The Four-Step Blueprint for a Successful Data Culture

Data Culture

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DEFINITION

A company-wide attitude that embraces the use of data in everyday decision making.
It stems from a belief that data helps everyone perform their jobs better. Data cultures
avoid basing strategies on guesswork, and instead root the problem-solving process
in reality by pulling information from one standardized single source of truth.

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Introduction

You're in analytics, so you "get" data.

You understand the value of investing in a data platform. You're using it to constantly validate that every business decision you make is a sound one, backed by real numbers. But the problem is, so many of the people you work with don't see it that way. Some of them get strange numbers when they run reports, and others are too intimidated to log into your data tool at all.

You're still spending way too much time correcting faulty analysis and fielding ad hoc queries. It's taking time away that you'd rather be working on those more complex, impactful projects you've been looking forward to.

The good news: The solution to this problem exists. And it's to build a data culture -- a culture of employees are using data on their own with confidence, ultimately contributing more to the bottom line, and you see accumulating ROI for your data tools over the long-term.

With some effort and patience, you can free up your time for those strategic projects. And that's exactly why we wrote this book. We want to show you the exact strategies that many companies have used to build effective data cultures, and get those late adopters finally running their own analysis. By reading, you'll skip the months of trial and error and apply what's already working at fully data-driven organizations.

So let's dive in.
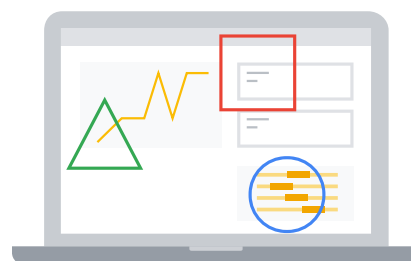
What does a data culture look like?

Mindy Rose, former analytics lead at Disqus, a global comment system that enables, connects, and improves conversations across the web, paints a picture of a company that has successfully evolved a data culture:

"Our colleagues were no longer at the mercy of analysts to pull data and or perform simple analyses. Operational burdens for the analytics team were greatly reduced and productivity increased overall. Teams were making more informed decisions, and we had widespread alignment across the company."

What does it mean for your people and your organization?

Time saved
As a data analyst at Disqus points out, the time saved can be used for innovation and operational improvement: "Adoption and internal training of Looker led to 10 to 20 hours per week of time savings for analysts, opening up more time for the data and analytics team to focus on opportunities for growth and improved infrastructure."

Engaged teams
As employees feel more comfortable analyzing and dispensing data, their contributions to the business become more useful, more focused, and more scientific. We've seen this result in a notable rise in promotions within a company. As our experience dictates, data culture can yield massive professional growth.

Focusing on what matters
Edward Kaznowski, lead performance analyst at global food delivery service company Deliveroo, notes that a data culture enables his team to "focus on the things we want to do and really enjoy, which is building really, really important reporting and doing really cool analysis for the business."

Adam Dathi, head of business intelligence and operations at Yieldify, can attest that a data culture will open the door to creativity across more departments. "Insights and innovation are now delivered much faster than before and by a far wider array of teams," remarks Dathi.

It's an evolving process

A solid data culture requires a robust feedback loop with your users. You'll need a consistent flow of user feedback regarding their data usage with and without your tools. You'll soon find that the more feedback you collect, the more improvements and iterations you'll be able to make.

Data Experiences

Data Experiences

Technology

Data Culture

People

Data Literacy
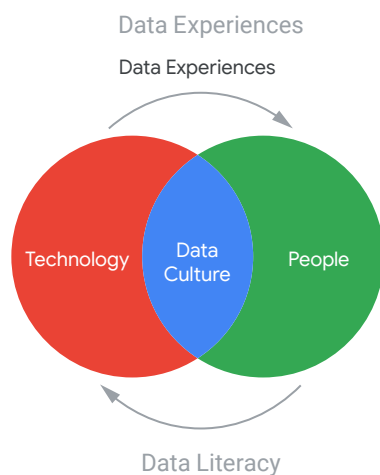
This is much like the concept of a "virtuous" cycle—a term coined by Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos—which embodies the idea that providing stellar customer experiences has a cumulative effect, continually driving more and more sales and growth. Comparably, the constant improvements in decision-making made possible by data platforms spawn cumulative effects. Thoughtfully blending data, creativity and culture speeds up the evolution of your business in ways you thought weren't possible.

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Start here. Start now.
Behavior change takes time.

If this sounds ambitious, relax—you'll get there. You can develop a data culture at your organization. You don't have to do it all at once. And you don't have to do it alone.

This eBook offers a step-by-step approach to building a data culture at your company. We've broken the process down into four phases:

Planning: Understand your users and their data requirements.

Building: Create helpful experiences with your data tools, deliver data conveniently, show the value of being data-centric, and get people on board with data self-service.

Launching: Communicate your data program, train users, and engage them continually.

Growing: Once you have a strong base of early adopters, expand your reach across your organization.

"The point of establishing a strong data culture is to drive data usage, so making sure your data model is accurate and easy to understand is key. To create a data culture that everyone can be a part of, make things simple..."

Garegin Ordyan, Head of Analytics at Fivetran

# Planning

Phase 1

Planning your data culture

The first step is to gather requirements from key stakeholders. We recommend you start by talking to one team or department.

Why is requirements gathering so immensely important? Because it lets you understand:

- How your users actually use data

- What insights they're asking you for

- How they'll use those insights

This will help you understand what you'll need to build both technically and culturally. Your data ecosystem includes many stakeholders, from these business owners, to the data/technology owners, product owners, and executives.

Sounds like a lot, right? That's why, in the next section, we'll show you how to find the types of people who will be thrilled to help you spread your data culture—Data Ambassadors. Your Data Ambassadors will be your greatest assets, the ones who lay the real foundation on which your data culture progresses.
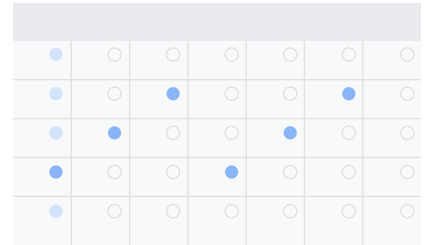
Bottom line: building a data culture without gathering requirements is like shooting at a target you can't see.

From data to insights

Let's start with a theorem that was introduced by Erik Jones, the director of product management and analytics at New Relic.

