Driving Germany's Data and AI Transformation

CDAO Germany 2026 takes place on **April 28–29 at the Holiday Inn Munich City Centre, Hochstrasse 3, 81669 Munich, Germany**, bringing together Germany's leading data and AI professionals, innovators, and strategists for two days of insight, inspiration, and hands-on collaboration. Explore how enterprises across industrial, financial, and public sectors are leveraging data and AI to drive transformation, deliver measurable impact, and unlock new opportunities. Learn practical strategies for scaling AI responsibly, integrating analytics into decision-making, and fostering a data-driven culture that supports organisational agility and long-term resilience.

What to Expect:

- **Inspiring Keynotes:** Hear from German and global leaders about the latest trends, regulatory changes, and the future of data, AI, and analytics.

- **Hands-On Sessions & Hackathons:** Work with peers on real-world challenges, explore trade-offs, and walk away with practical frameworks you can use immediately.

- **Panels & Fireside Conversations:** Gain insights from multiple industries on governance, accountability, and building high-performing, data-driven teams.

- **Case Study Spotlights:** Discover how organizations are transforming data and AI insights into tangible business and operational results.

- **Networking & Collaboration:** Connect with peers, industry experts, and solution providers through structured discussions, roundtables, and social events.

Confirmed Speakers*

Elizabeth Press – *Deputy Chief Digital Officer,* Research Factory at the Brandenburg University of Technology.

Alexander Woellwarth-Lauterburg, *Chief AI Officer –* Rhapsody

Pier Martin, *Vice President, Data and Analytics* - ZEAL Network SE

Francesco Di Costanzo, *Chief Executive Officer –* JAJA FINANCE

Maximilian Ehrlich, *Director Data & Insights –* TONIES

Gareth Farr, *Head of Data Science and AI –* UNICREDIT

Marcin Nizinski, *Head of IT Audit and Data Analytics –* SIEMENS ENERGY

Jochen Baumeister, *Global Head of Behavioral Science and Data Science* – SANDOZ

Dr. Shivaji Dasgupta, *Non-Executive Director (Technology, Data and AI)* - STATE STREET

Florian Leser, *Executive Advisor/ Former Head of Data Analytics and AI –* KKH

Dr. Katharina Behme, *Director Analytics & Insights –* LUXEXPERIENCE

DAY ONE April 28th CDAO Germany 2026	
08:00 – 08:50	*Registration & Coffee in the Exhibition Area*
8:50 - 8:55	**Chair's Opening Remarks**
08:55 - 09:00	**Speed Networking – Making new connections at CDAO Germany!** During this 5-minute networking session, the aim of the game is to go and meet two people you don't already know. Have fun!

09:00 - 09:30	**Opening Keynote Presentation: Europe's AI Moment: From Models to Data-Ready, Governed AI Systems** Why execution, not algorithms or regulation, will decide Europe's AI future Key themes - Why data readiness, not model quality, is the real bottleneck to scaling AI - What AI-ready data actually means in federated European organisations - How geopolitical fragmentation increases the need for sovereign, execution-grade AI systems - Why most governance fails—and how to move from static control to execution enablement - What CDAOs must prioritise in 2026 to build resilient, reusable AI foundations Alexander Woellwarth-Lauterburg, *Chief AI Officer* – RHAPSODY
09:30-10:00	**Presentation: From Strategy Decks to Operational Impact: Why Data Still Struggles to Deliver ROI** - Why do so many well-funded data strategies fail to change day-to-day decisions? - How can CDAOs connect data initiatives directly to P&L, efficiency, and growth? - What trade-offs must leaders make between speed, quality, and governance? - How do you prove value when outcomes are indirect or long-term? - What lessons have emerged from initiatives that didn't work? Gareth Farr, *Head of Data Science and AI* – UNICREDIT
10:00 - 10:30	**Presentation: AI Governance by Design - How to Move Fast Without Losing Control** - How can governance be embedded into platforms rather than enforced after the fact? - What does "good governance" look like in production AI systems? - How should German organisations balance compliance, innovation, and accountability? - Where are teams over-engineering controls and where are risks underestimated? - How do you govern AI when use cases evolve faster than regulation? ==Reserved Keynote Presentation==
10:30 - 11:00	*Mid-Morning Coffee & Networking in the Exhibition Area*

