

Fractional Chief AI Officer

Executive AI leadership without adding a full-time C-suite position

Many companies have moved beyond asking whether they should use AI. The harder problem is deciding what to do next, who owns the decisions, which investments deserve funding, and how to keep AI use controlled as tools and vendor capabilities change.

CAVA Suite LLC provides Fractional Chief AI Officer services for small and mid-sized organizations that need senior AI leadership, but do not yet need or want a full-time Chief AI Officer.

Best fit	Organizations with roughly 50 to 200 employees that are actively adopting AI or implementing an AI roadmap.
Engagement model	Monthly retainer for reserved executive capacity, recurring leadership cadence, and defined areas of ownership.
Typical starting point	After an AI Exposure Audit or AI Governance Setup, or when an organization already has enough visibility to begin execution.
Primary result	AI decisions move from isolated experiments to a managed portfolio with owners, measures, gates, and executive accountability.

What the Fractional CAIO Owns

The role is designed around leadership and execution, not simply advisory hours. Scope is tailored to the client, but the recurring responsibilities usually fall into the following areas:

- AI portfolio ownership: maintain priorities, sequence initiatives, and stop work that no longer justifies its cost or risk.
- Executive decision support: frame choices for leadership and turn technical, vendor, risk, and operating questions into decisions.
- Governance operation: chair or support the AI Steering Group, maintain decision rights, and keep approvals and exceptions moving.
- Use-case intake and prioritization: evaluate new requests for value, feasibility, data readiness, consequence, and evidence requirements.
- Pilot and implementation oversight: define success measures, assign owners, monitor progress, and make proceed, revise, or stop decisions.
- Vendor and platform decisions: coordinate business, IT, legal, privacy, procurement, and security input before commitments are made.
- Measurement and value tracking: monitor adoption, productivity, correction effort, cost, incidents, and realized business value.
- Policy and operating-model maintenance: keep the governance system current as tools, vendors, regulations, and business needs change.
- Executive and board reporting: provide a concise view of progress, decisions, exposure, investment, and next-quarter priorities.

What This Is Not

A Fractional CAIO does not replace the client's legal counsel, cybersecurity team, privacy specialists, HR leadership, finance function, or system owners. The role coordinates those owners and makes sure AI decisions reach the right people with enough evidence to act.

The engagement also does not automatically include software implementation, custom application development, forensic investigation, legal opinions, security testing, or full production validation. Those items are scoped separately when needed.

How a Typical Month Works

Cadence	Typical activity	Output
Weekly	Sponsor or operating check-in	Decisions, blockers, assignments
Monthly	AI Steering Group	Approvals, exceptions, portfolio changes
Monthly	Roadmap and metrics review	Progress, value, risk, next actions
As needed	Use-case and vendor reviews	Proceed, pilot, defer, reject decisions
Quarterly	Executive strategy review	Priority reset and investment plan

Where It Fits in the CAVA Suite Service Path

1. AI Exposure Audit. Find where AI is already touching the business, identify the largest exposures, and determine what management should do first.
2. AI Governance Setup. Build the operating system: roles, policies, intake, vendor review, assurance requirements, and roadmap.
3. Fractional Chief AI Officer. Operate the system, execute the roadmap, make recurring decisions, and keep the organization moving.

A company does not have to purchase all three services. The Fractional CAIO engagement can begin directly when sufficient current-state information, decision authority, and operating controls already exist.

Commercial Structure

Fractional engagements are normally sold as a monthly retainer rather than as a bank of hourly consulting time. The retainer reserves senior capacity and priority access, while the SOW defines the expected cadence, responsibilities, included capacity, and overage rules.

Illustrative tier	Reserved capacity	Typical use
Executive Advisory	Up to 12 hours/month	Leadership guidance, Steering Group, selected decisions
Fractional CAIO	Up to 20 hours/month	Roadmap ownership, governance operation, use-case and vendor decisions
Embedded Fractional CAIO	30+ hours/month	Heavier implementation oversight and cross-functional execution

Actual scope and pricing are set after a short qualification discussion. For most clients, CAVA recommends an initial three-month commitment so there is enough time to establish cadence, resolve priority decisions, and demonstrate value.

When Fractional CAIO Support Makes Sense

- You have an AI roadmap, but no senior owner has enough time to drive it.
- AI requests are arriving faster than leadership can evaluate them.
- Governance exists on paper but is not yet operating consistently.
- IT, legal, business, finance, and risk teams need one executive owner to coordinate decisions.
- You are preparing pilots or vendor selections and want an independent leader focused on measurable business results.
- You need experienced AI leadership now, but a full-time CAIO is not justified.

Start with a Conversation

The right engagement depends on what is already in place. Some companies should begin with an AI Exposure Audit. Others are ready for Governance Setup or direct Fractional CAIO support.

CAVA Suite LLC can review your current state, determine which entry point fits, and propose a fixed project or monthly retainer with clear boundaries.