.

13%
Leave the role within the first 12 months

50%
Of new executive buyers come from another organization

76%
Of executives who move between mapped organizations stay in their sector

WHAT LEADERS TELL US

58% of leaders say their organization would lose key relationships if certain people left. Only **12%** of respondents say their organization has a consistent process for handing relationships over.

Meerkat, The State of Relationship Capital 2026, survey of 69 professionals

WHAT IT MEANS

The account's champion and your seller are both likely to be somewhere else before a multiyear deal renews. When both sides of a relationship turn over, the account resets to cold unless someone on your team holds a second path in.

Origin and sector movement from a 10% sample of 2025 appointees (23,160 people). Source: Meerkat relationship graph, US career records (about 112 million US professional profiles), extracted November 16, 2026.

02

PART 02

Future-proof your organization.

02

Five moves to keep relationships when people leave

Each move answers a number in this report.

1 Map the relationships your team holds today

See which target accounts anyone on your team can reach through someone they've worked with. Do it before the next territory plan, and before the next departure.

76%
of CROs are new to the seat since late 2022

2 Put two paths into every key account

A single champion is a single point of failure on both sides. Require a second relationship, held by a second person, in each top account.

35%
of executive buyers leave within 24 months

3 Treat buyer moves as pipeline

Three in four executives who move stay in their sector. Track where your champions go, and follow them into the next account.

76%
of movers stay in their sector

4 Capture a new leader's network in the first 30 days

Three in four CROs come from outside, with two decades of relationships. Map them on arrival, while the leader is motivated to share.

17%
of new CROs are out within a year

5 Make AI fluency visible

Ask every leader and seller to earn and record one AI credential this year. The board will ask, and the talent market already does.

98%
of sellers show no AI credential

Source: Meerkat relationship graph, US career records (about 112 million US professional profiles), extracted November 16, 2026.

03

PART 03

Future-proof your career.

03

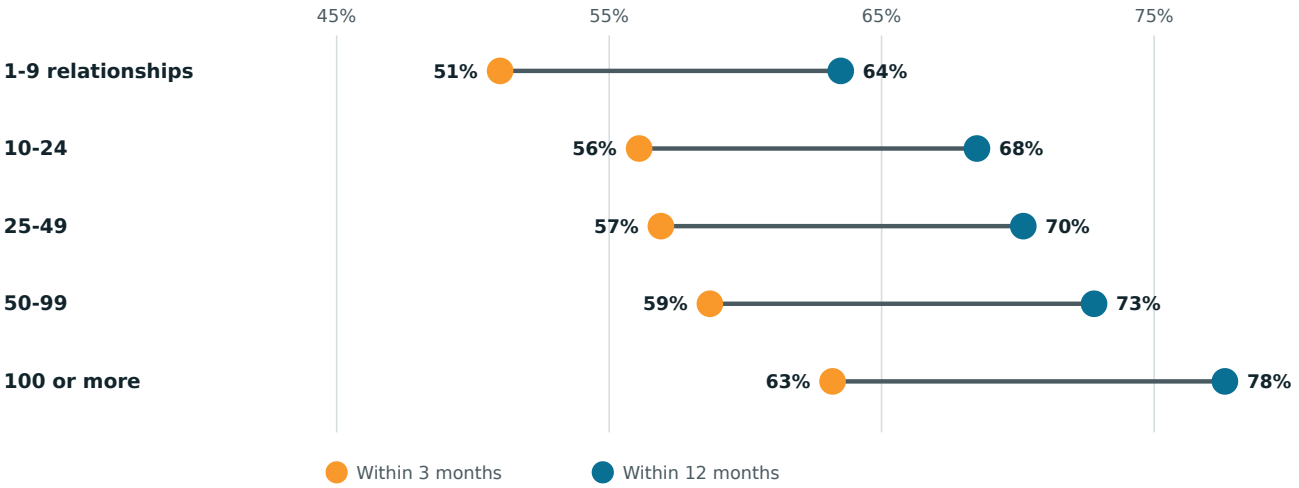
Leaders with bigger networks land faster

Share of exiting CROs and VPs of Sales who started a role at a new organization, by network size.

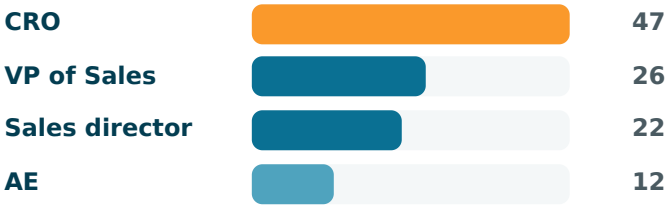
What counts as a verified relationship. A tie Meerkat can evidence from records: two people worked at the same company in the same period long enough to know each other, served on the same board, or one recommended the other. The count shows relationships on record, not everyone a person knows.

Landed a new role, by verified relationships on record

18,926 exits by revenue leaders in AI years 1-3, a 25% sample



Median verified relationships, by current title



The gap is 12 points at three months and 14 points at a year.

The pattern doesn't prove cause. It does match what the exit data shows: the next seat comes through people, and it comes before the exit.

WHAT IT MEANS

Your network is your severance. Build it on the company's time, in the open, because the same relationships that find your next role also open your current accounts.

People with fuller profiles show both more relationships and more roles, which accounts for part of the gap. Source: Meerkat relationship graph, US career records (about 112 million US professional profiles), extracted November 16, 2026.

