Amplifi

5 tips for better Data Quality

Quality data underpins any digital initiative

Data should be treated like any other valuable business asset.

The insight gained from data helps inform future business decisions, but what if your data is poor quality? Inconsistent, inaccurate or outdated data leaves a business open to lost opportunities and the consequences of badly informed decisions.

Regardless of technology or resource, ultimately, the success of any data project relies upon the quality of the data. What you put in will always affect the results you get out.

Many departments within an organisation rely on the same shared data, from sales and marketing, to operations and finance. With multiple people accessing the same data, they need to be confident that the information they are using is complete, reliable and usable.

So, whether you are about to embark on a data project or you have already started and have recognised your need for a Data Quality Strategy, this guide will highlight some of our top tips to help you along the way.

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1

Find your business data ambassadors

There will be people in your business that are invaluable within their respective areas. They will know not only what is wrong with their data, but which rules should be in place for fixing data.

When you review your data landscape, pay attention to who these people might be and bring them on the data quality and governance journey with you. They will feel like they have a voice when it comes to data improvement and are the most likely people to drive your data initiatives forward with you.

Whatever structure your data governance organisation is, involve these people in the data quality life cycle and reward their successes.

TOP TIP 1

Find the data ambassadors within your business and involve them early in the defining of data quality and governance frameworks.

2

Add some Gamification

Data quality going wrong can be a serious issue. But the process of identifying and fixing issues does not need to be serious. Whichever tools and dashboards you use, try and gamify the art of getting positive DQ results.

Look at the ways you measure and monitor progress on data quality issues and don't be afraid to put names against items on your data quality tracker and on your dashboards.

Some people will not need an incentive to fix their data issues but in a world that is getting ever busier, an extra competitive incentive to fix data issues can be healthy, and the chances are you will make data quality a bit more fun.

TOP TIP 2

Think of ways to make data quality improvement fun, and add some competitive spice to the fixing of data quality issues across projects or data domains.

Don't forget your governance forums

When fixing data issues, there is a risk that you may get peaks and troughs of progress, or long periods where things are stagnant.

If you get into the habit of having regular working groups, with a key set of individuals with a structured terms of reference, you will end up creating a regular touch point for people to report on progress and raise new data quality issues.

This will create the momentum that you need to ensure data quality levels remain high, and that the cleansing efforts are small but regular. In addition, it is an opportunity for people across business areas to understand the impact of them creating, updating or deleting data, from the perspective of their peers.

Often people work in siloes and don't have a wider understanding of the usage of key data.

TOP TIP 3

Create data quality forums for your key data domains and projects and use these to evaluate the data rules and results of any data quality testing.

4

Data quality is not (usually) a project

Data Quality should be an inclusive part of everyday business operations, and not regarded as a one-off project. However, there will be times, such as data migration, the efforts around data quality and cleansing will need to be increased.

Data quality management is a key discipline of your overall data strategy. It is important to ensure that there is ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement of your data, and a constant evaluation of whether your data is helping you achieve your business goals.

This means you should consider how you are embedding operational data quality into your every day processes – including the use of any tooling and having the right organisation structure in place to manage the full data quality life cycle, rather than a treating it as a stand alone project.

TOP TIP 4

Try to embed data quality management into your day-to-day routine. Design a data quality lifecycle with the right tooling, processes, roles and responsibilities.

Build technical accelerators

At some point you will be thinking about building robust, repeatable data quality tests that can be used to drive any data quality reporting and dashboarding for the business to review.

Ideally, you don't want to create the same types of tests from scratch each time a new data set or attribute requires testing. There will be some rules which are reusable across different data sets that require the same type of logic.

Build your data quality logic in such a way that there is as much automation as possible and so that standard tests have their own framework for putting new data through and getting quick results.

TOP TIP 5

Build a technical data quality framework that allows for as much automation as possible, and makes use of standard test types which may be applied to multiple data sets.

How can Amplifi help?

Amplifi is an award-winning data management consultancy that works with organisations to unlock the value of their data.

Not only do we understand the technical aspect of data, we also understand the positive impact good data management has on businesses.

Good data underpins the success of any data management initiative. What you put in will always affect the results you get out.

Our team has the experience and expertise to help organisations like yours to get real, tangible results due to the impactful decisions they can make with data.

We also provide the full suite of data management services including advisory, delivery and support services for Master Data Management (MDM), Product Information Management (PIM), Data Quality, Data Migration and Data Integration.

Gartner®

For four years running, Amplifi has featured in Gartner's annual Market Report for MDM External Service Providers and is one of only 20 vendors to be included globally

Amplifi have worked with many organisations to ensure their data management is world class

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Have you got Data Quality challenges that mean you can't get the most out of your data? To find out how Amplifi can help, please contact us:

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