DATA GOVERNANCE

Transforming your data accountability, output and efficiency

Data governance is the execution and enforcement of authority over the management of data and data-related assets. Governance is part of a larger discipline that has traditionally been called enterprise information management (EIM). It is a continuous practice that forces the entire business to take ownership of the data instead of relegating that ownership solely to the information technology group. Once implemented, it becomes a standard operating procedure which promotes trustworthy output, efficiency and stronger communication across an organization.

Data governance is focused on enabling data as a strategic asset. It forces decision-makers to define goals, objectives and focus areas. When blended with data stewardship, the formalization of accountability for the management of data and data-related assets, it becomes the foundation of data governance based on strong organizational constructs and pragmatic processes.

The primary goals of data governance are:

• To understand the information needs of the enterprise and all its stakeholders
• To capture, store, protect and ensure the integrity of data assets
• To continually improve the quality of data and information, including accuracy, integrity, integration, relevance and usefulness of data
• To ensure privacy and confidentiality, and to prevent unauthorized inappropriate use of data and information
• To maximize the effective use and value of data and information assets

The secondary goals of data governance are:

• To control the cost of data management
• To promote a wider and deeper understanding of the value of data assets
• To manage information consistently across the enterprise
• To align data management efforts and technology with business needs

RSM approach

To help fulfill these goals, RSM offers a seven-phase approach to effective data governance, taking clients through hands-on workshops, which produce tangible deliverables to manage the program. The seven steps are:

1. Scope and initiation—discover key areas and critical elements required to function as a business, including the alignment of data governance to larger firm initiatives and review of current initiatives
2. Assessment—conduct interviews to determine the current capacity for enterprise data governance adoption, information management maturity, change capacity and controls review, and the state in which your organization governs its data
3. Visioning—create governance framework draft by defining the initial requirements for data elements and subject areas of focus (i.e., current state processes, data source systems, gaps and preferred future-state functionality)
4. **Business alignment**—align data governance workstream to key business initiatives through the identification of critical business drivers, technology and core data, and define key ownership roles

5. **Governing framework design**—determine governance board, domains and data stewards; develop data governance charter in conjunction with the policies, standards and process drafts by domain

6. **Road map**—define integration of data governance and sustaining requirements in a simple operating model with a focus on determining quality metrics used to monitor and control key data elements in each domain's governance program

7. **Rollout and sustainment**—ensure user adoption and overall program success by testing proposed future-state processes, training, and establishing a standard cadence to control, manage and communicate updates to your organization

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**A common misunderstanding**

It is important to remember that data governance is not a function performed by those who manage information. Instead, there should be a separation of duties between those who govern the data versus those who manage it. The same separation exists between auditors and managers in most businesses. Auditors verify compliance to standards, and define and implement new controls and standards as necessary.

**The RSM advantage**

RSM is a national provider of industry-focused services for the middle market. We have a dedicated team of data analytics and business intelligence advisors that understand how important your data is to your business and how you can utilize it to make more informed decisions.

Through our comprehensive services and timely advice, we are ready to help you transform the way you govern your data and do business.