

Becoming a Data Led Organisation



Data Literacy Should Be a Priority

“Nowadays, more leaders know that data is essential to business success.”

On any given workday, business leaders are faced with an ongoing and billowing stream of data and information. Every day, they and their teams are required to make thousands of business decisions.

Many organisations are ‘hoarding’ data without extracting any business value from it. It’s like investing in loads of books to gain insights and not reading them.

Today there’s much more debate around strategic challenges such as the people and skills required to create data-enabled organisations and better data governance.

According to Forbes, dashboards, reporting, end-user self service, advanced visualisation and data warehousing are the top 5 most important technologies and initiatives strategic to Business Intelligence (BI) in 2018. Small organisations with up to 100 employees had the highest rate of BI penetration or adoption in 2018.

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Business Intelligence

A report from Forbes says that Executive Management, Operations, and Sales are the three primary roles driving Business Intelligence (BI) adoption in 2018. This means that Executive Management Teams are taking more of an active ownership role in BI initiatives.

Top four BI objectives organisations have today:

1. Making better decisions
2. improving operational efficiencies
3. growing revenues
4. increased competitive advantage.

Additional goals include enhancing customer service and attaining greater degrees of compliance and risk management.

Top five most important technologies and initiatives strategic to BI in 2018:

1. Dashboards
2. Reporting
3. End-user self-service
4. Advanced visualisation
5. Data warehousing.

In 2018, small organisations with up to 100 employees had the highest rate of BI penetration. Today, Insurance, Technology and Business Services vertical industries have the highest rate of BI adoption.

Implementing BI

“Why do I need Business Intelligence (BI) anyway?”



Let's start at the beginning – everything must start with a why. If you can relate to any of these statements, then you can start to now understand why you need BI.

- Get insight into customer behaviour
- Make company data actionable information
- Improve business efficiency across departments
- The need to integrate data from multiple business applications or data sources
- Create visibility into the company's operations and finances, from multiple areas into one simple view
- Ability to access key information quickly and easily from anywhere
- Users requiring more in-depth knowledge of business information
- Rapid company growth or a recent or pending merger/acquisition

“Determine who your Business Intelligence (BI) users are before deciding on the solution to deliver your business intelligence.”

It is essential that before you invest in technology to help with business intelligence reporting that you invest time upfront on really understanding what your user's data needs are, and how they are currently carrying out their job. Then you can assess the systems they already have access to, and how beneficial they are to them.



1. Who are your users?



2. Categorise your user groups.



3. Identify the desired experience.



4. Map your user groups to your data sources.

Do You Know Your Data?

“Access key consolidated information quickly and easily from anywhere.”

So, you have your why, you have a strategy, you've selected your vendor and the whole business has bought into the concept of the journey you are about to start, but there's the elephant in the room – how clean is your data?

Most organisations will have years of data built up through multiple legacy systems without any data management process in place or any real understanding of what the data is in the first place.

The major selling point of most BI solutions is the ability to consolidate all of your available data within your business. This makes it easier to undertake analysis on consolidated data and allows the business to make more informed and educated decisions.

In many cases the immediate failure comes down to the fact that the data you consolidate is full of errors and mistakes, often due to its historic nature, creating a general distrust in any new systems delivery. This obstacle often leads to users keeping hold of their old manual systems to stay within their existing comfort zones and ignoring the new BI platform.

The primary objective is to get them over that initial mistrust and convert them into willing and able users of

the BI solution, and that goal is only achieved with clean and trustworthy data. Once users start to doubt the accuracy of the information in the system it is near impossible to win back their trust. This is compounded if they have already been through a bad experience in the past with similar implementations.

To avoid this scenario first look at the most common errors in systems' data and address these first. Common examples are:

- Missing or incomplete data
- Duplicates
- Spelling mistakes
- Outdated information

The cleaner your data, the more useful insights and value your organisation will be able to gain from your systems. This will demonstrate immediate ROI. There will be no benefit to anyone (apart from the software provider who has sold you a multi-year subscription license) unless you invest time in understanding your data: decide where you source your data, mapping into a correct format and ensuring the quality of the data is up-to-date.

