

infoBRIEF

How to Accelerate Your Data Strategy with a Use Case-Driven Approach



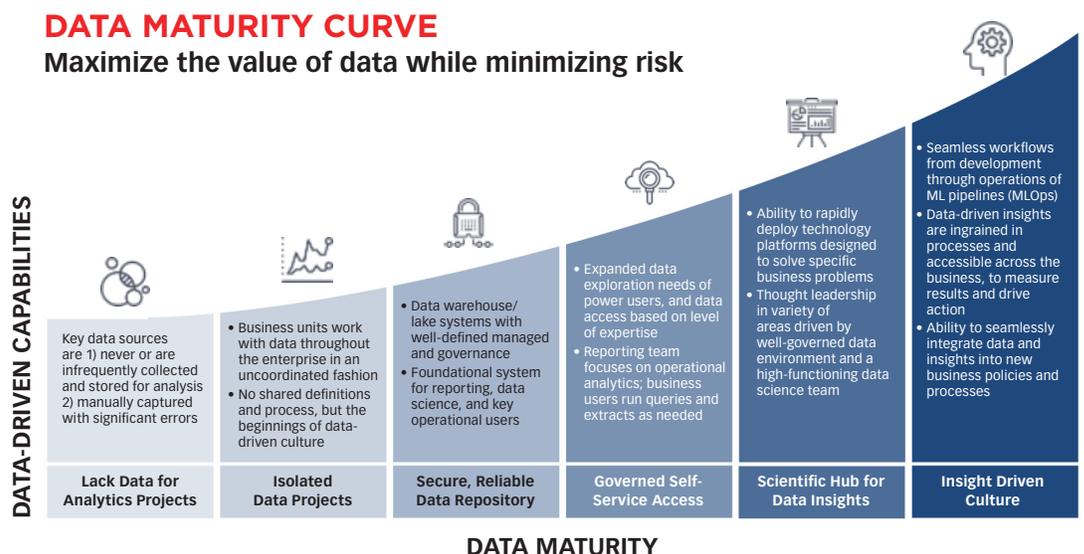
Enterprises face several powerful motivators for maximizing the value of their data. In addition to fueling innovation and directing agility, data offers the promise of strengthening customer relationships, improving operational efficiency, and increasing competitiveness. At the same time, ever-increasing data regulations—such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the European Union or the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA)—are driving enterprises to reduce risks associated with their data. Given all of these competing drivers, prioritizing investment to improve data-related capabilities is a significant challenge.

To accelerate your data strategy, you should first identify where you're starting from and have a vision for where you're going. Applying the Data Maturity Curve of World Wide Technology (WWT) to your data organization can help you maximize the value of your data while minimizing risk.

Understanding your data maturity

A detailed framework addressing data governance, data management, and data infrastructure can be leveraged along with a set of prioritized use cases to get a foundational understanding of your organization's data maturity.

» **DATA GOVERNANCE** is the function that provides the overarching strategy and policy direction for data at an organization.




- » **DATA MANAGEMENT** is the function that implements the strategy and policy set forth by data governance, via people, process, and technology solutions.
- » **DATA INFRASTRUCTURE** is the underlying environment that supports the data ecosystem, ranging from data platforms and the accompanying data architectures to the tools used for data analysis.

Together, these three areas create a framework for evaluating foundational data maturity. Considered in conjunction with your selected use cases, they enable you to begin prioritizing your investments.

The importance of a data science use case approach

WWT recommends leveraging a use-case-driven approach to prioritize investments and improve data maturity. A use-case-driven approach helps you move incrementally up the data maturity curve, by clarifying which people to empower, processes to improve, and technologies to implement, ensuring that the business can realize value and build from its success.

The use-case-driven approach begins with identifying and prioritizing data science use cases based on business outcomes. Depending on the maturity of your organization, use cases may be readily available, or you may need to meet with business leaders to identify and develop them. Although it can be tempting to find the “perfect” use case, it’s more important to begin with a use case that balances value and complexity. These use cases should be pursued by a small team (typically a few data scientists and business analysts), with the goal of making quick progress. This will help you avoid “analysis paralysis” and enable you to get started on the impactful data science work as quickly as possible. It is also important that use cases are tied to specific and measurable KPIs and that impact measurement is performed periodically.

In parallel, we recommend building a strategic road map (usually spanning multiple years) that outlines a plan to develop a holistic set of data capabilities (people, processes, and technologies) that supports the broader data vision of

the organization. We find that this vision is best developed via interviews to better understand the current challenges and desired data capabilities from leaders across different business units of the organization. It is also directly informed by the hands-on use case work occurring in parallel.

As work continues, enterprises should look to pair “quick win” use cases with more-foundational transformation, which will enable the business to invest in building out foundational capabilities while quickly realizing value from these investments. If chosen correctly, these initial use cases should create significant business value and help you accelerate down the data maturity path.

Keys to success

Work with business leaders who are excited about the prospect of data science and have a high data IQ. You want to work with groups that are motivated to support data science efforts, especially at a leadership level. These are typically people who view data as an asset and have adopted a data-first approach to decision-making, even if their organization isn’t necessarily mature across people, process, and technology.

It’s also important to be able to pivot quickly, since data science use cases are closely intertwined, especially if they are within the same domain. If you start down a path that doesn’t yield the results you expected or run into an unforeseen challenge, don’t be afraid to move on to a use case that looks more promising (especially as you learn more). Remember, the goal is to make incremental progress and deliver quick wins.

Conclusion

Advancing data maturity isn’t an easy task, but taking a strategic approach with hands-on data science work is the best and fastest way to increase the value your organization is getting from data, while reducing risk. A use-case-driven approach will ensure that investments are tied to business outcomes, and the momentum you gain from small wins can carry you forward to data maturity.

Ready to start discussing your data strategy?
Request a workshop with WWT today!

