



Dynamics Matters
Podcast

How to land your data strategy: increasing adoption
With Doug McConchie, Head of Data & Analytics - HSO

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“When you’re that successful, things have a momentum, and at a certain point you can’t really tell whether you have created the momentum or it’s creating you.” – Annie Lennox

You now have a fit for purpose data strategy. One shaped to help you achieve your organisational goals. But unless it lands well with users – those instrumental in managing data and following the plan – your hard work in developing the data strategy will be undone.

How then should you land your data strategy to ensure it becomes an integral part of business operation, and retains a key role and importance in directing the business to success?



Delivering on your data strategy is part of a long game

Think of the implementation of your data strategy as a large-scale two-to-three-year programme. Consider the shift your organisation will need to take in terms of its culture and the transformation you'll need to go through, and then how you manage that.

“A data strategy is not too dissimilar to that of a transformation programme. When you think about it in that context, once you have your strategy, you then move into management control and performance measurement. It's not very sexy, it's not very exciting, but it's entirely practical.” – Doug McConchie, Head of Data & Analytics, HSO

Think through – from a practical point of view – how the various structures you have in place in your organisation, need to be aligned to implement the new data strategy. And then what changes you may need to make so your data strategy fits better with your organisation.

One of the most important elements of implementing change and delivering a successful data strategy is with people. Your ‘data enablers’.

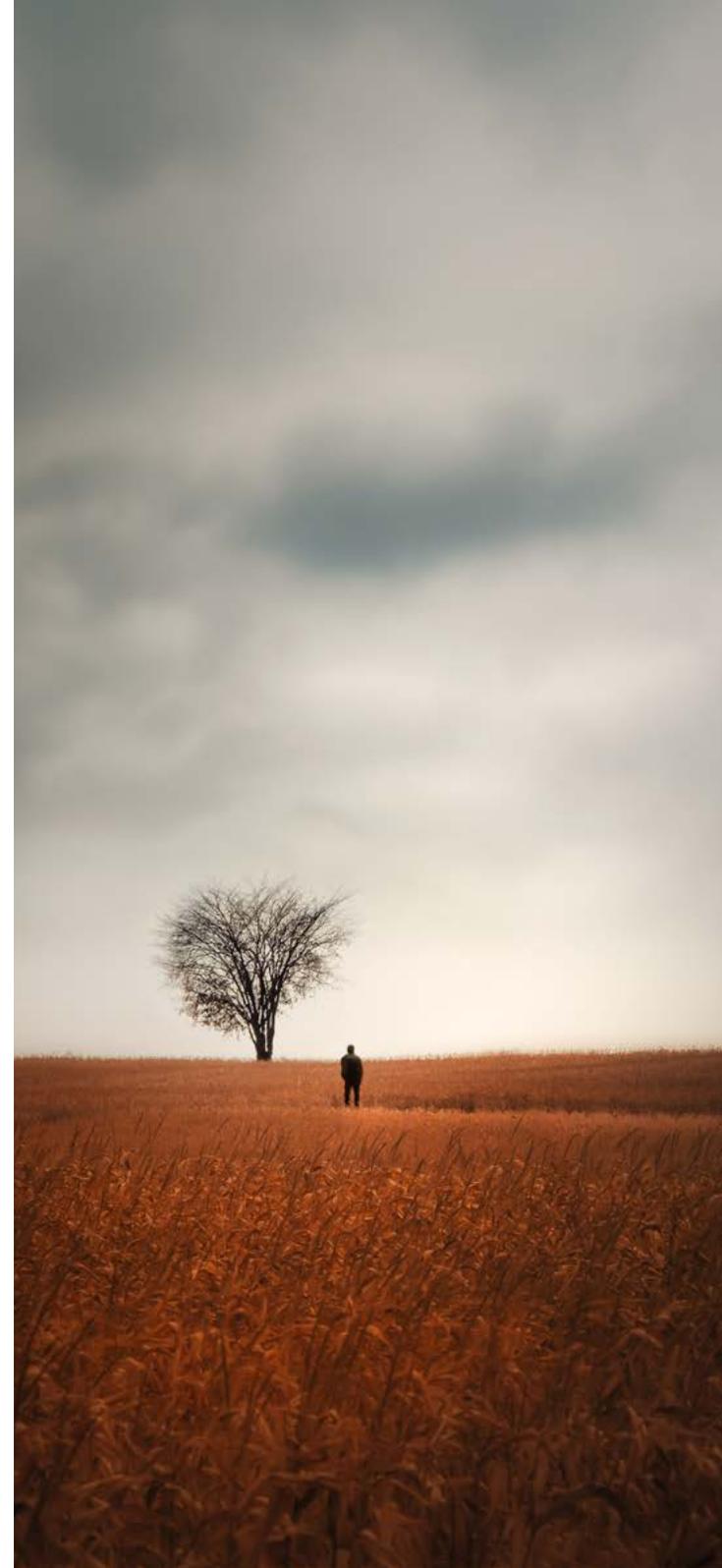
You need a top down and bottom-up approach

