THE ADAPTABLE DATA ENABLEMENT FRAMEWORK

How to align your data management strategy to the impacts of disruptive technologies

Ed Silva and Chris Carney

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Introduction

Business and technology disruptions have constantly been impacting the speed and associated risk of operating a business. With the advent of democratized AI adoption and production-grade experimentation, enterprises are facing a critical need for aligned governance capabilities to manage the risks associated with the pervasive and yet immature use of such technologies to avoid unintentional yet potentially catastrophic consequences.

In recent engagements with clients the lessons learned around data governance's main challenges, three common principles emerged: 1- Collaboration, 2- Flexible Framework 3- Data Enablement Strategy. Data Governance has often been associated with restricting data, its use, and its access. An Enablement-First approach is far better suited towards supporting the business needs for leveraging the data as a valuable asset and a competitive advantage.

Having a strategic direction and plan aligned with the enterprise's business goals is essential. Often people refer to this as having a "North Star" to follow. The North Star concept dates back 5,000 years where sailors used it to help guide them in the right direction through calm and turbulent waters. Years ago, Stephen Covey used a similar term called "True North" in his best-selling book 7 Habits of Highly Effective People[1] to illustrate how individuals need to know what their personal beliefs and guiding principles (True North) are so when things get complicated and decision making becomes difficult, they can find their way back to their "True North". Similarly, the right strategy, and data enablement framework can keep you going in the right direction.

To make things more complicated the pace of disruptive technologies being utilized by enterprises is accelerating. Every disruptive technology being introduced impacts how data should be governed. It is apparent that technology changes are outpacing the rate at which humans can understand as well as the rate at which enterprises can consume the technology change. There is a need for an adaptable framework to address these rapid changes. Today generative AI has the headlines with the introduction of ChatGPT and similar products. The structure must be adaptable enough to quickly respond to the ever-changing business landscape.

Disruptive Technologies

Artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML) and large language models (LLM) such as ChatGPT are creating quite a disruption in the market, but is your organization ready for such technology? There are benefits to engaging in emerging technology, but it comes with challenges that need to be considered.

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[1] The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey, May 2020

As outlined in a recent article by Make Use Of[2] "ChatGPT does not use the internet to locate answers, unlike other AI assistants like Siri or Alexa. Instead, it constructs a sentence word by word, selecting the most likely "token" that should come next based on its training. In other words, ChatGPT arrives at an answer by making a series of guesses, which is part of why it can argue wrong answers as if they were completely true." It can even fabricate answers when one doesn't exist and call it true.

Consider a recent news story about a lawyer in NY who used ChatGPT in a court case. The story stated, the lawyer had created a legal brief for a case in Federal District Court that was filled with fake judicial opinions and legal citations, all generated by ChatGPT. The lawyer commented he did not comprehend that ChatGPT could fabricate cases. Since the data can be inaccurate, human validation of the various use cases needs to be put in place and monitored. These use cases need to be explored, analyzed, and validated.

"AI has the potential to transform your business, but it also introduces the risk and liabilities worth reviewing" as published recently by Forbes regarding AI.[3] There are risks and legal aspects to consider with using AI tools such as ChatGPT and foundational controls need to be put in place on when and where they can benefit.

Here are some simple questions you can ask yourself about your company to determine if your data governance program is headed in the right direction:

- Do you have a dedicated governance organization in place to ensure your company's decision making has a proper foundation?
- Do you have a flexible governance organizational structure that can respond to ever-changing business disruptions in a timely manner?
- If you are using AI, do you have the proper controls in place to ensure the use of AI models and outcomes are transparent enough to discern their accuracy and legal viability?
- Do your business and IT teams collaborate and work together on data governance?
- Are you confident your data models produce insights that are consistently accurate across the enterprise?
- Are you following the right processes and checklists to drive efficiency and improve the quality of your decision-making?
- Are you using technology effectively and delivering insights timely enough to achieve the desired business outcomes?
- Does your staff have the right skills and available time to conduct data governance effectively?
- Is your executive leadership leading and championing data governance?

