



CI DEPLOYMENT SERIES • EPISODE 03

# CI is more intuitive than it is simple

*Why appointing a **head of CI** is a consequential decision –  
and one that's often made without the depth it deserves*

SWIPE →



## THE PATTERN

# The decision is often made without a **deliberate frame**

Most senior appointments – finance, operations, commercial – arrive with a clear playbook for what "right" looks like.

CI rarely does. The brief gets assembled later, often after the person is already in the seat.

*The result isn't a wrong appointment. It's an unframed one.*



## THE MISCONCEPTION

**CI looks intuitive.**

**That's exactly why it gets underestimated.**

The vocabulary is approachable. The tools are visible. The principles sound like common sense. So, the role can get treated as something a strong general manager can pick up along the way.

## THE QUIET TRUTH

**CI is intuitive in places and a hard-won skill everywhere else.**



WHAT THE ROLE ACTUALLY ASKS FOR

# Three things, all non-negotiable.

01

THE SKILL

Seeing CI as an  
integrated system

02

THE DATA

Reading reality  
through data

03

THE PERSON

The character  
to lead change

*All three develop over time. The function grows as the leader does.*



01 • THE SKILL

# CI deployment is a system. Reading it takes years.

Not a sequence of projects. A web of mechanisms – governance, cadence, integration with the business – that decide whether improvement lives or fades.

A real head of CI sees how the pieces hold together and sees further:  
how a decision this week shapes the function in two years.

*This skill is acquired the long way through mistakes, through navigating functions, through learning to lead without authority. It develops over time.*



## 02 • THE DATA

**CI without data is CI on instinct.**  
**And instinct rarely closes the gap.**

Without data, the gap is fuzzy, the impact is anecdotal, the wins are hard to defend.

### WHAT THIS ASKS OF THE LEADER

**Skill**

**Flexibility**

**Creativity**

**Initiative**

*They can only drive the use of data **if they understand it themselves.***



03 • THE PERSON

# System and data take you halfway. Character takes you the rest.

## COURAGE

The honest call when the easier one is available.

## INFLUENCE WITHOUT AUTHORITY

Bringing people and decisions along without holding the levers.

## RESILIENCE

Holding the line over years, not quarters.

## JUDGMENT IN COMPROMISE

Compromise where you can. Stay the course where it matters.

*Even when CI is welcomed, the change still meets resistance and **that's what character is for.***



THE ANALOGY THAT KEEPS IT HONEST

# A Michelin kitchen looks easy from the dining room. **It isn't.**

The discipline behind it – system, fluency, character –  
only shows when you step into the kitchen.

CI works the same way. Looking in is not the same as running it.

CI deserves the *same depth of preparation* as the kitchens it gets compared to.



COMING NEXT

# Episode 04:

## What a **deliberate appointment** looks like.

*Five questions to ask before naming a **head of CI**  
And what good answers actually sound like.*

### IF THIS WAS USEFUL

- Follow Anna Plekhanova for more on CI, transformation, and operating models.
- Save this for your next leadership appointment conversation.
- Share it with a colleague leading or hiring for CI.