



**Data - Centric Strategies for Enterprises:  
Is Your Data in the Right Place,  
with the Right Performance and Protection?**

*Powering Clients to a Future Shaped by Growth*

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- Ramzi Sayyid  
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## INTRODUCTION

Recently Frost & Sullivan, the Growth Pipeline Company, assembled a select group of CIOs and industry thought leaders from Bristol Myers Squibb, DXC Technology, Ericsson and Verizon, to discuss why a data-centric strategy for managing and protecting data is the best approach for all enterprises today, across all industries. The webinar and wide-ranging data discussion that followed was moderated by Brian Cotton, Partner and Senior Vice President, Information and Communications Technologies Practice, Frost & Sullivan.

## BECOMING A DATA-CENTERED BUSINESS

Brian began the presentation by noting that every business today is, or needs to soon become, a data-oriented software business. He distinguished between the past role of IT as guardians of the infrastructure and processes for gathering and moving data, to a new focus supporting data sets that reside at the center of the digital organization. Brian explained that the large volume of data available today encompasses both structured data such as contracts, financial records and business metrics, and unstructured data in the form of customer call and social media comments for example.

To succeed and please customers, there is a clear business need for a sharper focus on data and the value it holds. It is important for organizations to intelligently and seamlessly manage and protect data as well as align business strategy and applications around the insights that the data provides. The advent of advanced analytics, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) can utilize and augment this data centric approach.

## TODAY, EVERY BUSINESS IS A DATA ORIENTED BUSINESS



Previously IT departments thought in terms of infrastructure and processes.



Today, an organization's branded intellectual property resides as some form of digital asset



Data exists in a variety of forms.



Enterprises need to manage and protect this data while allowing seamless collaboration across all necessary stakeholders for that data.



A data oriented business means its processes are aligned around access to the insight that its data enables.

## MANAGING THE DATA

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But it can be hard to know where to begin managing and extracting useful insights from enterprise data. To that end, Brian referenced a 2019 Frost & Sullivan survey that showed the top 3 features that enterprise IT decision makers were looking for in data management solutions. The results were:

1. Deployment flexibility (cloud, on-premises, hybrid)
2. Data security and role based access
3. Inter-operability, collaboration and workflow management

Conversely, the consequences of poor data management can be severe. Veritas Technologies, a data protection company, commissioned a global survey of 1,500 IT decision makers in 4Q 2019. This survey detailed long-term damage to the enterprise as a result of ineffective data management. The top 3 negative issues cited were:

1. Increase in operating costs
2. Less efficient employees
3. Lack of agility

Other key issues rising from ineffective data management included loss of competitiveness, increased vulnerability to security threats and declining revenues – all very serious repercussions. Importantly, the Veritas study revealed that IT decision makers believe that there's significant financial justification for making their organization's data management capabilities more effective. In fact, results suggest that there can be more than a 2 times return on every dollar invested in doing so.

As the internet continues to serve as a primary business platform and Internet of Things (IoT) applications continue to grow as well, all the data gathered and exchanged also grows in value. Increasingly, a data-centric strategy to managing and protecting data is the foundation of all business models today, across almost all industries. And any company with digital assets requires a secure and efficient approach to data sharing and management:

“Realizing the value of data means it has to be shared seamlessly across the organization.”

– **Brian Cotton**  
**Partner and**  
**Senior Vice President,**  
**Information and**  
**Communications**  
**Technologies Practice**  
**Frost & Sullivan**

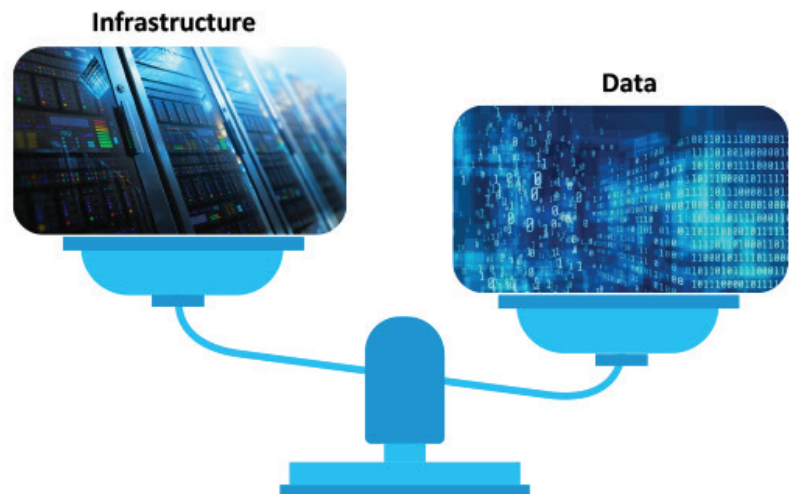
### THREE IMPORTANT COMPONENTS OF DATA-CENTRIC MANAGEMENT

1. Tactically, there is need to share data between various systems, databases and devices as seamlessly as possible
2. Applications that analyze, synthesize or transform data both internally and externally are required. For example, automated and intelligent adjustments to customer offerings based on customer feedback
3. The people and devices (such as mobile devices, sensors, robotics ) are interactive component of data management

### THE INFRASTRUCTURE-CENTRIC ENTERPRISE VERSUS A DATA-CENTRIC ENTERPRISE

The difference between an infrastructure-based approach to data versus a data centric approach can be summarized by “value”. Until recently, most companies approached data through the lens of “What does the system need to do?” One major downside to this approach is that data is frequently accessed and copied, often resulting in redundancies and data degradation.

