

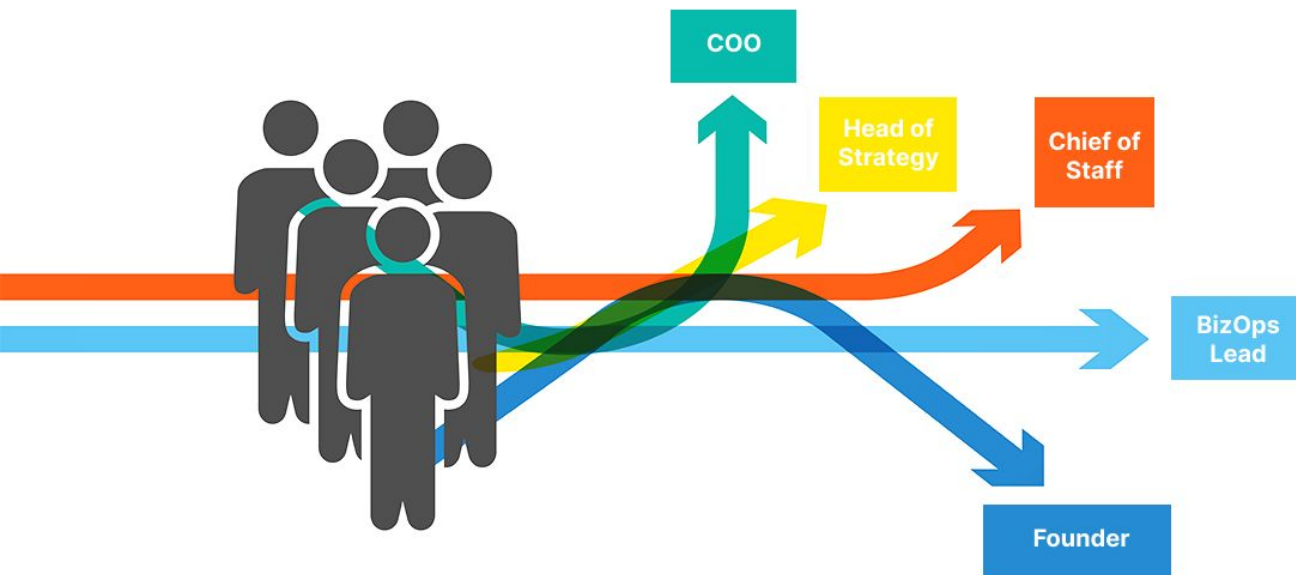
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Is Chief of Staff a Dead end role?

Part 2





● Introduction

Chief of Staff roles can be very rewarding, but does the career path hold long-term promise? Can the skills and experience gained in the role lead to success in other roles or companies? Our team conducted research on 1,000+ professionals' work history who were Chief of Staff at some point during their career in the past 10 years – most no longer in that role – to determine what other opportunities this role leads to.

In part 1 of this series, we explored the types of challenges Chiefs of Staff generally face navigating their career. Factors like company scale, internal politics, transferable skill sets all impact the opportunities presented to Chiefs of Staff.

In the past 5 years, the Chief of Staff role has exploded among companies large and small in industries all around the world. With career progression - especially generalist careers - becoming less linear, it's critical to look at the data to understand how leaders in these roles are progressing through their careers.

The next generation of Chiefs of Staff stand as beneficiaries of the leaders who have implemented this position among executive teams in organizations for the first time. They can learn from these trailblazers by applying what they have done well, improving upon what hasn't worked as well, and using their CoS career paths as examples for their own.

The first burning question we sought to answer: How long are Chiefs of Staff typically staying in their roles?

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Our research shows that the average Chief of Staff tenure was 20.04 months.

It's also worth noting that there were only small deviations in tenure from people that held a Chief of Staff role 8+ years ago compared with those that were in the position more recently.