11:00-11:45	**Panel Discussion: The Challenges and Pitfalls of Setting Up and Executing an AI Strategy** • Where AI strategies most commonly break down between design and execution • Organisational, data, and governance challenges that are underestimated early on • Aligning ambition with real capabilities, timelines, and constraints • What companies wish they had known before launching their AI strategy Panellists: Maximilian Ehrlich – Director Data & Insights – **Tonies** Florian Leser, *Executive Advisor/ Former Head of Data Analytics and AI* – **KKH** Dr. Shivaji Dasgupta, *Non-Executive Director (Technology, Data and AI)* - **STATE STREET**
11:45 – 12:15-	**Presentation: Operationalising AI in a Regulated German Industry: What Changed, and What Hurt** • What had to change in processes, not just technology, to deploy AI in production? • How were risk, compliance, and legal teams brought along the journey? • Where did expectations clash with reality? • What trade-offs were made between accuracy, speed, and explainability? • What would the organisation *never* do again? Elizabeth Press – Deputy Chief Digital Officer – **CHESCO (Center for Hybrid Electric Systems Cottbus)**
12:15-12:45	**Presentation: The CDAO Operating Model Question: Centralised, Federated, or Product-Led?** • What operating models work in German enterprises? • How to balance autonomy with alignment across business units • The hidden costs of getting the model wrong • How operating models must evolve as AI matures • Signs it's time to change your current setup ==Reserved Keynote Presentation==
12:45 – 13:45	*Lunch & Networking in the Exhibition Area*

Track A:	Track B:

13:45-14:30	**Discussion group: How Can Organizations Truly Win in a Data-Driven World?** Discussion Topics: • Why is a reliable data foundation still so hard to achieve at scale? • What does "good enough" data really mean for decision-making and AI? • How can traditional enterprises overcome legacy system inertia? • What role do leadership commitment and organisational culture play in long-term success? • Where do data initiatives most often fail — technology, people, or governance? Live Poll (5 mins) • Which barrier is most critical — data, culture, or governance? • Where should focus and investment be prioritised in 2026? • How confident are you that your data strategy will deliver measurable impact this year? Florian Leser, *Executive Advisor/ Former Head of Data Analytics and AI* – KKH Dr. Katharina Behme, *Director Analytics & Insights* – LUXEXPERIENCE	**Discussion Group: Fixing the Foundations — What Actually Enables Scalable AI and Analytics?** Discussion Topics: • Why do data foundations still struggle to scale in large, federated organisations? • What does "fit-for-purpose" data mean in practice for analytics and AI use cases? • How can organisations balance decentralisation with consistency and control? • Where do data quality, integration, and governance most often fail to keep pace with AI ambition? • What foundations must be in place before scaling AI beyond pilots? Live Poll (5 mins): • What is the biggest blocker to scalable AI today — data quality, integration, governance, or ownership? • Where should enterprises focus first to unlock AI value in 2026? • How confident are you in your organisation's current data foundations? Dr. Shivaji Dasgupta, *Non-Executive Director (Technology, Data and AI)* - STATE STREET
14:30-15:00	**Presentation: The Real Challenge in Analytics: Why Technology Isn't the Problem** • Why strong platforms still fail to drive adoption and impact • The critical success factors behind high-performing data teams • Building the right competencies across technical and business roles • Working with shared principles instead of rigid	**Presentation: Speeding Up a Traditional Industry: How Data & AI Are Transforming Wind Energy** • How AI dramatically shortened planning and optimisation cycles • From manual decision-making to automation at scale • Cultural resistance in traditional industries — and how it was overcome • Cost, speed, and quality gains achieved through data-driven processes

	rules • How to shift mindsets, not just tools	• What other asset-heavy industries can learn from this journey
15:00-15:30	*Afternoon Break & Networking in the Exhibition Area*	
15:30 - 16:15	**Panel Discussion: Who Owns the Decision? Accountability in AI-Driven Organisations** • When AI informs or automates decisions, who is ultimately accountable? • How do organisations prevent "decision drift" between business, data, and IT? • What governance models clarify ownership instead of adding friction? • How should CDAOs work with legal, compliance, and business leaders on accountability? • Where have organisations already learned these lessons the hard way?	
16:15-16:45	**Presentation: AI, GenAI & Agentic AI: From Innovation Hype to Enterprise Reality** • How AI maturity has evolved from experimentation to industrialisation • Where GenAI is delivering value today and where expectations are inflated • What agentic AI changes for governance, accountability, and risk • How leaders should assess readiness before scaling • What the next phase of enterprise AI will demand from CDAOs ==Reserved Keynote Presentation==	
16:45-17:30	**Closing Roundtable: Dashboards, KPIs & OKRs: Why Decision-Making Still Breaks at Scale** • Why do organisations have more data than ever — yet struggle to act confidently? • Where do dashboards help decision-making, and where do they actively slow it down? • Are OKRs and KPIs being misused as reporting tools rather than decision tools? • How can organisations design metrics that support *trade-offs*, not just monitoring? • What should leaders stop measuring altogether?	
17:30-17:40	**Chairs Closing Remarks**	
17:40-18:40	*Networking Drinks Reception*	
18:20	**END OF DAY ONE**	

