



CI DEPLOYMENT SERIES • EPISODE 04

Naming a Head of CI **is a consequential decision**

Episode 03 made the case. These five questions help you get it right.

SWIPE →



WHERE WE LEFT OFF

Episode 03 established **what the role actually asks for**

01

THE SKILL

**Seeing CI as an
integrated system**

02

THE DATA

**Reading reality through
data**

03

THE PERSON

**The character to lead
change**

The next question is practical: how do you see those things in a room, in an interview?



THE INTERVIEW ROOM

CI professionals are fluent speakers. Fluency is **NOT** the signal.

Good presenters can navigate the intuitive layer of CI – the vocabulary, the principles, the management language. It sounds right. It covers well.

THE QUIET TELL

What to listen for is not **what** they say, it's **what they can describe**.

Specifics. Examples. Decisions made. Things that went wrong. A smooth answer with no texture is the first signal.



QUESTION 01 • THE SKILL

Q1: Walk me through a CI deployment you personally shaped. What was the business context, where did you start and why there?

What it reveals: whether they see CI as a system anchored in business reality or a programme of activities.

WEAK ANSWER

“I was involved in a large transformation across multiple departments. We ran awareness workshops, teams picked up initiatives, and engagement was positive.”

WEAK SIGNALS

- **“Involved in”** – no ownership. Not led, not shaped.
- **Multiple departments** – fragmented from day one. No deployment logic.
- **Workshops first** – activity described, not a system.
- **“Engagement was positive”** – soft outcome. No results, no numbers, no decisions.

STRONG ANSWER

*“I started with business diagnostics. It was essential to understand how the business operated — **how interfaces worked, the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system.** I engaged with all business leaders and functional managers to understand how they perceived department performance and **how they saw their function within the integrated organisational system.** That work helped identify **potential value streams. We took it from there.**”*



QUESTION 02 • THE DATA

Q2: Tell me about a time when the data pointed clearly in one direction and you pushed back on it. What did you see that the data didn't?

What it reveals: whether they use data to think or to report. A practitioner reads behind the number.

WEAK ANSWER

“Sometimes data isn't fully accurate, so we double-check the sources and adjust our approach accordingly.”

WEAK SIGNALS

- **Data as a reporting problem** – not an analytical question.
- **No example, no stakes** – cannot be tested or verified.
- **“Adjust accordingly”** – no decision, no consequence, no learning.

STRONG ANSWER

*“Data is the foundation of everything we do in CI. Our role is to **analyse it right**. The best example is comparing related KPIs together. All HSE-related actions were **closing on time** — yet **HSE audits revealed repetitive safety issues**. The headline looked fine. The reality was different. In cases like that, **you are helping the business see the real problem — not just the reported one.**”*



QUESTION 03 • THE PERSON

Q3: Tell me about a moment when you held a position that a senior stakeholder disagreed with. What happened, and what did you do?

What it reveals: whether they can navigate disagreement with judgment, holding a view without closing the conversation.

WEAK ANSWER

“In those situations, I try to understand their perspective and find common ground. Keeping everyone aligned is important.”

WEAK SIGNALS

- **No example, no stakes** – hypothetical, not lived.
- **“Find common ground”** – conflict avoidance dressed as diplomacy.
- **No position held** – no evidence of judgment under pressure.

STRONG ANSWER

“The COO wanted to prioritise a high-visibility initiative. I understood the reasoning; there was political value in it. But our analysis showed **three alternatives with significantly higher business impact**. I didn’t push back. I laid out the options, quantified each one, and **let the data carry the conversation**. We found a direction together that was better than the starting point. That’s what the role asks for – **not winning but navigating towards the right outcome**.”



QUESTION 04 · SKILL + PERSON

Q4: How do you ensure the CI function stays focused on real value rather than becoming a service desk for whatever others bring?

What it reveals: whether they operate at the level of the whole organisation or just the CI function.

WEAK ANSWER

“We align closely with business priorities and work with stakeholders to make sure we’re focused on the right things.”

WEAK SIGNALS

- “Aligning” and “supporting” – follower words. Reactive by design.
- No filter, no screen – says yes to everything.
- No ownership of value direction – direction comes from others.

STRONG ANSWER

“CI was fully embedded in strategic and tactical business meetings. My role was to **bring leadership together around company-scale value** – not what was best for one function, but **what would make the biggest difference for the company**. We agreed on criteria together. And then I stayed close to the business every day, with data, to help leadership **hold focus and stay true to agreed priorities.**”



QUESTION 05 · WHAT EXPERIENCE LEAVES BEHIND

Q5: Tell me about a CI deployment that didn't go the way it should have. What broke, and what do you know now that you didn't then?

What it reveals: this question cannot be rehearsed from a distance. Failure described from the inside, with specificity and ownership, is the mark of a practitioner.

WEAK ANSWER

“Sometimes organisations aren't fully ready or there isn't enough leadership commitment. Change is always challenging without proper alignment.”

WEAK SIGNALS

- **Abstract and generic** – applies to any initiative, anywhere.
- **No ownership** – failure happened to them, not through them.
- **No structural insight** – sounds reasonable, says nothing.

STRONG ANSWER

“We had strong sponsorship, visible projects, reporting that looked right. Two years in, **nothing had changed in how decisions were actually made.** CI was tolerated, not integrated. I'd **built the function around the sponsor** and when his priorities shifted, the function had no independent roots. What I'd do differently: **integrate into governance from month one, not month eighteen.**”



THE TAKEAWAY

The answers won't be perfect.
Listen for what they've actually lived.

Texture
over polish

Specificity
over fluency

Ownership
over observation

*Look for the one who speaks in **systems**, not programmes. In **data**, not reports. In **collaboration**, not control. And who knows what **failure feels like from the inside**.*



COMING NEXT

Episodes 01–04 shaped the thinking.

Episode 05 begins the CI strategy itself.

First component: **Ownership.** Who owns CI – and what that ownership actually means for the deployment.

IF THIS RESONATED

- **Follow Anna Plekhanova** for more on CI, transformation, and operating models.
- **Save this** for your next CI leadership appointment conversation.
- **Agree, disagree, or seen this firsthand?** Leave a comment – the conversation is the best part.