Data Monetization: Who's Doing It Right (Now)

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What You Need to Know

Some call data the new currency. Others, the new oil, gold, bacon, or (with seemingly forced irony) tofu. In their way, each of these analogies is more-or-less apt for something difficult to define in a single-word, headline-ready term. In the modern enterprise, data may be viewed as any of those things, but whatever the metaphor most appropriate for your enterprise, data is something from which you can (and must) derive measurable value.

Modern data innovators are recognizing new value—not just from the data assets themselves, but from the ways in which they can take advantage of them. In these cases, deriving value from data isn't just tangential to operations: It is core to new business models.

For this research, Blue Hill Research interviewed four companies who are doing data monetization right. They include a bricks-and-mortar automotive services company, a leading healthcare services firm, a 150-year-old agribusiness, and a contract electronics manufacturer. The commonality the data leaders at these enterprises share? An astute eye for leveraging industry-leading data-integration and data preparation technologies to capitalize on new market opportunities.

Data Monetization = Data-Derived Value Delivery

In common parlance, data monetization means making money off your enterprise data. One typical model: The broker who aggregates data from multiple sources, packages it, and resells it at a premium.[1]

Data monetization—often conflated with data commercialization—is more than just the one example of a new revenue stream flowing from an aggregated-then-resold package of data. For the purposes of this research, data monetization is defined as data-derived value delivery, typically resulting from a successful digital transformation initiative. Envision it as the positive, planned-for outcome of all that effort your team made to collect, curate, integrate, munge, analyze, and consume what is undoubtedly super-valuable new data.

In an enterprise data context, data monetization is what happens when you do data integration, data preparation, and analytics right. No data-integration effort should be engineered unless one of three measurable things is the outcome: It makes money for the enterprise, it saves money for the enterprise, or it delivers intangible benefit to the enterprise.

AT A GLANCE

Data Monetization

Data monetization is the outcome of successful enterprise digital transformations that aim to derive new value from data.

Who's Doing It Right (Now)

Sears Auto Center employs data-integration capabilities from Domo to gain better visibility into operations. Using GoodData software, **MediGain** reinvented its dynamic reporting, and strengthened customer relationships. **DTN/The Progressive Farmer** uses Talend to bring its disparate data connections together, creating new platforms for customer delivery and partner engagement. Contract manufacturer Celestica uses Sisense to improve production scheduling efficiency.

Featured Technology Vendors

- **Domo**
- **GoodData**
- **Talend**
- **Sisense**

[1] For more details on data brokers, see Blue Hill's report, "Think Like a Data Broker to Capture Hidden Value in Enterprise Data."

Getting the most out of enterprise data—literally, milking it for every achievable ounce of revenue, efficiency, or marketing value—is no longer something you can take for granted, nor something you can push off. In the new data-driven competitive environment, it's a cost of doing business.

The Data-Monetization Value Framework

Enterprise data-monetization success depends upon three steps to define vision, mission, and tactics:

1. **Understand value types**—In tangible terms, what will data monetization mean to your enterprise?
2. **Set operational objectives**—Do you target efficiency, transparency, visibility, accountability, continuous improvement, trust, control, speed, agility? All of the above?
3. **Identify the enabling technology** (or technologies)—In this case, we look at data integration, data preparation, and analytics impacts on data monetization.

Data-derived value comes in three flavors: Direct, Indirect, and Intangible.[2]

Table 1: Data-Derived Value

Value Type	Direct	Indirect	Intangible		
Monetization	Revenue, cost savings	OEM, Channel, Partner	Marketing differentiation	Goodwill	CSAT
Example Context	Data as product, data as efficiency driver	Data contributes to partner success	Data as competitive advantage	Data-driven community value	Data contributes to customer success
Example Product or Service	DaaS, brokered aggregated data, operational metrics	C360 view	Value-add to existing product	Shared data package	C360 view

Source: Blue Hill Research, October 2016

Data-monetization initiatives should target specific operational objectives, including (but not necessarily limited to, in part or in full): **efficiency** in operations**, transparency** of actions**, visibility** of workflows**, accountability, continuous improvement,** mutual **trust** in the data veracity**, control** over process (no or reduced variability)**, speed** to decision-making**,** and operational (often supply-chain) **agility**. These outcomes translate—operationally—into data-derived value, reflected in new revenue streams, cost savings, or intangible benefits to the enterprise.

[2] In their December, 2015 Blue Hill Research report, "Essential Strategies for Building Data Monetization Business Models," James Haight and Hyoun Park identify three data-derived value-delivery outcomes: direct revenue, customer-retention, and customer service personalization. This research re-categorizes those potential value outcomes by the nature of the monetization itself: direct, indirect, or intangible.

Domo and the Quest for the Single Source of Truth

In an effort to reduce all the guessing, Kaner teamed with Richards, who had come over from the Stanley/Black & Decker organization. Their initial objective was straightforward: Establish the vaunted (and oft-quoted-by-data-technology-marketers) "single source of truth" for Sears Auto Center. If stakeholders could agree on the validity of the shared data, discussions would shift from counterproductive arguments over interpretation to constructive approaches to righting the ship(s).

