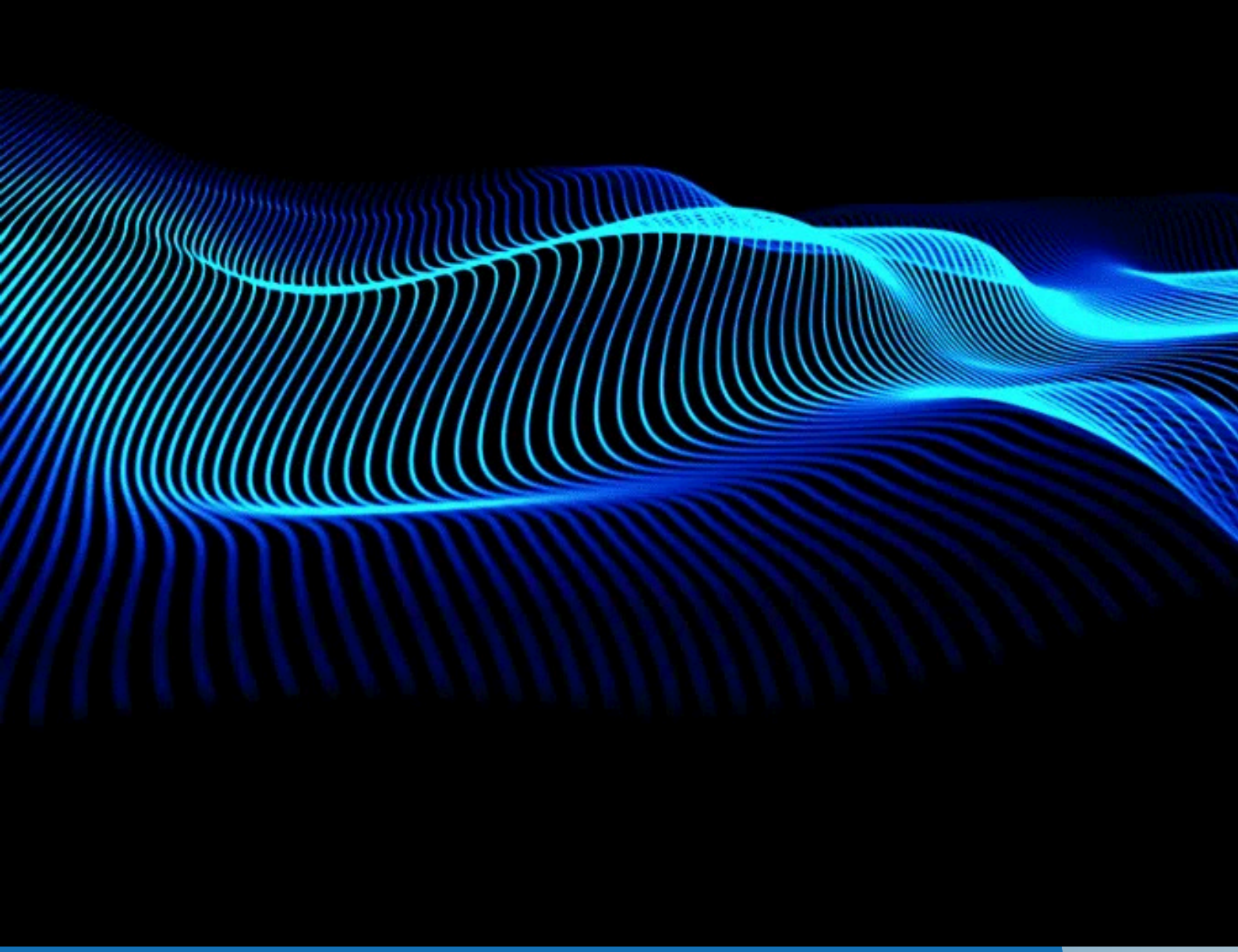

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Data Governance Implementation

How To Implement Meaningful Data Governance in the Time of Artificial Intelligence

By Robert D'Astolto

Introduction

While we are still in the early stages of widespread deployment, whichever way you look at it, Artificial Intelligence is having a major impact. This impact is on top of the well-established activities of analytics, business intelligence, forecasting, predicting and reporting which all require high quality data. This means that Data Governance is rising in importance as every organisation entering the AI era tackles two questions:

- Do we trust the data?
- Do we trust use of the data?

Underpinning the answer to these two questions are data quality concerns, ethics and what are the operational boundaries we must observe to maintain privacy and security?

This paper sets out how to implement Data Governance by

- Using a Phased Approach
- Not losing sight of the need to develop people capability and
- How to measure success

The companion paper Data Governance Foundations looks at what Data Governance is, why you need a framework and how to develop one, how to structure Data Governance and to how Plan it. The paper is a is available at dataagility.com/insights

Data Governance Implementation in the time of AI

A Phased Approach – Prioritise your data governance needs, and be practical

The advent of Advanced Analytics and Artificial Intelligence means that we are all more dependent on good quality data than ever before. Trust in data and trust in the uses of data are critical business capabilities enabled by data governance.