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[2] Make Use Of, "8 Big Problems with OpenAI's ChatGPT", May 6, 2023: 10: https://www.makeuseof.com/openai-chatgpt-biggest-probelms/
[3] Forbes, "Is Your Organization Truly Ready for AI?", March 22, 2023: https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2023/03/22/is-your-organization-truly-ready-for-ai/?sh=3689e81af209

- If you don't have a formal data governance program, have you assessed the cost and risk of not investing in data governance?

What will be the next disruption is anyone's guess. How do we govern data and analytic outcomes in an ever-changing business ecosystem? The data governance organization must be adaptable and flexible at the speed of business.

The Adaptable Data Enablement Framework

The Adaptable Data Enablement Framework *is a cross-functional governing body of IT and business resources working together based on a living roadmap to develop and enable data and analytical solutions that support the strategic and tactical objectives of the enterprise.* There are many demands; financial, economic, political, and social, that require adaptability, flexibility, and speed to properly enable the use of data. In today's rapidly changing conditions, the Adaptable Data Enablement Framework is needed. See the diagram below.
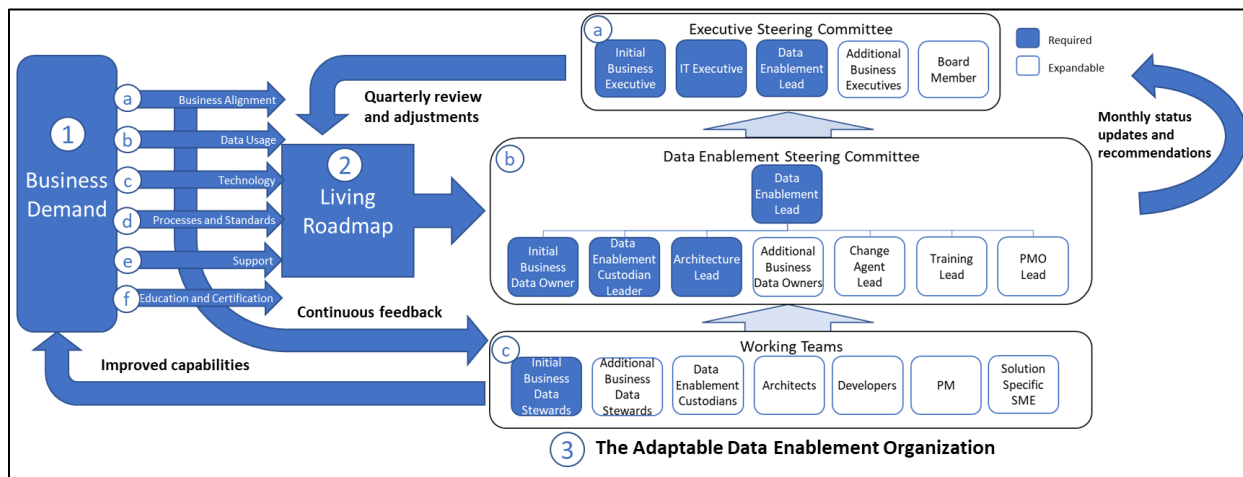
The framework is made up of 3 main parts, Business Demand, Living Roadmap, and the Organization.

1. **Business Demand:** The outcomes of a data enablement approach should not be focused purely on the data and technology but on a wider range of functions which allow an organization to continuously adapt and change, thus driving flexibility towards a broad spectrum of disruptive influences. Business feedback should be continuous, and as the framework is established and matures the outcomes from the framework increase business capabilities. The organization can then adjust the outcomes as needed over time, through a continuous feedback process. The organization should have the ability to quickly aggregate and analyze feedback through online and in person interviews and analyze the results using the framework. Below outlines 6 key functions to focus on for adaptable data enablement:

   a. **Business alignment**: Executive Business Leadership and IT Leadership are aligned the data strategy and how it gets executed. The business also defines the right KPI's, and business rules needed to drive the right decisions and work with IT to execute the outcomes with appropriate tools and resources.

