

The Ten Golden Rules of Data Governance

The ultimate success of any Business Intelligence solution is dependent upon the quality of the data used. Without good quality data that is complete, consistent between systems, and has been validated to be correct then the BI solution will ultimately lose credibility. There is even the risk that key decisions will be taken based on misleading data.

Here are our Ten Golden Rules that should be taken into consideration when planning any Data Governance or Business Intelligence initiative:



Get buy-in – Without the appropriate support for your data governance initiative then the failure of the project is inevitable. Whilst securing Executive sponsorship and financial backing is critical, it is equally important to get support for the project across all levels of the company, from senior management down to the individuals who will enforce and monitor data quality on a day to day basis. A solid vision and roadmap at the start of the project can help people within the organisation understand the benefits of data governance.

One version of the truth – Master data management is a method of identifying the key data assets within your company and ensuring that a consistent view of this data is held across the company. This is achieved by techniques such as:

- Standardising terminology

- Defining common business rules to cleanse and complete the data
- Linking data using central data warehouses or virtual master data management

Vision – It is essential to define a clear vision at the start of the data governance initiative. This requires an understanding of both the business and what data problems exist within it. The vision should outline who the key project stakeholders will be, what the project objectives are, what benefits the initiative will bring to the business and provide a strategic roadmap for moving the project forwards. It is important to keep the focus on this vision throughout the project lifecycle to avoid losing sight of the key project goals.

Expertise – Implementing data governance can seem like a daunting and expensive prospect. However no management of your company's valuable data assets can prove to be more costly. Working with data governance experts can make the process easier to navigate and help ensure that the initiative is successful.

Roles and responsibilities – Provide clear definition as to who will be responsible for what. The important roles to consider are who will be responsible for:

- Sponsorship of the project
- Steering of the project
- Defining data rules, guidelines and standards
- Implementing data cleansing and management technologies
- On-going monitoring and management of data

One of the common reasons for failure with data governance is stakeholders not having the sufficient understanding of their role or not having the correct skills and experience to fulfil their responsibilities. It is vital that the appropriate training and support is provided.

Necessary technology only – There are a vast number of tools

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available on the market place which can be used to support and enhance data governance initiatives. These include tools for Master Data Management (MDM), Data Integration, Data profiling, Metadata Management, Data Security Management and Business Process Management. Look for technologies that will support and provide benefit to your initiative. Our recommendation is to only implement what is necessary to support the project. Data governance normally requires changes to business processes in addition to the introduction of new technologies.

All-inclusive – Data governance programs are often started within the IT department however it is important to recognise that data quality has an impact across all business processes and functions, from billing, inventory and accounting to management and business intelligence. The most successful data governance programs are driven by representatives from the whole business and are not just restricted to one functional area. Business users typically have the best understanding of data issues whilst IT professionals are normally best placed to implement the technology to improve and manage data quality. Co-operation between the business and IT teams is essential.

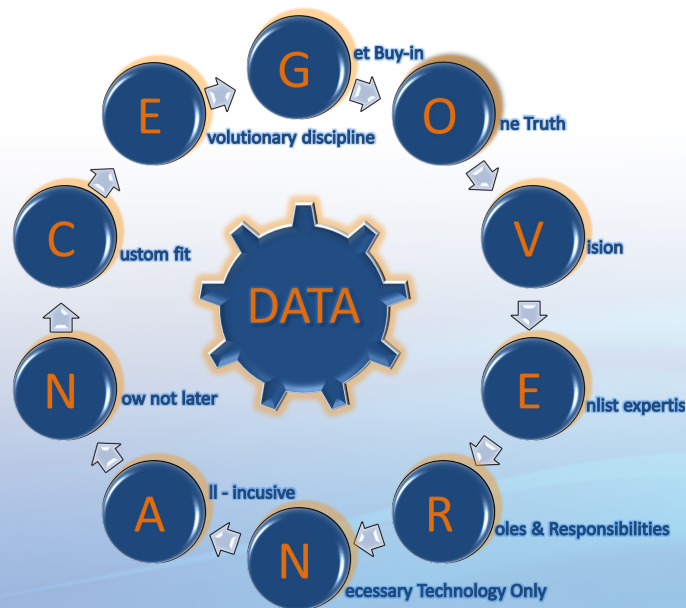
Now rather than later – Fixing data issues in the later stages of a project is a costly exercise. By incorporating data governance best practices early in a project lifecycle it helps

to ensure the maximum return on investment. Larger companies with more complicated needs should consider adopting an incremental approach and look to create a framework that is both scalable and reusable. This approach allows for high priority data problems to be addressed first.

Custom fit the initiative – When it comes to data governance it is not possible to implement a standard framework that works for all companies. The initiative should be tailored appropriately to fit with the company's individual size, structure, culture and needs.

Evolutionary discipline – Data governance should be viewed as an on-going process rather than a one-time event. The framework should include processes to monitor data quality, rules and exceptions as well as a review of the process itself. By understanding what works and what doesn't the process can be adapted over time to ensure that it remains relevant and continues to add value.

At Whistlebrook we offer a wide number of services to suit the individual needs of your company. These range from consultancy, project management through to database and BI expertise. We recognise the importance of building a sustainable framework that adds value to your business. Our pragmatic approach to problem solving ensures that the solution is a tailor-made to fit the individual needs of your company.



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