



The role of IT in business-led Data Governance

by First San Francisco Partners

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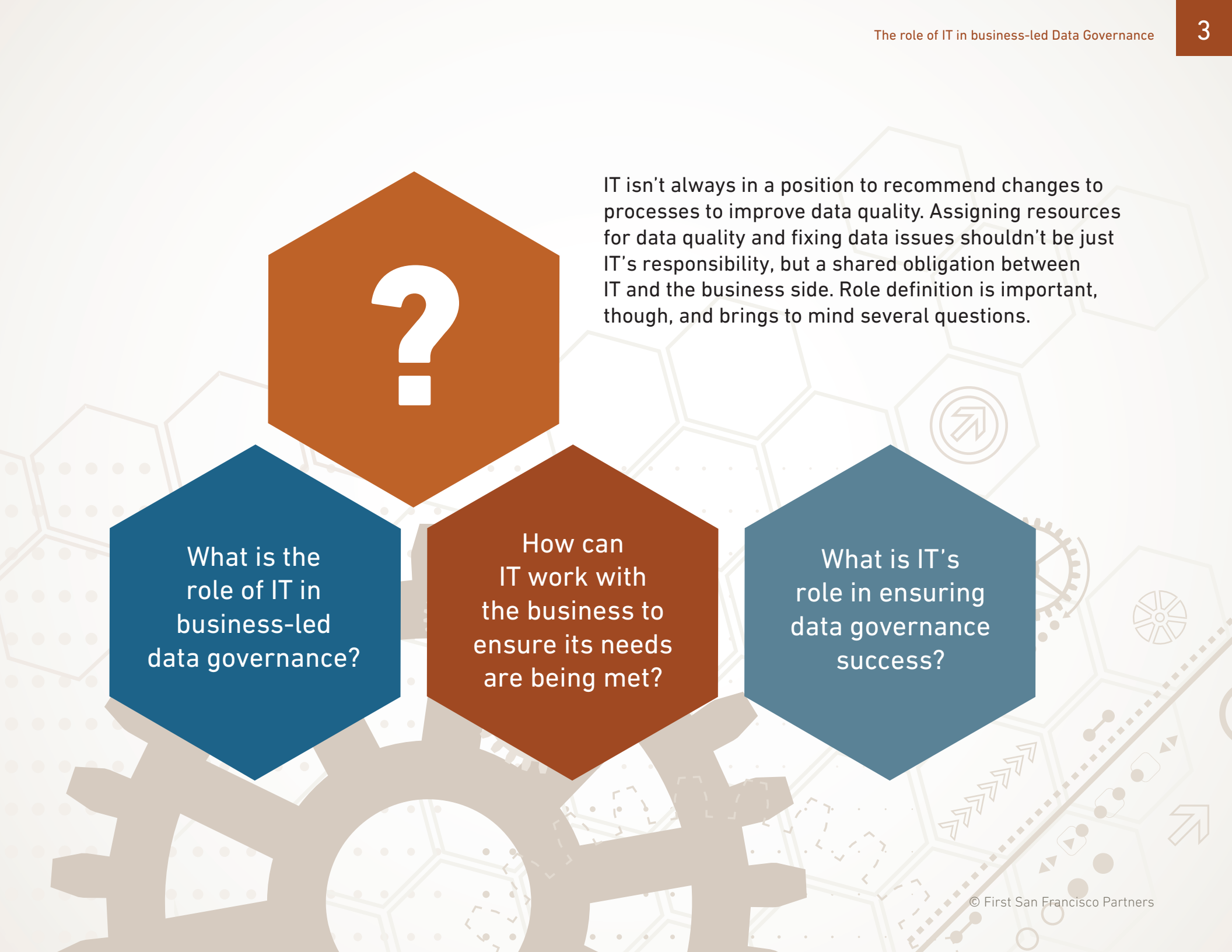


It's been said the first step in solving any problem is recognizing there is one.

Fortunately today, more and more companies recognize the importance of enterprise data. Yet, they still have a difficult time effectively managing this important asset. Sometimes it's due to lack of business involvement and sponsorship. Other times it's an inability to identify data owners or a reluctance to share data.

Although it's imperative for the business side to lead and sponsor data governance, it's equally important for business and IT to partner on all data management efforts.

Many organizations are centralizing IT and, with that, managing data centrally to achieve economies of scale, improve productivity and effectively manage information. In this structure, IT can see issues that span lines of business and geography, like enterprise data issues. Often, IT is the first to recognize issues and become early champions of data governance.



IT isn't always in a position to recommend changes to processes to improve data quality. Assigning resources for data quality and fixing data issues shouldn't be just IT's responsibility, but a shared obligation between IT and the business side. Role definition is important, though, and brings to mind several questions.



What is the role of IT in business-led data governance?

How can IT work with the business to ensure its needs are being met?

