



e-newsletter

Gaining Support for Data Quality



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Ten Steps to Data Quality

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<http://www.irmuk.co.uk/events/122.cfm>

Danette McGilvray is president and principal of Granite Falls Consulting, Inc., a firm that helps organizations increase their success by addressing the information quality and data governance aspects of their business efforts. Focusing on bottom-line results, Danette helps organizations enhance the value of their information assets by incorporating information quality management into the business. She also emphasizes communication and the human aspect of data quality and governance. Danette is the author of *Executing Data Quality Projects: Ten Steps to Quality Data and Trusted Information™* (Morgan Kaufmann, 2008). An internationally respected expert, her Ten Steps™ approach to information quality has been embraced as a proven method for creating, improving, and managing information and data quality in the enterprise. Her trademarked approach, in which she has trained Fortune 500 clients and thousands of workshop attendees, applies to all types of data and all organizations. Her book is used as a textbook in university graduate programs. The Chinese translation was the first data quality book available in Chinese.

Danette helps clients solve specific data quality problems through data quality projects or incorporating data quality activities into other projects or methodologies. In addition to projects, Danette helps companies set up data quality and governance programs - formal on-going initiatives that address business needs by providing a foundation and services to sustain data quality. Her approach is outlined in her chapter on Data Quality Projects and Programs, in: S. Sadiq (ed.), *Handbook of Data Quality Research and Practice* (Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg, 2013).

Danette is an invited speaker at conferences around the world and received IAIDQ's Distinguished Member Award in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the field of information and data quality.

Joe was working diligently at his desk when a senior vice president walked by and caught sight of him. The VP introduced herself and asked what Joe was working on. After hearing about Joe's data quality project, the VP was so impressed with what Joe and his project had to offer the company that she immediately called the CEO, the COO, CFO, and the CIO. This was the start of what went on to become a successful data quality or data governance initiative within the organization. Fact or fiction?

How many of us get support for our data quality work that easily? I know I never have. I'm guessing that most of you reading this article have never had this happen either. The way to gain support is not through some lucky chance or wishful thinking. Rather, one way to gain support is through effective communications.

Know Your Audience

One key component of effective communications is identifying the appropriate people to engage. In the case of a data quality project, many people fulfill various roles — project sponsor, project stakeholders, project manager, data analysts, business subject matter experts and process owners, data modelers, database administrators, etc. As the leader of the data quality project, it is your responsibility to motivate those on your team and ensure your project continues to have the right level of support, time, funding, and other resources. Those involved with the project often have many other priorities competing for their participation, investment, and attention. How can you ensure that each person is willing to play their part in the success of the project?

Every person or role has his or her own concerns and perspectives that may or may not align with what is needed from them for your project. For example:

- Sponsors of your data quality project need to be kept apprised of progress and be informed of any project roadblocks that appear and where you need their help. Are they committed to removing barriers? How does their help for your project help their priorities?
- Stakeholders want to see the value of the information and data quality improvements expected from your project and how it will help them
- Process owners will need to cooperate in data correction and data error prevention and you need to show them the benefits of participating



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Data Management Seminars

Ten Steps to Data Quality

Danette McGilvray
8-9 May 2014, London
4-5 December 2014, London

Data Modelling Fundamentals

Steve Hoberman
7-8 October 2014, London

Data Modelling Masterclass

Steve Hoberman
9-10 October 2014, London

Defining & Executing your Information Strategy

Jan Henderyckx
25-26 September 2014, London

<http://www.irmuk.co.uk/events/seminars.cfm>

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- Knowledge workers (those dependent on the information to perform their jobs) need to be shown how continuous improvements will increase the quality of the data and how this helps them do their job better

To identify the needs of those involved, ask yourself “What’s In It For Them” (WIIFT) if they support and participate in this project? Consider:

- What are their concerns?
- What are their responsibilities?
- What do they care about?
- What’s in it for them if they support you?
- What will they get?
 - From a business standpoint
 - Personally
- What will they have to give?

Modify your communications to meet the needs of each of your audiences. Keeping track of your various audiences is one of many reasons that a communication plan is helpful for developing and delivering appropriate content.

Communication Plan

Your plan should account for the following:

Audience: Who needs to hear about your data quality project? Consider organizations, teams, and individuals. Expect to have several audiences identified. Is there anyone specifically who should not receive your communication?

Message and Desired Action: What do you want your audience to know (what is changing, how they are impacted, etc.)? What action do they need to take? What benefits will they get by taking that action? (Remember WIIFT!)

Trigger: What timing or event initiates your communication (for example, the first week in the quarter, a monthly management meeting, or when a project phase is complete)?

Communication Vehicle: What method of communication will you use? It is often helpful to list all the communication methods available within your organization. This may include in-person presentations, Web meetings, e-mail message with file attachments, Web site postings, newsletter articles, phone calls, etc. Use as a reference when expanding on the details of your plan.

Development: Who will develop and create the content? Who will provide input to that content?

Delivery: Who will present the communication? Those presenting may be the same or different from those responsible for development. For example, you may be asked to produce a slide set that will be used by your manager to share with his or her manager and peers.

Other Action: What other action is needed to complete the communication? For example, who should be contacted to ensure you are on the agenda and determine the time allowed for the next quarterly meeting?

Target Date: When do you want the specific communication to be completed?

Complete Date: When was the communication actually completed?

Status: What is the progress of the specific communication?

To give you a jumpstart, feel free to download a template with the headings above at <http://www.gfalls.com/ten-steps-data-quality-book/>. Please note, there is no specific order in which to account for the topics. Create the plan by filling in what you know and continue to refine as you go along. Use the template as a starting point, deleting columns or adding them as you proceed.

Create your communication plan early in your project, and maintain it diligently as you go along, accounting for updates and results/feedback from your early communications. Remember that communication is a dialogue. Not only are you communicating with others - you want them to communicate back with you.

Having a thoughtfully orchestrated plan ensures that the messages you deliver are packaged appropriately and reach their intended audiences. Developing a plan and tracking your communications will help motivate you to make the time for this important aspect of your data quality work.

Repetition, Repetition, Repetition

Don't be afraid to repeat your messages. The information needs to be presented to your audience several times to be absorbed. I learned many years ago that a message must be heard five to seven times for an adult learner to absorb it. It is something that has stuck with me ever since—you cannot expect your audience to remember a message that you have given them once, nor should you fault yourself for not making that one message memorable enough. The message will be truly processed only after it is given several times.

This does not necessarily mean that you should say the same thing in the same way. Vary the delivery, but repeat the message. Present it in different ways - visually (through email or a webpage), orally (in a meeting), etc. Variety and repetition are components of a well-orchestrated communication plan.

Summary

Communicating effectively is a frequently forgotten, but important, aspect of data quality management. Often, there is an erroneous assumption that communicating is not “real work”. Let me assure you that communicating is real work.

If you don't communicate, your project may not fail miserably, but it is unlikely to obtain more than limited success. While communicating takes time and effort, failing to do so will ensure wasted time and effort. Harnessing the strategies outlined above, however, will allow those involved to fully benefit from supporting and participating in your data quality project.