

# Executive SUMMARY

## Data Governance: Ensuring the Success of the Digital Enterprise



As organizations create, store, share and manage increasingly large amounts of data, IT and business leaders are being forced to confront a stark reality: Establishing and adhering to a smart, flexible and strategic data governance program can make all the difference in the world between success and failure.

By data governance, we don't just mean the substantial and complex array of regulatory and legal requirements in handling data as simple as documents and as complex as DNA code. It covers all policies, processes and procedures enterprises must undertake to ensure that their data is treated securely, efficiently and as a truly strategic asset.

As organizations of all industries, sizes, business models and geographies become digital enterprises, stakeholders throughout the organizations must address several fundamental questions about data governance:

- What's the best approach to ensure enterprise data governance in an ever-changing business climate?
- What is the right governance ecosystem?
- How can organizations keep up with the changing dynamics of their enterprise data universe?
- What kinds of solutions are needed to make it all a reality?

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**Taking the right steps to enable enterprise data governance** requires looking at data governance in concert with data quality, master data management and data delivery platforms, according to Michael Stege, data governance director at insurance giant Allstate. Without a holistic view of data governance—rather than a traditional, inefficient silo approach—organizations will be hard-pressed to ensure that they have the right data in the hands of the right people at the right time.

At the heart of any effort to ensure enterprise data governance are several fundamental requirements. First, it's essential to take an enterprise approach to data governance, rather than looking at disparate business groups' unique requirements and building a solution for each. Second, data governance directors and architects must strive for simplification. And third, decision makers must tightly collaborate with the lines of business in order to ensure business processes and data governance policies are closely aligned and are subject to rigid adherence.

Making those goals a reality demands the **proper governance ecosystem**, according to Woodson Savage, head of enterprise data strategy and products at Cox Automotive. With so much data, in so many different formats and from so many different sources, organizations need to take great pains to build an ecosystem that includes the right organizational structures and groups—across all product and service groups, industries and business units.

Having the right ecosystem—people, processes, policies and products—is an important step in addressing the business realities of unique data maturity across the organization. Inevitably, some internal user groups will have substantial experience with issues such as structured data, while others will rely heavily on proper handling and management of fast-growing unstructured data. And, outside stakeholders—customers, suppliers and distribution partners—bring an entirely new level of complex requirements that cannot be properly addressed without identifying and leveraging the full ecosystem that makes up data governance.

Of course, all industries are moving and changing at breakneck speed, putting more pressure than ever on organizations to develop flexible, agile strategies that account for this rapid upheaval in the enterprise data universe. The expanding universe of what data is captured, how it is captured and where it is captured from requires a much more strategic, big-picture analysis of data's role within the organization and how to ensure proper data governance in this context, according to Rajaraman Srinivasan, senior director at global consulting leader Cognizant.

At the same time, the volume and variety of users of enterprise data has exploded. No longer are traditional business intelligence consumers the sole or even primary user group for enterprise data; a whole raft of new data and analytics users must be accounted for, due in large part to the introduction of affordable, intuitive and flexible tools.

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Finally, when the right strategies and priorities are put into place, organizations must do their homework in evaluating those **new tool sets and services** that help data governance programs turn all corporate data into a competitive asset for today's digital enterprise. According to Harald Smith, director of product management for Trillium Software, data governance can be optimized to deliver timely, trusted and secure data across the enterprise by following four important steps:

- Establish clear business objectives and gain executive support.
- Empower teams with self-service tools to drive collaboration.
- Measure early and often, in order to quantify results and identify areas of improvement.
- Build on successes and expand across the organization.

Data governance is much more than a buzzword or shelfware that gets dusted off and updated once a year. It is literally the map to the buried treasure—the huge and fast-growing volumes of enterprise data that must be properly nurtured and leveraged for sustainable competitive advantage and quantifiable business benefit.