



# How to Choose the Right Data Governance Resources

## Data Governance Organization Structure

*A whitepaper by First San Francisco Partners*

## How to Choose the Right Data Governance Resources

A data governance organization and its structure should be defined to align with your company's organizational hierarchy and resources. Finding the right people to assign to data governance requires an understanding of both the functional and the political role of governance within your organization.

First recognizing and involving those employees that are already engaged in data management functions will minimize the impact to your organization. It is equally important to ensure cross-functional participation from the various business stakeholders. This article highlights some best practices in putting the right resources behind the required roles.

### Data Governance Organization Structure

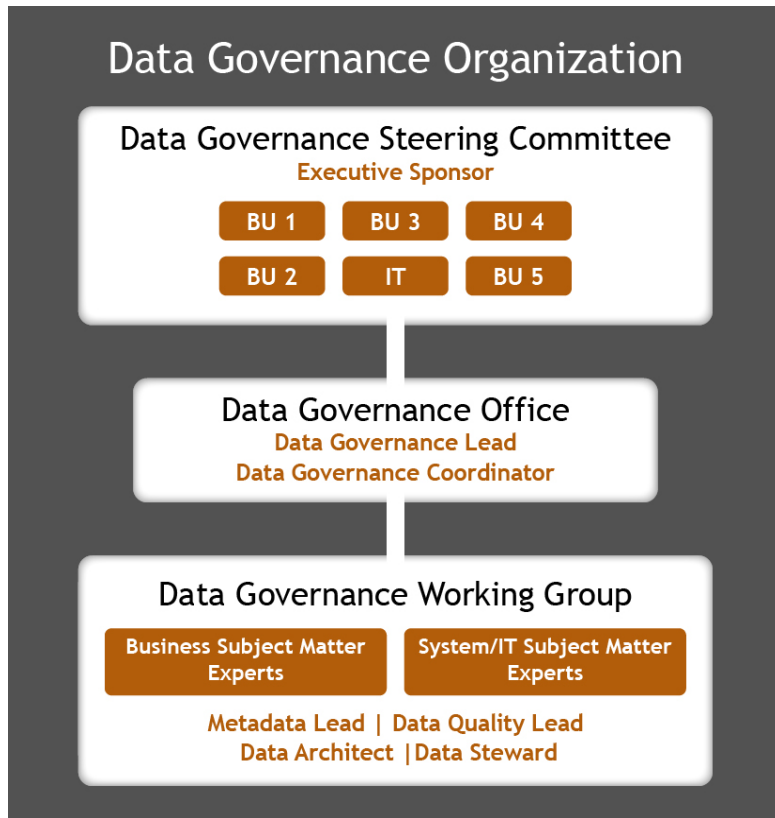
Many organizations implementing a data governance program create a 3-tier model designed to facilitate decision-making and issue escalation. The top tier of this model is the **Steering Committee (SC)** while the middle tier is the **Data Governance Office (DGO)** and the third tier consists of representatives from each line of business (LOB) and IT. The DGO and LOB representatives comprise the **Data Governance Working Group (DGWG)**.

The SC is the executive arm and is empowered to approve, fund, prioritize and when appropriate, recommend projects to address data and business needs. Typically, stakeholders included in the SC are Senior Vice President and Vice President levels within those lines of business that create and use the data type being governed (such as marketing, sales and finance for customer data; product development, supply chain and order management for product data). This group is responsible for directing data governance across lines of business and across the organization, and is key to ensuring adherence to the policies and processes.

The DGO oversees and enforces data governance on behalf of the organization while the DGWG is the working and analysis body of the organization. When necessary, sub-groups are formed from its members in order to address specific regional or functional data issues. Common roles that arise within the DGWG may include: Metadata Lead, Data Quality Lead, Data Architect and Data Steward.

### What Resources are Needed?

Not every company creates a data governance organization in the same way. However, there are some common roles that are essential to data governance program success. As a first step in implementing a data governance program—and after selecting a Data Governance Lead (DGL)—program sponsors and the DGL typically identify executive, LOB and IT resources. The question then arises: **What resources are needed to get the data governance organization off the ground?**



Understanding roles and responsibilities, skill sets and time commitment is an essential part of selecting the right resources for a data governance program.

What follows is a brief overview of the staffing requirements of each tier of a data governance organization.

## Tier 1: The Steering Committee (SC)

### Role and Responsibilities

The SC consists of executives from each LOB and IT—normally at the Vice President- or C-level. This group articulates the data governance vision and provides general oversight and decision-making as well as supporting execution of policies and procedures. SC members are also responsible for identifying and bringing business resources from their LOB into the organization.

The SC may meet as often as every 2 weeks or as infrequently as once a quarter. Estimated time commitment is 5% for each member per month.

### The Skill Set

SC members have a highly visible, political role and must bring the following skills and attributes to the table:

- Recognized and respected leadership ability
- LOB expertise
- Proven ability to manage multiple functions—e.g. governing, enforcing governance policies, arbitrating and influencing—simultaneously

## Best Practices

Because **accountability to execution is driven with a top-down approach**, the success and relevance of the SC is critical. Each SC member must buy-in to the enterprise data governance strategy and implementation roadmap.

