

# 7 Realities for Your Data Initiative

Just starting on your data journey? Or midway through your transformation to be data-driven and assessing its success? Regardless of where you are on executing your data strategy, there are key realities that need to be recognized along the way.

1

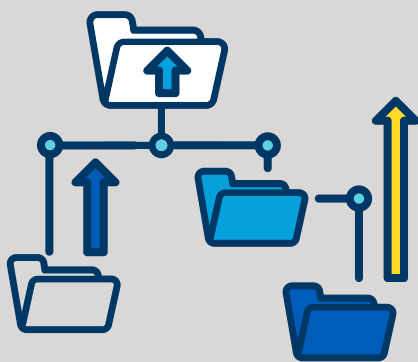
**The data treasure hunt is manual, disjointed, and duplicative**



When your data only lives in the source systems running your organization, it is difficult to understand what data assets exist. The development of cross-platform insights involves multiple analysts independently dumping data from systems and manipulating it in spreadsheets. These manual efforts are often repeated across analysts with different results, and the opportunity for error is high.

2

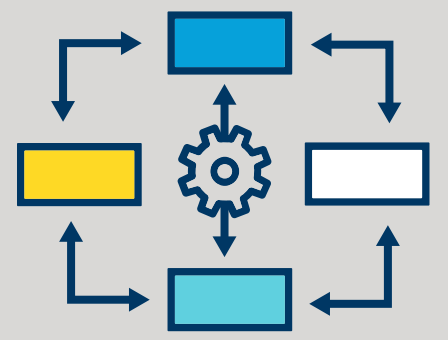
**Making the data accessible is table stakes**



Getting the data out of source applications and accessible in a common repository will help overcome some realities of #1. But this is only the beginning of the data value chain, so the data extraction process should be low-code, flexible, and repeatable, regardless of the nature of the source application. This is not where the data engineering or IT resources should be spent.

3

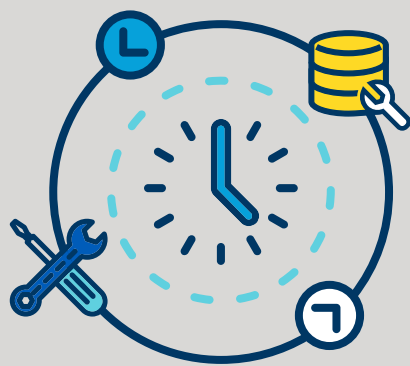
**Real business value from data comes from integration not extraction**



Once the source system data exists in a common location, you can start to see cross-platform data connections. Business insights and value come from integrating data from multiple sources into analytical repositories and applying common business rules to ensure clean, consistent data. This is the fun stuff – and where the money and human capital should be applied.

4

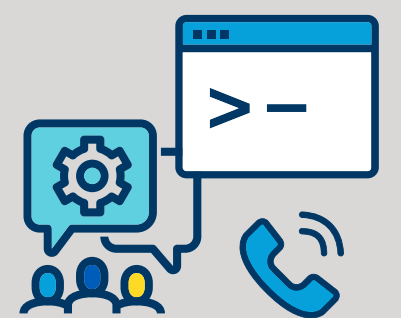
**Source systems & business applications are not static**



Source applications will change over time, especially packaged and SaaS applications. Depending on the nature of the changes, your data extraction pipelines will quickly become outdated or even break completely. Ongoing maintenance is necessary to ensure the integrated data the business has come to rely on is still available. The less time engineering spends maintaining these pipelines, the more time they can focus on creating new analytical data sets to support business changes.

5

**Data engineering resources will be overextended**



Most data engineering (DE) teams will have to do double-duty in terms of building new functionality as well as providing support for what has already been developed. Even if there is a separate production support team, the DE resources will often be tapped to help resolve production data issues. Enabling DE resources with the right tools and repeatable processes to increase speed to market is necessity.

6

**Business data demands will likely outpace IT delivery supply**



If your business partners are continually asking to add to the integrated data sets available, then you are doing something right with your data strategy. But your data engineering team (see #5) is likely struggling to balance these new demands with upkeep of what has already been developed. Ensure these resources can focus their time on business value-add activities so the business is not tempted to develop 'shadow IT' when IT is not able to deliver quickly enough.

7

**People will ask when the data initiative will be 'done'**



Many IT projects have a clear end date when the project is complete and business as usual operations begin. While individual projects within a data initiative may deliver new data functionality over time, there is no one project that will signal the endpoint of the journey to becoming a data-driven organization. As businesses grow and evolve, the data needed to support this must also do the same. The mindset around data delivery must shift away from a project-based approach to one that views data as a core business function and a corporate asset.