PART 03 · YOUR CAREER

03

Six habits of leaders who stay employable

Network while you're employed. The numbers say putting it off costs you.

1 Stay in the market while you're employed

A C-suite search often takes longer than three months. Yet most CROs who find a new seat start it within three months of leaving, which means they were looking before they left. Keep three live conversations with CEOs, investors and recruiters at all times.

79%
of CROs who find a seat within a year start it within three months of leaving

2 Know your number

Count the people who'd take your call and vouch for you. Leaders under 10 verified relationships land at 51%. Aim for 100.

100+
relationships: 63% land in three months

3 Stay close to former colleagues

Career overlaps are the most common verified tie. Two notes a year to each former team keeps the path warm.

47
median relationships of a sitting CRO

4 Get on a board or advisory body

Board ties count as verified relationships, and they outlast any employer.

9%
of ex-CROs move into advisory work

5 Build a fractional option before you need it

Advisory and fractional work is a growing landing place. Line up one engagement you could start in 30 days.

12%
of next roles are fractional, up from 9%

6 Put your AI fluency on the record

Earn a credential and publish what you've built with AI. Few of your peers have.

2.3%
of revenue executives hold one

Source: Meerkat relationship graph, US career records (about 112 million US professional profiles), extracted November 16, 2026.

04

PART 04

What comes next.

PART 04 · WHAT COMES NEXT

04

Predictions for the next 6 and 12 months

Each projection extends the four-year trend in the data. None is a forecast for a single company.

In 6 months

BY MAY 2027

One in eight US CRO seats change hands.

Basis: 25% of sitting CROs took the seat in the last 12 months.

About 1,500 CROs leave a seat, and roughly 400 of them show no new role a year later.

Basis: 3,151 exits in AI year 3; one in four with no new role on record.

About 120,000 new VP-and-above buyers take seats at US organizations.

Basis: about 239,000 appointments a year, flat for three years.

GTM engineer appointments pass a 1,500-a-year pace.

Basis: 178, 536, then 995 with year 4 still reporting.

About 110 of the next 2,000 new CROs are out before six months are up.

Basis: a 5.7% six-month exit rate in AI year 3, and about 4,000 appointments a year.

In 12 months

BY NOVEMBER 2027

More than 80% of sitting CROs date from after generative AI hit the workplace.

Basis: 76% today, with one in four seats turning over each year.

Frontline hires per revenue executive fall to about 24.

Basis: 48, 36, 32, 28 over the last four years.

Fractional and interim titles reach 5% of revenue-executive appointments.

Basis: 2.5%, 3.1%, 4.0%, 4.2% over the last four years.

More than 10,000 sellers earn an AI credential in the year, and fewer than 3% of sellers hold one.

Basis: 8,164 in AI year 3; 2% of sellers hold one today.

About 680 of the next 4,000 new CROs are out within their first year.

Basis: a 17% first-year exit rate, steady since late 2022.

Source: Meerkat relationship graph, US career records (about 112 million US professional profiles), extracted November 16, 2026.

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The seat is temporary. Relationships are the asset that stays with you.

Three in four CROs are new to the seat in the last four years, and one in three executive buyers leaves within two. The data in this report shows what lasts through that turnover: leaders with more relationships on record find their next seat faster. The same relationships, shared across a team, are what keep an account in place when people leave.

ABOUT MEERKAT

Meerkat is your relationship advisor built for agentic AI. We provide clients with rich relationship graphs and enriched contact data so they can quickly find and act on warm-path introductions. At Meerkat, we believe that as AI commoditizes outreach and access, earned trust is your most important asset.

Give us your toughest account,
and we'll show you who opens the door.

Request a demo **trymeerkat.ai**

AI does the work. Meerkat knows who opens the door.

ABOUT THE DATA

How this report was built

Every count comes from Meerkat's relationship graph unless marked as survey data.

Who built this report

Research and analysis by Mary Shea, PhD, Co-Founder and Chief Growth Officer of Meerkat, who set the research questions, directed the analysis and is responsible for the conclusions. Built with Claude Opus, an AI model from Anthropic, which queried the graph, ran the calculations, drafted the text and produced the charts under her direction.

Source

This report is built on Meerkat's relationship graph: 600 million professional profiles connected by 2.7 billion evidence-backed relationships, built from licensed and public sources. The graph includes about 112 million professional profiles in the United States. Data extracted November 16, 2026.

AI years

Each AI year runs November to October, beginning November 2022. The baseline year is November 2021 to October 2022. Charts labeled 2019 to 2025 use the same November-to-October years.

Appointments and exits

An appointment is a person starting a role with a matching title. An exit is a role with an end date. Leaving a role includes promotions and moves within a company.

Share of job starts

Hiring on record fell across the US after 2022, and recent months are incomplete. To separate sales trends from both effects, we compare sales appointments with all US job starts, estimated from a 1% sample of US profiles.

Landing a new role

A role at a different organization that starts up to one month before an exit or within the stated window after. People who haven't updated their profiles appear as having no new role, so landing rates are conservative.

Verified relationships

Two people who worked at the same company in the same period with enough time together to know each other, served on the same board, or where one recommended the other.

Predictions

Projections extend recent trends in the data. They describe the US market as a whole.

Survey data

Callouts marked "What leaders tell us" come from The State of Relationship Capital 2026, a Meerkat survey of 69 professionals fielded in late summer and early fall 2026. Leader figures use the 37 respondents at VP level and above.

Coverage

The graph reflects relationships we can evidence from our sources. Some of the strongest relationships may not appear in any source.