Just Enough Data Governance

Building critical mass in Enterprise Cloud Data Management

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Time to Act on Data Governance

If you're reading this, you've recognized that it's time for data governance. The challenges that brought you here could be anything from compliance and customer centricity initiatives to productivity improvements and decision support, to name a few.

Whatever your driver, one truth should be self-evident: you can't lead data-driven digital transformation without end-to-end enterprise data governance.

But it's also true that governing data across the entire enterprise is hard work. It's a huge responsibility and it demands the involvement of many stakeholders.

That's why "just enough" data governance could be the right move for you. It's all about reducing the scale of the data governance challenge by doing enough to earn early credibility that builds to critical mass. You'll know you've arrived at critical mass when your governance program has done three things:

1. Delivered some form of ROI— whether measurable or at least anecdotal at this stage

2. Gained the backing of internal influential evangelists

3. Been recognized by many in your organization as a best practice

When this critical mass is reached, the momentum will help you justify future investment. It's a "land and expand" plan of attack.

As the person leading this project, your job is part communications, part marketing, and part project management: identifying the business need or opportunity, designing (and selling) the plan and building a foundation for effective collaboration across business functions.

It's no mean feat. If you're successful you'll have achieved two pretty remarkable things: you'll have reinforced the importance of data governance in the company culture, and aligned IT and business units in working towards shared goals.

This eBook will help you navigate a reduced-risk path to just enough data governance.

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The Stakes Couldn't be Higher

Data is now recognized as one of, if not the most important strategic assets an enterprise has to manage.

That's why more and more enterprises of all sizes are embracing the challenge of making data governance as ingrained in their culture as any other business function. You follow best practices when you manage your finance and human resource assets—so why not your data assets?

The trouble is, the threat of failure looms large—it's the constant reminder of the corporate (and career) risk inherent in the undertaking. The data governance procedures you set up will change the way people work across departments, and ultimately it will underpin your entire data management capability.