In addition to being "trustable," the data had to be timely, and visible to employees at all levels of the company, from the individual auto technicians to store management to regional leadership to corporate in Chicago.

"We knew there was a need for unification," says Richards. "… [A] need to have clear communication, clear insight on what the data is telling us about how to run the business differently to drive profitability and drive revenue growth."

Kaner and Richards turned to business intelligence and data-integration software from Domo. It was a technology to which Richards had been introduced when he had worked previously in the Sears home appliance division. Over the course of a few months, and working with a Domo consultant, Kaner, Richards, and team prototyped and then deployed a data-integration solution that pulled from multiple systems, including HR, POS, financial, even online. Notably, Sears Auto Center did not have to implement new measurement tools … the team simply needed a way to exploit data housed in their existing data sources.

The Impacts: Efficiency, Transparency, Trust, and an Impressive Turnaround

Kaner and Richards wisely focused Sears Auto Center's operational reinvention on productivity. Their Domo deployment highlighted operational bottlenecks, limitations, and gaps they had suspected but until then had not been able to validate (or especially, address) with any certainty. They looked at cycle times, employee productivity, even retail product mix data.

That new level of scrutiny has brought a new level of transparency to the entire business, all the way from regional retail service techs to Chicago leadership. Technicians with low-turn times can be coached. Best practices at one location can more easily be deployed at others. Kaner and Richards and team can also identify understaffed locations (with overwork signaled by overly-*high* employee productivity metrics) and add techs to reduce stockout-cost risks.

Domo's Business Orientation? As Valuable as Its Technical Expertise

It's worth noting that the initial Domo deployment didn't succeed just because the technology was appropriate for the business case. It succeeded because the Domo consultant deploying it recognized not just the technology opportunity, but Sears Auto Center's business opportunity.

"What I love about the team at Domo is the fact that the consultants that they bring in—They have a business mindset," says Kaner. "They understand: 'Help me understand what problem you're trying to solve, let me wrap some data around it, and then we can continue to iterate what I'm showing you, [and] by the time you're done....'"

The way Sears Auto Center has capitalized on its data with Domo is more than a technology success story. It's an object lesson in turning around a struggling business. It's about establishing an operational model that emphasizes transparency, efficiency, accountability, control, and continuous improvement at *all* levels. Kaner and Richards and team understood that unifying data could make operations more efficient. Automotive service isn't a high-margin business, and for Sears Auto Center, keeping auto techs busy, optimizing cycle times, and recognizing opportunities for upsell were paramount to success. The entire business operation became measurable. For Sears Auto Center, implementing Domo meant that the data could be interpreted accurately across the organization.

In the Sears Auto Center example, key stakeholders monetized their data in a direct way—achieving substantial cost savings through greater efficiency and generating additional incremental revenue with targeted marketing.

The proof is in the pudding: In just the few months following rollout to the retail service level, Kaner and Richards saw a business that had been suffering double-digit declines *grow* by single digits. That's a pretty dramatic turnaround. And all because Sears Auto Center recognized the potential value in its data, and more practically, how Domo could help them capture that tangible value.

Data-Driven Competitive Advantage: How MediGain Uses GoodData to Differentiate its Services in the Healthcare Space

MediGain Practice Management (a division of MTBC) is one of the largest healthcare services providers in North America. MediGain provides revenue cycle management (RCM) and analytics solutions to healthcare providers around the world. The bulk of MediGain's customers are medium-sized multiple-practitioner offices, often specialty medical practices (like say, dermatology), that assign back office administrative functions to MediGain.

(Blue Hill Research has profiled MediGain before, including as an example of data-monetization success.[4])

The Challenges: A Difficult-to-Scale Service Model and Oh-Too-Human Data Prep

MediGain CIO Ian Maurer started with the company as a consultant. He was brought in to help streamline and automate business-intelligence functions at the company. Though MediGain seemed ideal for a SaaS delivery model, Maurer learned that many of MediGain's services (in particular, monthly performance reporting packages) were being produced manually by offshored business analysts.

The operating model worked, but was straining at the seams. Maurer recognized that having humans produce data products could lead to very-human outcomes.

"The process was prone to errors," notes Maurer. "Our clients are not all on the same practice-management EHR systems … Sometimes you could not get all the data you wanted to present to a client. There was no standardization, no normalization."

In such a highly-regulated industry like healthcare, MediGain's occasional inaccuracies were costly to reconcile. (Complicating matters, spans of communication were extended when third parties like insurance companies were involved.) Worse, every mistake—even the minor ones—threatened CSAT. MediGain is in the information management services business, and if customers lose faith in their own (delivered-by-MediGain) numbers, they'll look to switch to direct or substitute competing services.

On top of the potential error risk, Maurer identified another MediGain challenge: operations weren't designed to scale.

