



Do You Have What It Takes To Build Your Data Office?

By Chris Pehura

“Having a data office means executives accept data’s strategic value; that data is an executive priority for our organization. Having a data office means executives politically back our CDO, our data programs, and our data activities. But our data office is more than just about data. When done right, our data office increases our organization’s competency to prioritize, forecast, plan, and execute all our business activities across the organization. Our data office doesn’t just focus on business opportunities. Our data office is an integral part to the ongoing success of our corporate governance and our executive board.”

Our talent is not equipped to build a healthy data office. They are not familiar with driving the ten-year road map or managing the data programs, forecast models, projects, and human resources. What we have is talent that solves traditional problems, traditionally. And, setting up a data office is anything but traditional.

“We’re really good at recruiting talent for things we’re already good at. But when it involves developing new competencies such as those for Big Data and healthy data offices, our lack of knowledge and training incents us to use outdated traditional approaches. This results in us building a poorly constructed foundation for our data office.”

We must train our talent to use approaches friendly for our data office. We must widen our business outcomes to widen our data office's influence beyond data management, operational data, and cost savings. We must advocate a roadmap outlining the politics, budgets, and investments; investments directed at making data a form of financial capital.

“Road maps must be clearly outlined. Three years is too short. Ten years is just long enough. Here's an example of a well rounded roadmap for a data office.

Year 1-3: Data-Driven Organizational Structure, Talent Pools, and Technology

Year 2-3: Data-Driven Efficiencies using Cost Reduction

Year 4-5: Data-Driven Revenue Protection using Risk Management

Year 6-7: Data-Driven Revenue Growth using Force Multipliers

Year 7-10: Data-Driven Leadership Development using Force Multipliers

To avoid the politics, infighting, and cat-herding we must set clear expectations.”

With our road map, we must build a strong foundation for our data office. We build this foundation by scaffolding both our data office and our data governance to our corporate governance. By doing this, we build on our corporate governance's existing stories, conversations, and credibility; allowing us to fast track our data-centric conversations; conversations such as those around regulations, customers, competitors, and priorities.

“In data governance all our conversations are data-centric. All conversations emphasize our organization's data; data that we must develop, enrich, maintain, and share. Because the data-driven process is similar for each and every business activity, we in the data office can easily discuss, compare, and realign business processes, data, and corporate talent to better meet our organization's needs for reorganization, restructuring, and culture change.”

To become the strategic center for data, our data office must drive a common business vocabulary for our data. We need this vocabulary to better understand, compare, scope, and share our data across our organization. To establish our common business vocabulary, we not only need to define our data, we also need to identify and track the business rules around our data.

“After many acquisitions, mergers, and de-merges, it's typical for the same business term to mean different things to the different lines of business. For instance, the term customer can be very muddy.

1. One qualifies as a customer when one bought a product in the last year.
2. One qualifies as a customer when one bought a product from another line.

3. One qualifies as a customer when one will buy a product one month from now.”

Armed with our common vocabulary, we are ready to have the right talent to drive our analytics, AI, algorithms, forecasting models, programs, and projects. Our data office allows our organization to use data to increase productivity, multiply returns, and execute strategic change, culture change, reorganization, and restructuring. To do this, we must have the right data-centric management consultants and the right training programs to support and reinforce our right talent.

“It’s difficult to hire the right talent to support our data office. Building a data office requires one to establish data-driven processes, data-driven culture, and data-driven organizational structure. These are unfamiliar skills for our organization, unfamiliar to our executives, and unfamiliar to our HR team.”

It’s a long drawn out process to build our healthy data office. To be successful we must accept what we’re good at. Once we’ve done that, we bring in the right training, the right management consultants, and the right data scientists. Then we bring in our army of contractors to tighten the screws.

Do you have what it takes to build your data office?

About the Author



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Data-centric Business Management



Chris is a management consultant with a data emphasis helping Fortune 100/1000 companies strategically evolve and reinvent their businesses to maximize their revenue growth. Through realignment, to overhauls, to rebuilding things from the top down and ground up, he integrates and solidifies leaders, strategies, and solutions into all aspects of the organization. As practice director for [C-SUITE DATA](#), a Canadian based consulting firm specializing in data and Big Data, Chris serves as a coach, trainer, and the voice for how data is the new capital that drives, multiplies, and maximizes revenue growth.



where leaders, business management, and data converge