But this risk is tiny compared to what your company risks by doing nothing. Neglect to govern your data and you tempt any number of less-than-inviting fates: regulatory penalties; such as around GDPR, brand degradation, customer churn, faltering financial performance, and loss of market share.
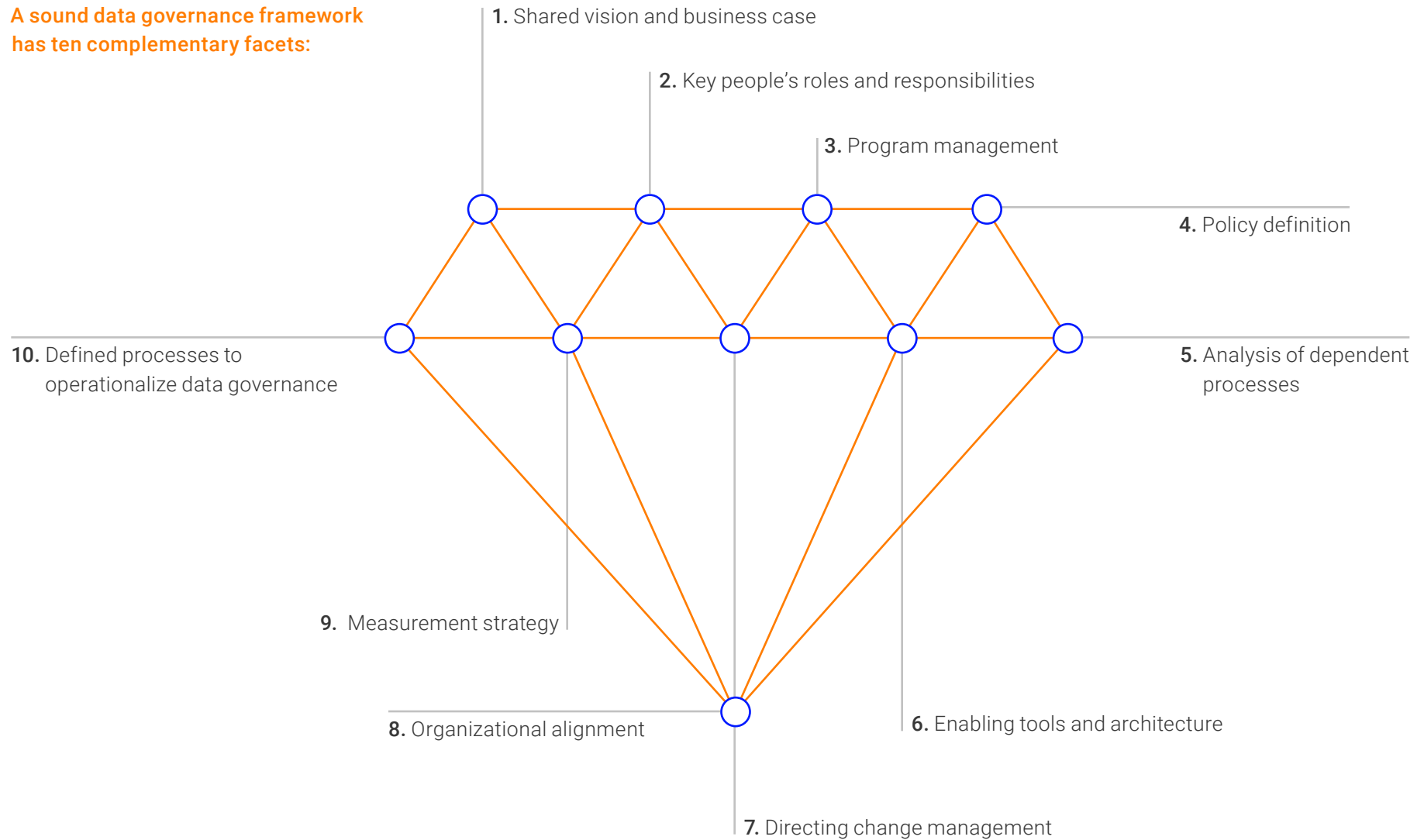
Without the appropriate care, your data can go from being a valuable asset to an expensive liability. Data governance is the tough but necessary job of keeping your data on your side.
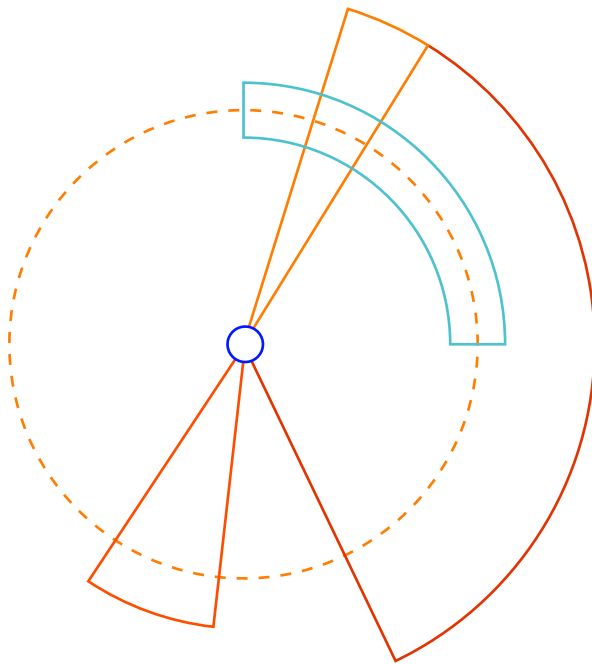
And the upside is as exciting as the downside is frightening. Get data governance right and you'll go live with new apps and services faster; empower the lines of business to do great things; make faster, better decisions; unite your customer data… In short, when your data's properly governed, the sky's the limit.
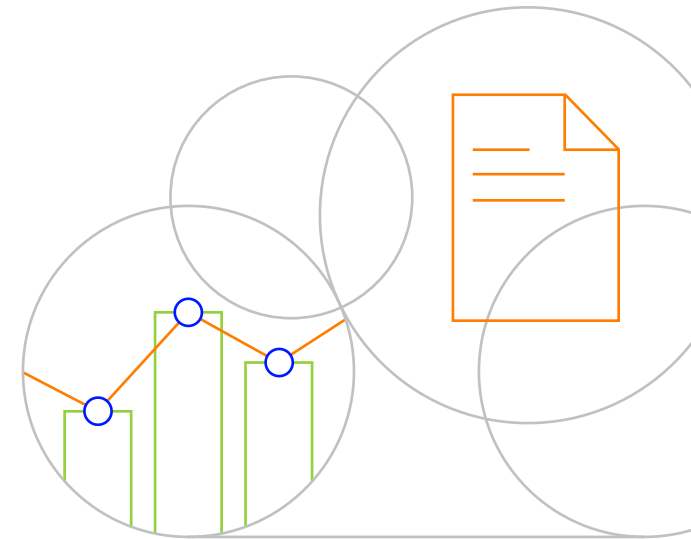
Ten Facets of Data Governance

