

# INSIDE THE HEALTHCARE C-SUITE

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December 2015 Newsletter

Volume: 2 Issue: 12

## Does Your C-Suite Need a Chief Innovation Officer?

*An interview with Curt Lucas, President and CEO,  
InveniasPartners*

*InveniasPartners, a Chicago-based executive search, assessment and talent management firm, supports hospitals, health systems, payers and medical groups in their quest to find top C-Suite and board talent.*



InveniasPartners just released *The Evolving C-Suite: Trends, Predictions and Strategic Advice*-now available for download at [www.inveniaspartners.com](http://www.inveniaspartners.com). Maddie Lazarz, InveniasPartners' director of marketing and a senior research associate, interviewed Curt Lucas, InveniasPartners' president and CEO, on the emergence of the chief innovation officer within the healthcare C-Suite.

**Lazarz:** Some experts think that C-Suites need a chief entrepreneur. Do you agree?

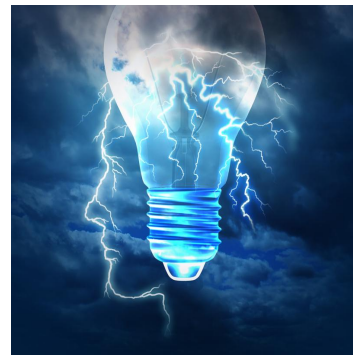
**Lucas:** Healthcare organizations may not need a chief entrepreneur, but there's growing support for a chief innovation or transformation officer within the C-Suite. Healthcare CEOs aren't always innovation superstars, so they may need an innovation partner or colleague in the C-Suite.

**Lazarz:** What's the role of the chief innovation officer?

**Lucas:** The chief innovation officer is always on the lookout for new systems, processes, incentives and metrics that support radical, breakthrough thinking and action. These executives tend to identify and open up new areas for organizational growth and development. Just as the CEO and other members of the C-Suite focus on current business and clinical priorities, the chief innovation officer looks at the shape of healthcare to come.

**Lazarz:** What do healthcare organizations want in chief innovation officer?

**Lucas:** In many cases, healthcare organizations want executives who will discover and mobilize other entrepreneurs or intrapreneurs to explore new clinical, operational and financial models and test fresh value propositions. They want executives who champion the idea of risk, but who are willing to take only calculated risks.



**Lazarz:** When you ask healthcare organizations to describe the ideal chief innovation officer candidate, what do they tend to say?

**Lucas:** Healthcare organizations-especially large integrated delivery systems and academic medical centers-often want executives who know how to build a business. But they also ask for executives who score high on leadership qualities like passion, optimism, enthusiasm, perseverance, tact, inspiration and tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty.

**Lazarz:** What do chief innovation officers typically do within healthcare organizations?

**Lucas:** Healthcare boards and CEOs want innovation executives who will build the organization's future. They want people who can awaken the spirit of innovation within clinicians, executives, managers and employees-even patients and community residents--and then guide innovations to their best possible conclusion. Being an innovation executive often means teaching others fresh way of thinking-specifically how to analyze and integrate the impact of new and emerging trends and markets.

**Lazarz:** Why is collaboration so important?

**Lucas:** Chief information officers often create a distinct and sometimes separate environment where innovation can thrive. But they also work closely and partner with the CEO and other members of the C-Suite. They're responsible and accountable for their innovations and must report-often to board members-on an innovation's progress and results. Is the innovation working? What has it achieved-and for whom? How can this organization apply lessons learned from the innovation to other clinical, operational or financial areas?

**Lazarz:** Bringing a chief innovation officer on board isn't an easy task, right?

**Lucas:** No it isn't. It takes time to integrate a new function into the C-Suite. And it takes time for an organization to decide if it truly needs another C-suite executive to spearhead transformation and innovation. Some organizations decide that every member of the C-suite should engage in innovation so they focus on creating a culture that supports innovation.

**Lazarz:** Who do you regard as an innovation leader in healthcare?

**Lucas:** I've been impressed by what the Cleveland Clinic has accomplished. Innovations at Cleveland Clinic have opened the door to healthcare inventors, investors and partners. The Global Healthcare Innovations Alliance, for example, provides a network of health systems, academic institutions and for-profit companies. Innovations at Cleveland Clinic have been able to spin off multiple companies, including Talis Clinical, Shield Biotech and Cleveland HeartLab.

**Lazarz:** Most healthcare systems and hospitals will never achieve results like that.

**Lucas:** That's true, but they can learn a great deal from the Cleveland Clinic's innovation standards, structures and processes. They can also seek innovation inspiration from Intermountain Healthcare's Transformation Lab or Scripps Health's Center for Learning and Innovation.

**Lazarz:** How do you see the future of innovation in healthcare?

**Lucas:** The healthcare industry is still looking for answers. What type of innovation process works in healthcare? How do we build nurture cross-discipline collaboration? And how do we identify and develop the leadership talent required to design an innovation, secure commitment and champion health system change.

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In\*ven\*i\*as verb \in -`ven - ē - əs\

1. To Find

2. Discover

3. To come upon by searching or effort