

Checklist: Data Management Efficiency

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

- Improve business performance, quality and ROI, while reducing costs
- Minimize risk associated with change
- Drive new business models and direction
- Shorten time-to-market
- Enable mergers, acquisitions and divestitures

IT EFFORTS

- Link business and IT
- Optimize flexibility for today and tomorrow
- Extend value and reach of the enterprise
- Reduce costs
- Mitigate risk
- Reduce complexity
- Improve quality of service

As competition becomes more intense, the need to improve data access and sharpen business analysis becomes more acute. Increasing numbers of users require more access to real-time data with greater analytical flexibility and reporting capabilities. Across a number of industries, the drive for more agile business practices demands precise business insight and analysis. IT teams not only need to manage larger and larger data stores with more and more users, but need to align with business objectives and organizational goals.

Consider: Align IT efforts to drive business success: Identify the “killer” business case, not the killer app.

Rapid data growth raises numerous potential problems within the database environment. Up to a point, drains on performance and scalability issues can be addressed by tuning the database; however, as growth of production databases continues unabated, tuning reaches an upper limit of effectiveness. Bottlenecks occur. Backup and upgrade times are lengthened. Service Level Agreements (SLAs) become more difficult to maintain. How does your current plan address explosive data growth, increased user demands, and longer data retention cycles?

Designing an efficient system requires a complete understanding of data and its uses. Consider these questions as tools to determine how to streamline your existing data architecture and data management.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

1. Are current systems adequate to handle increased reporting requirements?
2. Is the volume of data you store on your OLTP system raising your costs significantly?
3. Is your storage architecture capable of adapting to new data loads and increased access demands?
4. How difficult is it to maintain existing systems?

DATA DEMANDS

1. Does the process of creating reports impact the production cycle?
2. Are increased user demands impacting your performance measures and associated costs?
3. Do you currently limit the data on your report server?
4. Are you building more and more summary tables to satisfy user performance requirements?
5. Do users need to access multiple databases to get answers to business questions?
6. Do you anticipate rapid growth in the amount of data that you will be keeping on-line for regulatory performance?
7. Are your data retention periods increasing?

DATA EVALUATION

1. How often is the data on your primary OLTP systems required for reporting and modification?
2. Do you have established service levels for all applications and data types?
3. Are data types segregated based on access requirements and storage options?

SIMPLIFY

1. Have you automated as many manual and repetitive tasks as possible?
2. Do you have a plan to rationalize and consolidate applications?
3. Can you reduce or eliminate customization requirements from applications?
4. Are costs a consideration when evaluating legacy systems?
5. Does your IT team have the right skill sets to manage the numerous applications and systems?

STANDARDIZATION

1. Do you use standard interfaces and common technologies?
2. Does your architecture share commonality across the enterprise?
3. Do you have standardized processes for application controls and data management?

MODULAR

1. Can you break down monolithic structures?
2. Do you employ reusable components?
3. Are logical architectures implemented across your enterprise?

BUSINESS GOAL CHECK-IN

1. Do IT goals map to current business imperatives?
2. Does your IT team offer innovative and effective solutions to business challenges?
3. Are your IT outreach efforts proactive?

EFFICIENCY SUCCESS MEASURES

How can you tell when your organization has reached its potential for efficiency?

- IT resources maximized, delivering to business requirements
 - Human capital, financial, and physical costs managed
 - Fewer wasted cycles, especially computing cycles (e.g., CPU)
 - Manual efforts and maintenance cycles reduced
 - Lower TCO
- Flexibility
 - More capability to shift or link resources
 - Unleashing new uses for existing systems
- Timeliness
 - Performance improvements
 - Everything done at a faster rate
 - Initiatives implemented more quickly
 - Reduced time-to-deploy
- Enhancing value delivered throughout the organization
 - Complete integration of IT initiatives with business challenges
 - IT focus on innovation (not maintenance)
 - Organization is empowered through information delivery

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