DAY TWO April 29th
CDAO Germany 2026

08:20–08:50	*Registration & Coffee in the Exhibition Area*
8:50 - 8:55	**Chair's Opening Remarks**
08:55 - 09:00	**Speed Networking – Making new connections at CDAO Germany!** During this 5-minute networking session, the aim of the game is to go and meet two people you don't already know. Have fun!
09:00-09:30	**Opening Keynote: The Next Frontier for Data Teams — 2026 and Beyond** • How data teams are evolving to integrate AI, analytics, and business strategy • Building agility without compromising compliance in German enterprises • Aligning data team structures with evolving corporate strategy • Lessons from organisations that successfully scaled data-driven operations
09:30-10:00	**Presentation: Developing a Data Operating System** To drive consistent business impact, data teams need more than just a modern stack — they need a clear, structured operating system. In this session, Pier Martin will explore how embedding human-centered principles and soft skills into your data culture can radically improve ROI. From real-world day-to-day team challenges to practical leadership strategies, he'll offer insights and immediate actions for building stronger, more effective data functions. • **Data Teams Need an Operating System—Not Just a Stack:** Why focusing only on tools and technology misses the mark, and how process, mindset, and communication routines create consistency across data functions. • **Soft Skills as a Multiplier for ROI:** How skills like storytelling, empathy, and influence-building amplify technical output and help data teams embed more deeply into business strategy. • **Prioritization as a Leadership Capability:** Why leaving prioritization to tooling or backlog grooming is a mistake—and how data leaders can guide their teams by aligning decisions to business impact. • **From Insight to Action:** Common roadblocks data teams face and practical changes leaders can implement immediately to improve alignment, output, and morale. Pier Martin, *Vice President, Data Analytics – **ZEAL Network***

10:00-10:30	**Hackathon: Prioritising AI Investments for Maximum Impact** In this interactive session, attendees work in small groups on real-world AI investment scenarios, tackling trade-offs between speed, risk, and ROI. **Live Poll (5 mins)** • Which AI initiative should be prioritized: efficiency, innovation, or risk mitigation? • Centralized approval or decentralized decision-making? • Short-term vs long-term impact — which is critical in 2026? **Group Hack (20 mins)** • Define non-negotiable objectives for AI initiatives • Identify acceptable trade-offs between speed, risk, and scalability • Prepare a concise justification for executive leadership **Debate & Compare (15 mins)** • Groups share outcomes • Discuss assumptions and differences in decision-making • Highlight what leadership would challenge first **Key Takeaways (5 mins)** • Common patterns and pitfalls • Practical frameworks for prioritizing AI investments **Facilitators:**
10:30-11:00	*Mid-Morning Coffee & Networking in the Exhibition Area*
11:00-11:30	**Expert Ask-Me-Anything: Driving Profitable Data Strategy and Cyber-Resilience in Regulated Industries** Join an interactive session with a seasoned leader at the intersection of strategy, finance, data, and cybersecurity. With extensive experience driving growth and digital transformation across sectors—including digital business, Industry 4.0, the public sector, blue chips, and scale-ups—this expert will share practical guidance on leveraging data strategically, aligning with compliance requirements, and strengthening cyber-resilience. *Key Focus Areas: Data-driven ROI, data strategy in regulated industries, cyber-resilience, digital transformation, AI-driven innovation, and the socio-economic impact of digital business models.* Elizabeth Press – *Deputy Chief Digital Officer,* **Research Factory at the Brandenburg University of Technology.**

11:30-12:00	**Panel Discussion: Turning Insights into Impact — Making Data Actionable** • Identifying which metrics and insights truly drive decisions • Overcoming silos to enable cross-functional collaboration • Aligning governance frameworks with business priorities • Ensuring adoption and accountability for data-driven decisions **Panellists:** Francesco Di Costanzo – CEO – **Jaja Finance**
12:00-12:30	**Presentation: Modern Data Platforms — Driving Speed and Scalability in 2026** • Architecture choices for real-time, AI-ready platforms • Balancing cloud, hybrid, and sovereign setups • Managing cost, performance, and governance simultaneously • Lessons from organizations scaling platforms under legacy constraints
12:30-13:30	*Lunch & Networking in the Exhibition Area*
13:30-14:10	**Panel Discussion: Data as a Revenue Driver — Capturing Commercial Value** • Monetising data while maintaining trust and compliance • Leveraging AI, IoT, and predictive analytics to unlock revenue • Balancing ethical considerations with commercial goals • Strategies to scale data products for internal and external stakeholders
14:10-14:40	**Presentation: When AI Goes Live: Managing Failure, Drift, and Unexpected Outcomes** **Key Discussion Points:** • What really breaks once AI models are live — data drift, model decay, and operational blind spots • How organizations detect failure early before business impact escalates • Who owns remediation when models behave unexpectedly? • Balancing transparency, explainability, and speed when things go wrong • Lessons learned from AI incidents that forced course correction
14:40-15:20	**Roundtable: Accelerating Digital Transformation Through Data Management** • Core principles of effective data management • Overcoming common challenges and driving business innovation • Practical examples from German enterprises

	• Implementing actionable frameworks for measurable transformation **Live Poll (5 mins)** • Which area of data management will deliver the greatest business impact in 2026? • Where should investment and focus be prioritized? • How confident are you that current data practices will scale effectively?
15:20- 15:30	**Chairs Closing Remarks**
15:30	**END OF DAY TWO**