> **Data** ≠ Information ≠ **Insight**   *or*   **Data** ≠ **Insight**

What does this theorem mean for you as you plan to introduce a data culture to your organization?

Providing access to data or information doesn't automatically mean that you're surfacing useful insights for people. You've got to do the work in the middle that will turn the "≠" into a much more valuable "=" symbol. To accomplish this, you'll have to discover what your stakeholders need to understand—and do—with the data, so it can be transformed into useful, actionable insights.

The first place to start is to get the support and buy-in of your executive leadership team. Their big-picture vision and agreement that analytics is strategic to the organization will help you as you build and permeate a data culture. You can read more about the importance of executive buy-in here.

Planning for an organizational data culture starts with a big-picture vision for how data will transform your company. Your executive team and managers should be able to speak to that vision and should be aware of the executive sponsorship.

Ensure that they have coalesced around defined success metrics for company goals that can be measured using data, and share these metrics across the company. Get executives excited about data, and show them how it can be used to measure progress toward achieving the vision. You should be able to list the names, roles, and skill sets of the team that is supporting this initiative so you can clearly point to your champions.

"Our president is the biggest user of Looker, and his entire staff uses it every day."

Mike Burkes, VP Business Intelligence, Fraud Management and Revenue Assurance
Ultra Mobile

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Next up: data literacy

What is data literacy?

Gartner defines data literacy as the ability to read, write, and communicate data in context. This includes an understanding of data sources, analytical methods and techniques, and **the ability to describe the user case, application, and resulting value**.

Why is it important to understand the data literacy levels of your stakeholders?

This'll help you figure out how much training your people will need when you get to the launch phase. As you plan, build, launch, and grow your company's data culture, you'll be familiarizing everyone with many data concepts. The best way to foster an organization-wide data culture is to make sure that people understand where data comes from, what they're asking of it, and how to interpret the insights that emerge.

With executive sponsorship in hand, you can focus on taking the pulse of your organization's data literacy. This will help you understand what type of training will be needed, and set the stage for exploratory conversations you'll have next as you build use cases for your data solution. A survey can help you uncover this information.

When you design a survey, we recommend following the simple guidelines below in order to increase your response rate and ensure you get results you can use effectively.

- Don't limit the survey to questions with restrictive answer options. Offer options like "I don't know," and "Other," and provide a field for open-ended responses.

- Don't require a response to every question.

- Focus each survey you send on collecting one specific information point (i.e. Data Literacy).

"One of the things that we've talked about before is turning insights into actions. Here we're taking it a step further. We're turning insights into dollars, and no one can argue with that."

Brett Kokot, Director of Product

Here's a survey template for gauging data literacy you can use and customize.

Can you explain the results of your business unit's efforts with concrete numbers?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **I don't know** ☐ **Other**

Can you make an argument for a new project using numbers?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **I don't know** ☐ **Other**

How often do you use data to support your decisions, opinions, or ideas?

[   ]

Do you feel comfortable coming up with questions to ask the data?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **I don't know** ☐ **Other**

When viewing a new visualization or dashboard, how confident are you in your ability to understand it?
(1=not at all confident, 5=extremely confident)   **1   2   3   4   5**

This survey is meant to assess your level of comfort with using data in your daily work. The results will help us understand which resources folks may need to better use data. Time to complete: 5 minutes.

When you're trying to get survey responses, setting clear expectations for what you're looking for and how long it'll take them will help your chances of getting responses.

Articulating user stories

Once you understand how people feel about the data they interact with regularly, you can begin the process of understanding their "user stories." This is your opportunity to dive deeper with them and build a framework for everyone's needs. It's where you begin the journey from transforming raw data to information and then to insights.

This process gives you a snapshot of each person's needs in terms of:

• Their job role

• The data they need to do their job

• How they will use this information in their job

• Where the data is found
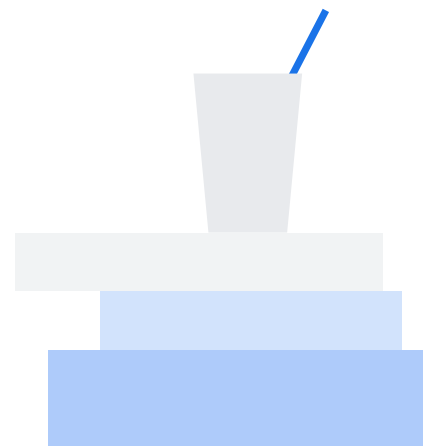
Let's explore an example of a user story and the way you'll build out the data:

As a customer success manager,
I want to see a holistic view of my customers' health
So that I can proactively contact key customers.

ACTIVITY

How to explore data use cases with your stakeholders

This template is a great way to begin the user story process. User stories are how you build the data analytics use cases for your stakeholders. We encourage you to ask three simple questions to kick off this process:

As a... (Who needs this information?)

I want... (What are you trying to understand?)

So that... (How are you going to use this information?)

Let's fill it in with an example:

As a social media manager...

I want to know which social media source drives the most traffic to our website...

So that I can determine where to focus our company's marketing efforts.

Fill in this template with your chosen team!

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Now you can dive into the specific questions that underpin the "I want" line. For example, if your customer success managers want to see a holistic view of customer health, they will need to understand:

Q: When did customers last log in?

Q: What is their renewal date?

Q: How many open support tickets do they have?

Q: What is their user activity?

With this information, you can map to the data sources that will provide the answers:

Q: When did customers last log in?
A: Product data

Q: What is their renewal date?
A: Salesforce

Q: How many open support tickets do they have?
A: Zendesk

Q: What is their user activity?
A: Product data

And finally, you'll work with each person to capture the actions they want to take once they've surfaced the insights. This ensures that the metrics they're asking you to report on are useful and actionable. For example:

Q: Last login
A: Reach out if more than 60 days ago

Q: Renewal date
A: Schedule a check-in call when this date nears

Q: Open support tickets
A: Offer educational materials if over a certain number

Q: User activity
A: If low, reach out with adoption program materials

Showing the value: metrics, kpis, and time saved

We're all motivated by the WIFM ("what's in it for me?"). It's very powerful to show your stakeholders that you're building a data ecosystem that will enable them to surface insights and take action themselves.

In order to do this convincingly, you've got to be able to objectively measure how you'll add value for them. This is where aligning around metrics, key performance indicators (KPIs), processes, and data definitions comes in.

