Are you ready to help federal agencies lift their enterprise data initiatives off the ground?

On June 24, 2019, the United States released its first ever federal data strategy. The way the Federal Government provides, maintains, and uses data has a unique place in society, and maintaining trust in Federal data is pivotal to a democratic process. To meet the changing role of data and needs of democracy, the Federal Government created a coordinated and integrated data strategy that better enables data to deliver on mission, serve the public, and steward resources while respecting privacy and confidentiality. The mission of the Federal Data Strategy is to fully leverage the value of federal data for mission, service, and the public good by guiding the Federal Government in practicing ethical governance, conscious design, and a learning culture. The Federal Data Strategy was developed iteratively by a team of 57 members from across the Federal Government, representing 23 agencies. As drafts were created, the team actively sought and incorporated feedback from Federal employees and the public through a series of requests for comments, Federal Forums, and Public Forums. To implement the Federal Data Strategy, annual action plans will identify and prioritize steps for a given year, along with targeted timeframes and responsible entities. The 2020 Action Plan establishes a solid foundation that will support implementation of the strategy over the next decade. Specifically, the plan identifies initial actions for agencies that are essential for establishing processes, building capacity, and aligning existing efforts to better leverage data as a strategic asset.

A step-by-step, balanced approach can help guide discussions with your federal government clients as they implement the strategy – a key component of the digital transformation journey for any government agency.

**Step 1:** A first step with any data strategy is to **identify key business/mission outcomes** that agencies want to achieve with data. Without a clear purpose and goal, teams can get easily caught in data analysis paralysis. Effectively using a design thinking approach can help agencies identify key mission outcomes. Design thinking is about seeing the world through citizens’ eyes.

**Step 2:** In 2005, mathematician Clive Humby famously coined the phrase, “data is the new oil.” If you don’t know where the oil fields are or what the quality of the oil is, the oil becomes useless. This is true for data as well. In the age of agile delivery, it is prudent for agencies to **implement data governance** that enables teams to innovate without burdensome restrictions.

**Step 3:** **Train workforces** to realize the full potential of data and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Employees need to become data wranglers. Agencies need to build data training programs to train and reskill employees on modern data practices.

**Step 4:** To gain value, **establish tools and infrastructure** that complement an agency’s workforce. Modern data science and analytics tools make it easy to sift through and visualize data to find insights that inform key agency decisions. Access to cloud infrastructure provides agency teams with the ability to build and sustain scalable solutions rapidly.

**Step 5:** To sustain delivery of the promise of data and insights, agencies need to **embrace an agile mindset**. Rapid prototyping will provide agencies with an ability to explore and realize innovative ideas/solutions more quickly. As the workforce becomes more comfortable with moving fast and taking risk, agencies will finally start to see the benefit of all this talk about data.

In conclusion, for an enterprise data initiative to be successful it needs to have a well-balanced approach as presented above. Effectively implementing this approach can enhance an agency’s data maturity and data-driven decision-making capabilities thereby propelling them forward in their digital transformation journey.

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