WEBINAR Q&A:

Can a data model serve the purpose of a data catalog?

Although the data model may have information about the data that is similar to a data catalog, the challenge with most data model tools is the ability for a business user to use and understand it. Data catalog solutions are targeted at a business user and generally have intuitive user interfaces to make it easy to understand how to navigate and understand the data and metadata. Yes, there are some more technical users of a data catalog, like a data scientist, but those solutions that are easy to use provide the broadest reach. The data catalog, as an enterprise-wide platform rather than a local solution to specific needs, plays a key role in agile data governance and can be an indispensable component of any data governance program.

How do you train people what "data governance" is and show them how this could help them as a user of data?

First, I would encourage you to think about data governance as an enablement function rather than a control function. With that perspective, and as you communicate with users of data, it’s important to understand what challenges and issues they experience on a daily or ongoing basis. When you align training, communication and awareness messaging with how data governance supports their work and addresses their specific challenges, you enable data users to not only have a personalized understanding of the importance of governance in support for their role, but also a deeper understanding and appreciation for how data governance as a service line and broad capability supports the critical objectives of the organization.
It's also helpful to take a multi-prong approach. On the First San Francisco Partners website, there are many educational resources including eBook guides and case studies that can facilitate training and adoption. There is also a data governance course training on DATAVERSITY that spans the scope of foundational and next-generation governance.

**What communication methods do you see in use that are actually end user friendly, not complex data catalogs that people won’t look at.**

You can use a wide variety of communication approaches to share information and learn from your stakeholders. It is important to communicate through established mechanisms such as emails, meetings and newsletters because people have habits for finding the information they need. It’s also effective to combine that with novel approaches to communication to reach a wider audience such as lunch and learns, videos, infographics and blogs. Two-way communication is key to enabling adoption, and you want to ensure you communicate early and often to maintain momentum around your governance efforts.

**How important is training as a Data Office function?**

It is hugely important, and I encourage you to think of training through the same lens as communication. Broad data literacy is a critical success factor for any data-focused initiative. Training, which in large part encompasses “awareness communication," can play a key role in engaging different data users to ensure any data-related training is not just training on a tool or process for training’s sake. Instead, you can leverage training to enable foundational understanding about how and why that tool or process-focused training process is important to the organization and how it benefits their individual role.

**Do you see value/benefit for less mature organizations to start with the traditional operating model and evolve into the agile model over time?**

Modern, agile data governance doesn’t mean there isn’t a need for rules about data — a la a centralized, decentralized or hybrid model approach. Agile governance incorporates the best parts of the established models but shifts the focus to providing more support that empowers individuals to collaborate more and get more value from data.

Inherently, the gap between a traditional governance and agile approach involves evolution -- both within the data management industry and within your own organization. Whether you start with a traditional or agile model, it’s important to keep in mind some of the premises of the agile model
from the beginning. One key premise we encourage as a best practice is the idea of a Data Governance Office that is a service line to the organization.

Ultimately, it’s less about a maturity gap between traditional vs. agile and more about a cultural shift between the way your organization views governance as a service or a control function. If you’re just getting started with governance, you can start with an agile approach in a focused area just as easily as you can start with a more traditional approach with a centralized Data Governance Council.

Would love access to this deck to read at length will it be available?

Yes! Please access the deck online (linked above). The recording to the original webinar held on October 6 is also available on-demand. Please feel free to share these materials with your colleagues and contacts.

If you have any questions, reach out to Kelle O’Neal at kelle@firstsanfranciscopartners.com

You can also find out more info on firstsanfranciscopartners.com