### DATA CENTRIC VS. INFRASTRUCTURE CENTRIC: NOT THE SAME THING



In contrast, a key question with a data-centric approach is, “What is the value of the data and how can it be managed in a way that aligns with its value?” With this strategy, the architecture for the data is foundational and the systems or infrastructures that support it follow. As business needs or processes change, applications can be updated, but the data integrity is not



affected and is not altered or sullied. Leading-edge companies are re-focusing on data as the lifeblood of the organization, analyzing it, sharing it and creating new applications for it. They are moving to a more holistic, data-centric approach for better data, better insights -- and better business results.

## THOUGHT LEADER PANEL DISCUSSION

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With these key observations top of mind, the assembled industry leaders were asked a series of questions about data in the enterprise and related strategies and challenges for managing and protecting data. As highlighted below, their replies were thoughtful, diverse and cutting edge.

### WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN DELIVERING DATA THAT ENTERPRISE APPLICATIONS REQUIRE?

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- Diverse applications require using data consistently across various functions and mastering data semantics, across industries. Consistency is key
- Transforming large monolithic applications to services is complex to say the least. Examining how the services will interact with the data and how services interact with each other to process the data is critical.
- Thinking about all the ways customers will interact with the data is a huge undertaking. In the past, there were call center apps, for example. But today online customers want a lot of data available very quickly.
- Dealing with fragmented data sets. How to look at fragmented information and make it valuable to stakeholders? How to normalize the data? How to look at it and get one central truth?
- Determining how confident you can be in the data. Addressing security concerns. Making modifications to applications

“ I am seeing a change in many organizations in that they now want to function at the speed of the cloud. Whether in public cloud space or on premise, they want to recover faster and faster.”

– James Miller  
Chief Technology  
Officer and Vice  
President for Cloud and  
Platform Services  
DXC Technology

## WHAT ARE ORGANIZATIONS DOING TO UPDATE THEIR DATA PROTECTION STRATEGIES AND MEET STRICT RECOVERY TIMES?

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- Hosting the data and attempting to better understand where the data lives along with the systems and applications using the data..
- Some organizations now want to function at the speed of the cloud, to recover faster. Their objectives are changing and they are focusing on newer technologies for faster results.
- Ideally, data is stored closer to where it needs to be (via edge computing for example) and can be recovered very quickly.
- “We need to recognize that personal data needs to be protected as evidenced in the General Data Protection Regulation Act (GDPR) which aims to prevent misuse of data.” It’s also important to protect not just data, but applications too.
- There is an overarching ethical question about data usage that all enterprises must address: Is it the right thing to do with the data? This question goes beyond safeguarding physical data to the concept of protecting a company’s brand, reputation and customer trust by making ethical decisions about how to use customer data.
- We are moving from an era of centralized data protection, where data was physical and integrated, and protected by firewalls, etc., to an era when new companies (without the burden of old infrastructures) can leapfrog these traditional approaches. Instead, they can build data integrity into diffuse systems.

## WHY SHOULD ORGANIZATIONS USE A MANAGED SERVICE INSTEAD OF MANAGING IT THEMSELVES?

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- The answer depends on the organization.
- Look at the core business and determine where benefits can be realized...let that guide your decision about managed services versus self-management.
- Regulations or geo-political circumstances also need to be considered. Whether its customer-facing data or social-facing data may also influence the decision.
- Managed services can augment capabilities.
- Some service providers partner with companies that use the latest technologies and can leverage learnings from them to help other companies more efficiently manage their data, too.

## IN A BROAD CONTEXT, THERE IS A UNIVERSAL THEME



## WHAT ARE THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT THINGS AN ENTERPRISE CIO NEEDS TO REMEMBER WHEN PLANNING AN APPROACH TO MANAGING AND PROTECTING THE ORGANIZATION'S DATA?

- CIOs should be working to get broader organizational buy in – “it’s not just their problem,” it’s the entire company’s challenge. Focus on value partnerships. Communicate the value the data brings.
- Consider transitioning to becoming cloud native or to using cloud services and micro services. Understand how services interact with a holistic view of the data.
- The concept of data gravity was mentioned as a strategy for managing and protecting organizational data. According to WhatIs.com, “Data gravity is the ability of bodies of data to attract applications, services and other data. The force of gravity, in this context, is manifested in the way software services and business logic are drawn to data relative to its mass (the amount of data) and, as a result, are physically located closer to the data.”
- Protect the data. Investing in data is big. Finally, be sure your data is accurate.

## WHAT IS YOUR ORGANIZATION'S VIEW ON USING A SERVICE PROVIDER TO EXECUTE ON YOUR STRATEGY?

- If you do so, make sure you can segregate data to sort out highly sensitive information. It’s likely more cost effective to portion that out to a service provider.

“The way our customers are interacting with data is different and their expectations about how fast it’s available is a lot more demanding than it used to be.”  
– Ramzi Sayyid  
Director of IT  
Verizon

“Data is usually very fragmented... Ask how confident can you feel that the data is a single source of truth? How can you have a sense of credibility associated with data?”  
– Akhil Gokul  
Head of Core & Cloud CTO  
Ericsson



## WHAT STRATEGY DO YOU HAVE IN PLACE TO GAIN THE MOST VALUE FROM YOUR DATA?

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- Ask: how can we generate business value? Two primary ways:
  1. Make management decisions that leverage analytics/reporting/metrics and looking at the right KPIs.
  2. Examine how your customers are or could be using data to make their life easier. Look at the customer experience and drive the right metrics to support or improve that. Make that investment.

## CONCLUSION

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The abundance of data available to enterprises today is unprecedented and will continue to grow. It's critically important that companies analyze, normalize, share and leverage data for valuable business insights and customer service. Organizing the enterprise around the data and using the right tools and applications to collaborate with stakeholders, share data with customers, and keep data secure can help ensure that your organization grows.

[Listen to the Webinar OnDemand](#)



For more information about the DXC Data Platform, visit [here](#).

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