



Why a strong Data Operating Model is no longer optional

Foreword

To turn a data strategy into real business impact, organizations need more than just ambition – they need structure. A well-defined Data Operating Model ensures alignment between people, processes, and technology while embedding governance, quality, and accountability. It transforms data from a fragmented challenge into a trusted, well-managed asset that drives long-term success.

Introduction

In today's industry, **data is more than just an asset** – it is a fundamental cornerstone **for business innovation, regulatory compliance and strategic decision-making**. However, many organizations struggle to harness its true value due to fragmented ownership, inconsistent governance, and a lack of alignment between IT and business priorities. Thereby, a structured approach to data handling is essential. A **Data Operating Model (DOM)** provides the **structured framework needed to operationalize data strategy**, embedding **governance, quality, and literacy** across the organization. It ensures that data isn't just collected but **trusted, well-managed,**

and leveraged for maximum business impact. To build a resilient and scalable DOM, organizations need a cohesive approach closely aligned with data vision and strategy. The **Data Management Capability Assessment Model (DCAM)** offers a powerful methodology to design, assess, and continuously refine data management practices, creating a standardized, future-ready foundation for enterprise-wide data excellence. In this article, we'll explore why a **Data Operating Model** is critical for business success and how organizations can implement, scale, and sustain it effectively.

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The Data Operating Model

At the heart of a **Data Operating Model (DOM)** lies a **coherent data vision and strategy**, seamlessly integrated with the organization's overarching corporate strategy and target operating model to ensure that data goals are strategically aligned with business objectives. To operationalize this vision, organizations need a **structured, scalable approach** – one that frameworks like DCAM help establish by systematically assessing and enhancing data capabilities across key dimensions:



Data Operating Model Framework

Processes

Efficient processes ensure that data is managed systematically, enabling consistency, accuracy, and reliability throughout its lifecycle.

- **Data Lifecycle Management** – Ensures structured data creation, storage, and deletion processes, helping organizations maintain compliance and optimize storage costs.
- **Data Quality & Controls** – Maintains data integrity through validation, accuracy, and consistency measures, ensuring that business decisions are based on reliable information.
- **Data Access for Sharing & Consumption** – Establishes secure and efficient data-sharing mechanisms across the organization, balancing accessibility with security to promote seamless collaboration.

People & Skills

Skilled employees and a strong data culture are critical for successfully embedding data-driven decision-making within an organization.

- **Change Management & Data Literacy** – Promotes a data-driven culture by enhancing employee capabilities, ensuring that teams can confidently interpret and utilize data insights.
- **Roles, Responsibilities & Skills** – Defines clear accountability for data ownership and stewardship, reducing ambiguity and fostering collaboration across departments.
- **Data Organization & Culture** – Embeds data-centric thinking within the corporate structure, ensuring that data initiatives receive executive support and alignment with business goals.

Governance

Strong governance structures are essential to mitigate risks, ensure compliance, and establish trust in data assets.

- **Data Ownership** – Assigns accountability for data assets within the organization, ensuring clear responsibility for data stewardship and decision-making.
- **Policies & Compliance** – Ensures adherence to regulations, such as GDPR, CSRD, and EU Taxonomy, protecting organizations from legal risks and reputational damage.
- **Data Control Environment** – Develops robust security frameworks through collaborative efforts across teams and functions to proactively de-risk data-related issues, ensure compliance, and enable seamless data interoperability.

Technology

The right technology stack enables scalability, enhances analytics capabilities, and ensures seamless data integration.

- **Data Analytics & AI** – Focuses on extracting value from data by leveraging advanced analytics, machine learning and AI-driven insights, allowing organizations to derive deeper value from their data assets and make data-informed decisions.
- **Cloud / Hybrid Data Platform** – Establishes a unified environment enabling to manage, process and analyze data assets across on-prem, private and public cloud environment by assuring cost optimization and operational resilience.
- **Data Infrastructure** – Establishes the foundational technology backbone for data storage, integration, and system interoperability, ensuring reliable, secure and efficient data transfer across organization.

Advantages of implementing a Data Operating Model

A **strategically designed Data Operating Model** provides organizations with a **scalable and future-proof** approach to managing data assets.

