



Knowledge-Driven Business Strategy: You're Going to Need a Smarter Board

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Data Driven Business (DDB) has been a buzz phrase for a hot minute. Although I agree in spirit of what DDB stands for, it just has never seemed quite right to me. I've been in the Business Intelligence industry for 20 years, and I've seen lots of clients chasing the elusive DDB grail. Time and time again executives realize

they have too many dashboards that show their data, and that none of those dashboards are helping them make the best decisions.

The original intention of Data Visualization was born out of a need to analyze massive amounts of data in the quickest way. Leveraging the fact that the human mind can distinguish changes in patterns quicker using size, shape, and / or color rather than visually calculating the difference in numbers in a spreadsheet (my apologies to the finance folks who need their crosstabs). I am a HUGE fan of Data Visualization, but the fact is that Data has not and will not stop growing. Forget "You're gonna need a bigger boat" – it's now "You're gonna need a SMARTER boat."

While talking about how we help clients uncover actionable insights the team at Boulder Insight came up with a different term: Knowledge Driven Business. Because it's not enough to be a Data Driven Business, what organizations need is the right knowledge, at the right time, to make the right decision, whether that's a decision being made a few times a day or a thousand times a year. Clients don't start out with that realization though: first and foremost, they think what they really want is dashboards that work well and look good.

What we've found most effective is realizing that while we're all on a quest to soar, we have to crawl, walk, and run first. The path of our clients' data journey (a journey ideally taken quarterly, or at least annually, because the only thing constant in business is change) goes like this:

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Crawl | Business Strategy We “start with the why,” by defining audiences, teasing out the right goals / KPIs, identifying decisions that need to be made and what information is needed to make those decisions.

Walk | Data Alignment We leverage what we learned in the Crawl phase to align, clean, and organize the “right data” to answer the questions that will drive growth and increase value. Organization is critical as data needs to be BI-Readable (vs human-readable) and thus optimized for speed.

Run | Data Visualization and Training Once the data is organized from the Walk Phase, we either build or teach clients how to best build and use intuitive dashboards using Human Centered Design methodologies.

Soar | Automation The Automation phase is a BIG One! It's where we all need to go. This phase is automating tasks through Scripting, Machine Learning, and Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning, to hypercharge the human processing power and generate new datasets that provide the knowledge to make the right decisions at the right time.

Data will NEVER stop expanding, and we need all methods at our disposal to manage its growth.

Written by Chris Cox
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