Implementing changes to the way you manage data in your organisation involves many stakeholders, and the process needs to be monitored and possibly adjusted throughout. It takes time and resources.

This is why you should plan a phased roll-out of your data governance. Trying to roll it out in one Big Bang approach generally doesn't work.

Start with the area and data of highest priority. It might be an area where you have critical data that has quality concerns, or where repeated errors have been recorded.

Identify where improved data governance will mean better business performance immediately, and more satisfied employees and customers through improved data.

Another way is to look for other initiatives in your organisation that also have a data focus, and see if you can piggyback off those. It can be easier to get people involved in a practical way, rather than just assigning them added responsibilities for data governance as a 'business as usual' activity. When there is a practical project happening, they can start building into that role of responsibility, their adaptation will feel reasonable and will make sense to them.

For example, if you are implementing a new finance system, you might decide, let's implement data governance in the Finance area first. With such a project, the decisions that need to be made around the data and any data migration present a good avenue to get the Data Owner and Data Stewards involved, in a practical way.

Focus On People – Identify your responsible data governance leaders

While data governance includes technical artifacts, the premise of any implementation is around people. For data governance, you assign people to certain roles.

Data Owners and Data Stewards are key people within the business who will be responsible for the data. They are also responsible for implementing the governance framework and the policies, procedures and standards that come with it.

Explain to the Data Owner what that means for them. The benefits and their accountabilities.

Similarly for your Data Stewards – the subject matter experts, the people who are using and managing the data day-to-day, and supporting the users of the data. They will want to know what it means for them including what parts of data governance they need to learn, and what training they will need.

Data Owners and Stewards don't have to be data management experts, but they need a sound level of understanding and an appreciation of data governance.

The realisation of their responsibilities and possibilities should be a positive experience for Data Owners and Data Stewards. Incorporate these people into the planning process, and provide expert support during the implementation process. Ensure they feel empowered and ready to implement data governance.

Support Your People – Engage data governance experts

Data Owners and Data Stewards are the people within your business who will carry data governance forward. Because they are not data governance experts, however, they need to be supported by a function or a person who is the expert.

Many organisations now have their own experts. This might be a Data Governance Officer, Information Manager, or Data Manager. Usually, they report into a Chief Information Officer, Chief Data Officer or Head of Data and Analytics. Increasingly we see Chief Analytics Officers and it is likley that Senior AI roles will also appear in many organisations.

Other organisations engage external experts such as Data Agility consultants.

In addition to being skilled in data governance, these experts are clear communicators actively engaged across the business to drive the change.

Facilitate Positive Change – Launch communications and a broad marketing campaign

Data governance implementation includes considered change management and an effective internal marketing campaign. It involves selling a new perspective to your business, as well as the implementation of new processes and procedures.

Typically, we structure it so that there is targeted awareness and training for people with defined roles who are heavily impacted – the Data Owners, Data Stewards and other users identified as central to the implementation in the first instance.

At the same time, remembering that we take a phased approach and not everyone will be impacted right away, we launch a broader communications program. The idea is to start to educate everyone about data governance, so they understand why it is being implemented and have good awareness and are ready when their time comes for the implementation.

A broad marketing campaign is also valuable where cultural change is required Ie. when you need people to change the way they think about their data. When you want every person to value the organisation's data, and the business to place more importance on data, it is vital that everyone receives the same messaging.

These actions might be driven by the data governance expert but will be supported by an organisation's Communications and/or Learning and Development teams.

Measure Your Success – Achieve business benefits

Data governance implementation is the execution of a plan.
It is acknowledging the collection of policies, frameworks, procedures, people and culture that ensure the effective, efficient and reliable use of data to support your organisation achieve its objectives and vision, and putting them to use.
In measuring the effectiveness of your implementation, you will need to determine metrics of business improvements. You will also need to reflect on how data governance is helping your organisation achieve its vision and uphold its principles.

Results, our clients experience : In the words of Sam O'Brien, Director Business Intelligence & Systems, Better Health Network

"BHN have developed a data and digital strategy to enable scalable, data-driven decision-making, improve interoperability, and future-proof the organisation's technology ecosystem.
As the first step of the data strategy, Data Agility was chosen to work with BHN to build a forward-looking data governance structure that would support current operations and the uptake of new AI capabilities.
In an environment in which trust in data is increasingly important, the work provided complete coverage, delivering

- *Policies including the use of AI and client data*
- *Operating model – based on the Data Agility framework*
- *Committee structure and terms of reference*
- *Training and awareness programs – including Data Governance awareness, Privacy and Security, and data custodian roles & responsibilities,*

I'm very pleased with Data Agility's collaborative and comprehensive work on our data governance ecosystem. We have a full suite of capabilities from Policy through to Operating Model, enabling our data strategy. "

Please also consider the companion paper Data Governance Foundations which looks at definition, framework, structure and planning. It is available at dataagility.com/insights

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Data Agility are specialists in AI, Data Analytics and Information Management. We support our clients to improve performance and resolve business issues through the effective application of their data.

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