Data Model

Data model represents the framework of what the relationship are within a database. This framework in the world of data warehousing is a critical component as it will provide the structure which will support the analytical needs of the decision makers. The data itself will literally be stored within this framework on a database. So building a data model is a critical step in the design of the data warehouse. This step requires your business people to engage in the process by participating in facilitated session with our data architects. This can seem intimidating for organizations to take on, so often organizations start looking for something out of the box. The amount of effort you would take in vetting a packaged data model to ensure that it fits your business; is nearly the same level of effort to go ahead and design one specifically for your business. However, this is an easy trap to fall into because data models appear to do more than they actually do. Especially to business people. The first thing to understand is that a data model is just a shell. A data model without populated data isn’t much more than a drawing. The real expense and heavy lifting in a data warehouse project is not in the design of the model, but rather populating that model with data from your source systems. And that is where the big money is spent to create a data warehouse. Now some organizations don’t even vet packaged data models, assuming they are well positioned out of the box. But they’re usually in for a huge shock once all the reporting and analytics go live. They often find that the logic does not mirror their internal practices and rules. Additionally, they find entire dimensions not being represented. The ETL, Staging, Data model and reports are all in place and now need a major rebuild. If you are going to use a packaged data model, at very least, you should vet it completely before deploying it in your business. Rather than thinking of the packaged data model as the end game you’re better off thinking of it as a guide while you design your own data warehouse. This is because you’re likely to have a lot of deviations from what the vendor would consider as “standard”. And it also enables you to build your competitive advantage above and beyond your competitors’ analytics.