A sound data governance framework has ten complementary facets:

1. Shared vision and business case

2. Key people's roles and responsibilities

3. Program management

4. Policy definition

10. Defined processes to operationalize data governance

5. Analysis of dependent processes

9. Measurement strategy

8. Organizational alignment

6. Enabling tools and architecture

7. Directing change management

The "defined processes" in the data governance framework enable efforts to cleanse, repair, define, mask, secure, reconcile, escalate, and approve data discrepancies, policies, and standards. Together, these core operational data governance processes build a foundation for you to effectively:

– Discover the state of the enterprise's data lifecycle, dependent business processes, and supporting organizational and technical capabilities as they stand today—not to forget the data itself.

– Define and document the terminology you use, along with its operational and business context. This is when you define and standardize the taxonomies, relationships, policies, rules, models, standards, processes, and measurement strategies needed to effectively manage your data governance efforts.

– Apply the standards and processes such that they satisfy all governance policies, business rules, workflows, and cross-functional roles and responsibilities that have been ratified in the previous steps.

– Measure and monitor the effectiveness of your data governance efforts and the operational and business value they generate, while making sure that your data practices are transparent and audit-friendly.

We've written more about the ten facets of holistic data governance in this white paper.

What Just Enough Looks Like

Holistic, end-to-end, enterprise-wide data governance may be your aspirational goal, but it's a long road. Careful route planning today will help you avoid a lot of roadblocks later in your journey.

And just enough data governance is often the best road. It's a smart way to use your limited resources to execute a successful initiative that will breed future successes.

Do too little and you won't gain enough momentum. Too much, and you risk biting off more than you can chew with the resources at your disposal. Get it just right, and you'll initiate a virtuous cycle. It's a tricky balancing act to pull off, but if you find that Goldilocks Zone, you set your enterprise on the best course for data readiness.

Embrace the cliché and find the low-hanging fruit

It starts with identifying the business priorities where governance programs can prove their value. Where a data challenge solved is a big step towards a positive business outcome.

The choice of project is crucial. Look for areas where you can ride the "domino effect" and enjoy additional benefits in related areas.

In practice, you might set the goal of improving the response rates of email marketing campaigns, with the future goal of optimizing all channels of cross-sell go-to-market, including direct mail, call center, web, mobile, and social.

Just enough data governance focuses on measurable business first strategic initiative benefits. Success in the initial strategic project is proof of the viability of wider rollout. Remember, data governance is never a one-and-done solution. It's always an ongoing program, not just a project.

So How Do You Get There?

Identifying and assessing the opportunity for just enough data governance (the strategic pain point) is really about knowing two things:

Current status—baseline your data governance maturity today. (Don't worry—data governance is still an emerging discipline and most organizations claim low maturity! Of a sample of nearly 500 maturity assessments completed on GovernYourData.com by companies across 15 industries, the average maturity score is 1.6 out of 5.)

Desired status—the data governance maturity that's required—and feasible. (Most organizations don't need to reach for the highest level of data governance maturity to accomplish their critical few business objectives. A little governance really does go a long way.)

Resources:

– Data governance maturity assessment tool and benchmark

– Business opportunity assessment tool

In parallel with these tools, you should conduct interviews with the top business and IT stakeholders who can help you focus your efforts for the best chance of success. Your people are your best source of insight—find the right ones and speak to them.

