Collibra

eBook

Defrag your data governance

How to accelerate patient care
and drug discovery, safely — with unified governance

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Unified data governance: From bottleneck to treatment accelerator

Every healthcare and life sciences organization wants to do more with data. But few are prepared to empower their clinicians, doctors, researchers or other staff with the trusted data needed to make a greater impact on patient lives. And AI only compounds the magnitude of need and the risk.

There are a million difficult problems standing in the way. From a lack of visibility into what data exists, to regulatory requirements to the various ways data is defined.

While all those problems seem disconnected, they boil down to one thing: governance fragmentation. Control, visibility and even meaning are tied to specific systems, like your EMR, EHR and various other sources and compute platforms. And fragmentation extends to your people, as technical solutions aren't accessible to the stakeholders who need to create policies, steward and use the data.

The organizations that overcome these challenges will build a solid foundation for unified data governance, boosting patient engagement, reducing readmittance, improving patient safety and outcomes, and ensuring compliance with HIPAA and other regulations. Without the risk. We call that feeling: Data Confidence.

What is Data Confidence?

Data Confidence is the way you and your colleagues feel when your organization can accelerate every data and AI use case — without compromising on patient safety or quality.

It happens when governance becomes an enabler rather than a bottleneck. Your people can find, understand and use trusted data across every system. Business context flows alongside technical metadata. And policies apply consistently everywhere data lives.

Bottom line: When your people can trust, comply and consume data confidently, innovation accelerates. That's Data Confidence.

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Why unified data governance is your new superpower

Unified data governance isn't just about making sure everyone complies with internal policies and external regulations. It's also about making sure people have access to reliable, high-quality data. And use it to do smart things for both your organization and the patients you serve. Getting more data into more hands will help your people make better decisions and create patient outcomes.

Done right, data governance introduces end-to-end visibility and control for your data assets. Knowing you can consistently apply governance principles, ensure quality and track how data is used lets you loosen the reins. And that means your people can do more with data.

There are no trade-offs: Unified governance reduces compliance and other safety risks while empowering users.

Unified data governance can help you:

- **Enable certified and accurate reporting:** Collective knowledge across teams enables certified and accurate business reporting, resulting in less effort
- **Increase transparency and understanding:** Organizations produce staggering varieties of data, and staff can't use data they — or you — don't know about. Centralizing how you track, manage and grant access to data helps you know what you have. And it lets you help people understand what assets are available and what they mean, which leads to higher utilization
- **Improve compliance and reduce risk:** As data and AI regulations grow, your risk, compliance and legal teams need a way to assess and track data requests — at the request phase and after. And they need to collaborate with technical data teams to construct and apply policies. Managing all of this manually is clunky to the point where it's challenging to enforce data policies consistently
- **Build trust:** Offering only reliable, well-understood data will build trust in its outputs

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Data governance is the foundation for ensuring the best outputs while minimizing risk and effort. It's about collaborating on data and using it to its full potential by providing access to reliable, trusted data. A better understanding of your data assets leads to improved transparency and knowledge.

Here are the four steps to building a successful data governance program within your organization. Let's explore each step in detail.

Four steps to data governance success

- Step 1: Lay a foundation for consistency
- Step 2: Establish confederation
- Step 3: Enable certification
- Step 4: Execute continuous improvement

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1.

Lay a foundation for consistency

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Organizations generally start with different departments, each with terminology and descriptions for the same data assets.

This inconsistency hinders everyone since there isn't a common language for discussing data.

One way to resolve this issue is to create a common business glossary that will allow your organization to:

- Standardize business terms
- Establish data standards
- Improve overall efficiency and productivity

In a federated governance model, different lines of business or departments within your health or hospital system may create their own definitions. It's particularly important to link those definitions to datasets and data products so users can understand what the data means.

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2. Establish confederation

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Moving to a cloud-native hybrid data landscape can help healthcare and life sciences organizations become more agile and capable of scaling and pivoting in uncertain markets. Organizations can solve the most difficult business problems by sharing data, context and analyses.

But it doesn't solve every problem. Hospitals, pharmaceutical and medical device companies are made up of different departments, teams and business units, each with its own operating style and needs. This diversity can make it challenging to consistently govern data.

A successful approach to data governance will unify access and control features — but it won't be one-size-fits-all. Instead, it will provide a way for everyone to participate in a single unified system of data governance while allowing freedom to design a model that enables data owners to define roles, responsibilities and terms while integrating into the broader goal of becoming data-driven.

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3. Enable certification

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Establishing confederation is a significant milestone but maintaining it will require implementing higher-level business processes. These can include setting up a regular data standards refresh cycle, creating an update process for curated data and implementing best practices for handling certified assets. The main goal for this step is to separate raw data from data that's been curated or certified, which is crucial for ensuring vetted, high-quality datasets that you feel confident about.

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4. Execute continuous improvement

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Once a certified set of well-monitored data products is available to data consumers, a data governance council can oversee the ecosystem of data standards, policies, definitions and new data product requirements. The council should consist of department and central data team members.

The council should use metrics to monitor data quality, availability and delivery to data consumers. Based on these metrics, the committee can approve new investments in projects that most benefit the organization. They can also monitor data incidents and faults and approve new investments to improve data quality or inefficiencies in particularly high-risk or complex data pipelines.

The council should conduct business reviews monthly or quarterly to understand the state of affairs and guide continuous improvement initiatives. In essence, they govern the data governance process.

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Unified data governance: A critical capabilities checklist

Researching data governance solutions? A comprehensive data intelligence platform that focuses on ensuring trusted data requires an array of advanced tools. Here are the key capabilities to look for:

Data Governance

Automate data governance workflows to quickly deliver trusted data to teams faster

Data Catalog

Help teams discover and understand the data they have

Data Quality and Observability

Ensure high-quality data in every model built

Data Lineage

Map input, training, and output data for analysis and regulatory reporting

Data Privacy

Automate and operationalize privacy and address applicable data regulations

Data Access Governance

Classify and protect data across all data sources

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The time for unified data governance is now

With AI accelerating the pace of innovation—and the pressures on data leaders to deliver trusted, high-quality data mounting every day—fragmented governance isn't just inefficient. It's a liability.

The difference between leaders and laggards? A unified approach to data governance that breaks down silos, automates controls and puts trusted, high-quality data in the hands of the technical and business professionals who need it to do their jobs. Organizations that build a strong governance foundation today won't just manage the challenges of AI. They'll accelerate all their data and AI use cases, safely.

Ready to transform fragmented governance into Data Confidence? Remember to follow these four strategic steps:

- Step 1: Lay a foundation for consistency
- Step 2: Establish confederation
- Step 3: Enable certification
- Step 4: Execute continuous improvement

Start your journey to unified governance today.

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