   b. **Data usage**: The data is well defined, with data quality processes in place as well as proper data ingestion, integration, aggregation, and consumption capabilities to meet

business needs. The goal is to improve business productivity and get more value out of the time spent, which comes from continuous interaction with the business and improvements through the framework. According to a recent article by McKinsey[4], "respondents to our 2019 Global Data Transformation Survey reported that an average of 30 percent of their total enterprise time was spent on non-value-added tasks because of poor data quality and availability."

c. **Technology**: The right tools are in place to meet business demands understanding that tools alone do not solve business problems and might even cause additional problems. For example, in one recent client engagement, the CIO pushed forward with an approach to build vs buy an MDM tool, without the holistic engagement with the business, only to have funding cut, resources removed, and decisions realigned. Using the framework will help you make the right technological decisions.

d. **Processes and standards**: Companies today are hindered by manual and inefficient processes where business users spend more time organizing the data than analyzing it. Improvements can be made to processes by redesigning and automating them, when possible, but if the processes are not followed, they quickly becomes shelfware.

e. **Support**: Traditional support comes from IT, but SME's, within the business are necessary to help drive change, improve data literacy, gauge impact from the organization and offer updates and suggestions.

f. **Education and certifications**: Data producers and consumers are trained in data understanding and tools and should have the ability to develop or modify a dashboard themselves. As referenced earlier in the McKinsey article[4], knowing that the data is certified or validated reduces non-value-added tasks by others in the organization, drives innovation, improves data literacy, and builds citizen developers which ultimately leads to increased resource capacity throughout the organization.

2. **Living Roadmap:** A data governance organization is formed, and an initial set of outcomes are identified and implemented, but it often dies out without additional focus and purpose. An adaptable governance organization is constantly reviewing input from the business and adjusting and augmenting the roadmap.

3. The **Adaptable Data Enablement Organization** has 3 main levels that work together to drive the change. All 3 levels contain required and expandable roles. There are required business and IT members at all levels, additional roles expand and adapt as the organization grows. The other expandable roles are critical to drive change and are introduced as resource requirements change.

a. **Executive Steering Committee:** The steering committee is made up of business and IT executive leaders with the purpose of reviewing progress of the enablement organization, making and approving changes, resolving conflict, and approving outcomes and funding. The combination of the business and IT executives jointly managing the

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[4] Designing data governance that delivers value, June 26, 2020: https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/mckinsey-digital/our-insights/designing-data-governance-that-delivers-value#/

data enablement organization sets the right strategies and breaks down barriers to begin the journey of becoming a data driven enterprise. Atul Gawande observed the lack of teamwork in surgeries in his book, The Checklist Manifesto[5]. As discussed in the book, just the act of following a checklist to bring people together improved teamwork, increased efficiency, collaboration, and overall outcomes. Creating a culture of collaboration and teamwork at the executive level drives the right culture change to drive data enablement.

b. **Data Enablement Steering Committee**: This is the core of the data enablement organization, where the purpose is to execute the tactical steps of the roadmap, review new objectives, reprioritize the roadmap as needed, review process and policy adherence, data access, changes, and new requests. The most critical position in the entire organization is the data enablement lead who is at the heart of change with a true passion to connect business and IT to drive data enablement.

c. **Working Teams**: The purpose of the working teams made up of both business and IT resources, is to execute the various data stewardship, development, project management and innovation objectives directed by the data enablement steering committee.

The combination of managing business demand and the living roadmap using the 3-tier adaptable organization to address current and future disruptive technologies improves speed to value and insulates the enterprise from the unintentional consequences caused by inefficient or ineffective data governance. The executive committee sets and maintains the strategic direction, the steering committee leads, advises and reviews statuses and the working teams drive execution, all under the umbrella of the Adaptable Data Enablement Framework.

Benefits

The Adaptable Data Enablement Framework offers immediate and long-term benefits to your enterprise such as:

- Improved Decision making because the end-product being created is of higher quality, produced in less time with fewer problems. This is primarily due to Business and IT working collaboratively toward a common goal.
- Comprehensive solutions including disruptive technologies are deployed because every aspect of delivering new requests is covered, ensuring details are not missed. New requests get evaluated against the lens of the 6 data enablement categories. The 6 categories are business alignment, data usage, technology, organization, process and standards, and education and certification.
- Quicker speed to insights because many data management processes are automated reducing data analysis, development, and testing time.