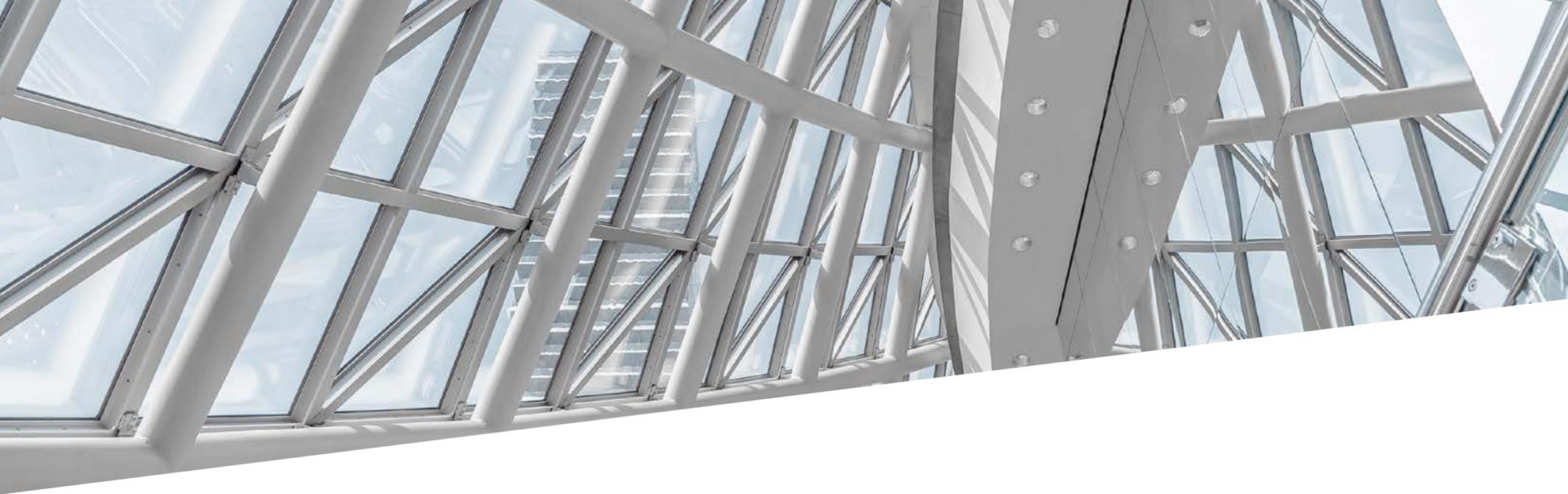
Your data strategy will not be successful if delivered in isolation. You need those at the top of the organisation banging the data drum. The impact of which will reverberate through the organisation to those directly affected – in both good ways and bad – by changes in how data is managed.

Gaining exec level support - or representation through a Chief Data Officer type role - is essential to ensure you have the support and influence needed to land your data strategy with impact. But the Chief Data Officer then needs support from other key data focused people. People working in data governance, business intelligence, master data and so on.

“As you deliver value into the business from your data strategy, you’ll get people excited about what you’ve delivered.” – Doug McConchie, Head of Data & Analytics, HSO

The right people in place will help you maintain the positive momentum of the initial landing. And this ensures long-term data value and success.





Create your structures for success

The needs of other parts of the business will be shared at exec level, and then interpreted as to their impact on the overall data strategy. This is then communicated and implemented through your data team. For this you require the right people, in the right roles, and with the right skills, but you also need a base structure of responsibilities on which your data team will operate.

- **Data strategy review board.** Oversee and approve data initiatives and understand lessons learned as the organisation goes through its data maturity learning curve.
- **Data governance council.** Look after, and manage, the data standards and quality of data, and data processes with the organisation.

- **Data strategy programme board.** Responsible for the day-to-day delivery of data projects and their workstreams and making sure each initiative delivers on time and in full.
- **Centres of excellence.** Set standards of operation, conduct research, provide information, and promote professional and career development.
- **Design and architecture unit.** Identifying and using design and architecture best practice, reviewing ways your data strategy can be delivered successfully within your organisation.

With the right team and structure in place, you can focus on the next step of your data strategy.

Focus on continuous improvement

The mindset when delivering your data strategy is one of continuous improvement. Just as programmes in other areas of the organisation have a concept of learning, data related activities are no different.

Some of this will be about improving people's skills in using new technologies you introduce. But, more than anything, continuous improvement means asking the difficult questions.

Could data reach a new level of performance? Your reporting: is it as mature and as performant as it needs to be? Does it look at what happened last week or last month? Does it look forward into aspects of forecasting? Does it use aspects of machine learning and artificial intelligence to improve insight? Do you have the right data models? Are those models robust? Do you have data catalogues? Do you think about master data? The list goes on. Remember: there's always room to take data management to the next level of performance.





Keep it fresh

The chief data officer is the person who is living and breathing the data strategy and its implementation. They also sit at the top table, listening to the hopes, aspirations, and frustrations from fellow executives. Passing those messages back to the data team to incorporate into your continuous improvement plan. This will help the data strategy stay fresh and aligned to the business mission. And - most importantly - it will continue to deliver value back to the business.

Once you have defined your data strategy, developed a plan with buy-in, and landed it with limited disruption, measuring and reporting return on investment is next. And will be covered in part three of this data strategy mini-series.

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