

# From AI as a Tool to AI Doing Work: Insights from Sanjay Puri with Richard Wiedenbeck on The CAIO Connect Podcast

*AI is shifting from a tool to a business driver—reshaping organizations, leadership roles, and workflows, as discussed by Richard Wiedenbeck with Sanjay Puri.*

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, March 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On The [CAIO Connect Podcast](#), hosted by [Sanjay Puri](#), a compelling conversation with [Richard Wiedenbeck](#),

Chief AI Officer and CIO Hall of Fame Inductee at Avatar Solutions LLC. challenges one of the biggest misconceptions in enterprise AI: that it's primarily a technology problem. Instead, Wiedenbeck makes it clear—AI is fundamentally about business value, transformation, and

leadership. As organizations move from AI assisting work to AI actually doing work, the role of leadership is being rewritten in real time.

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Being a Chief AI Officer isn't about the technology. It's about driving business value.”

*Richard Wiedenbeck*

**AI Is Not Technology—It's Business Value**

Wiedenbeck's core thesis is simple yet powerful: being a Chief AI Officer is not about deploying tools, it's about driving outcomes. AI represents the convergence of

business strategy, governance, and change leadership. Organizations that treat AI as just another IT implementation risk missing its true potential—deploying intelligence across the enterprise.

## Why Incremental Change Won't Work

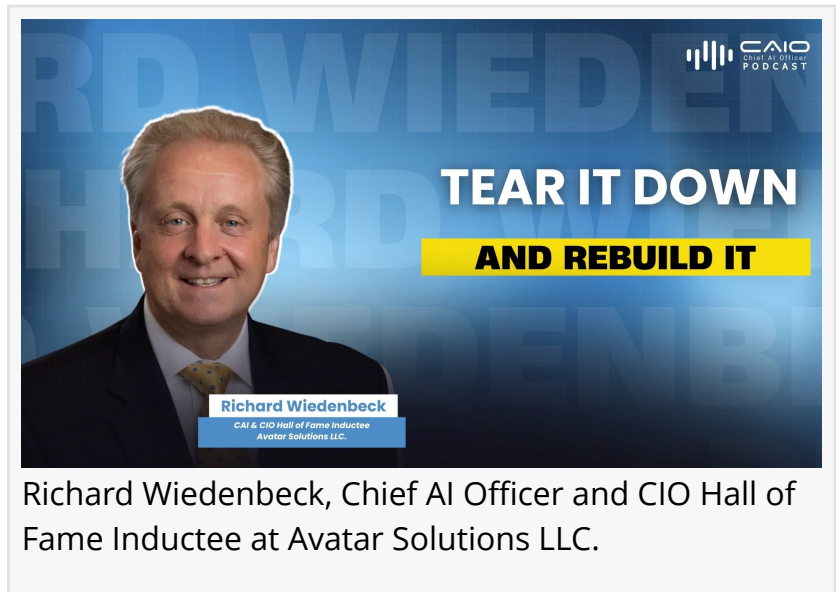
Using a striking analogy, Wiedenbeck compares today's leaders to “mechanical engineers in the age of electricity.” Many organizations are using AI to make existing processes faster, rather than rethinking them entirely. The real opportunity lies not in optimizing workflows, but in redesigning them—shifting from “playing checkers faster” to “playing chess differently.”



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## The Rise of Re-engineering Organizations

AI introduces new capabilities—Generative AI, agentic systems, and AI workers—that demand a fundamental rethink of how work gets done. This is not about automation alone; it's about building a re-engineering capability within the organization. Companies must rethink entire departments, processes, and decision-making frameworks, operating at dramatically higher speed and scale.



## The CIO Question: Adapt or Be Disrupted

One of the most provocative parts of the discussion revolves around the future of the CIO. Wiedenbeck doesn't dismiss the role but reframes it: relevance depends on transformation leadership. Those who continue to act as order-takers risk being sidelined, while those who evolve into business and transformation leaders can seize a central role in the AI-driven enterprise.

## AI and the Workforce: Evolution, Not Elimination

Contrary to popular fear, AI is not immediately about replacing jobs but about shifting work. At organizations like Ameritas, the focus is on moving tasks from humans to AI to improve unit economics, while redeploying talent strategically. Over time, however, AI will not just execute tasks—it will reshape how work itself is designed.

## Rethinking ROI in the Age of AI

Traditional ROI models fall short in capturing AI's impact. Wiedenbeck outlines a broader framework that includes cost reduction, revenue enablement, quality improvement, and risk mitigation. Not all value can be directly quantified, but that doesn't make it any less real—leaders must learn to interpret and act on these signals.

## The Myth of Perfect Data

A particularly contrarian insight challenges the obsession with clean, structured data. According to Wiedenbeck, companies don't need perfect data to begin their AI journey. What matters is identifying the right data for the task at hand, rather than striving for unrealistic perfection.

## Governance: Moving Beyond Risk

A critical gap exists at the board level. Many organizations treat AI purely as a risk issue, burying it within audit committees. Wiedenbeck argues that this is a mistake—AI must be discussed as a strategic transformation driver, with active engagement from leadership and boards alike.

## From Tools to Transformation

The conversation on The CAIO Connect Podcast underscores a defining shift: AI is no longer a tool—it is a force reshaping the enterprise. As Sanjay Puri and Richard Wiedenbeck highlight, success will depend on leaders who can rethink systems, redesign work, and embrace AI as a driver of business value. In this new era, the winners won't be those who adopt AI—they'll be those who transform because of it.

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