

# Beyond Waffle House

## Transforming from Transactional Data Providers to Strategic Partners

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# Data-Driven Dissonance

Are We Getting What We Hoped For?

# They're All Data-Driven Except When They're Not

## Gap Between Wants and Haves Around Data



### What they want

**83%** of CEOs want their organizations to be more data-driven

**87%** of CXOs said being an intelligent enterprise is their top priority

### What they have

**33%** are comfortable questioning KPIs and metrics used in organizations

**29%** are asked to communicate using data-driven methods

**30%** say actions are driven by data analysis

**34%** find it easy to find internal or external collaborator that can help

n = 455, Base = end users, Source: IDC survey, 2021

# They're All Data-Driven

Except When They're Not

## The State of Data and AI in Leading Companies 2024 (Bean & Davenport)

Progress of Data and Analytics Initiatives	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Driving Business Innovation with Data	59.5%	64.2%	48.5%	56.5%	59.5%	77.6%
Competing on Data and Analytics	47.6%	45.1%	41.2%	47.4%	40.8%	50.0%
Managing Data as a Business Asset	46.9%	50.0%	39.3%	39.7%	39.5%	49.1%
Created a Data-Driven Organization	31.0%	37.8%	24.0%	26.5%	23.9%	48.1%
Established a Data & Analytics Culture	28.3%	26.8%	24.4%	19.3%	20.6%	42.6%



# The Data Providers

Transactional, Reactive Models That Limit Value

# *The Waffle House Ad Hoc Champions*



# *The Waffle House*

## *Ad Hoc Champions*

### **Pros**

- Efficiently handle high volume of requests
- Reliably provide routine, operational & compliance reports
- Shared expectations

### **Cons**

- Not equipped or supported to provide any other value (and blamed for limited value)
- Skills are underutilized, growth opportunities are limited
- Excluded from strategic decision-making

*The Vending Machine  
Disrespected Dedication*



# *The Vending Machine*

## *Disrespected Dedication*

### **Pros**

- Convenience
- On-demand data

### **Cons**

- Data quality & valuable insights are sacrificed
- Leads to technical / analytical debt
- Misapplication of skilled analysts
- Expertise is overlooked or denied
- Low morale from low respect

***The Glorified Alexa***  
*Underutilized Sophistication*



# *The Glorified Alexa*

## *Underutilized Sophistication*

### **Pros**

- Advanced analytics capabilities
- Development of interactive dashboards, self-service analytics and other deliverables
- Use technology to automate and streamline processes
- “Smart” flex

### **Cons**

- Stakeholders may only know Waffle House questions
- “Data for data’s sake” – requests or initiatives which show capabilities but don’t address priorities
- Still not integrated into strategic decision making

***The Butler***  
*Invisible Workhorse*



# *The Butler*

## *Invisible Workhorse*

### **Pros**

- Provides critical data capabilities
- Versatile, able to take on a wide variety of tasks with proficiency
- Willing “team players”
- Reliable

### **Cons**

- Exists to carry out data tasks for other teams
- Other teams are “hands off” of data
- Not part of decision-making, except to rubber stamp
- Can’t change status or data culture – people prefer having a butler

# **The Strategic Partner**

Delivering Value Through Expertise and  
Collaborative Innovation



*The Navigator*  
*Strategic Guide*

### Pros

- Provides trusted counsel to leadership
- Deeply integrated into decision-making
- Data and analytics are aligned to organizational priorities
- Identifies opportunities, threats, & challenges proactively

### Cons

- Data team may not be (or feel) equipped to effectively engage stakeholders in this way
- Requires intentional effort to develop and maintain supportive culture
- Processes may feel more complex and involved than other personas

# Transforming Mindsets

Going from Giving and Taking Orders to  
Strategic Partnership

# Key Action Steps

## Data Teams

### **Be self-aware**

- Which persona(s) best reflects your team?
- Where are your growth opportunities?

### **Strengthen your skills and upgrade processes**

- Enhance your analytical and communication skills.
- Automate and streamline routine operations.

### **Think like a partner**

- Seek to understand leaders' perspective, priorities, pain points.
- Collaborate cross-functionally to identify opportunities to drive value.

### **Deliver value, not just data**

- Pursue data-informed solutions aligned with organizational goals.
- Provide insights, implications, and recommendations.

# Key Action Steps

## Organizational Leaders

### **Be self-aware**

- Do you primarily engage your data team(s) as operational support or strategic partners?

### **Articulate strategic plans and priorities clearly and frequently**

- Identifying goals, initiatives, and success metrics will drive data team's focus.

### **Request insights, not just info**

- Intentionally include data team in strategic discussions and decision-making.
- Seek data team's input on business challenges and opportunities.

### **Cultivate an empowering data culture**

- Promote curiosity, continuous learning, and data literacy campuswide.

### **Invest in growth**

- Invest in tools and training to expand analytical skillsets.

# Thank you!

## Let's Connect!

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