The absolute worst thing that could happen is you end up producing an abundance of useless reports that nobody reads, understands, believes or does anything with.



Ownership

“Data should be driven by the business and not the IT department.”

Data is often left to the IT department to deal with. However, the insights affect the entire organisation and therefore should be a boardroom issue.

Before the C-suite starts pointing fingers at the IT department in this data-driven era they should really understand that they are the ones who are ultimately responsible for deciding what data they need. They are the ones setting the business strategies, objectives and KPIs that data will help measure and inform. They would also do well to understand what security is applied to protect the data that their organisation holds as they are the ones that will have to stand up and outwardly explain any data breach.

Security

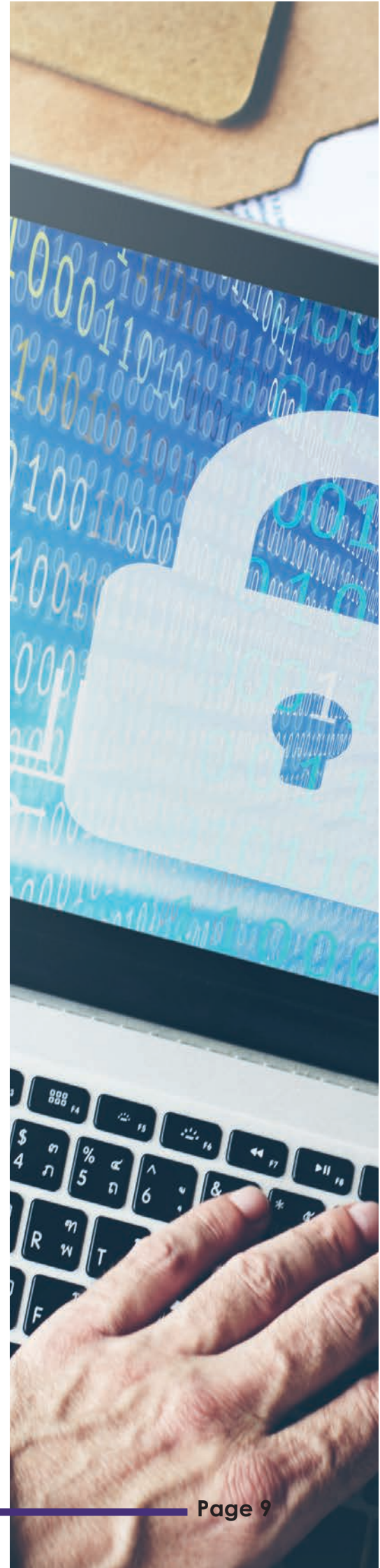
“CEOs are often the ones who have to explain a large data breach.”

The past year has seen a lot of high-profile data breaches that have resulted in CEOs escalating data protection to the boardroom. In the household names, such as the TSB, where data breaches have occurred, CEOs have lost their jobs.

We have seen a rise in the recruitment of Chief Data Officers (CDOs) as a new role in medium to large organisations, which shows that data is finally being recognised as too valuable to be pushed aside to IT departments. However, Forbes reported that in 2018, fewer than 15% of organisations have a Chief Data Officer, and only about 10% have a Chief Analytics Officer. There are still CIO roles but not as many, whom would have been responsible for data as well as a smaller percentage of CFOs taking on this responsibility.

With a spotlight on data security, data governance also needs to be in hand. This means not only setting a data governance strategy and procedure but also enforcing it amongst employees dealing with data. Therefore, data culture needs to be addressed at an individual level.

With the UK leading GDPR, it plays a major role in data governance initiatives.



Value Your Data

“Access key consolidated information quickly and easily from anywhere.”

