



# Key steps to building a data-driven company of the future

## Introduction

Turning the abstract value of data into something tangible means empowerment can no longer reside strictly with the people who use data most. The hallmarks of a truly data-centric environment means anyone encountering data—of all skill levels and data fluency—can turn insights into the next opportunity and innovation.

A true analytics culture is based on “more than a stack of technologies, or a few people,” explained a recent [Harvard Business Review article](#). Instead, “data and analytics should be the pulse of the organization, incorporated into all key decisions.”

To achieve this, a company needs to harness these defining elements: establish a foundation of data governance and trust; make data the core competency; foster data adoption with data literacy; and make data accessible for all.

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# 01

## Make data your core competency

The promise of digital transformation is the ability to harness the power of technology to grow your business, reach new markets, and attract new customers. It means that you also need to understand all of the data, or digital exhaust, created by new customer experiences.

For example, Domino's Pizza is one of the largest pizza brands in the world (even located in pizza's Italian birthplace). But in 2010, they were losing considerable market share, much to the chagrin of investors. Forgettable pizza and an aging business model almost guaranteed their prolonged descent. The company needed to do something different—something bold—to create differentiation in a crowded industry. According to [Forbes](#), there were three critical elements to Domino's digital transformation overall.

From organizational buy-in to a relentless measuring of metrics, the company staffs 400 analytics and software hires (out of 800 corporate employees) to make this digital transformation possible. Optimizing pizza delivery and using data to effectively reach new customers, while nurturing existing ones, became an integral part of their success—and survival.

By implementing a data-to-insights mentality, Doyle's transition to a data-driven pizza brand opened up completely new opportunities for the brand at-large. The company capitalized on stockpiles of data to craft a new social media and mobile strategy, connecting newer customers with their product ([pizza emoji's, anyone?](#)). Domino's also discovered insights about customers' expectations of their product quality. Fresh. Hot. Fast. These elements lead to a [signature delivery vehicle](#) (Adweek called it a Cheese Lover's Batmobile) that clearly solidified Domino's as the pizza brand of the twenty-first century.



All that technology (plus making their pizza taste better) has changed how customers order (using the Domino's app, or directly via Twitter, or by texting an emoji); how they monitor their order status; and how Domino's manages operations.

Digital transformation isn't just about collecting more data. You transform to modernize, and modernity means harnessing all of the knowledge you can from your data. To achieve long-term success, a modern company prioritizes the infrastructure and resourcing needed to leverage and extract data to its full potential.



I came on board with a mission of becoming fact-based and data driven, taking some of the mythology and the folklore out of how we conduct our business.

— Peter Cregger, Chief Data Officer, Fmi



# 02

## Establish a foundation of governed, trusted data

A strong foundation starts with an attitude of openness, backed by the proper controls. These days, knowledge workers are expected to use data as the basis of their decisions and they will find a way to use data with or without the support of IT. Restricting access to company data can have adverse consequences. Employees may create their own data sources in spreadsheets or download data from web data sources. The result is overabundant data silos that are unsecured and uncertified by the company's data stewards or IT.

Modern companies are building out a data management function with self-service analytics as the end goal—providing the proper level of control for every type of user. Successful companies opt for an **integrated approach** between defensive and offensive data strategies, supporting both “customer-focused business functions” and “legal, financial, compliance, and IT concerns” (HBR). For example, IT will establish certified data sources or standard reports that can be explored and utilized by people who want to perform custom analyses.

**REI** is the nation's largest consumer co-op and specialty outdoor retailer, with over 16 million members—and a prime example of this integrated approach. They leverage over 90 terabytes of customer data to track attribution and sales metrics, contributing to an increase in customer loyalty and repeat sales.

Core to REI's analytics program is a collaborative relationship between business units and IT. Clinton Fowler, Director of Customer and Advanced Analytics at REI explained how “IT brings production-grade technology and services, particularly



vital investments around reliability, accessibility, scalability, performance and support” so business units are set up for success when they dig deeper into customer trends.

To nurture the business-IT collaboration, both functions commit to five measures: co-locating to build trust and engage face-to-face; holding a monthly IT and business leadership meeting; distributing weekly project updates; scheduling a regular, required team gathering to better understand needs; and holding consistent one-on-one meetings. As a result, REI’s business divisions, from marketing to operations, have a complete view of more than 75 data sources that influence their daily decisions.

