

The Executive Guide to Data Management

Enterprise data management (EDM) is the process of inventorizing and establishing data governance while simultaneously seeking organizational buy-in from key stakeholders.

In many ways, EDM is twofold - Managing people and the data.

Data management really boils down to getting accurate and timely data to the appropriate people when they need it while following a standardized process for storing quality data in a secure, and governed manner.

In this short guide, we will delve into some of the most asked questions about enterprise data management and showcase some resources for further learning.

So, who is really in charge of enterprise data management?

Enterprise data management folks are not just working in a dimly lit basement and talking just about database backups or indexes and other systems related topics such as disaster recovery strategies or efficient query plans anymore.

That mindset dates back to a time when the term **Data management** was conformed to being just the gatekeepers and managers of the systems that housed the data.

Today's data managers are folks who carry multiple responsibilities and possess extensive experience across various job functions in the data department.

Modern Data management folks have worked in multiple roles such as Database administration, ETL development, Data architecture, Data analysis, Data support and even folks who might have been IT administrators, or IT project managers.

Today's Data management folks are tasked with being fully in charge of the process of managing the business's entire data life cycle.

This includes documenting and directing the flow of data from various sources via techniques such as - Ingestion & the controlled processing of the data such as removal or summarization of key business elements, cleansing or standardizing the data, validating the data, trapping and reporting errors and coming up with fixes, both long term and short term.

Data management is an engaged and engaging process touching every aspect of the end to end business cycle.

The cycle of data through these and many other such steps and state is referred to as **Data lineage**. By managing data lineage, the enterprise's data is less vulnerable to breaches, incorrect analysis, and legal misalignment.

Most complications arise from having insecure personally identifiable information on-premises or in the cloud.

Benefits of enterprise data management

Ensuring that your data is in a secure place and meets standards of availability, maintainability, security and adherence to various rules, best practices & data access policies. These tasks are the cornerstone of the data management team. They ensure that the data is available in a format and method - when and where your business users need it.

The benefits that the data management team enables are:

- Access to high-quality data for accurate analysis
- Data security and compliance according to regulations
- Data consolidation across multiple sources for increased efficiency
- Data architecture that scales with your enterprise

Various data management solutions can be effectively leveraged for optimal results. Using the right technologies with the right rigor at the appropriate time is key to ensuring that your data management strategy and functions are all on point.

Further, data analysis and other data work will be more efficient because your people will know exactly where to find the data they need. Additionally, a well-governed data lineage makes it easy to quickly identify data dependencies, understand who is using each data source, and make relevant tables more accessible.

Master data management vs. enterprise data management

Master data management (MDM) and enterprise data management (EDM) have a lot of similarities.

Master data management focuses on creating a single view of data in one place or location. Think of it as a master file or master record. For example - The Government has a list of all valid social security numbers in a master record or master file somewhere.

This master file or Master data management system will contain the essential data or information you need for a given process, for example - Validating whether a health insurance Id is valid or not.

Another way to think of this is a full-fledged requirements document that includes the necessary data elements and information for the appropriate data source.

For example, what information is required within a sales department to track leads and opportunities? To begin - Elements like name, address, email and phone come to mind.

These data elements will likely be sourced from another tool, maybe a CRM or your website. This is your master file of potential customers and the data will very likely be enriched by adding many more data elements (dimensions) within the same dataset.

Master data management can get complicated very quickly, depending on the business and the use cases your business supports or is likely to support in the future. A much more intricate Master data management system would require creating a master file with multiple categories or dimensions, e.g., adding vendors within a supply chain, their location, and other reference data elements.

It all depends on the business data that is used in the process and how the data gets managed.

It is very crucial to decide upfront between a master data file and other enterprise data management strategies and is thus an important step requiring careful thought, consideration and weighing the necessary pros and cons before deciding on one v/s the others.

Components of enterprise data management

A data management strategy requires a lot of ground work.

As a first step, it is very imperative to complete a data audit. The data management steering committee or the data lead for the organization would define - at the very outset what data is available, what is produced, used, and deleted in a business process.

From there, a current state would be established which will help in identification of the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.

This process ensures that the organization is aware of a big picture of the data.

Cataloging all the data available as comprehensively as possible including both structured and unstructured data is very important.

Once data is cataloged, then strategies and methods to clean the data and transforming it for effective usage can be performed.

However, projects like data cataloging and data preparation can be challenging, intensive, and complex. Once completed, you're much closer to successful data management from there.

Data administration & governance

Data administration and governance should be regarded as part of regular and scheduled maintenance.

An important aspect is to identify a data steward.

The data steward is the chief maintainer of the master file and the documentation for data management. They are responsible to develop and document a clear plan for the ongoing maintenance, support, enhancements, updates and evolution of the data and governance functions.

It is very important to think of succession at the outset so that policies, procedures and methods as well as standards are clearly defined. In addition, care should be taken such that the roles and rules of the enterprise data management program should be decided during this process including who needs to be involved and to what degree.

Such documentation should be published, kept up-to-date and in an easy to access and shared location.

An important aspect of the data management process is to take an active role in ensuring that the right people are appropriately informed of the contents regularly.

Data management procedures thus documented ensure transparency for the rest of the organization and makes it easy for everyone to follow a standardized process which will highly benefit the data initiatives.

Data stewards are the go-to people for any kind of data questions and concerns. Data stewards need to promote transparency and collaboration and prioritize efforts and initiatives that will support and trust the mission for data management.

Best practices for enterprise data management

Enterprise data management is both - managing people & managing data.

Here are some simple best practices in mind when starting a data management program:


- Data management leads will need executive sponsorship, like the Chief data officer (CDO) or Chief technical officer (CTO) or chief information officer (CIO), to help make inroads within the various departments and business units.
- Guidelines need to be established to constantly educate teams on the importance of data management and be provided with the reasoning for following them.
- Data governance & data security go hand in hand and therefore should be prioritized as such
- Ensure data cataloging is part of the data management strategy
- Ensure which teams require what data, when, how and in what format, ensure that data access is appropriately provided

At Acumen Velocity, our data management practitioners have helped some of the largest organizations implement robust data management initiatives. We are tool agnostic, process intensive and pride ourselves with providing the right fitment of the technological elements to the appropriate business requirements depending on organizational goals.

Contact us for a Free, no obligation initial assessment of your organizational data, we can help your team craft the right strategies to ensure that your data initiatives will be empowered to take on the data challenges that you are tasked with.

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