Often these decisions are made based on previous experiences, “business as usual,” or staying in your comfort zone instead of blending new and existing data and insights. The challenge then is:

1. How can executives decipher the meaningful information from the clutter?

2. How can they ensure that they make an impact for their business against the flush of information washing over them?

3. How can they become catalysts of change?

Organisations need employees that have the ability to analyse, interpret and communicate the value of data to others. Data storytelling skills brings a competitive edge in today's business environment that sometimes Leaders lack.

Being able to tell stories around data is a core skill. Nowadays, data visualisation, telling stories using pictures, using graphic-rich software is being used to explain data insights more so than Data Analysts.

Data-driven decisions are the antidote to basing your decisions on ‘gut instinct’ that could lead the business in the wrong direction. Instead you can base your decisions on conscious reasoning, realistic evidence and therefore, understanding.

Data Insight is being used to inform financial management, improve customer insight, increase customer engagement as well as other key operating indicators. Organisations aren't sweating their data assets, they're using poor quality data, and there's a heavy reliance on I.T. They don't know what they want to see in terms of data but it can all be within their grasp.

Data Strategy

Your data strategy should be driven by your overall business strategy.

Consider your organisation's strategic priorities and key business questions as a first step. This will help you identify how you might use data to help you deliver those priorities and answer your business questions.



Come up with approximately 5 use cases, which are your data uses and priorities.

Quick Wins

Try and get 1 to 3 quick wins to get a return on investment, as implementing a full data strategy will take a considerable amount of time to put in place and deliver value.

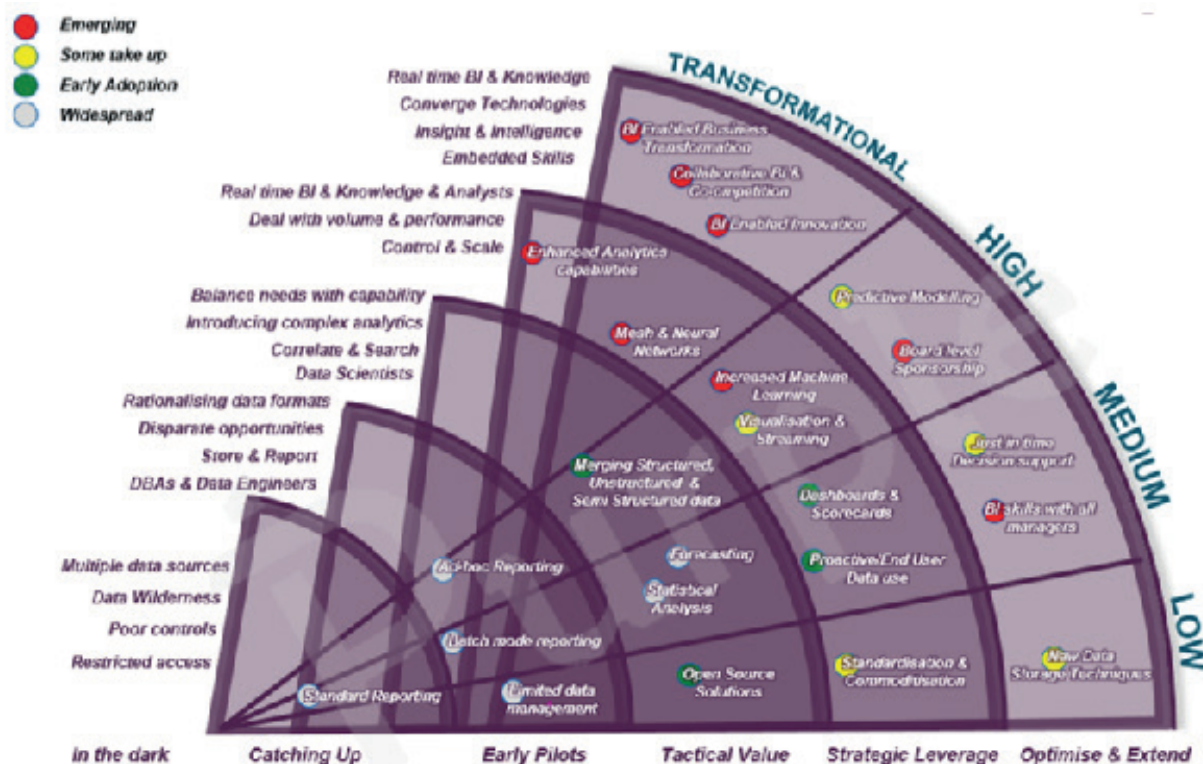
Something like looking at customer churn that will aide a strategy for customer retention.

