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DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

How Dell IT is Driving Data-as-a-product

Find out how Dell is unlocking the value of our data by partnering with the business to treat data as a product.

By Will Hudson | April 28, 2022

Topics in this article

Digital Transformation

This blog is co-authored by [Attila Finta](#), Senior Consultant, IT Architecture, Dell Digital.

Welcome to the new data era, where hyper-connected infrastructure is processing more and more zettabytes from everywhere and anywhere around the world at speeds we've never seen before. We intuitively know that this data will produce breakthrough insights and outstanding results for the companies that are able to make sense of it all. The question for all of us IT folk is "HOW do I enable my business partners to leverage that data and create the bottom-line value that we know is there?"

We believe the approach that makes the most sense is to make it [Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable (FAIR)](#), while also recognizing data for what it is – a product that we use to create value for our customers.

As with any product, this requires that we understand the objectives of our customers, how they want to create value with our data product, and then tailor our approach to how we produce and manage that product throughout its lifecycle.

This means that we must create a close partnership between data producers (largely IT folks) and data consumers (largely business folks). This partnership forms the basis for implementing data management best practices, creating trust in the data and ultimately the long-term value creation we're all looking for.

Dell Digital, Dell's IT organization, is protecting and maximizing the potential of Dell Technologies data to power our business units through a data-first culture, data-as-a-product and a foundational architecture built for this data decade.

The business imperative for data

As I mentioned above the first, and arguably most important, step in embracing data-as-a- product is identifying the key data consumers and forming a relationship with your business partners. Creating value with data is all about enabling business processes to consume your data in a way that generates insights and value. Defining how that is best done must be a business activity—one that supports and extends business process.

In some cases, this requires a culture change both for the technical teams, who often see data analysis as a showcase for sophisticated technologies, and for the business teams, who often regard data as the sawdust left behind from their business processes. Data leverages technology and intelligence to create value inside of processes. Without the people and process knowledge the business brings, we technologists are left without a lot of purpose.

The product team model

To do this, Dell Digital is taking bold steps to democratize our data and empower our application owners by forming data product teams around data sets and the business processes they support. These teams directly include business partners throughout the product development lifecycle. This both deepens the trusted relationships that exist between application owners and business partners and serves to bolster the trust and sense of ownership that business people have in the data.

By focusing the relationship down to well-defined "creators" and "consumers," we can create a highly effective product team that is able to not only manage quality and the data lifecycle more efficiently, but it can also pivot its precious resources towards innovation, value creation and maximization. These teams can then be free to iterate, experiment, test and learn their way to a better data future for their data product.

The people behind the product

Hopefully you have an idea of what we are trying to create: an innovative new model that leverages the best practices of software engineering and relationship building to create multi-disciplinary teams that are empowered to leverage your data to create new ways of doing business.

This is about creating the culture of ownership and accountability for data, but not in a monolithic, in a highly democratized way. In this fashion, data product teams can collaborate, share best practices with each other and even compete to return the value of data back to the enterprise and our customers. Data ownership at the product level is the core concept here, without which value creation is impossible. Identifying a clear business owner and technical owner is fundamental.

Technology in the data playground

Having successfully done that, we can release our inner technologist on some of the most amazing new technology in the industry. In order to create a successful marketplace of data products that maximizes the connections between data producers and data consumers (and also enables new and unforeseen connections), we've deployed a data fabric architecture.

Built on Dell-on-Dell technology, our ecosystem is interconnected through active metadata and automation. We provide automated self-service to rapidly spin up new data pipelines with smart data ingestion.

Our curated catalog offers a range of data forms, from raw data for operational analytics data science to cleansed and curated data for machine learning analytics, to aggregated data packaged and optimized for consumption for traditional business intelligence and artificial intelligence.

The end state of this data fabric is an ecosystem that's optimized as autonomously as possible to deliver the data seamlessly from the producer to the consumer through automation and active metadata.

Since technology is only valuable when it gets used, we have spent a lot of time designing a user experience that supports our data-as-a-product approach. The idea is for users to feel like they have the same experience across our entire data set.

The bottom line is that data needs to be respected and treated as a product, and if you do that, you can find all kinds of value creation opportunities across your data footprint.

Our session "[Unlocking the Value of Dell Technologies Data Footprint](#)" at Dell Technologies World 2022 will go into depth on how we are protecting and maximizing the potential of Dell Technologies data to power our business units through a data-first culture, data as-a-product and a foundational architecture built for this data decade. Join us to meet Dell's IT practitioners, learn our best practices and ask us all your questions. [Register now](#).

*Keep up with our Dell Digital strategies and more at [**Dell Technologies: Our Digital Transformation**](#).*

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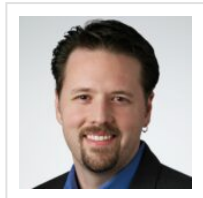
About the Author: [Will Hudson](#)

Will Hudson currently leads the Customer Engagement and Data Transformation (CEDT) organization. The CEDT team partners with the Chief Marketing Officer and other key business leaders across Dell Technologies to drive the next evolution of our customer-centric digital transformation. Knowing, understanding, and establishing direct and meaningful connection…

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