- **Regulatory Compliance:** Streamlines compliance with GDPR, CSRD, and other regulatory requirements, embedding governance into daily operations.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Enhances data accessibility, quality, and security, reducing inefficiencies and improving business agility.
- **Scalable Growth:** Creates a structured foundation for enterprise-wide data maturity, supporting AI-driven decision-making and innovation.
- **Competitive Advantage:** Transforms data from a compliance requirement into a strategic asset, positioning organizations for data-driven success.

By integrating structured governance, optimized processes, and the right technology, organizations turn data into a catalyst for innovation and growth. With DCAM-driven assessments, businesses can continuously track maturity, identify gaps, and refine their approach, ensuring that their Data Operating Model remains resilient, adaptable, and value-driven.

“A Data Operating Model must remain parametrizable – its capabilities should be continuously restructured and reweighted based on evolving business demands, whether prioritizing stronger Data & AI-driven insights, enhanced IT infrastructure, or reinforced governance frameworks.”



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Implementing the Data Operating Model with scalability



Achieving a mature Data Operating Model doesn't mean overhauling everything at once. A faster, smarter approach is to start with a **Minimal Viable Data Operating Model** – a lean, foundational framework that activates core capabilities while providing the flexibility to evolve and scale as business needs grow and the journey to a mature Data Operating Model consists of three key phases:



Stage 1: Start simple – Define the vision and strategy

Begin with a clear Data Vision and Data Strategy aligned with business goals. This involves assessing current data capabilities, identifying key pain points, and defining strategic objectives. A well-defined roadmap ensures alignment between business priorities and data initiatives. Utilizing an overarching framework in this phase helps organizations structure their assessment and identify improvement areas effectively.



Stage 2: Build the core – Design the operating model

Establish the right structure for each dimension – Processes, People & Skills, Governance, and Technology – is crucial to ensure scalability and adaptability. This phase includes designing data workflows, defining governance roles, selecting appropriate technologies, and creating training programs to enhance data literacy across the organization. Unlike traditional operating models, a Data Operating Model must be parametrizable – meaning its capabilities should be designed to dynamically adjust based on shifting priorities. Whether the organization needs to emphasize AI-driven insights, enhance IT infrastructure, or reinforce governance controls, the DOM should allow for a modular approach where different capabilities can be weighted or reconfigured. By embedding this agility into the design phase, organizations can ensure that their data ecosystem remains scalable, future-proof, and aligned with evolving strategic demands.



Stage 3: Scale & evolve – Implement, track & optimize

With the Minimal Viable Data Operating Model in place, organizations can gradually expand capabilities, ensuring adaptability to evolving business need. Roll out the operating model and continuously monitor its effectiveness, ensuring scalability and compliance. Regular assessments should be conducted to measure progress against key performance indicators (KPIs). DCAM provides a structured method for tracking maturity levels and guiding the organization in systematically uplifting data management capabilities across different business units and domains. Adjustments should be made as business needs evolve, and organizations should invest in continuous improvement initiatives to enhance their data maturity over time.

Capgemini can help you

Establishing a Data Operating Model aligned with a structured framework like DCAM is more than a necessity – it is a strategic opportunity to integrate data into the core of business operations. By aligning processes, governance, technology, and culture, companies can transform compliance obligations into a competitive advantage.

Capgemini's experts bring extensive experience in designing and implementing tailored Data Operating Models, ensuring that organizations meet challenges such as CSRD and ESG requirements effectively. With a proven track record across industries, Capgemini supports clients from strategy to execution, enabling a seamless and value-driven transformation. Let us help you navigate complexities, achieve compliance, and unlock your organization's full potential.

Additional information – Capgemini Global Collaboration

*The **business technology** team in Switzerland supports clients in developing technology strategic vision and roadmap, focusing on business value, thinking digital to generate new and sustainable business model and innovation.*

*The **intelligent industry** team in Germany supports clients by bridging industry and data in effectively and intelligently leveraging data within business processes, providing knowledge, tools, and strategies to enable data-driven decision-making and create sustainable value through delivering progressive and strategic solutions.*

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