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## **FED AGENCY CHIEF DATA OFFICERS EMERGE AS BIG DATA HEROES**

*Eighty-eight percent of agencies with a CDO say they are making a positive impact and 93 percent of those without a CDO say having one would positively impact the agency*

**Alexandria, Va., December 12, 2016** – [MeriTalk](#), a public-private partnership focused on improving the outcomes of government IT, today announced the results of its new report, “Calling the Plays: The Evolving Role of the CDO and Federal Big Data.” The study, underwritten by [ViON Corporation](#), reveals Chief Data Officers (CDOs) are changing the Federal big data game – 69 percent of Federal agencies with a CDO are more likely to successfully manage big data than those without (40 percent). In fact, 88 percent of agencies with CDOs report they’re having a positive impact – while 93 percent of those who don’t have a CDO say having one would make a positive impact.

Almost all Feds (92 percent) say their agency uses big data in some form, yet the majority (58 percent) would grade their agency’s data management strategy a C or below. Feds’ top challenges include the ability to convert data into actionable intelligence, govern data, and centralize data storage.

In fact, the majority of Feds without a CDO (67 percent) say their agency is in desperate need of leadership around big data and analytics efforts. In addition to successfully managing big data, agencies with CDOs are also more likely to successfully leverage big data for decision making (61 percent versus 28 percent of those without a CDO).

Of agencies with a CDO, 76 percent say the CDO has taken ownership over data management and governance issues, with the following primary responsibilities:

- Centralizing organizational data (55 percent)
- Protecting organizational data (51 percent)
- Improving data quality (49 percent)
- Managing open government data efforts (43 percent)
- Bridging the gap between IT and operations (43 percent)

- Leveraging data to help set and achieve realistic goals (41 percent)

“It’s clear agencies are inundated with data on a daily basis – what they do with that data is critical though,” says Rodney Hite, director, big data and analytics solutions, ViON. “Implementing a Chief Data Officer ensures your agency is focusing the right amount on mission-critical data management goals – while storing and protecting data throughout the process. Regardless of whether an agency has one or not, the majority – 57 percent – believe the CDO will be the hero of big data and analytics.”

Agencies with a CDO – versus those without one – appear to have the upper hand when it comes to leveraging big data in other operations, including:

- Cyber security analytics (65 percent versus 48 percent)
- Strategic decision making (57 percent versus 41 percent)
- Mission Intelligence (49 percent versus 35 percent)

Ninety-two percent of agencies with CDOs report the CDO and Chief Information Officer (CIO) have a productive working relationship to ensure their agency is keeping pace with the technological realities of big data and analytics. In fact, 71 percent even say their CDO has taken a few of the CIO’s responsibilities to help even out the workload.

However, most agencies aren’t rounding out the support team for CDOs. Of agencies with CDOs, only 25 percent also have a Deputy Chief Data Officer; 29 percent have a Chief Analytics Officer; and only 25 percent have a Chief Data Scientist. And, completing the data staff isn’t in immediate plans – in the next two years, only 24 percent plan on hiring a Deputy CDO; 23 percent a Chief Analytics Officer; and only 15 percent plan to hire a Chief Data Scientist.

“Agencies need these data trailblazers as the volume of structured and unstructured data continues to explode,” says Steve O’Keeffe, founder, MeriTalk. “Once you cut through the noise, properly managing data can be the key to agency success in other arenas, from cyber security to customer experience. Agencies are in dire need of a new data playbook.”

When it comes to incorporating the CDO into agency big data strategy, Fed IT managers suggest the following:

- Allow the CIO to be in on tasking, job descriptions, interviewing, and hiring
- Define roles, expectations, and reporting structure
- Integrate the CDO into current IT data policies and procedures to simplify the transition
- Listen to the needs of the agency and build your plan around the agency’s mission

“Calling the Plays: The Evolving Role of the CDO and Federal Big Data” is based on an online survey of 150 Federal IT managers in September and October 2016. The report has a margin of error of  $\pm 7.97\%$  at a 95% confidence level. To download the full report, please visit <https://www.meritalk.com/study/calling-the-plays/>.

### **About MeriTalk**

The voice of tomorrow’s government today, MeriTalk is a public-private partnership focused on improving the outcomes of government IT. Focusing on government’s hot-button issues, MeriTalk hosts [Big Data Exchange](#), [Cloud Computing Exchange](#), [Cyber Security Exchange](#), and [Data Center Exchange](#) – platforms dedicated to supporting public-private dialogue and collaboration. MeriTalk connects with an audience of 115,000 government community contacts. For more information, visit [www.meritalk.com](http://www.meritalk.com) or follow us on Twitter, @MeriTalk. MeriTalk is a [300Brand organization](#).