Mindy Rose from Disqus is an advocate for ensuring that the entire company is in alignment on key metrics: "Make sure everyone understands overall company key performance indicators (KPIs) and why they matter. At Disqus, we talk about KPIs openly and frequently," says Rose.

"We have a weekly KPI meeting run by the analytics team, open to the entire company. Analysts disseminate metrics, pacing, and progress towards goals. Other attendees are encouraged to be curious about data and to ask questions, add context, or call out specific projects that they think may have shifted KPIs. In return, the analytics team gets feedback and insight into which metrics are critical and which ones need iteration. Key product-driven insights are provided that drive engagement around KPIs."

Before and after data

It's important to quantify the time it takes for people to do their jobs "before-data." Understand how long it's taking to run reports or get answers back from your data science or analytics team. Then, you'll be able to give stakeholders a compelling picture of how much time they're saving by adopting data-centric habits.

Communicate all the things they'll be able to do instead. But unless you measure, it's impossible to use metrics to bring people along with you.

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Before and after data examples. Jumbleberry, Adore Me, Heroku, Bitfocus, onPeak

Here are just a few examples of companies that adopted Looker and were quickly able to objectively prove that a data culture made people's jobs easier and gave them time back—time they now spend on more strategic initiatives.

- Time to complete case requests at Jumbleberry dropped from 20 hours a week to 2 hours a week—a 90% reduction.

- Adore Me's data analysts used to spend 100% of their time on reporting—now they spend only 5%.

- At Heroku, 90% of questions asked by business teams are now answered immediately through a self-service model.

- The time to complete more than 300 SQL queries (three weeks of work) has been reduced to one hour of work at Bitfocus.

- 70% of all analytics requests at onPeak take minutes. Before, they took months.

"Everyone wants to go home earlier or get through their work faster. If you can show people the benefit of using data by automating a task or improving someone's workflow, you can get them thinking, 'Wow this is cool. What else can I do with this? How could I use data to make a decision better?'"

Josh Temple, Senior Data Engineer, Milk Bar

Planning a Data Culture: Key Takeaways

When you understand your stakeholders, their requirements, and their understanding of data, your path to a data-centric organization will be much smoother.

Don't skimp on the time it takes to do this phase thoroughly. Understanding everyone's needs and coalescing the company around a data vision sponsored by management will help you as you build and launch. Trust us!

Building
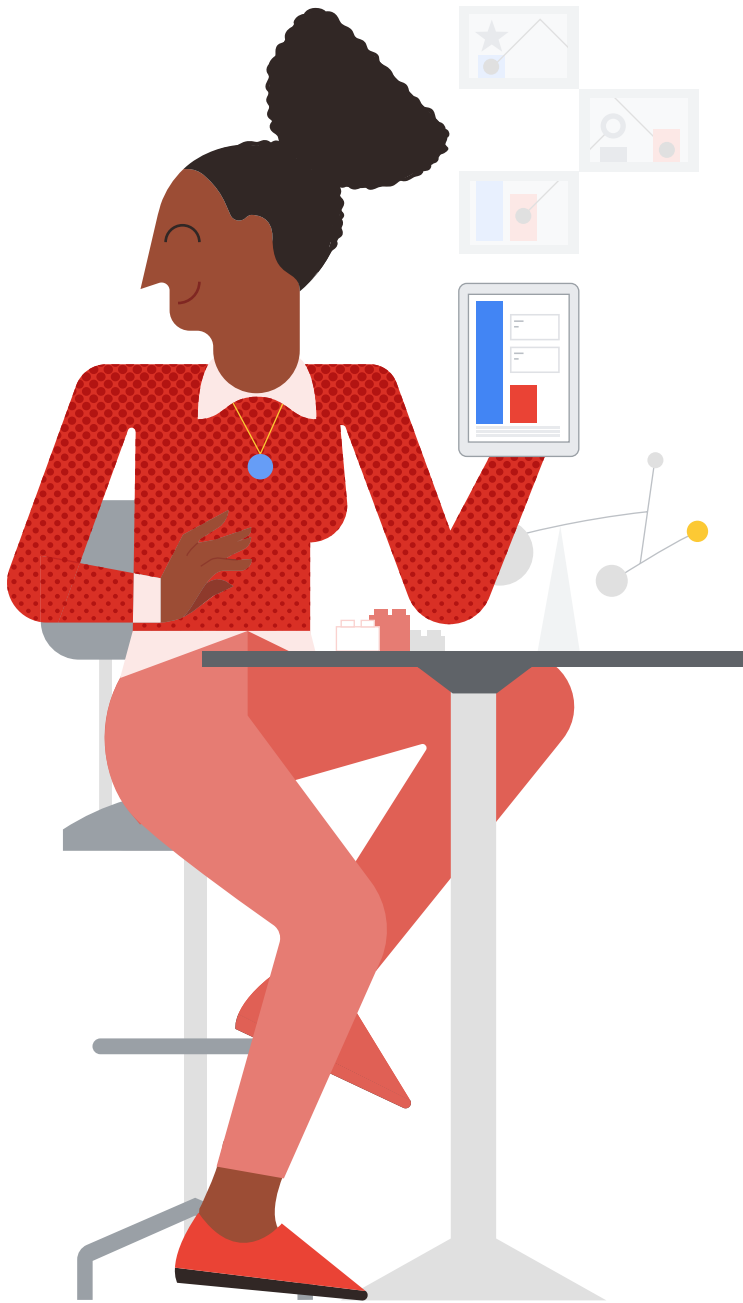
Phase 2:
Building a data culture

Now it's time to build out the reports your users need and strategize how to make data the easy, default choice for your company.

You're ready to make it as habitual as checking email. In this section, we'll show you how to make the adoption curve smooth, so that integrating a data culture into your organization is as routine as possible.

Building reports

Now that you know what people need, your next step is to create those reports—and ensure that the way the data and insights are presented to everyone is as clear and compelling as possible..

One of the best ways to ensure this is to create charts and reports that are easy to understand.

"Email, coffee, and Looker—it's kind of how my day starts."

Sean Bave, General Manager and VP, Stack Overflow

Considerations for individual charts

When creating charts, consider what information you're trying to convey. The four major categories we see are:

- How the values compare to each other

- How the data is distributed

- How the data is composed

- How values relate to each other

Each category of information calls for different types of charts.

