Data and Analytics Drives Strategic Decision Making

At a Glance

Business analytics and reporting can empower enterprise transformation. To modernize data for reporting and analytics, organizations should:

- Implement self-service to generate efficiency
- Use data governance to empower analytics
- Minimize silos and use a flexible architecture for knowledge workers

As data becomes more complex and explodes in volume, end-users' expectations for quick access to reliable data remains robust. To meet business needs, companies must harness and use information in a way that propels business goals. Reporting and analytics are, therefore, critical priorities for CIOs because they structure and optimize information to guide businesses in strategic decision making, which can bring a competitive advantage. Each plays a key role in enterprise transformation, the success of which largely depends on whether an organization plans for the use and analysis of data and implements the technical infrastructure to support it.

End users must have the ability to easily access accurate, relevant data when and where they need it, and leverage that information in a way that enables business. While data access is a must, it should be balanced with governance to ensure the data is trustworthy, compliant and secure. Users also must be able to engage in *collaborative* analytics — a key modernization capability that supports *enterprise-level* discussions — as opposed to simplistic individual views that lead to tunnel-vision decisions.

Self-service generates efficiency

CIOs aiming for strong reporting and analytics must focus on self-service. They should shift to data automation so end users can access information when they need it without waiting for IT to provide it to them. Business-driven CIOs are implementing self-service by modernizing and using the cloud for rapid data access. CIOs are moving data and applications to flexible cloud platforms that offer greater accessibility, support reporting requirements, and execute on data-sharing and platform demands.

Cloud services bring a scalable solution that accommodates increasing demands and provide a flexible system that empowers the organization in ways that an on-premises environment cannot. They also enable self-service by automating data access, discovery, analysis, preparation and presentation.

Strong data governance empowers analytics

Data *governance* is a top consideration in enterprise transformation. Organizations that do not govern their data do not have quality data from which to ensure regulatory compliance or to make solid business decisions. Bad data can lead to faulty decision making that results in decreased customer satisfaction, loss in revenue and damage to the brand. It can also lower efficiency and productivity, as one seemingly minor data error can have a snowball effect, especially when not caught early in the process.

CIOs who want to support strong analytics must implement data governance that brings

- Streamlined operations
- Analytics grounded in reliable data
- Effective regulatory compliance

Minimize silos and implement a flexible architecture for knowledge workers

Information silos are real — and they are disabling to knowledge workers. To modernize, CIOs must minimize information silos to have a single source of truth. Organizations should evaluate whether or not they are minimizing data silos by leveraging an open, flexible platform that supports data-sharing and reporting needs.

During modernization, organizations often struggle with how different platforms will integrate with various apps, and they likely will be using an even greater number of apps in the future. Building a flexible data architecture accommodates unique business needs, including the nuances of various applications. The idea of a "one-architecture-fits-all" approach is not effective. Having a platform that is founded in flexibility enables integration and allows for the efficient flow of reporting.

Collaboration should center around governance

CIOs should collaborate with C-suite members on the parameters of data governance, including the:

- Value of data being stored
- Use, organization and governance of data
- Accessibility of data

A transformation "center of excellence" can help define roles and responsibilities while enabling enterprise transformation change management initiatives and communications among C-suite members.

C-suite members are uniquely impacted by reporting and analytics:

- **Chief risk officer (CRO)** — In today's environment, data is a key component in the risk environment. CROs should be data-driven and remain alert to risks associated with data breaches. A data-driven CRO will proactively manage risk by understanding how the organization's data can be strategically used to protect against threats to the company's data sources.

- **Chief financial officer (CFO)** — CFOs must understand the value that data governance brings to reporting and analytics. CFOs will value the ability to access information that is more accurate, detailed and timely to support financial reporting.

- **Chief data officer (CDO)** — Enterprise data strategy is at the core of CDO priorities and directly tied to the outputs of reporting and analytics. The CIO and CDO must collaborate on how data strategy can serve reporting and analytics in a way that bolsters enterprise transformation.

- **Chief marketing officer (CMO)** — Rigid data environments negatively impact marketing efforts. Strong data governance enables more effective marketing activities and the ability to assess the value of marketing campaigns. CMOs can easily leverage modern data assets to make better, more informed decisions.

- **Chief audit executive (CAE)** — Data automation brings immense value to a historically manually-driven internal audit function. Data sampling can become more efficient, population samples will be broader for effective risk identification, and self-service accessibility can enable internal audit analytics.

- **Chief compliance officer (CCO)** — Reporting and analytics provides the ability to manage the controls environment and test the effectiveness, completeness and accuracy of controls. It also provides the ability to assess gaps in compliance and enables gap assessments to be done in a more proactive fashion.

- **Business leaders and employees** — Organizations do not transform overnight. Sustainable modernization requires time. Strong reporting and analytics enable business leaders and employees to make sustainable incremental improvements. Organizations will benefit from broad-based, incremental performance improvements by having the right data at the right time for better decision-making.

What should companies do now?

Organizations should consider conducting an enterprise data readiness assessment by evaluating their organizational maturity level for various aspects of data reporting and analytics. Accordingly, they should determine modernization readiness, data quality and governance capabilities, data maturity status, modernization goals and the requirements to achieve them. Next-level organizations should evaluate and consider:

- The impact that modernizing will have on their reporting and analytics

- How they want to analyze data and use it as an asset

- The benefits that modernizing will have on analytics and whether it will enable data analysis in the manner needed

- Investments in technologies and solutions needed to share, profit from or differentiate data

Tomorrow's CIO is continuously evaluating whether they have the right systems in place to support the organization's modernization efforts. CIOs must plan for the future — in the present — to enable reporting and analytics that propel decision-making and transform organizations.

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