

# The data request process

So far, you've learned that a business data request is any business question that can be answered with data. One of the ways a data analyst can learn about business data requests is through a data request process. In this reading, you'll learn more about the data request process. You'll also learn how to manage and work within the data request process to complete your analysis.

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## The data request

Data requests can be formal or informal. The format of a data request will influence the information available to you. An informal data request will not require specific information. When making an informal data request, you can leave out information, or provide extraneous content.

A ticketing system provides structure for a data request. With this system, you can specify the fields required for each ticket, including:

- Date of the request
- Department or person requesting
- Scope of the request
- Goals of the request
- Date information is needed

When you receive an informal request, via email or verbally, it's possible that some of these elements won't be included. When receiving an informal request, be sure to gather all of the information you need to complete your analysis. This might include asking the requester more questions before beginning the analysis process.

## How to respond to a data request

Once you've gathered the information from the data request, it may still be helpful to follow-up with the requester for clarification.

Some questions you can ask after receiving a data request include:

- What is the business goal of the request?
- How does the requester intend to use the data?
- In what format does the requester need the data?

Once you have all of the information you need, you can create a plan for addressing the data question.

First, determine the ease of the request. If it's straightforward, you can move on to the next stage. If the request is unclear, ask more clarifying questions to ensure that you can complete the project effectively.

Second, create a plan for completing the analysis. Clearly communicating this plan with the initial requester ensures that everyone knows what to expect from your data analysis.

## Managing multiple requests

The data request system becomes more complicated when managing multiple projects simultaneously.

When managing different projects, having a request management system can help you track the status of each project. It can also provide a framework for communicating each project's status with the requester.

When managing related projects, a request management system can also provide a structure to map the relationships between them. A request management system can help you determine whether data can be used for multiple projects, and how to work more efficiently. This will also allow you to communicate with all requesters more effectively.

## Key takeaways

The data request process provides structure to data analysis projects, especially while working on multiple projects at once. The organization and format of your data request system can also provide transparency, and help you identify potential issues before they can occur.

## Resources for more information

To learn more about using data request systems, check out these links:

- The Institute of Education Sciences provides a guide to managing requests:  
<https://slds.ed.gov/services/PDCService.svc/GetPDCDocumentFile?fileId=34570>
- Skylight provides information about how to respond to data requests:  
<https://skylight.digital/work/toolkits/data-sharing-playbook/responding-to-data-request/s/>