What are you trying to show?
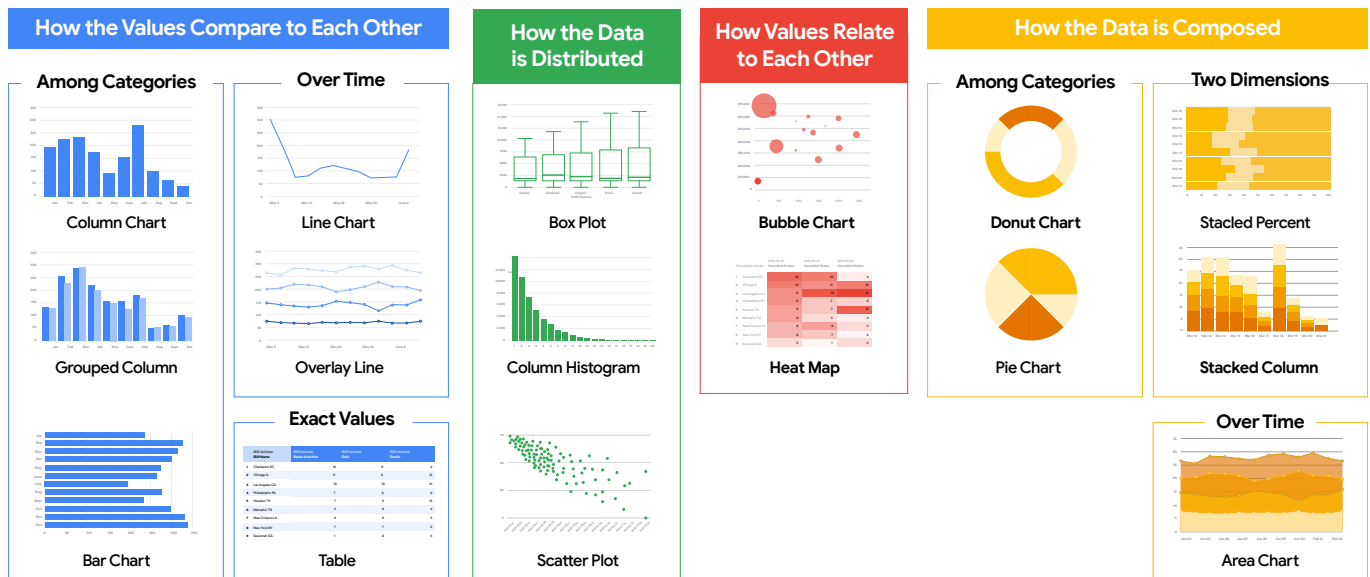
For a detailed breakdown of when to choose what, including examples, refer to these resources:

Article: How to choose the best chart or graph for your data
Presentation: Dress up your data: visualization best practices

Considerations for reports and dashboards

Now that your chart selections are on point, let's focus on the next step: putting multiple charts together to create a report that tells your data story.

It's extremely important to:

- Focus on a single topic and only present information that will help your audience take action on the information they see

- Keep an open feedback loop with the intended audience to make sure you're delivering something they can use

- Clarify the meaning of the data whenever possible; people should know what a number or a graph means without having to ask you

- Simplify your report by removing anything and everything that doesn't support the end user taking action in response to the data they see

- Position the most important information at the top so it's seen right away
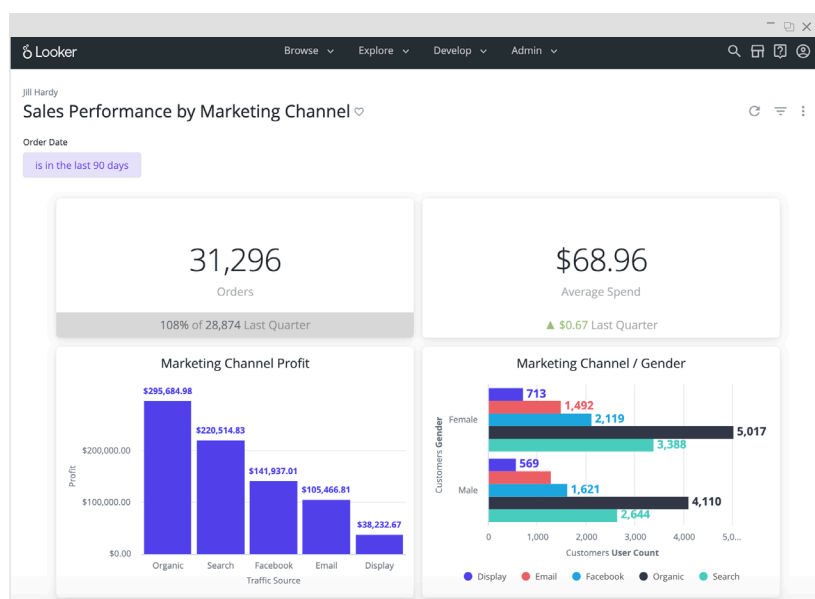
For more on this crucial topic, please check out the following:

Article: 5 tips to make your next dashboard your best yet (designing dashboards for UX/UI)
Workshop deck: Building Impactful Dashboards

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Transparent, convenient data interaction

Another way to build a robust data culture is to make it possible for people to interact with data in a variety of ways and as conveniently—and transparently—as possible.

Like Disqus, for example, who ensures that the entire company aligns democratically around key data metrics and definitions, many other companies are transparent and collaborative around data.

Or Fivetran, who uses Looker to highlight progress toward company goals during every company-wide meeting. This "allows us to give teams across Fivetran a window into different departments' activities and successes," says Garegin Ordyan, head of analytics.

Similarly, Paul Ghio, head of product at Creative Market at Fivetran notes that the company justifies projects or decisions with "data to make much more effective decisions."

Once this starts to happen, they are more likely to use it regularly and become data champions. Schedule regular email reports to be delivered to the entire team, set up a data Slack channel, and create easy URLs so that anyone in the company can easily access data reporting. Reduce the cognitive load so data becomes easy and enjoyable.

"Find a way to make (data) a part of everyone's daily routine—like checking the weather...Part of generating a data-driven culture is creating a team that wants to seek out data. Make it easy for them to find."