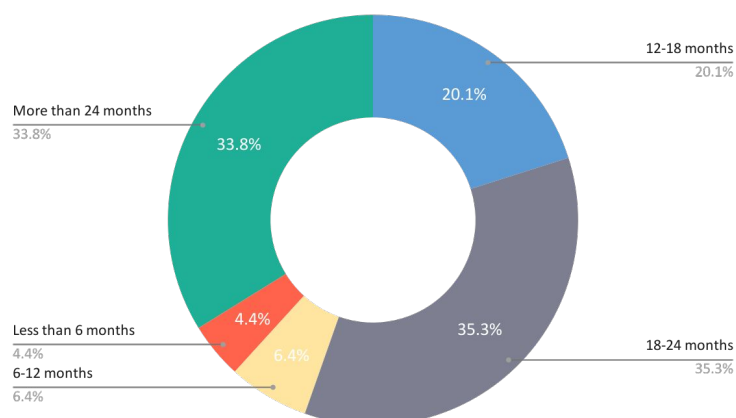
20 Months

Average Chief of Staff Tenure

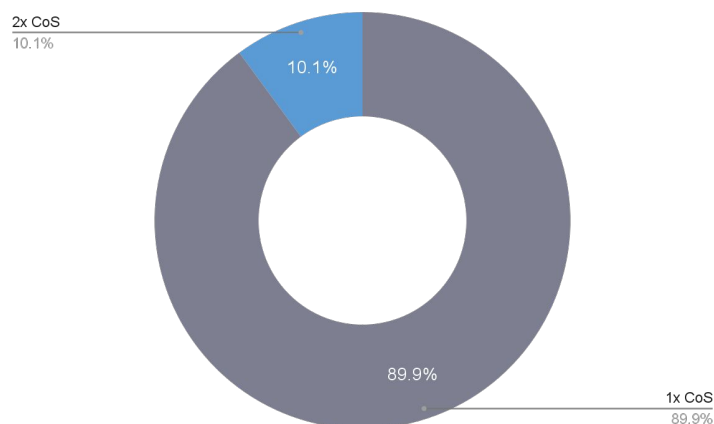
How long do you expect to be in your CoS role?

This also aligns with our own experience working with hundreds of professionals in the position through the Chief of Staff Network. It's also not too different from how current Chiefs of Staff perceive the duration of their role tenure.

In our 2021 Chief of Staff Compensation report, the data showed 35% of acting Chiefs of Staff thinking about their roles as lasting 18-24 months.



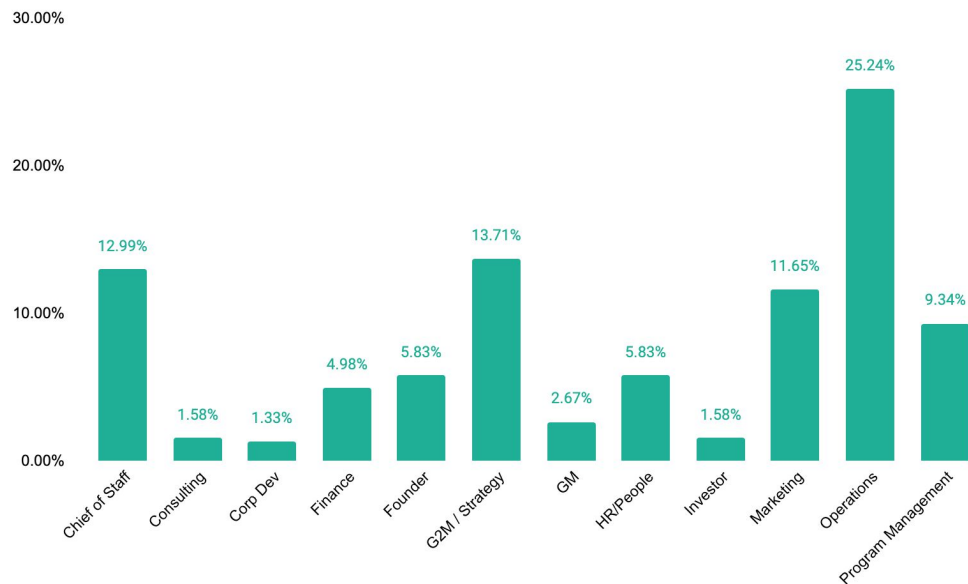
How many people take on multiple Chief of Staff roles?



