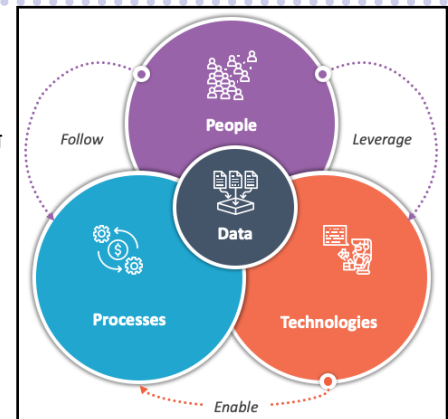




The value of creating a company's Process, Technology, and Data Architecture

Today's headlines are centered around machine learning and artificial intelligence. This is being positioned as the next great digital transformation step in delivering value to employees, customers and the organizational as a whole. In order to achieve this potential, companies need to position themselves for success in using this great technological breakthrough. From our perspective, to achieve the results that are being projected, companies need to rationalize their internal processes, technology and data architecture to ensure that the foundation needed to utilize these technology advancements to provide the required results. The "guts no glory" work needs to be completed. This work will create a single source of truth in terms of data and systems, along with ensuring processes are developed to produce efficient operations and execution. These steps will provide the backbone needed to produce significant results when using machine learning and artificial intelligence.



In many organizations, technology is treated as the "silver bullet. However, technology alone is only one aspect of what's needed to enable and embed transformational change. Some companies go about transforming themselves with a series of "pilots". Only to start and stop because of the lack of depth of understanding of what it will take to embed these new technologies within the company.

Process

The first step to transformation is to take a look at your existing processes. Take a look at these processes, functionally, as well as, cross-functionally, from an end to end perspective. Most companies try to skip this step and implement the current processes with new technology. Don't get me wrong, technology is a great lever to success, however, this only occurs if you take the time and effort to understand the "To Be" processes you need to have in place in the future. If you don't do this step, you are only modernizing your current way you work and miss out on the opportunity to utilize technology as best as you can to differentiate how work could be accomplished.

Technology

Technology is the pillar that gets most of the attention these days. Companies typically think of technology like a widget — something that they can plug in to fix a problem. This kind of thinking leads to having huge portfolios of technologies that are very difficult to manage. Technology also doesn't always do what we expect it to. Departments within a company, sometimes don't share a common language, so they end up coming to separate conclusions based on different sets of data. More data means more confusion, which means less control over your product and process. These issues are only made worse by the information silos that technology can perpetuate. Make sure you rationalize the technology portfolio and define the data and technical architecture that fits your organization's method of work best.

Data Architecture

To be able to establish a Data Architecture strategy, you first need to determine your data needs. Then you need to classify your data into key areas, such as, product data, process data, customer data and transactional data. With that in mind, you need to define an authoring authority in terms of data owner and system of record. Once that is understood, you need to establish the method of controlling change to the data elements and providing the ability to configure the data into different states, such as latest release, data in work, etc. These concepts are key to ensuring that the data people get access to, is the correct for employees, suppliers and customers need to utilize in order to answer their questions and needs.

To enable greater value for the company, the organization's foundation needs to be strong, rationalized and able to manage changes and control configuration. This foundation will provide value not only for the use of machine learning and artificial intelligence but also throughout the organization when it comes to providing clear communication and a single method of sharing of information internally and with your suppliers and extended supply chain.

We have a great wealth of knowledge and experience in developing this foundation for our clients.

Give us a call if you'd like to discuss how to develop this foundation for your organization.

Next Month: The importance of re-evaluating your technology vision for best fit