Mindy Rose, Analytics Lead, Disqus
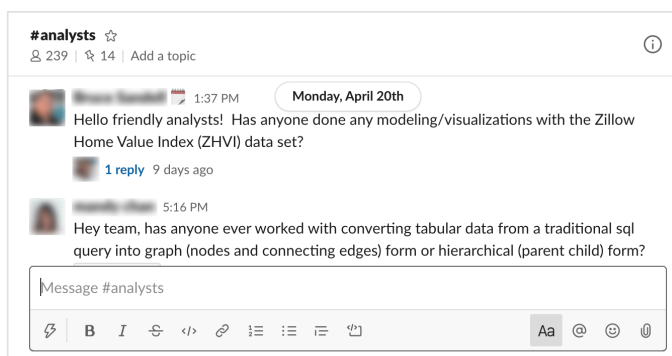
Build a self-service culture with data ambassadors

When you teach people to navigate data and surface insights for themselves, they become independent and free up a huge amount of time to focus on solving deeper problems. So, how do you build a self-service data culture? And how do you build a self-service data culture in the midst of introducing new data solutions and analytics tools?

The answer: data ambassadors.

A data ambassador is an evangelist who helps drive adoption within their business unit. They help their team learn how to use your data solution, bring new use cases and business logic back to technology teams, and evangelize new ways to use and operationalize data throughout the company.

Don't worry, this isn't a role you have to hire for. Many times, data ambassadors present themselves organically.

People who are excited about data and have deep knowledge of their business area become your allies, and you can even entice them by developing a specific program just for them. The team member who was the most engaged or interested in your planning phase, or who seemed the most fluent in their business unit's data needs may be the perfect data ambassador.

This is likely the person you will solicit feedback from as you build out the first reports and visualizations for each user story. They will naturally become data ambassadors as they give you suggestions, seek input from their teams, and begin to drum up enthusiasm with their peers.

To learn more about building a successful data ambassador program, see how other companies have done it:

The expected (and unexpected) rewards of building a data culture at Guild Education

"Give someone a data answer, and they have an answer for a day; teach someone data self-service, and they have answers for a lifetime."

What does a data ambassador do?

- Onboards new users to data solutions.

- Helps define user cases and KPIs/metrics.

- Shows their teams how to interact with data in everyday workflows.

- Acts as a liaison between their team and the analytics team.

- Evangelizes data throughout their business unit.

Benefits of becoming a data ambassador

Career development: Learns new technologies, develops leadership and mentorship skills.

Enhanced experience and exposure: Influences data decisions and strategies.

Networking: Joins a broader data community.

How do you identify a potential data ambassador?

Nomination: Business teams can nominate people who are good at talking about data, understanding data relationships, and testing new reports; or who have had early access to, and training on, your data solution.

System activity: Once your data solution has launched, look for top users or people who are heavily involved in giving feedback.

Call to action: Ask! Promote the opportunity, or formalize the data ambassador role as an internal company position.

How does a data ambassador foster a data culture?

- Holds office hours to help train users.

- Connects regularly with users.

- Incentivizes and recognizes users.

- Relays user feedback to the data team, and relays data updates to end users.

- Helps the data team understand user needs.

“…as you train people, and then they move to other teams, the number of teams with Looker ambassadors grows, and before long there are experts across the company.”

Sean McKeever, Senior Business Intelligence Analyst, Guild Education

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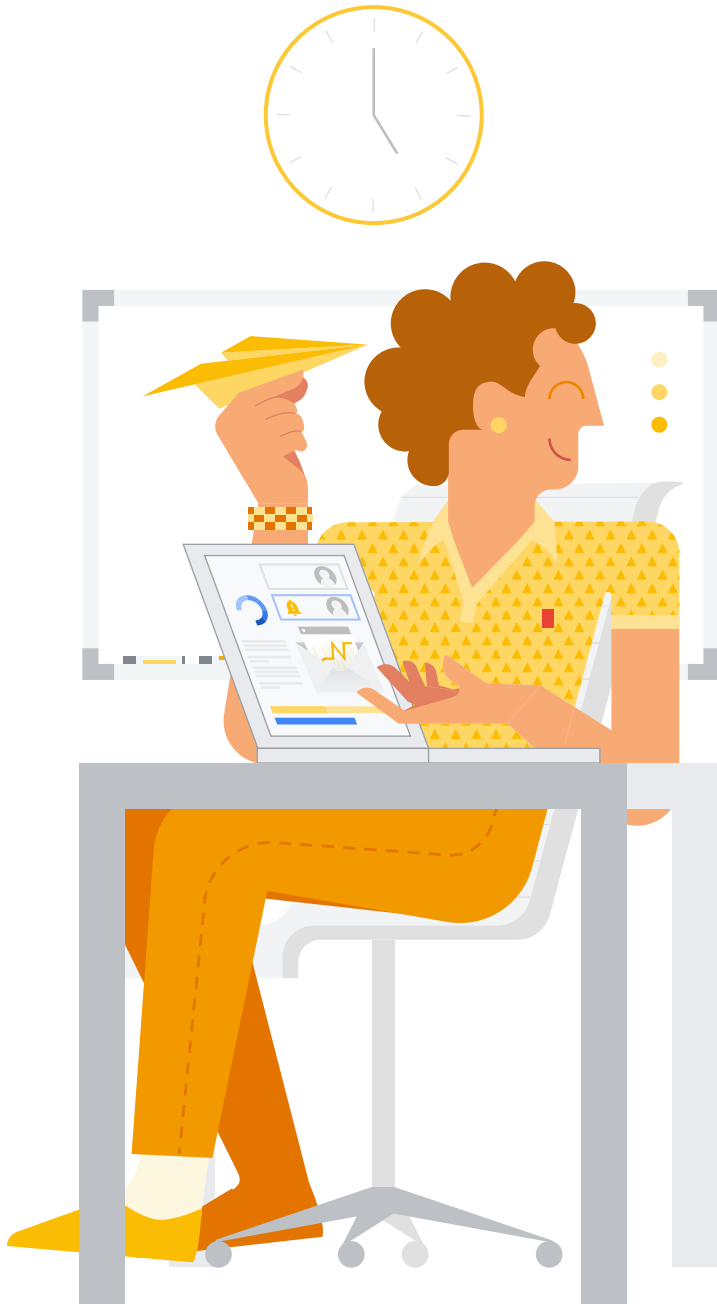
Launchng

Phase 3:

Launching Your Data Culture

Before you push the "Go" button on launching your data culture, you need to promote your program, make your people data-ready, and, above all, make it fun and engaging. Think of it like a product launch.