And make sure they speak to each other, too. In just enough data governance, it's alignment or bust: now's when your stakeholder management and facilitation skills come in. Start with an influential stakeholder that's got the business need and who understands the value your project can bring, and empower them to collaborate with the right tools as part of your enterprise data governance vision.
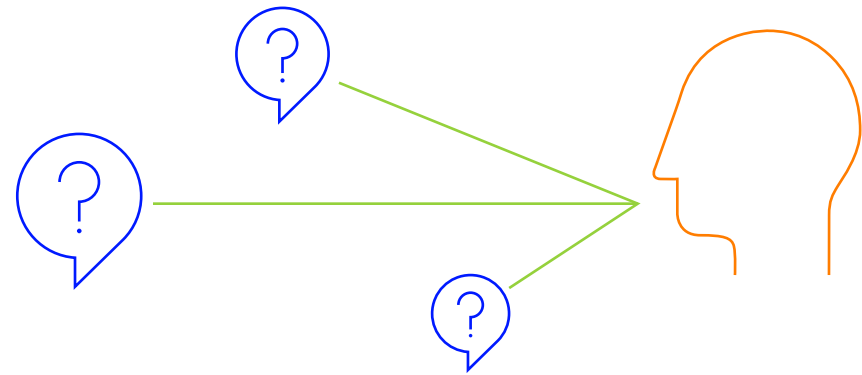
Here are some questions you can ask to frame these conversations:

– What are the top business imperatives as defined by your CEO and board of directors?

– What organizational business processes, decisions, and stakeholder (customer, partner, employee) interactions are the most important in support of these top imperatives?

– What data and applications are used to support those processes, decisions, and interactions?

– What upstream people, systems, and processes create, capture, and update that data?

– What is your organization's confidence level in the security and trustworthiness of that data?

– What would be the business impact when you don't have confidence in your data?

– Make sure your insight stays fresh: repeat the process and reassess priorities frequently— bi-annually at a minimum.

Just Enough Data Governance in Action

McGraw Hill Education has had more data churn in the last ten years than it had in the preceding hundred years.

But after decades of giving various business divisions almost complete autonomy over how they manage their own data, the company realized things were getting messy and inefficient. Specifically, it discovered serious data quality issues when it tried to ramp up business intelligence.

That's when Roberta Pape stepped in to lead data governance. She and her team started small, focusing on their product data where important data quality work had already been done. This way they could make big strides early.

Roberta's focus has been on operationalizing data governance management, ensuring different stakeholders have a clearer, simpler way to work together. Part of that has come down to using the right technology for data governance collaboration.

But she's also made sure five crucial things happen:

– Standardization across different IT teams with a clearly defined data quality rules and metrics, moving from diverse rules to a more unified set.

– Centralization of a single source of truth so that they aren't trying to fix data issues downstream (where it's more expensive).

– Empowerment of certain stakeholders so that they have the authority and decision rights to enact changes in their functions.

– Business and IT collaboration with a clear sense that the data belongs to the business and IT's there to help.

– Clarity of goals with clearly documented processes to highlight inefficiencies, as well as roles and responsibilities that would protect stakeholder needs.

Today, Roberta's team at McGraw Hill Education is on course to tackle a new opportunity—the company's customer data.

It's a credit to her emphasis on just enough data governance, as well as her dedication to operationalizing data governance management that McGraw Hill Education is ready for even bigger opportunities.

Learn more about McGraw Hill Education's approach to data governance.

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Measuring Success

The goal with just enough data governance is to begin the journey to holistic enterprise data governance, and ultimately business transformation with measurable ROI. It's about identifying the strategic projects where your data governance efforts can achieve critical mass.

So in the short term the success of just enough data governance should be measured in terms of traction and progress toward this initial goal.

