

The Retail Reset

 ModerneBook

Not Getting Value from Your Data
Transformation? Fix It!



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Introduction

Many retail and CPG organizations get deep into a data transformation, or even to the end of their efforts, only to find that they are getting nowhere near the value that was projected and anticipated. This is not only immensely frustrating and disappointing, but it can cause those driving the transformation to lose political capital, if not their jobs. Luckily, it is possible to extract a lot more value with little effort by focusing energy on enabling people to make more extensive and efficient use of what's been put in place within your retail environment.

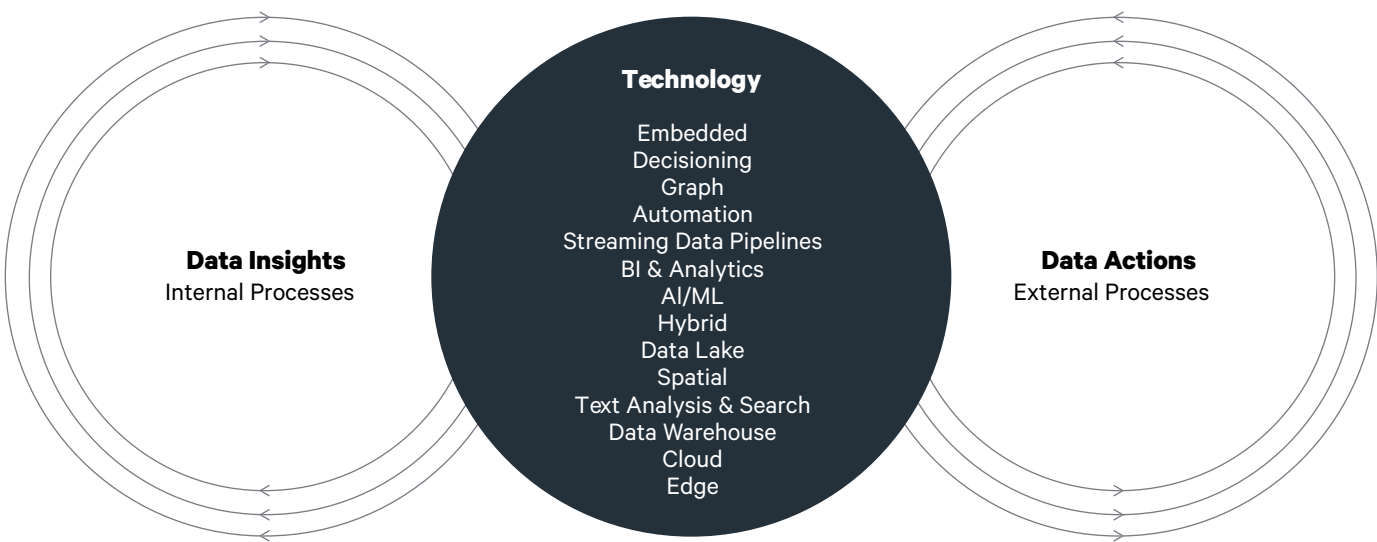


It's Not Just About the Tools and Technologies

Too many retail organizations focus their data transformation efforts on the technical migrations, implementations, and integrations required. According to an [IDC](#) survey, 88% of CEOs said they plan to sustain or increase technology spending in 2022 mainly to accelerate digital strategies. Organizations have invested in technologies such as databases, data warehouses, enterprise applications, and data lakes for years. However, in a data culture survey conducted by IDC in 2021, only a third of workers said that their decisions and actions were data-driven.

This approach isn't entirely misguided, as tech is an important component. However, they aren't the only components. The conditions for a successful data transformation cannot be led purely by tech and the individuals who control it. From technical to business, from store operations to strategy, and from the warehouse to the front office, more people are working with data daily to complete tasks, make decisions, and affect business outcomes. A successful data transformation is one that ensures data becomes a central part of retail operations without unknowingly tying the hands of the organization's best innovators. Tools and technologies are simply enablers.

No matter how well implemented or how sophisticated, tools and technologies implemented by a retail organization will not lead to business changes or business value unless the users of those tools and technologies embrace and make use of the new capabilities being provided to them. Just as it is possible to have a fancy sports car and only use it to drive kids to school, it is possible to implement a world-class data transformation from a tools and technology perspective but then have the organization fail to take advantage of what it offers.



Source: IDC, 2022



Focus Heavily on Empowering Users and Business Process Change

Completing a top-notch data transformation from a technology perspective, but then having those in the organization fail to make use of it, will lead to little improvements being made and limited benefits being realized. You see, putting the enablers in place is pointless if those enablers aren't used by the broader retail organization.

Business leaders and decision-makers can take these three steps to empower diverse users with varying degrees of technical knowledge and capabilities.