Define Your Communication Strategy

You can begin launch by identifying the steps of your communication plan in terms of messaging, supporting infrastructure, and channels, as well as a phased roll out to users.

To help you roll out your data program, we've provided some questions you can ask yourself as you develop your outreach effort.

- How will end users understand the vision for analytics at their company, why data is important, and how it will evolve over time?

- How will you communicate success metrics?

- Consider how to provide users with the following information:

- The journey of data from source systems to reports

- The definitions of metrics

- Access to resources, or get help when they have a question

- What channels already exist for communicating en masse with certain teams and users?

- What other media or tools at your company can you leverage for communication, sharing knowledge, and storing assets?

- What tools have you used in the past to communicate other company-wide initiatives?

Once you have your answers, go ahead and schedule meetings to introduce your new reports to your colleagues.

Free Download
You can download these customizable email and presentation templates to use when you introduce people to data:

Presentation:
12 ways to comunicate your Looker Roll-Out

Email Template:
How to communicate a roll-out

Getting Everyone Involved: Continual Iteration and Improvement

As you start inviting more and more people to engage with your data platform, you'll want to gather their input on a regular basis. You'll be learning from them as much as they'll be learning from you.

This is where you can lean heavily on your Data Ambassadors to help teach users how to find answers themselves from the data, no matter what tools you've deployed.

1 **Encourage self-service:** When someone requests data, coach them through how to handle the request themselves. In time, they'll become more skillful at it and will be able to take the reins themselves.

Example: Disqus

For a long time, users at Disqus had been conditioned to rely on analysts for data pulls and analysis and were reluctant to explore the powerful data tools already in place. To help boost end-user confidence, the company committed to providing them with the tools and training to help them understand how to work with data and perform their own analysis.

Their advice?

"When someone requests a data pull, sit down with them, and walk them through building a report from scratch. And don't just have them look over your shoulder while you do it—seriously, make them do it. With time, they will become more proficient, gain more confidence, ask more questions, and, most importantly, have the ability to find the answers themselves."

2 **Make formal training accessible:** Publicizing training and making it easy to access is key. Use your internal communication hubs, like Slack or your intranet

to post training schedules, events, resources, and links to online training.

Another effective tactic is holding regular office hours where anyone can come and ask questions. You might start by hosting these yourself, and eventually handing the sessions over to your data ambassadors.

Example: Fivetran

At Fivetran, setting office hours has proven to be invaluable: "Providing regular opportunities for anyone to ask questions and learn in real-time helps to build on that excitement and trust in the platform. At Fivetran, we hold Looker office hours three times a week to help people get started, learn how to set up their first few dashboards, and do complex merged explores and offsets," says Garegin Ordyan, Head of Analytics at Fivetran.

Make it clear to everyone who their go-to people are. These individuals can be advanced, experienced users who are certified in the solutions you have adopted.

You should also encourage people to take advantage of your data solution vendor's training resources. Many vendors offer a rich treasure trove of free-of-charge resources and links—online classes, instructor-led virtual training, live and recorded instructional webinars, and documentation—that you can distribute across your company.

For example, Looker provides comprehensive and in-depth learning materials that are public for all users at all skill levels. Just about every question you could have has already been answered and documented, so take advantage! https://looker.com/guide

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3 **Make the value of data clear:** There's no better way to illustrate the value of data than compelling user stories. When your people hear about how data has transformed the way their peers save time and effort, gain insights, tackle problems more effectively, make better decisions, and push innovation, they'll want to know more.

Quantifiable results will add even more credibility. Encourage teams to share their successes, and publicize these wins through internal emails, newsletters, or internal blog hubs.

Here are 9 examples from our own customers.

Trumaker, a San Francisco-based menswear brand specializing in made-to-measure shirts: "Being able to...consume data and feed it in any way we want, really cuts down on our workload and adds value to our data."

Counsyl, a genetic screening company that provides women and their families actionable information to make critical and timely health decisions: From finance personnel to lab scientists, data has completely transformed the organization's culture. "People who have been working in healthcare for 10 years now feel empowered to understand problems we haven't solved yet," states Leland Robbins, senior manager analytics and operations.

BuzzFeed, a leading independent digital media company delivering news and entertainment worldwide: More than 700 employees at BuzzFeed use Looker each month to gain insights on the content they produce, helping them to identify what's working, what they should be moving away from, and what they should be doing more of.

Heroku, a Salesforce.com company, is a PaaS that provides services and tools to build, run, and scale web and mobile applications: 80% of the data team's operational time used to be spent with sales and marketing. Now, different teams can find immediate answers to more than 90% of their questions through a self-service Looker data model that also provides scheduling and actions.

onPeak, a top provider of accommodations in the events industry: Productizing analytics and embedding a business intelligence tool for all their internal teams in marketing, sales, account management gives them self-service access to the specific data they each need to do their jobs better. Now 70% of all analytics requests take just minutes, whereas, in the past, they used to take months.

Continuum, a company that provides managed IT service providers the technology platform, services, and processes they need to simplify IT management and deliver exceptional service: The partner success team went from spending an average of two hours before each partner meeting running reports to less than five seconds. That means 2,000 hours of time were saved within the first six months of using their new data platform. Additionally, the time spent on creating new reports and dashboards was reduced from two to three days to minutes.

Jumbleberry, a digital marketing network that delivers a full-suite of performance-based monetization solutions designed for direct response marketers: Time to complete case requests dropped from 20 hours a week to 2 hours a week—a 90% reduction.

AdoreMe, a subscription-based lingerie e-commerce company. Data analysts used to spend 100% of their time on reporting—now they spend only 5%.

Bitfocus, a leading system administration and software development firm: The time to complete more than 300 SQL queries (three weeks of work) has been reduced to one hour of work.

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4 **Encourage curiosity:** Milk Bar, which describes itself as a New York City bakery known for "low-brow desserts" made with familiar ingredients, sees its data platform as a force multiplier because it empowers users who don't have technical skills or experience to work directly with data.

Senior Data Engineer, Josh Temple's primary goal was to show everyone how data makes their jobs easier. Once people started seeing the value of data, they were hungry for more.

