

E-book

Simplifying the Data Dilemma

Bring clarity to data lifecycles in complex multicloud environments, and fuel growth.

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Introduction

The companies that stand apart in a competitive, digital economy are those that can cut through the noise to detect the meaningful signals that live in their data.

Data analytics tools and platforms, along with AI and machine learning technologies, go beyond providing the opportunity to finesse how you operate and measure outcomes. If you weren't born in the cloud, there's a real risk that digital natives and other competitors will harness the potential of analytics and AI before you do to achieve the kind of prescience and growth that propels them beyond reach.

For long-standing, traditional companies, the fear of being left behind is often overshadowed by uncertainty about how to bring order to the chaos of an exponentially expanding ecosystem of data sources and formats, cloud infrastructure and software applications.

The result? Many large, established companies don't have comprehensive data solutions or the organizational culture needed to effectively capture,

process, analyze and apply data end-to-end. Too much data goes unmined, analytical outputs are unreliable, and projects designed to operationalize insights stall.

Using your data to its fullest potential, and deriving maximum value from your data investment, requires clear thinking about the problems you want to solve, which activities will have the most impact, and how you'll coordinate all the moving parts. You can't ignore any one important piece of this transformation journey, but you can't do it all at once (or, in most cases, on your own).

To make it easier to untangle big data, you need to transform your systems and capabilities step-by-step, guided by an overarching strategy, strong technical capabilities, a mindset of continuous evolution and expert help, when needed.



Digitization, data and augmenting human intuition.

Information is the lifeblood of your business. That's why data, analytics and AI have become an essential part of the digital transformation discussion. The ability to extract useful information from your big data and business systems is a fundamental aspect of remaining competitive in a digital economy.

Of course, like any major change initiative, it's not always easy for large companies to become data-informed businesses where both operational and strategic decisions are guided and enhanced by analytical insights and machine learning. It takes time to implement projects and influence attitudes when you have large teams spread across multiple locations, countries and markets — and that's a problem when the pace of technological change is so rapid.

Most companies already work with numerous digitized workflows, have moved workloads to the cloud and use hundreds of different software applications. Despite these modernization efforts, most still face challenges when trying to extract clear, comprehensive and actionable insights from data across their enterprise.





Three reasons traditional companies must fix ineffective data solutions.

To remain competitive, organizations need to create and implement data strategies that account for the velocity and volume of data, the inefficiencies of legacy systems and the unification of siloed data.

1

Data velocity and volume are exploding the business landscape:

Data is being generated by businesses at incredible speed and in massive and exponentially growing amounts. That puts pressure on organizations' ability to store, retain, and leverage data effectively.



Enterprise data is being created faster than storage capacity, especially IoT data, according to IDC.¹ The cost of storage is a barrier to retaining potentially useful data long-term.¹ Willingness to invest more is tied to a company's capacity to prove a positive ROI on data analytics initiatives.



Data created and collected by large companies is often dispersed across physical locations, on-site data centers, and public and private clouds. This multicloud environment results in a multitude of data workflows, management tools and security measures that make it difficult to consolidate and analyze data.



Research firm Forrester says that up to 70% of all data held by enterprises goes unused for analytics.² In large part that's because a huge amount of the data being captured and stored is unstructured, which is not as easy to search and analyze without the right data platform and data analytics solutions in place — meaning many organizations ignore important data.

2

Large incumbent corporations face more legacy issues:

Outdated and disconnected systems, unmethodical approaches to transformative efforts, and poor planning can significantly slow a company's progress toward reliable data pipelines and useful analytical insights

Legacy issues like...

- Lack of enterprise-wide data strategy, architecture and data governance
- Too many bespoke and interim solutions, systems being used in isolation, lack of integration and lack of user-friendly interfaces
- Poor quality, incomplete and unreliable data and metadata, or data with unclear ownership or privacy details

LEAD TO

Issues like...

- No direction, wasted time and stymied adoption
- Difficulty gaining and allocating resources
- Trouble streamlining and scaling data ingestion
- No single source of truth for decision-making
- Fear of using data, or skewed analytical outputs
- Security risks, legal and compliance issues

3

Fragmented ecosystems are more complex to manage and enhance:

Data silos, disjointed data tools and internal friction can effectively work against a company that's actively pursuing better routes to data analytics. New systems need to be professionally managed, secured and optimized over time. This is made more difficult by:

Data management challenges

Managing data and technical architectures across a multicloud environment that continues to evolve with new technologies, apps, data types and security threats

Skills gaps

Building a team and capabilities to help you handle the scale and scope of managing a complex data ecosystem, in line with budgets and despite data science and IT skill shortages

Evolving priorities

Continually reviewing business drivers, compliance obligations and customer requirements, and adapting your data maturity and analytical outputs to match

Catching up with digital natives.