An integrated governance strategy is the foundation of a solid data company. It’s IT and the business united, with the business handling creation while IT handles policies and systems. The result is an environment where IT can ensure security and people have the confidence to explore trusted data and drive business impact.



When self-service analytics came on the scene, it disrupted the world of business intelligence. It meant that anyone could create analytics and could ask and answer questions. And the same thing is now happening with governance.

— Ellie Fields, Senior Director of Product Development, Tableau



# 03

## Foster adoption with data literacy

To derive value from data, employees need to have the skills to understand and analyze it— and to communicate results across the company.

Creating a data-centric company starts in the **hiring process**, bringing on staff who understand how to interpret data and have a natural curiosity to explore possibilities and optimize processes. Achieving this goal requires a **top-down approach**, with the C-suite practicing a data-driven mindset and fostering data literacy as a strategic company initiative.

When you make data literacy a priority, it also empowers existing employees to grow their skill sets. Giving employees the space and time to invest in opportunistic programs and mentorship will pay dividends for a company— setting a standard that data should play a crucial role in every business conversation and decision.

The descriptor, “banking and brokerage firm founded in the 1970s,” doesn’t necessarily line up with the general public’s view of a “data company.” **Charles Schwab** proved otherwise, making the shift towards an era of modern self-service analytics and fostering an environment where people are interested in data and eager to learn how they can analyze it more effectively. To increase adoption, Global Data Officer, Andrew Salesky once stated the need for a new capacity planning and support model that “supports both the experienced analysts as well as novice business users.”

Charles Schwab’s center of excellence—the same team responsible for data



governance and performance—established an internal community built within a SharePoint portal so that employees could ask questions, share use cases, and offer feedback. This quickly doubled the amount of active users on Schwab’s self-service analytics platform—leading branch managers, financial consultants, senior leadership, and more staff to spot opportunities to improve core business functions.

Data is only effective if everyone has the desire and the knowledge to leverage it. Data literacy shouldn’t be limited to engineering and analyst roles. Successful adoption means that every department is empowered with data so they can



The outcome of our internal user group has been to actually build a group of people who are working together, collaborating, sharing their skills and just sort of pushing each other forward.

— Alexs Thompson, Data Scientist, Hallmark





# 04

## Make data accessible for all

A basketball coach works hard to help his players strengthen and develop their peripheral vision to ensure they see every teammate's opportunity to make a big play. In a similar way, an organization's leadership needs to foster a culture of analytics that empowers all knowledge workers. And as more companies build their new playbook, they'll need a modern analytics platform providing a full analytical experience to make the most of everyone.

Take **MillerCoors**, for example. Home to marquee beer brands like Coors, Blue Moon, and Miller, the company plays in a competitive global landscape. Choosing to equip their sales staff (typically a non-data analyst role) with clean and governed data has made a critical difference by helping them secure market share. It's a full analytics experience, from IT to the sales team, that helps MillerCoors reach its full potential as a competitive brand. For example, MillerCoors' sales team regularly uses mobile dashboards to identify the most profitable products for retailers, giving them the opportunity to look up account-specific metrics on the fly.

Jim Webb, Director of Customer Solutions explains: "15 minutes before their meeting, staff can pull down the full sales report and see what they need to address with the retailer and pull together some key opportunities to help our retailer grow the size and value of their beer category."

Whether you're a sales person, a marketer, or someone in human resources, everyone has the potential to derive insights from data to make better decisions if they are given the opportunity.



I think practically every discipline can have some sort of analytics in it, especially disciplines that don't think of themselves as data disciplines.

— Jenny Richards, Community Advocacy Program Manager, Tableau



# Making data available to everyone is the ethos that will shape the innovative companies of tomorrow.

It's projected that the modern data world will encounter 163 zettabytes of data. All of this data holds your next potential business opportunity. Some organizations will wane in the presence of this growth; but most will find ways to empower their workforce to turn data into insights. When every knowledge worker grows more proficient (and equipped) with data, they can bring unique perspectives based on individual strengths. The result is a data-driven company that is on the forefront of change instead of lagging behind.



## About Tableau

Tableau is the enterprise analytics platform that helps people see and understand data. Give people access to intuitive visual analytics, interactive dashboards, and limitless ad-hoc analyses that reveal hidden opportunities and eureka moments alike. Get the security, governance, and management you require to confidently integrate Tableau into your business application and deliver the power of embedded analytics at scale.