Along with training, Temple offers proper documentation and sends out weekly emails and asks coworkers for any questions they may have.

"It's not enough just to train someone and move on," he stresses. "You have to give people an opportunity to ask a question that they may have thought was stupid or is just core to what they do. You have to provide ways for them to give feedback on an ongoing basis."

5 **Gather user input:** Establishing feedback loops is essential to fine-tuning your platform, providing the right level of training, increasing your employees' level of confidence in handling data, and ensuring that their needs are met. You can formalize this process by creating surveys that you can fine-tune as you go.

Here are some post-implementation survey questions you can use:

Here are some post-implementation survey questions you can use:

Q: Do you know how to find the reports that you need?

☐ Yes, I can find everything I need
☐ For the most part, but some information I need is missing
☐ No, it's confusing
☐ Other [＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿]

Q: Do you reference data when making decisions in your job?

☐ Yes, often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Not really
☐ If not, why? [＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿]
☐ Other [＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿]

Q: Do you know where to go for help with data?

☐ Yes ☐ No
☐ I know of some resources, but I wish I had different ones
☐ Other [＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿]

Q: Are you comfortable about choosing data visualizations?

☐ Yes ☐ No
☐ I have some level of comfort, but could use some additional help
☐ Other [＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿]

Q: Are you able to find metrics that you need to track and measure your current project?

☐ Yes ☐ No
☐ I could use some additional help
☐ Other [＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿]

Q: How often do you feel overwhelmed by data?

☐ Always ☐ Sometimes
☐ Rarely, but it can happen ☐ Never
☐ Other [＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿]

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When you design a survey, remember these guidelines:

Don't limit the survey to questions with restrictive answer options. Offer options like "I don't know," and "Other," and provide a field for open-ended responses.

Don't require a response to every question.

Keep a specific goal in mind—like learning about a group of stakeholders or a particular use case—instead of trying to gather all information in one go. It will make the information volume more manageable.

6 **Make it fun:** As part of your training exercises, you might consider hosting competitions where you challenge a group of users to create a dashboard for a defined data problem with a specific set of requirements.

You can set parameters like:

"Must include at least one area chart."

"Must have the ability to limit the data to a certain time frame."

"Must include at least one section header to break up the visualizations."

Participants can submit their dashboards to a vote and then receive feedback from their peers in a non-threatening, supportive way.

Another idea: tie data into a fun company-wide initiative, like a January fitness challenge to see who can record the highest number of steps walked in a month. You can create a dashboard for the challengethat everyone can use to check their rank in the challenge. And you can go deeper with this data as a subtle way of showing different types of analysis. For instance, you might include the cumulative number of steps taken by everyone in the company, the average number of steps taken each day of the week, and a breakdown of participation in the

challenge by department. It's a low-pressure way to get people more involved with data.

Get more details in our Looker dashboard challenge deck and rubric.

7 **Training enablement:** Questions to ask yourself

- How will the training team work with leadership? Do you have an executive sponsor supporting the training initiative across business units?

- Who is responsible for training users?
    - Is there a dedicated training team?
    - Or will training be delivered by an external team, such as partners or data tool vendors?

- Do you have a learning management system (LMS) tool in place at your organization? Will training be delivered in person, online, or a combination of both?

- Will training be mandatory for some users? Will analytics training be part of the company's new hire ramp?

- How will training differ by persona, user type, and team?
    - How will the team determine who needs training and at what level (initial, advanced, repeat, supplemental)?
    - How will the training team adjust training/ support initiatives to target groups who need it the most?
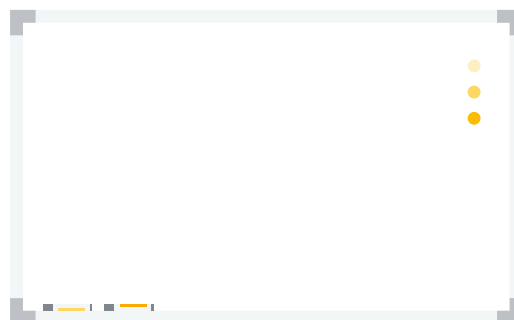
# Guild Education: Promoting a Data Culture

Employees of Fortune 500 companies and other large enterprises use the Guild Education platform to manage their educational journey. As they pivoted to a data culture, their student coaches were front and center in the process.

Here are some tips from Guild Education:

- **Formalize the selection process for task forces** and get management recommendations on who to name as data ambassadors.

- **Form small groups and use collaboration tools** for more productive meetings and to keep communication flowing.

- **Provide an overview** on the function of data and business intelligence (BI) and how it relates to the business.

- **Take a deeper dive** into data tools and provide hands-on exercises, such as doing ad-hoc queries or performing one-off calculations.

- **Incorporate training consistently** into every meeting to reap big dividends down the line.

- **Exchange ideas and set goals**, sharing accomplishments and planning work two weeks out.

- **Bring in new data enthusiasts** to build a group of experts and spread the word.

