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The wizard of (data) ops

Brains, heart, and courage can lead you
down the winding road to transformation

See the path—and the destination

Every organization has unique needs. Knowing yours and establishing a vision will help you determine next steps toward your destination.

That outcome may seem at first like a distant, shining Emerald City, with many challenges along the way. But with knowledge, courage, and heart, it's possible to find your way home.

Just take it brick by brick—and follow the road.



Who are the wizards? Everyone on your team.

No matter how sound your DataOps transformation strategy looks on paper, there's a critical element that can hamper performance if you overlook it. It's not a tech stack or a process step—it's people.

Small gaps in understanding can have a significant impact. To get ahead of them, begin with a deeper answer to the "so what?" of data—one that is measurable and explainable:

- DataOps team members should appreciate the impact their work has on the day-to-day tasks of the business.
- Data consumers need educating on the new ways data shapes their work, informs decisions, or boosts efficiency.

Addressing gaps within the DataOps team itself is a logical starting point.



It matters who your traveling companions are and how you travel with them

Building and managing the ideal DataOps team means understanding who is travelling with you to your “emerald city” and:

- Their role or roles they perform;
- The skills they have and skills they will need; and
- Their ways of working.

Considering these factors and investing in amplifying team talent can improve collaboration, maximize progress toward shared goals, and create a culture of efficiency and efficacy within DataOps. On the other hand, resistance to change can be a bump in the road, creating a whirlwind that leaves your team stuck under the house.

To keep moving down the road in unison, you need a unified internal understanding of the DataOps team destination you’re trying to reach—or build. Communicating your vision with measurable and explainable signposts can help.



Don't wait for the wizard

As the road stretches before you, what capabilities can power you toward the horizon?



Brains,



heart,



and courage.

Only, in this tale, those aren't gifts you receive at the end of the journey. They're the tools you need to support you along the journey.



Training the brains behind DataOps

For DataOps team members, knowledge is power—so it's time to train up and develop new skills.

The ways organizations manage and use data for daily work is evolving, and skills need to evolve along with them:

- **Data is being managed as a product:** Understand the processes, governance, people, etc. needed to deliver data.
- **Data consumers are increasingly decentralized:** Serve many through transparent and value-based prioritization, and resource management.

- **Self-service is growing:** Put your business cap on to understand end-user needs to maximize their data value.

- **Automation and next-gen technologies are emerging:** Learn the benefits of building these into your organization.

Overall, today, data plays a bigger role in creating value. DataOps teams will need a variety of skills to address the business's data needs.

Finding and addressing gaps in your team's current capabilities is critical to address long-term needs. Consider:

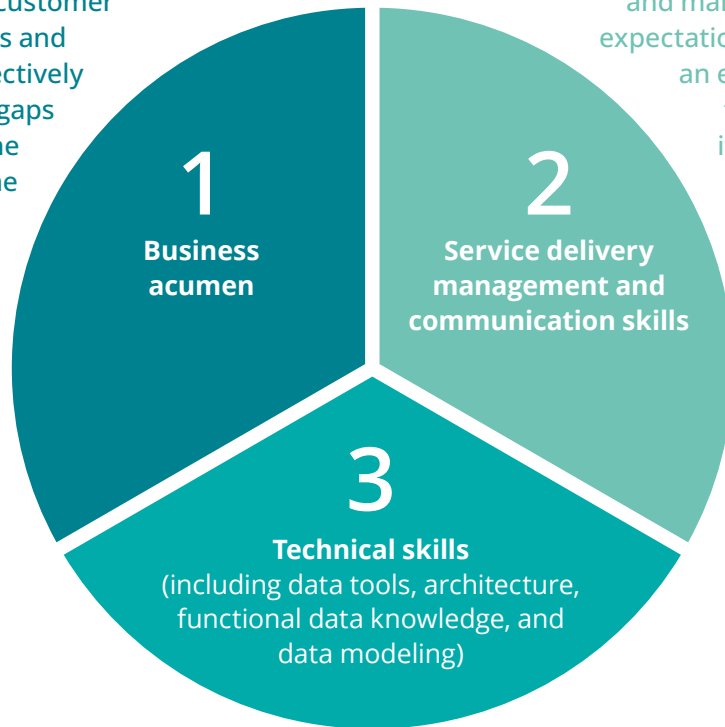
- What skills do I think I need to reach my goals?
- What skills do team members currently have? What's missing?
- Where might skills fail to connect with needs?

It's time to think proactively about how to integrate skill sets to deliver the most value to the business.