For each data priority, Consider the Following:

1. Data Requirements
2. Data Governance
3. Technology Implications
4. People Skills
5. Capacity
6. Change Management

Data Maturity

“Create and collect meaningful data, not data for data’s sake.”



Consider where your organisation sits from a data maturity perspective and think about where you need to get to and what steps you need to take to get there.

You can use a maturity model, such as the one shown, to plot where you are on your journey. There may be a spread of progress across multiple maturity levels.

Most people are trying to get up to Dashboard level but they are actually in a more embryonic state.

Many organisations will get access to BI but may not necessarily know what to do with it. The key is to take small steps.

A lot of organisations have data analytics functions, that can be an individual or team, that understand data to drive value back to the business.

Key Benefits of Data Insight

Getting your data in order and using it in the right way you'll start to get a better understanding of the real picture of what's going on in your organisation and be able to make decisions based on key data.


Seven Benefits of Data Insight



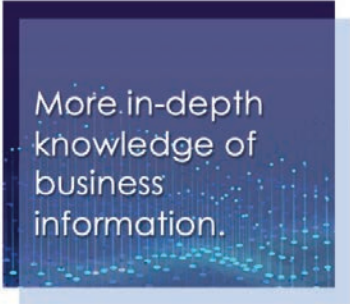
Improve business efficiencies across departments.



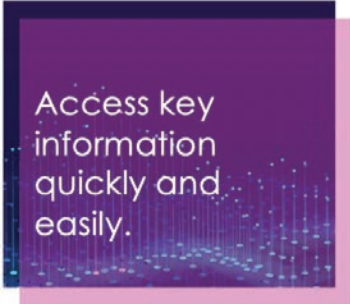
Better understanding of your data.



Company data becomes actionable information.



More in-depth knowledge of business information.



Access key information quickly and easily.



Make key strategic decisions.



Deliver against organisational objectives.

Adopt, Measure, Improve.

A hand is shown placing a white puzzle piece into a larger assembly of white puzzle pieces on a purple background. The puzzle pieces are arranged in a grid-like pattern, with some pieces already in place and others being added. The hand is holding a piece that fits into a gap in the existing structure.

Once you have everything else in place, the last piece of the jigsaw is the adoption plan.

Let's be very clear, unless you have an adoption plan this project will fail. Do not expect users to just pick this up and run with it. The absolute worst thing that could happen is that after all of your hard efforts in getting this far you don't get the business to properly use this and not only have you wasted a considerable amount of money, getting their trust again to do anything similar just isn't going to happen.

Adoption always starts with an Exec Sponsor, make sure you have this from the beginning of the project. Your Leaders need to be committed to data-based decision making. If they are on board, anyone who wants to be a high performer in your business has no incentive but to be on board as well.

In addition to the Exec Sponsor, you should also look at how you can build adoption into your HR performance management plans. This will ensure that everybody has the same obligations to be on board with the change.