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[5] The Checklist Manifesto, Atul Gawande, December 22, 2009

- The Living Roadmap is correctly prioritized, funded and resourced to meet the urgency of the business because there is a regular cadence between business and IT.
- Data literacy is increased because business and IT SMEs throughout the enterprise are continuously being trained as data consumers and producers to support the business more effectively.

Conclusion

Finally, every enterprise seeks to build a data driven culture. Using the multi-level Adaptable Enablement Framework, analytic solutions are more impactful, and decisions are made faster, ultimately driving the enterprise toward having a data driven culture.

As defined by Oxford Languages, adaptable means "able to be modified for a new use or purpose." The purpose of the Adaptable Data Enablement Framework, therefore, is to review the constant feedback from the 3 levels in the organization, adapt and adjust the direction and roadmap as needed to build a data driven culture. At PTS Partners we understand the right approach to build out an adaptable data enablement program that can support your current and future business needs. Our pre-built organization structures, principles, charter, purpose and roles and responsibilities accelerate the formation and execution of the organization.

About PTS Partners

PTS Partners is a boutique consulting firm solely focused on helping clients create and implement adaptable data strategies and data enablement programs designed to keep up with the pace of business and technology change. We are a small team unencumbered by large company inflexibility. We drive value by applying our expertise and approaches to our client's existing operational practices. We have developed a nimble, light-weight unique offering that delivers an accelerated data enablement assessment, strategy and living roadmap.
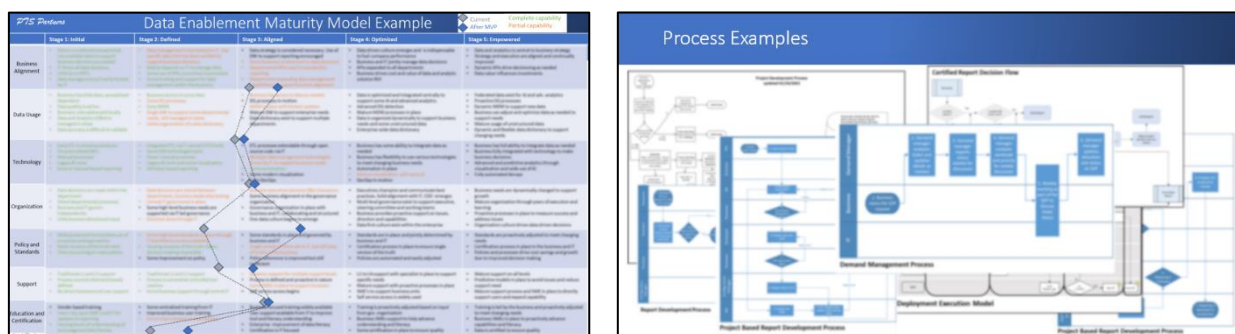
Sample Maturity Model and Process Diagrams

Our pre-built digital online assessment, data enablement maturity model and assessment, data enablement organization models, roles, responsibilities, and processes, as illustrated above, drive value, allowing incremental improvements throughout the process. Our combined years of analytics and digital experience, building data and analytics solutions and strategies, data governance and enablement organizations globally, in regions such as North and South America, and Asia Pacific qualify us as your strategic partner in building a successful and adaptable data enablement organizations.

For more information contact PTS Partners at contact@ptspartnersllc.com.

About the Authors

Ed Silva (esilva@ptspartnersllc.com) is a Partner with over 25 years of experience helping clients build data and analytics solutions to transform how they do business with customers, partners, and employees. Today, Ed's focus is in creating data strategies and data enablement programs for clients so they can be focused and flexible enough to keep up with ever increasing speed of business and technology change.

Chris Carney (carney@ptspartnersllc.com) is a Partner with over 25+ years of analytics, strategy, architecture, management, and governance experience. He has built many governance organizations over the past 15 years in multiple countries and is the author of several other white papers and blogs including "Deliver information business users need: Build and Analytics Center of Excellence", "Reinvigorating Enterprise Information Management", "Operational Analytics: Analytic Culture" and "Building the Business Intelligence Competency Center".