What is IT's role in ensuring data governance success?

Data Governance program goals

To understand the role of IT in data governance, let's first look at goals and objectives for a typical program:

- ▶ Ensure integrity of information
- ▶ Ensure information is secure while facilitating access
- ▶ Support decision-making
- ▶ Enhance services provided to customers and partners
- ▶ Assist in information collaboration
- ▶ Eliminate business and technical obstacles
- ▶ Standardize corporate data definitions, policies and processes, so data can be more readily shared, interpreted and used
- ▶ Manage data as a corporate asset
- ▶ Reduce costs and increase effectiveness through coordination of efforts
- ▶ Ensure transparency

The best approach to achieving and measuring these goals will be unique to each company.

What is universal is that the business can't achieve the goals without a partnership with IT to deploy and manage needed technology and tools. Also, the business side needs to own the data governance program and the philosophy that data is a corporate asset.

Developing operating guidelines to define how business and IT work together will aid collaboration and minimize conflict. The guidelines should be written, agreed upon and communicated across the organization.



There are many roles that could be considered for a data governance program.

Common ones include a Steering Committee (SC), Data Governance Lead (DGL and Data Governance Working Group (DGWG) – each comprised of representatives from business and IT. For example, a DGWG comprised of business and IT would be subject matter experts to drive data management and data quality strategy – and execute for their respective line of business areas.

Specifically for IT, its likely mandate is to ensure the future state of information and application architectures meet the needs of data governance. IT should champion the program's alignment to business goals and objectives. IT will also work to ensure the organization's information technologies sustain and extend the program, while providing a consistent view of end-to-end business processes.

To meet its goals, the IT organization must provide leadership, technical infrastructure and resources that collaborate with the business to identify data issues, provide alternatives to any roadblocks and implement solutions.



As a baseline,
IT should provide key
resources to the data
governance program.

IT Leadership

SC-level role that
provides leadership,
vision and oversight

IT Partner

peer to DGL and
responsible for
development and
ownership of
data governance
technical roadmap

Data Quality Lead

works collaboratively
with business' Data Steward
(DS) to gain understanding
of business needs for
information quality;
and ensures adherence to
data quality incident
best practices

Metadata Lead

creates and maintains
metadata repository and
defines business content

Enterprise Architect

works with DGL to provide
architecture and data
integration oversight

Data Architect

responsible and accountable
for creation and maintenance
of Enterprise Data Model

Data Custodian

works closely with the DS
and data owners to
implement data governance
policies and data owner
requirements and who carries
out data delivery function

IT has additional responsibilities, as well.

IT should take the lead on providing technology and technical infrastructure for the management, storage, access, security, navigation, movement and transformation of data. In this way, IT implements the necessary systems to support and measure data governance requirements and data business processes. IT also ensures the program's strategy aligns with the IT design methodology, development process methodology and best practices.

By working together with business' DS, IT plays an important role in root cause analysis on data issues and building remediation plans. It is also the role of the IT to measure, monitor and report on data quality and deliver stakeholder service based on service level agreements.

For data governance to be successful, IT needs to understand its importance to each business stakeholder, what the benefits are and how best to work together with the business side. When IT clearly articulates the benefits for each business function, sponsorship, ownership and partnership are more easily achieved.





Summary

The trend to centralize IT increases the importance of articulating IT's role in business-led data governance. Although IT may be the first to recognize and advocate data governance, challenges arise when ownership transfers to the business side. A comprehensive data governance strategy not only aligns business and IT to address data issues, but also defines data ownership and policies, data quality processes, decision rights and escalation procedures.

The IT organization plays a critical role in enabling data governance and contributes key resources to the program. The proper combination and collaboration of business and IT staff, skill sets and leadership is required to effectively carry out the data governance agenda.

The background of the slide is a light beige color with a pattern of small orange dots. Overlaid on this are various geometric shapes and icons. There are several large, interlocking gears in shades of blue, orange, and grey. Some of these gears have smaller gears inside them. There are also many hexagons, some solid colored (blue, orange, white) and some outlined in grey. Arrows of various sizes and colors (orange, blue, grey) are scattered throughout, pointing in different directions. Some arrows are inside circles or hexagons.

Author Kelle O'Neal



Kelle is Founder and CEO of First San Francisco Partners. A veteran leader and accomplished advisor in the information management sector, as well as a speaker and author, Kelle is passionate about helping organizations apply data and intelligence to gain a true competitive advantage.

Ready to put our data governance expertise to work for you? Contact us to get started.

info@firstsanfranciscopartners.com

www.firstsanfranciscopartners.com

1-888-612-9879

The logo for First San Francisco Partners. It features the company name in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The words "FIRST SAN FRANCISCO" are on the top line, and "PARTNERS" is on the bottom line. The text is set against a dark background that includes a stylized, orange-tinted image of the Golden Gate Bridge.

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