SC members must commit to vigorous participation in data governance-related matters and to communicating the value of the DGO—enabling other executives to see its short- and long-term value. As part of its charter, the SC acts quickly and communicates its decisions to the DGO and the DGWG in a timely fashion.

## Tier 2: The Data Governance Office (DGO)

### Role and Responsibilities

The DGO consists of the Data Governance Lead (DGL) and a coordinator. The DGL is usually at a level just below Vice President—though that may depend on how the company is structured. The DGL needs to be dedicated to the role with full-time, 100% time commitment, and will often have an IT partner who helps resolve technology-related issues on a part-time basis.

The DGL is the gatekeeper of data governance best practices and works independently across the business units and IT to align data governance and business strategies. The DGL is authorized by the SC to be ultimately responsible for implementing the data governance vision, promoting the role of data governance and enforcing policy.

“Nuts and bolts” responsibilities of the DGL include the following:

- Proposing data governance project spend
- Coordinating the efforts of the business and technology communities
- Establishing appropriate success metrics
- Monitoring and reporting data quality and data governance metrics
- Working with business leads and IT resources to prioritize and resolve issues

### The Skill Set

Consequently, an effective DGL will have many of the same attributes as SC members. Recognized leadership abilities and political astuteness are critical. So is an understanding of key influencers and strong data governance and industry practices content knowledge.

The Data Governance Coordinator (DGC) schedules meetings and conference calls, takes and publishes meeting minutes and updates issues logs, among other administrative duties. Estimated time commitment is 10% per week. The DGC needs the same capabilities as an experienced executive admin. Patience, excellent

communications skills and follow-up are essential, as is expert knowledge of collaboration tools such as SharePoint, WebEx and wikis.

### Best Practices

The best ways to ensure the success of the DGO is to **avoid hiring someone new to the role of DGL** and instead choose a respected leader who understands the organization's political landscape and strategic objectives. Ensuring the DGL has the cross-functional mandate and support from the SC to implement and enforce policies, processes and standards is equally important.

It is also important to communicate the appointment of the DGL to the enterprise and to include their contact information in the corporate directory. Both actions highlight the significance of the role and its sponsorship by upper management and the SC.

## Tier 3: Business Leads and IT Resources

### Role and Responsibilities

The third tier consists of business leads from LOBs and IT resources, preferably manager level or above. The business leads are the stewards of LOB data elements and subject matter experts (SMEs). As the liaison between the business and IT, they drive data management, process and data element definitions, and data quality for specific subject areas.

Depending on the organization, IT resources play various data management support roles, including metadata lead, data architect, data quality lead, business analyst and enterprise architect.

The business leads and IT resources, with the DGL, comprise the Data Governance Working Group (DGWG). They typically meet weekly to define use of key data elements, improve data management processes and resolve data-related issues. The DGWG commonly recommends projects based on their usage of the data in their respective LOBs. All levels within the Data Governance organization can initiate projects, while the SC resolves issues where disagreements exist about which projects are to be approved and their priority.

Estimated time commitment for business leads and IT resources is 20 to 25% per week.

### The Skill Set

Like the SC and the DGL, business leads and IT resources should be recognized leaders and effective communicators. They are consensus-builders. And critical to the success of data governance efforts, they should be able to work and make decisions as a team.

IT resources, in particular, must be technically strong. Not only do they need a basic understanding of data modeling at the conceptual, logical and physical levels, they must also have solid data analysis, mining and migration experience. Good technical writing and presentation skills are essential.

### Best Practices

Because data governance is a program, not a project, these resources should be made aware of the long-term commitment required and their managers' approval of their participation secured. They should be trained at the same time and have a common understanding of their mandate.

An important first step for the DGWG is to **identify issues that can be resolved relatively quickly in order to demonstrate the value of the program**—and to quickly communicate successes in order to build momentum and commitment.

Other practices that support success include making certain that:

- DGWG decisions supersede those made by the LOBs
- DGWG roles are communicated throughout the enterprise
- The SC explicitly approves resource assignments
- LOBs funnel issues to their DGWG representatives
- DGWG resources view their data governance activities as a priority

## In Summary

There are possibly as many ways to implement a data governance organization as there are companies, cultures and organization hierarchies. However, there are some common roles that are essential to data governance program success. The Steering Committee sets the vision and aligns it with corporate objectives; whereas, the Data Governance Lead and Data Governance Coordinator implement the vision and enforce policy. As a cross-functional business and IT team, the Data Governance Working Group are the subject matter experts who drive data management and data quality strategy and execution for their respective subject and line of business areas.

Moreover, when creating the organization it is important to impact the current organization as little as possible and to ensure cross-functional participation from the various business stakeholders. In order to accomplish this, identify employees that are currently doing data management functions, and recognize and involve them first. And only as data governance needs grow, should you need to look to hire additional resources.

### **Author: Kelle O'Neal**

As Founder and Managing Partner of First San Francisco Partners, Kelle O'Neal manages specialist data governance and data management consulting services to complex organizations that deliver faster time-to-results. Kelle can be reached at [kelle@firstsanfranciscopartners.com](mailto:kelle@firstsanfranciscopartners.com).

*For more information please visit  
[www.firstsanfranciscopartners.com](http://www.firstsanfranciscopartners.com)  
or call 1-800-612-9875*