

Data governance: Path to Value

Corinium Intelligence: CDAO Canada Conference

Alex Tait, US Chief Data & Analytics Officer

Cost to US economy
of poor data quality

\$3.1^T

Source: IBM - 2016

Data generated by
every person on earth

1.7^{MB/s}

Source: IBM - 2020

Of all data, % generated in
the last two years

90%

Source: IBM

Active Facebook users

2 Billion

Daily Google searches

8.5^B

Active ChatGPT users

180 Million

Current themes

Data governance continues to evolve. Organizations must continue to adapt to both internal and external changes, risks and opportunities

CDO Tenures
Short however
recognized as
critical to
business
leadership

Data is treated as
a **corporate asset**

Governance has
evolved beyond
technical
capabilities to
**cultural
transformation**

Education is
critical across the
**whole
organization**

**Exponential
growth** of data
and **powerful
tech** add
pressure to
governance

Key Questions

1. How do I demonstrate value-add of data governance and get (and sustain) business buy-in?
2. How do I build a robust Data Practice function to support data governance?

Common challenges

CHIEF DATA OFFICERS FACE ONGOING CHALLENGES IN MANAGING DATA



Resources are scarce, funding can be challenging



Competing priorities and massive volumes to manage



Governance treated as a project rather than an ongoing discipline



Lack of business ownership or commitment



Lack of data literacy across functions



Lack of understanding of legal, regulatory, privacy and/or compliance implications



Continuity of talent and institutional knowledge



Fragmented data silos, inadequate technology



False expectations and blurring of accountabilities (“isn’t IT looking after this?”)



Added pressure from new analytics capabilities and novel technology

“Without clean data, or clean enough data, your data science is worthless.”

Dr. Michael Stonebraker
Adjunct professor, MIT



“Data Governance is the critical **trust layer** that’s foundational to **any** data initiative.”

Demonstrating value-add of data governance and secure business buy-in

The value of data governance **must** be linked to business strategy

- 1 Spend time understanding your business strategy and challenges
- 2 Develop strong relationships with at least two executives, preferably those with front-line accountabilities (ask for a “day in the life”)
- 3 Give critical thought to how governance concepts link to opportunities or challenges – provide practical suggestions
- 4 Remind leaders that governance is an ongoing evolution – focus on priorities and celebrate incremental progress (nobody governs *everything well all the time!*)
- 5 Speak a common language and bias conversations towards value-add rather than overhead
- 6 ABH – Always Be Helpful. Jointly solution business challenges and don’t be afraid to brag!

The importance of speaking the right language



CDOs must be fluent in several languages including business management, risk management and technical (data, analytics, infrastructure) terms

This helps to understand risks, challenges, opportunities and influence outcomes

CDOs play a facilitation role across domains

Technical

- “I need funding to have someone profile the data in our two client datamarts, capture the technical metadata, add business metadata, link the two and write some SQL code to build DQ rules across the two sources”



Business

- “Our project (expected to drive \$20M of new revenue) will need data across multiple sources that aren’t well understood. Without understanding the data we have, we won’t be able to find and use the data we need for this project. I’ll need people to help catalog it and make sure it’s accurate.”

Governance stands the test of time

External volatility
is always expected

1. Core Data Governance strategy likely remains the same (with reprioritization)
2. Governance is equally (if not more) important during bad times as good times
3. Emerging technology continues to rely on a strong foundation – “trust layer” must be maintained and evolved

Building a strong data practice function

Solving for some common challenges

Expertise around metadata, quality, lineage, etc. practices varies across the organization

Data management toolsets may be highly technical in nature and require specialized talent

High demand on centralized data functions may exceed capacity to support business outcomes

Institutional knowledge may be required to navigate internal processes and policies

Resources closest to the business processes understand data the best

Scarce resources, funding and difficulty retaining specialized talent



Data Practices Organization

Data Practices Organization – What is it?

A business enablement function to support data practitioners throughout the organization



Consists of knowledgeable resources with deep expertise across the various practices (metadata management, quality, lineage, etc.) that can be leveraged by practitioners sitting closest to the business.

As specialists, the resources keep current on industry best practices and share thought leadership across the organization and are well versed in Data Governance policies and expectations



Provides shared enterprise solutions such as enterprise catalog, quality and lineage solutions that **are biased towards self-service** and providing a singular view of all data assets across the organization



Uses a player-coach approach between data practice team members and business practitioners to connect them to enterprise tools, providing training based on their unique needs



Drives self-sufficiency within business lines and expertise that can be drawn from the enterprise at any time. Also provides career path into (and out of) the centralized function

Key takeaways

Practical advice: Takeaways

- 1 Spend time understanding your business strategy and challenges, ask questions (be curious!) and build strong relationships with at least two key executives
- 2 Link governance imperatives to your business strategy, express in business outcomes
- 3 Incubate ideas alongside business partners to support organizational strategy, celebrate successes
- 4 Learn to be multilingual to communicate effectively across the organization and influence outcomes
- 5 Consider establishing a data practice function to elevate maturity, introduce common tools that are easy to use and biased towards self-service, activate player-coach approach
- 6 Retire the police badge and avoid waking up your executives in the middle of the night