Growing
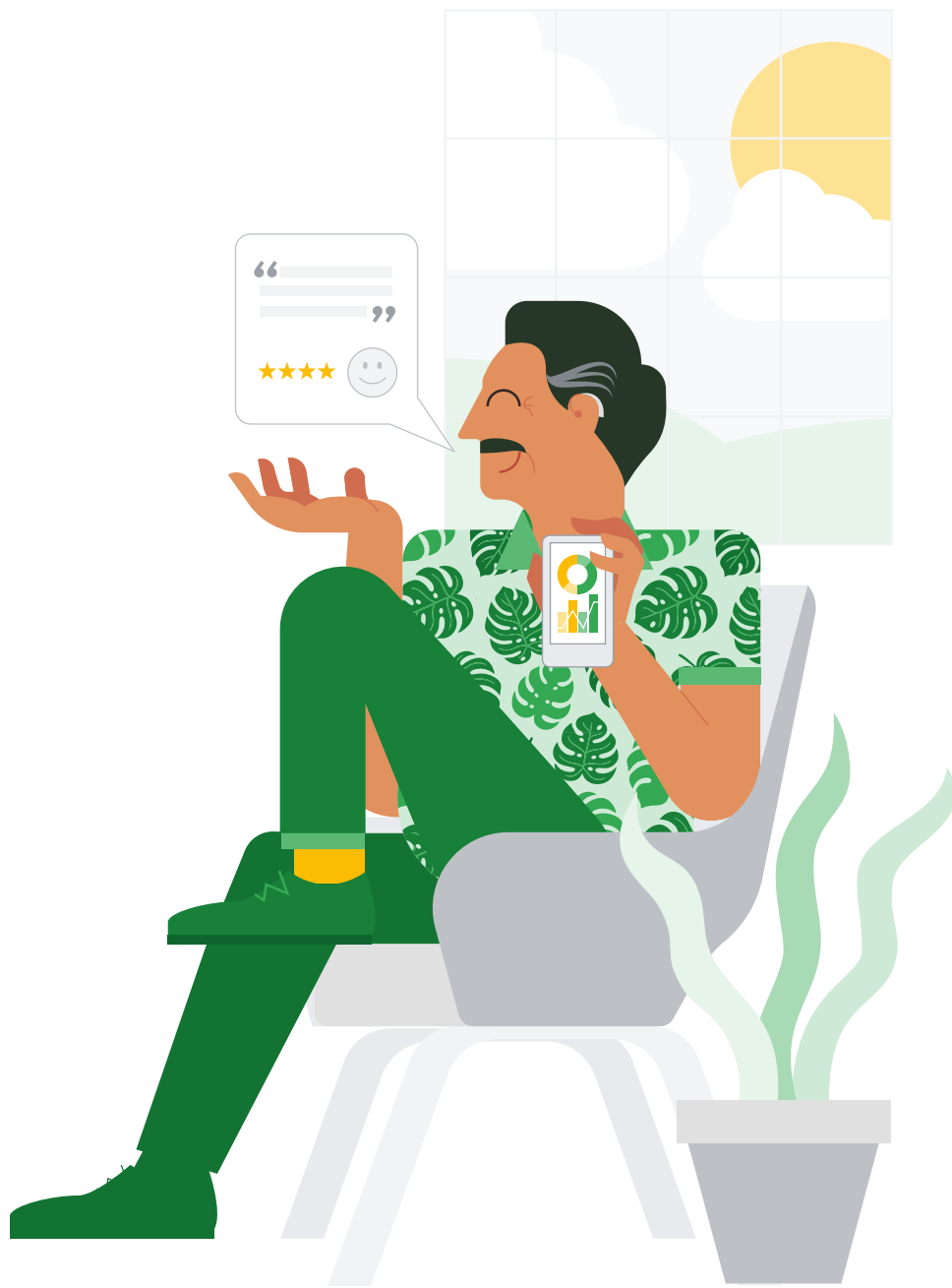
Phase 4:
Growing Your Data Culture

You're humming along, and your users are self-servicing with data. You deserve kudos.

Now, you're ready for the growth phase. There are likely still business units in your company with people who aren't leveraging data the way they could be.

There are a few ways to do that.

- You can expand the number of data use cases.

- You can increase the number of people who use data on a regular basis.

- You can make data the default choice.

To grow your data culture, keep supporting and growing your Data Ambassador program, and continue supporting data self-service.

Case Studies: How to Expand Your Data Culture

Expand the Use Cases: Glossier
Skincare and beauty products company Glossier started with simple metrics related to sales. They expanded their use of data and analytics, and now build business strategies by answering complex questions such as customer lifetime value, the order of purchase history, and regional buying trends.

Encourage Data-Driven Decisions: Avant
At online lending platform Avant, employees use data to support every decision. This has led to a 100% adoption rate of Looker, and a completely data-driven culture. As Will Wolfson, head of data quality says, "business users take ownership of their data."

"An internal survey we conducted earlier this year found that 94% of our employees utilize some form of data or analytics resource to do their job, which is truly representative of a data-driven culture."

Mindy Rose, Analytics Lead, Disqus
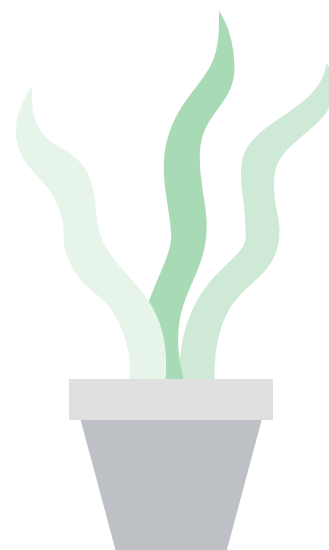
Support Self-Service: Milk Bar
New York-based Milk Bar focuses on training users and equipping them with the proper tools. "Rather than saying, 'I'm the only one who can do analytics because I'm the only one with the know-how to do it right,' they can take an active role in answering questions with data."

Have Patience: Data Cultures Take Time
Disqus focuses on growing its data culture. "94% of our employees utilize some form of data or analytics resource to do their job, which is truly representative of a data-driven culture. Obviously, this didn't happen overnight. The change was gradual, sometimes painfully so, and not met without challenges. However, with persistence, the support of our leadership team, and a devoted data and analytics team, we were able to influence our co-workers into caring about data as much as we do," says Mindy Rose, analytics lead.

Conclusion

Building a data culture that works may seem like a big job. But if you approach it systematically, you'll find it easy to make steady progress.

The most important thing to remember is it's a highly-iterative process. As you GROW and add use cases, you'll PLAN, BUILD, and LAUNCH with new stakeholders. As new people join the company, your Data Ambassadors will help them go through each step.

The individuals in your organization will go through a transformative process as you embark on a journey to a data-enabled culture. People will find their jobs are easier to do; they'll have more time to make strategic and better decisions; and everyone will be aligned around universally agreed-upon definitions of data that move your company forward into an exciting, data-driven future.

We're always here to help. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at any time.
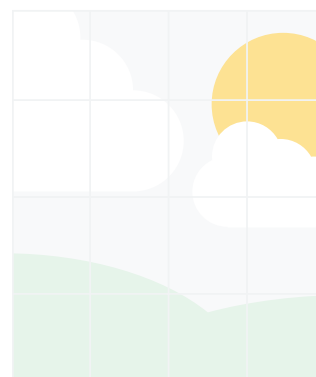
Resources

- How to choose the best chart or graph for your data

- Dress up your data: visualization best practices

- 5 tips to make your next dashboard your best yet (designing dashboards for UX/UI)

- Building Impactful Dashboards

- 12 ways to communicate your Looker roll-out

- How to Communicate a Roll-Out email template

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