While the role has often been described as a "stepping stone" position, a noticeable 10% of our sample population has worked in more than one Chief of Staff role at different companies in the past 8 years of their career.

The path from one CoS role to the next isn't always straightforward though. Very often other positions either at their current company or a new organization are pursued first.

What kinds of positions are Chiefs of Staff taking next?



As expected business operations was the most common title followed by go-to-market and strategy. Combined, business operations, G2M/Strategy and program management accounted for 48% of the career transitions.

5.8% of Chiefs of Staff pursued an entrepreneurial path immediately following their CoS tenure, demonstrating a growing prominence of Chiefs of Staff applying their varied skills to build their own companies.

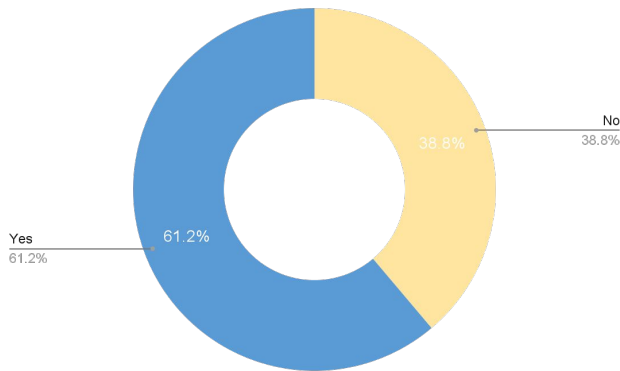
*Our previous graph shows 10% of people who took another CoS role. The additional 3% shown here took another CoS position but at the same company - typically with an added title like VP, Chief of Staff or Head of People / Chief of Staff.

Qualitative data collected in our 2021 CoS Compensation Report further illustrates what Chiefs of Staff hope to do next in their careers. When asked "What do you hope to do next after your CoS role?", the most common responses were mapped in this word cloud.:



● Are Chiefs of Staff moving to a new company after their tenure?

% Chiefs of Staff moving to a new company

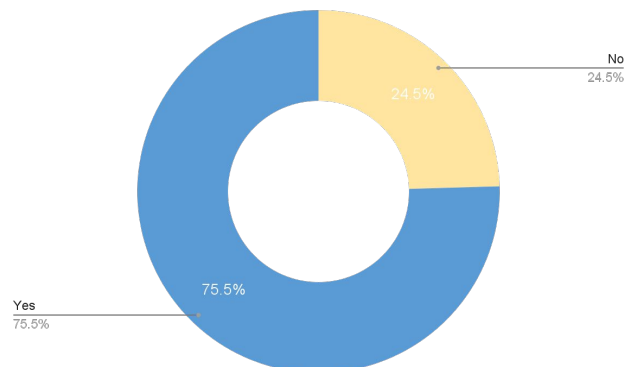


Immediately following their CoS role, 61% of people changed companies. This number is significant as it may demonstrate retention challenges for Chiefs of Staff. It could be that there is not enough clear direction or support for them to advance internally.

Given the growing perception of the role having strategic importance to the organization and attracting diverse and strong talent, it's surprising that more Chiefs of Staff are not able to find their next opportunity at their current company.

% repeat Chiefs of Staff moving to a new company

For professionals that do choose to stay in a CoS role, 75% of them transitioned to a new company. This could be interpreted as a glass ceiling for Chiefs of Staff who may find it difficult to expand their scope or level up in the role at their current company, but still are eager to continue operating as a Chief of Staff.



Working with a new principal, a different industry, a larger organization can change the dynamics and scope of the role drastically. If one chooses to continue being a CoS for a longer part of their career, changing companies may be a natural part of that growth.

25% of CoS continued on with their CoS roles but with updated titles or seniority levels at their existing companies.

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