Encourage Exploration

As retail companies open up data to stakeholders, a certain amount of exploration can foster the types of questions that make data analysis great. Whether it's through trainings or office hours, encouraging team members to explore data pays dividends:

- Error spotting: Glancing over data sets, especially new ones, could uncover anomalies or outliers in the data that might skew results.
- Better questions: Exploring data might also open up the types of questions that could lead to better decision-making and innovating.
- Data familiarity: It may take a bit of time before departments feel comfortable with data analysis, but encouraging exploration could help them learn to look for insights.

Team members can build skills and learn to ask questions that benefit the company. Everyone can also learn their way around available data and get comfortable relying on it to make decisions and collaborate intelligently.



Focus Heavily on Empowering Users and Business Process Change

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Rethink Governance

Many retail organizations go through a data transformation only to realize they're still plagued by the same problems (i.e. governance). The traditional way of handling governance means data stays locked behind strict security protocols. Departments ask questions or request data insights and wait until IT can return with an answer. This makes it incredibly difficult to foster a data culture, but unlocking data for all poses too great a risk — so companies leave valuable insights undiscovered.

Today, retail companies need data in real-time to facilitate data-driven decision-making across the enterprise. With the next era of granular governance control, decision-makers can approach governance at the atomic level. They can free data for stakeholders without risking its integrity or security.

A data operating system, for example, allows proactive management of data without setting onerous restrictions. It offers decision-makers the chance to create efficient security policies and to maintain observability. Attribute-based security controls also keep data flowing while maintaining compliance.



Focus Heavily on Empowering Users and Business Process Change

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Foster Collaboration

Collaborative intelligence is a necessary part of a successful data transformation. Once decision-makers open their data up, IT can collaborate with various teams, for example, on initiatives to improve customer retention or with the merchandise team to gain better direction for a proposed launch.

There are a few necessary steps to advance collaboration:

- **Respect (and trust) autonomy:** The C-suite can't expect collaboration if it doesn't trust its stakeholders with the data they need. Departments should be able to ask questions and answer them without unnecessary interference.
- **Identify leaders:** Leaders within departments can help lead collaboration efforts and encourage buy-in for any new technology products. These are different from managers; they're people who are comfortable with data and ready to shift to data-driven decision-making.
- **Connect technology:** Business units are often closed off by their specialized tools and solutions, but collaboration can't happen if technology is siloed across different departments, including unmonitored shadow IT. Create a connective tissue of data, and collaboration naturally follows.

Collaborative intelligence sparks a great deal of innovation because it taps into the expertise of the team. Data is theoretical until it comes in contact with experience, and collaborators can ask better, deeper driving questions and explore data for insights that may have been missed.

It is critical to focus on empowering users to become data-driven, whether it's through managing culture or facilitating trainings. They need to understand how to use the new environment, how it can change their current practices and processes, and how they can get support as they figure it all out. Make it clear to them that this spans supply chain, store operations, marketing, and more. Usually, users are eager and willing to put in the time required to get up to speed. However, if they aren't provided with the information and support they need from the start, they will grow disillusioned and just keep doing what they know how to do today with some slight changes.



Make It Easy for Users to Transform Their Approach

What if it were possible to provide a retailer's users with a well-governed and easy-to-navigate window into all the new capabilities available from a data transformation? It is possible! By layering a data operating system such as DataOS from The Modern Data Company on top of an existing retail environment, it can quickly unlock the path to value.

A data operating system can connect a wide range of disparate tools and platforms and provide a single, unified view of all the data and analytical resources available to each user across supply chain, sales, inventory, and all other corporate data. It also comes with built-in security and governance controls. Users need not worry about where data rests or how to connect it behind the scenes. The data operating system will handle all of that for them, right out of the box. It enables new business capabilities as opposed to new technical functionalities. It will lead to business process and practice changes that are desired.



Enable Increased Usability, See Increased Value

Functionality without usability is pointless. A retailer's users must be enabled to easily access and utilize the data and analytical resources available to them. Don't be an organization that focuses purely on functionality and is then surprised when transformation efforts fall short. By implementing a data operating system, the underlying functionality of an environment becomes readily accessible and usable. That in turn will lead to engaged users who will find new ways to push the limits and expand business capability for your retail organization. The end result will be a much more successful data transformation.

To discover more about how DataOS can help you get the maximum value from your data transformation, schedule a quick call with our data experts.

[Schedule a Demo →](#)



About DataOS®

DataOS is an operating system that consists of a set of primitives, services and modules that are interoperable and composable. These building blocks enable organizations to compose various data architectures and dramatically reduce integrations. Enterprises can have the same data-driven decision-making experience akin to data-first tech companies in days and weeks instead of months and years.

About The Modern Data Company

Founded in 2018, The Modern Data Company began with the realization that enterprise-wide data access has been siloed. Data engineers and database administrators have been the longstanding data gatekeepers who funneled data to analysts and data scientists. We aim to change that by freeing enterprises to make better data driven decisions by democratizing access to data. When all employees, irrespective of their technical skills or background, can easily explore and analyze enterprise data, then both productivity and market expansion are realized at a faster pace.



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