In the early stages of your journey to data readiness, support, sponsorship, and buy-in are crucial. Success is measured in program adoption by key stakeholders and positive cooperation across departments.
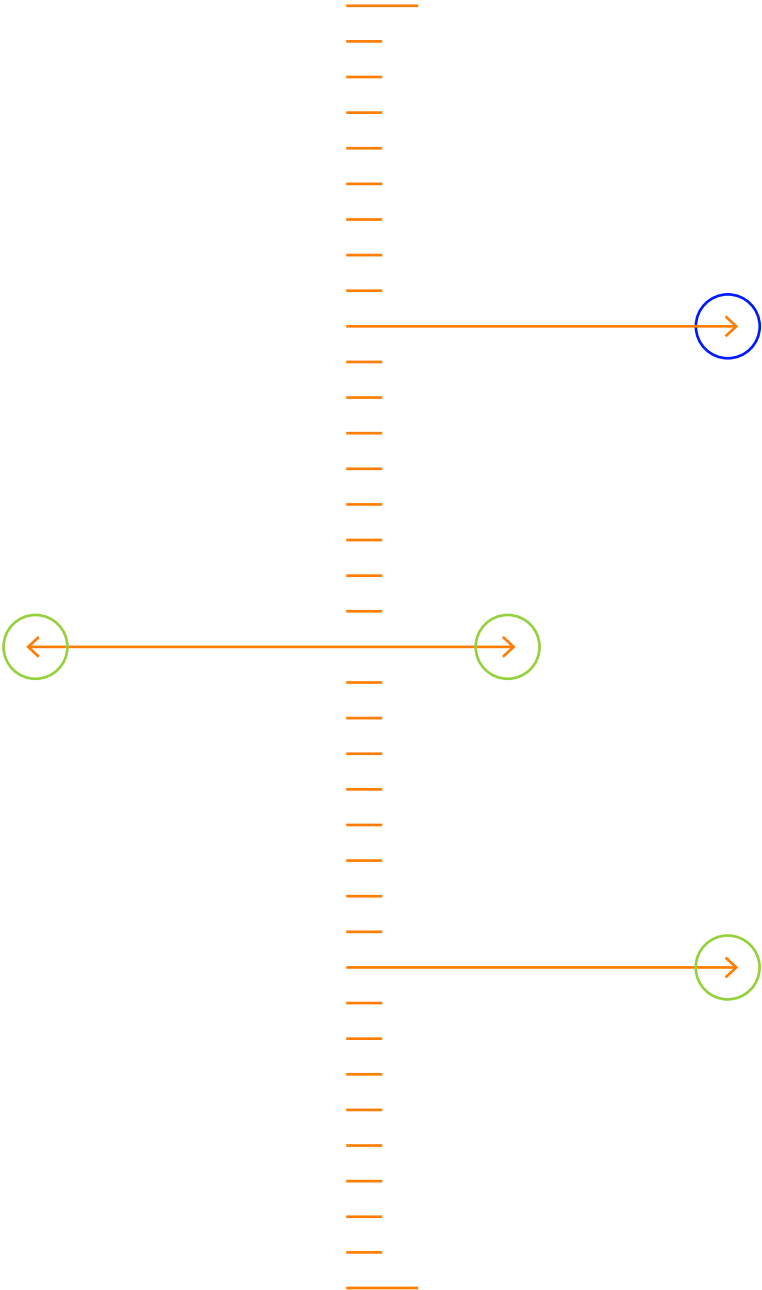
Further Reading

Data governance is no longer just an IT initiative it's a business imperative.

Read our white paper Holistic Data Governance: A Framework for Competitive Advantage to help plan, evangelize, and implement your data governance strategy for maximum competitive advantage.
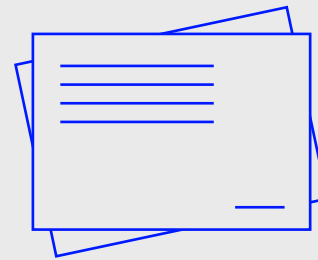
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Digital transformation changes expectations: better service, faster delivery, with less cost. Businesses must transform to stay relevant and data holds the answers.

As the world's leader in Enterprise Cloud Data Management, we're prepared to help you intelligently lead—in any sector, category or niche. Informatica provides you with the foresight to become more agile, realize new growth opportunities or create new inventions. With 100 percent focus on everything data, we offer the versatility needed to succeed.

We invite you to explore all that Informatica has to offer—and unleash the power of data to drive your next intelligent disruption.

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