IT vs Data Governance…

Since IT and data governance are so inextricably connected and vital to an organization's operations, how about we compare and contrast the two.

What is IT Governance?

IT governance ensures that the organization's IT investments support the business objectives, manage the risks, and meet compliance regulations.

Examples of organization's IT investments: physical and technical security, encryption, servers, software, computer and network devices, database schemas, and backups. In short: no IT, no data, and no business.

Stakeholders involved in the success of IT governance include the board of directors, executives in finance, operations, marketing, sales, HR, vendors and, of course, the chief information officer (CIO) as well as other IT management.

To accomplish their goals, CIOs will often use existing IT governance frameworks, created by industry experts. These frameworks also provide implementation guides, case studies and assessments. Here are some frameworks you may have heard of:

1. COBIT 5: A staple in the industry, this framework helps enterprises with IT governance, business optimization, and growth by leveraging proven practices. This framework is based on five key principles for governance and management of enterprise IT:

   - Meeting Stakeholder Needs
   - Covering the Enterprise End-to-End
   - Applying a Single, Integrated
   - Enabling a Holistic Approach
   - Separating Governance From Management

2. ITIL: IT Infrastructure Library helps with aligning IT services with the needs of the business. Most known for their framework of five core publications, each book collects the best practices for each phase of the IT service lifecycle.

3. FAIR: They're a non-profit professional organization (NGO) dedicated to advancing the discipline of measuring and managing information risk. They provide information risk, cybersecurity and business executives with the standards and best practices to help organizations measure, manage and report on information risk from the business perspective."

4. ISO (International Organization for Standardization)

   - ISO 9001 (General)
   - ISO 14001
   - ISO 27000 (IT)

- ISO/TS 16949
- ISO 22000
- ISO 50001
- ISO 13485
- ISO 31000
- ISO 26000
- ISO 20121

When it comes to frameworks, you'll have to decide which one works with your company culture and often times, organizations will find that a hybrid approach works the best.

So What Then is Data Governance?

Data governance refers to the management of data in order to improve business outcomes and fuel business growth.

The stakeholders involved for data governance include all the individuals required for IT governance plus a few more executives: the board, executives in finance, operations, marketing, sales, HR, vendors, CIO, IT management.

NOTES: Since this data governance is a relatively new field, there aren't established frameworks, such as COBIT 5.

But based on the research, a company's executive suite should be asking some of the following questions:

1. What is your business strategy? A data strategy isn't going to generate a single incremental dollar for your business, it's simply an enabler.

2. Have you defined and communicated key objectives throughout your organization? You're going to be wasting a lot of time, money and resources solving for a problem and if you don't know what the business problem is

3. Do you have the right data and is it of sufficient quality? Without data quality, your data projects and analytics will inevitably fall short.