Many of the businesses that were born in the cloud were able to quickly revolutionize the delivery of goods and services by leveraging the speed and convenience of digital networks and the data they generated. Companies that specialized in ecommerce, food service and on-demand entertainment saw tremendous benefits to digitization. Tech startups have been able to quickly become big players, displacing some incumbents along the way.

Conversely, established companies tend to have morphed their digital systems and data solutions gradually and erratically, with multiple initiatives owned by different business units or regions. The data solutions that do exist often use data in a limited way, which means they don't offer holistic insights, rarely deliver the maximum value, or give the right people easy access to insights.

Still, many organizations continue to do well based on their size, resources and market share. So, what's the urgency? Traditional market leaders that can embrace data analytics to innovate, improve their operations, and better understand and meet the needs of customers, will ensure they retain and deepen these inherent advantages — and go from good to great.



Why it matters: Good use of data delivers strong returns

Digital leaders are more likely to grow their earnings compared to digital laggards because their maturity leads to greater visibility, more innovation and a better capacity for change and resilience.³ Those that implement and optimize customer analytics technologies are three times as likely to generate above-average turnover growth as competitors with sporadic data analytics capabilities. Digital leaders are also 2.6 times more likely to achieve a higher ROI.⁴

Intuition can only take you so far

The instincts of experienced leaders and talented employees are core to the success of any business. But it's not a contradiction to also rely on data insights, machine learning outputs and business-intelligence reporting.

Organizations that strive to be data-informed cultivate better work environments for their employees by:

- Accelerating or automating mundane processes that don't require human problem-solving skills
- Opening up new avenues of thought that lead to valuable improvements, innovations and experiments
- Demonstrating performance increases and returns on investment, which help them reinforce or re-prioritize existing plans and activities

Digital literacy and a robust data culture are essential for avoiding guesswork, groupthink and unconscious bias — all of which hamstring evolving business models and modern approaches to customer experience. The alternative is a workplace culture where leaders continue to fall back on 'how we've always done things'.

Why it matters: You need to make good decisions, quickly

In a crisis, a company's weaknesses quickly become apparent. The ability to access the right information at the right time greatly bolsters your ability to navigate any hardships that come your way.

IDC found that 'digital resilience' – with foundational capabilities across data, analytics and AI – is critical to enterprise survival of unplanned incidents, like natural disasters or global pandemics. "Shared data, analytics and AI enable C-suite leaders, including the CIO, to accurately assess and quickly respond to changing operating environments."⁵

1. <https://blogs.idc.com/2019/11/04/how-you-contribute-to-todays-growing-datasphere-and-its-enterprise-impact/>
2. <https://www.forrester.com/blogs/hadoop-is-datas-darling-for-a-reason/>
3. <https://statics.teams.cdn.office.net/evergreen-assets/safelinks/1/atp-safelinks.html>
4. <https://statics.teams.cdn.office.net/evergreen-assets/safelinks/1/atp-safelinks.html>
5. <https://blogs.idc.com/2021/03/26/why-digital-resiliency-is-critical-to-building-the-future-enterprise/>

Let's take the next step together

It's easier to capitalize on the power of integrated data when you have a partner who can help you custom build an end-to-end solution that brings simplicity to how you manage and maximize the value of it.

Rackspace Technology has proven multicloud expertise and world-class talent to design, deliver and professionally support the best data solutions for complex enterprise environments.

Learn more at
www.rackspace.com/data/azure-data
or call 1-800-961-2888

About Rackspace Technology

Rackspace Technology® is the multicloud solutions expert. We combine our expertise with the world's leading technologies – across applications, data and security – to deliver end-to-end solutions. We have a proven record of advising customers based on their business challenges, designing solutions that scale, building and managing those solutions, and optimizing returns into the future.

As a global, multicloud technology services pioneer, we deliver innovative capabilities of the cloud to help customers build new revenue streams, increase efficiency and create incredible experiences. Named a best place to work, year after year according to Fortune, Forbes, and Glassdoor, we attract and develop world-class talent to deliver the best expertise to our customers. Everything we do is wrapped in our obsession with our customers' success – our Fanatical Experience® – so they can work faster, smarter and stay ahead of what's next.

Learn more at www.rackspace.com or call 1-800-961-2888.

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