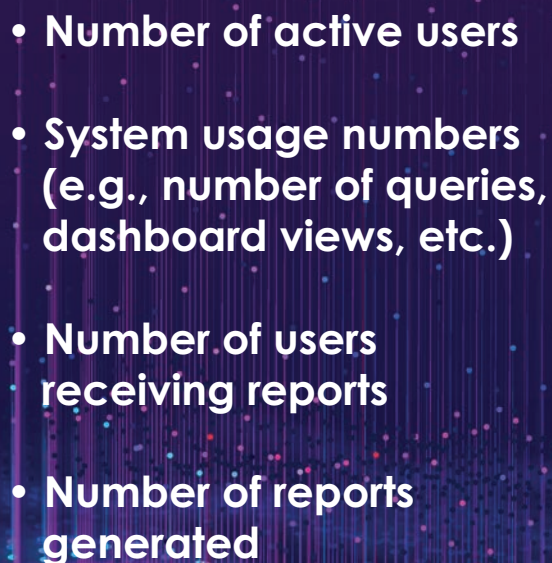
Technology adoption is carried out in a very simple framework...



User Adoption

How can you know how the user adoption on your system is going unless you measure it?

Make sure that you are taking steps to determine whether employees are using the system at the frequency you were anticipating. Here are some user adoption KPIs you should be monitoring, especially after users have been fully (and contextually!) trained on your solution:

- 
- **Number of active users**
 - **System usage numbers (e.g., number of queries, dashboard views, etc.)**
 - **Number of users receiving reports**
 - **Number of reports generated**

Establish your success criteria early on so you can celebrate success and milestones when you reach them. You'll also know if your initiative is on track or if there are additional actions you need to take to make your project profitable and beneficial to your business such as further training, cleaner data, etc.

Celebrating these successes creates a feedback loop of positive reinforcement around the solution. The more you celebrate insights, the more encouraged others are to find insights that can be celebrated, and so on, around and around.

As a final note, don't just rely on the numbers to gauge the success of your project, be sure to check in with key users to see if they need any additional training or resources and ask how satisfied they are with the BI tools.

The more insight you have about the human side of your BI initiative, the more control you have over increasing user adoption.

Advocates



“People still have a day job.”

Build a super user group. This is a group that will help with the hearts and minds of the rest of the organisation to get on board with the change. However, remember they have a day job also. Allow them to carve out time from this to ensure they can be your Advocates and help successful adoption of the change.

Training doesn't have to be a chore.

Offering training on your BI solutions to your users is perhaps the most obvious way of increasing user adoption, but it's not necessarily the most straightforward. When you plan your training program, there are some things to keep in mind.

When educating users always aim for contextual training – making sure that the training is specific to your company and their role. You will have a better chance at getting users to use and rely on the system for data-driven decisions and business improvements.

Introduce drop in clinics for quick questions, lunch and learns, for people to share their experiences, successes or even frustrations.

Celebrate your successes.

As a consultancy that works with clients through a transformation, there is always one thing we remind them of – look at what you have achieved. It's all too easy to look at the things you need to do without taking a moment to stop and realise what you have achieved. Give kudos to people when it's due, encourage people when the changes are working, the rest will come naturally.

User adoption is one of the key indicators of a successful BI initiative. By taking steps to maximise user adoption, you are taking steps to increase the ROI of your new system. Whether you're in the middle of your BI implementation or still in early stages, it's not too late to put these steps into practice.

**The most dangerous
phrase in the
language is
“We’ve always done
it this way”**

**REAR ADMIRAL
GRACE HOPPER**

Ten Steps to BI Deployment

KNOW YOUR WHY



Every change must start with why.

STRATEGY



Invest in creating a strategy.

EXECUTIVE SPONSOR



Change happens with leaders.

ACCEPT IT



This is a business transformation.

PEOPLE, PROCESSES, THEN TECHNOLOGY



Stay on track with what the business requires.

MAP OUT THE BI USER JOURNEY



Nobody is the same.

FIT FOR PURPOSE TRAINING



Classroom training isn't for everybody.

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATION



This is a business led initiative, but you must involve IT.

ADOPTION



It's all about adoption.

CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT



Monitor and adjust.

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