Putting your brains to work

The most effective DataOps teams show balance across three critical areas:

An appreciation of what your customer really wants and how to effectively bridge the gaps between the tech and the end user

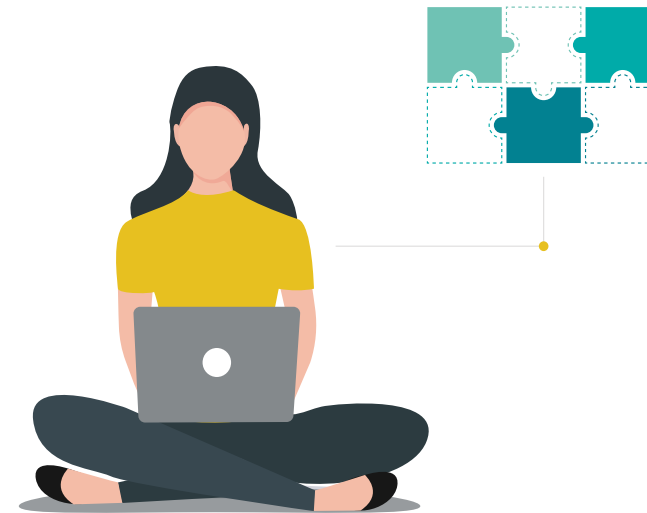


The coordination of work and management of expectations to create an environment that enables iteration and creativity

The underlying data landscape and toolkit that will be the foundation of capabilities

When you see gaps, ask:

- Can you fill them by upskilling team members, or do you need to recruit additional personnel?
- Do you need to adjust roles within the team, and how will team members react?
- Do you need to modify the way the team interacts?
- How do you adapt and prepare while upskilling, recruiting, or organizational change is taking place?



You gotta have heart

Bringing people together

Unlike storybook archetypes, your people aren't made of tin. They value connection—and the business gains value when they find it. That's why collaboration is so important.

Where it works, you'll find effective DataOps operating models help people align around common goals. They can also foster the experimentation, discovery, and innovation that push greater value.



You gotta have heart

A matter of trust

Trust between whom?

Between the DataOps team and the data customers in the business. Data democratization can foster a heightened focus on self-service. As data moves into the hands of the business, users need fewer prescribed pathways and more confidence in themselves and the data.

Trust is needed within the DataOps team itself as well. Agile delivery models that run on cross-team interaction can help improve coordination of work and manage dependencies and delivery of business requirements.

The organization that produces, processes, and uses data is made up of people—not empty tin kettles. People matter. Make sure you bring them fully along on the journey by tweaking processes and communicating. Working together comes from the heart.



You gotta have heart

What does collaboration look like?

It starts with effective communication on the right topic.

- For business needs to be met, they need to be clearly articulated and understood.
- For data practices to be effective, everyone needs to be trained on them using accessible and referenceable processes.
- For DataOps activities to have an impact, participants need to be trained on standard operating procedures and referenceable standards that control quality and output.

Communication is key, and including all stakeholders from the start of your journey can have significant impact on your time-to-evergreen value. Achieving effective collaboration can involve frequent, flexible, and purposeful meetings so everyone understands the business needs and the ways DataOps can support them. Many teams are also using more collaborative communication tools to avoid the need for extra meetings, while fulfilling the increasing need for quick answers to business and technical questions.

Don't forget that communication and feedback need to go in both directions. Continuous feedback between DataOps and the rest of the organization is important if the aim is to improve on what works today and add new capabilities for the future.



What is true courage?

How to be king of the forest

Change needs champions. And champions aren't timid. Who has the courage to push boundaries, take risks, and become—if not exactly king of the forest—the catalyst for change?

As we've seen, building an effective DataOps capability takes more than technology. It's a change in the way you assemble teams, build collaborative communication, and the way work gets done.

It can even be scary. But that doesn't mean you need a whole organization full of lions. You just need people to know it's OK to roar a little.

That's a matter of culture—which is the sum of the behaviors people choose to emphasize, both in DataOps and among end users.

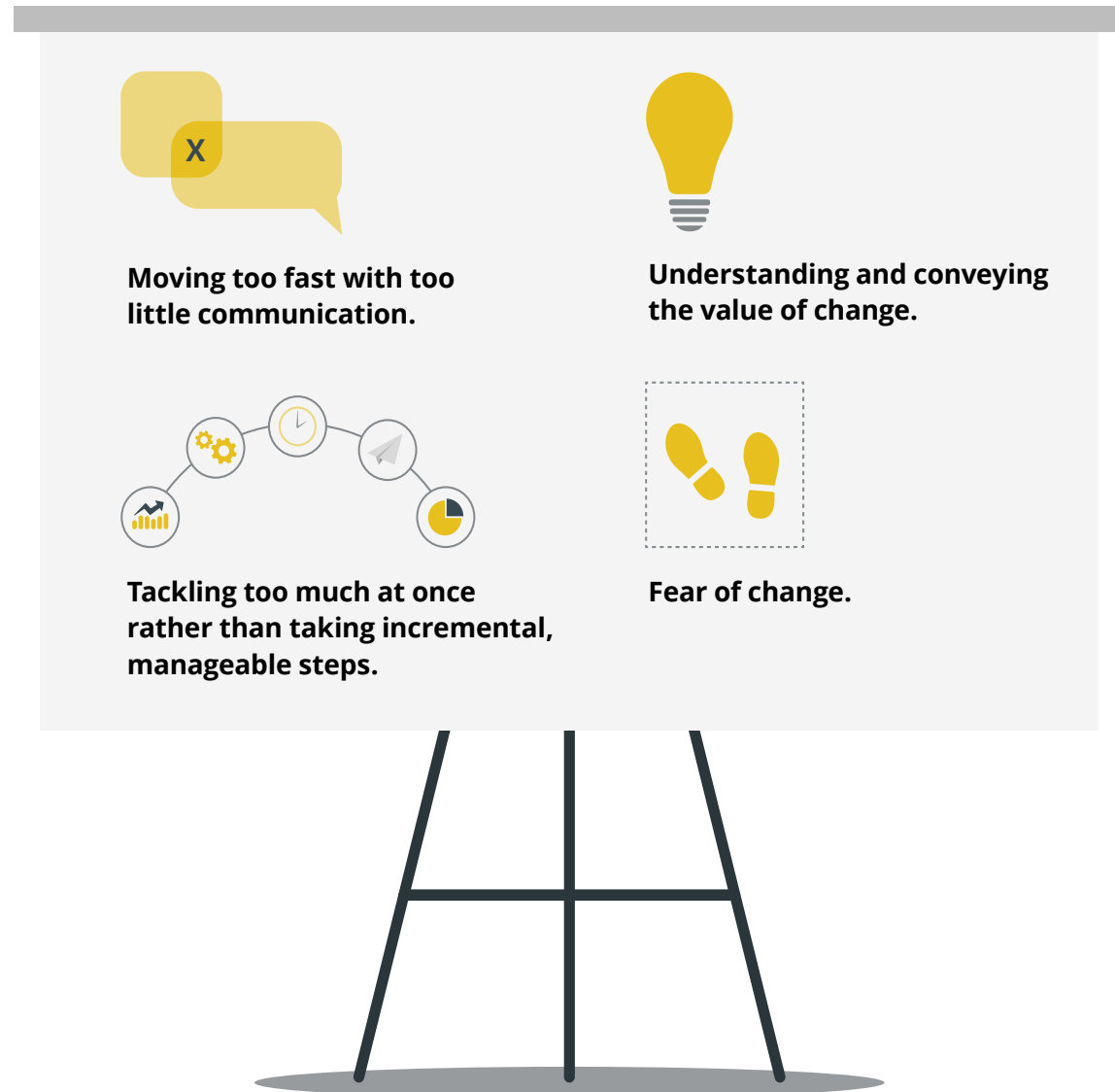


What is true courage?

Find your roar

Effective change management is critical. Show your people all the benefits they can realize through using DataOps principles, help them prepare themselves, and tell them what to expect when they reach goals. We said motivation is contagious. So is confidence.

Organizational transformation is no place for timidity. The process wouldn't take courage if there weren't bumps in the road. Prepare to handle unexpected issues—which starts with understanding their root causes and addressing them head-on. Common challenges that are often overlooked include:



What is true courage?

Be a champion of change

Data helps improve both individual and organizational performance, growing into a sustainable road toward evergreen growth and value.

DataOps grows to become more than just a team within your organization; it becomes a philosophy, an essential capability, to realizing evergreen value across your enterprise. The secret to unlocking this value... data literacy. Improving data literacy means supporting your data consumers as they read, manipulate, analyze, and interpret data. Everyone should have the vocabulary it takes to use data to drive analytical thinking and establish data-driven rationale.

To make this happen, stand tall and practice what you preach. Don't just talk DataOps—lean into it.

Your first and most important trainee? Yourself. From there, educate those around you. Motivation is contagious.



The wizard is you

On the long road to the shining city of DataOps mastery, a combination of brains, heart, and courage can take you farther, faster.

Each of these qualities is valuable. Together, they can be unbeatable.

Take one step at a time—but make each a bold step. Make your assessments unflinching. Don't be shy about upskilling, reorganizing, or reaching beyond the organization to acquire the talent that will make a difference. Introduce new ways to communicate as a team and identify opportunities for collaboration. At every turn, support bold change with decisive change management.

The road toward DataOps that drives evergreen value is long and challenging but rewarding. The key is making the trip together. Broaden your view, open your channels of communication, click your heels, and you're off on your journey.



Brains

Skilling up capabilities that power joint understanding and action.



Heart

The power of communication to turn solo actors into an organic team.



Courage

The clear vision and commitment that drives meaningful change.

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