"We had a bunch of acquisitions on the horizon," says Maurer. "We knew if were going to assimilate those properly, we were going to need a much better delivery model for the reporting."

[4] Refer to James Haight's and Hyoun Park's October 2015 piece "GoodData's Role in the Next Era of Analytics: Data Monetization" and their December 2015 Anatomy-of-a-Decision report "Essential Strategies for Building Data Monetization Business Models."

The Attack Plan: Data-Integration Technology to Improve Service Quality

Maurer knew manual data preparation wasn't a sustainable, long-term option to support MediGain service operations. Maurer demoed data-prep software from GoodData. He saw GoodData's no-maintenance PaaS model and ease of use as immediate potential benefits.

"I could visualize the fact that we could now go from a static single monthly report to a platform which was always available, always up to date, something that the clients could consume on their own without our intervention," explains Maurer. "I could see that was the future of where we wanted to go in order to scale up and automate, and reduce these errors."

MediGain committed to implementing GoodData, and embarked on a "very fast" rollout. Key to implementation success? MediGain employed a subject matter expert (SME) from the GoodData Services Data Product team who not only was an expert in data-prep technology, but understood both the healthcare space and RCM business model. Maurer worked with his GoodData SME to create the initial client-facing report templates.

"I didn't need a programmer, a developer, someone with a coding background," says Maurer. "That's very powerful … [Y]ou're taking that translation step out of the equation. You're not going from coder/developer to client, you're taking the person who understands the subject matter and that person is creating the deliverable."

Maurer and GoodData built out the entire system in a matter of days. And in a market space not known for its agility, they were able to onboard the first three customers—connecting to a myriad of EHR systems along the way—in a matter of a few short months.

Reaping the Benefits: A Dynamic Product, Cheaper Delivery, Improved CSAT, and … Better Marketing?

MediGain employed GoodData to improve–*greatly* improve–the reporting capabilities of its revenue cycle management services. The impact was nothing less than a reinvention of its customer-facing dashboards: Dynamic, on-demand, accurate metrics are available to end users at any time. Now customers can take immediate action based on live trending data instead of waiting until the next month to reactively address a (comparatively-delayed and potentially further-complicated) issue.

Using GoodData, MediGain is providing better services to its customers. The potential for human error in delivery is greatly reduced, and customers can now trust their data implicitly. And by reducing reliance on that manual data preparation, the MediGain BI team can now focus on analysis and other value-added customer services. (Novel approach, that!)

MediGain doesn't charge extra for its GoodData-enabled service quality improvements, but MediGain is still an ideal data-monetization example. As you might imagine, MediGain has seen impressive ROI from the GoodData project, and Maurer notes the GoodData implementation's positive (indirect) impact on revenue. But MediGain's greatest benefit from its revamped Insights service may be its impact on marketing.

"There really isn't any other RCM company out there … that has a product like this," says Maurer. "We've got [GoodData supporting] over 180 client systems—nobody's doing that … If a prospect is on a system we've already integrated, we can quickly turn them up, show them what they would be looking at if they were one of our customers. That's honestly what drives sales."

At industry tradeshows, the marketing team puts the brightly-colored MediGain Insights dashboard front and center, and leads with it in other marketing materials. In a data world burdened by strict governance mandates, and in an environment not often recognized for technical innovation, the MediGain marketing team is taking advantage of a powerful new weapon in its arsenal.

Of course, the benefits are not limited to marketing. For the MediGain sales team, the new GoodData-enabled MediGain Insights service accelerates closing. (That's particularly powerful when a sales cycle can exceed a year.)

MediGain has used GoodData technology to create a defensible marketing advantage for the company. But how big is that advantage? MediGain competitors have asked to white-label the service. (According to Maurer, the MediGain team is thinking about it.)

Harvesting New Data Crops: How The Progressive Farmer Uses Talend to Connect Agribusiness

If you work in agribusiness, you know—and may very well rely on data supplied by—The Progressive Farmer. The Progressive Farmer is a subsidiary of DTN, itself a division of Schneider Electric. The namesake print publication has been in distribution for more than 150 years, serving farming and agriculture customers around the United States.

Farmers need—and indeed, have always needed—as up-to-the-minute-as-possible pricing and weather information to set agricultural priorities. As Michael Ross, R&D Leader at DTN/The Progressive Farmer, explains, "Most farmers—especially when you're talking about row crops—corn, wheat, soy, that kind of thing—put a lot of investment in growing their crops … Corn, wheat, soy, all those are commodities, traded on open exchanges. And so in the '80's, when the Internet was in its infancy, farmers needed a good way of knowing 'Hey, what's the current trade price on my corn?' before going to that local elevator and selling their crop to a middleman."

DTN's name—short for "Data Transmission Network"—belies its origins. Back in the 1980's DTN used what Ross calls "little boxes built out of Commodore 64 parts" as communication channels for market ag prices. Farmers subscribed to the DTN service, got their own little box, and then received agriculture-specific (pre-Internet) information delivery services.

The New Challenge: Create a New Ag Connectivity Platform (and Ensure It Makes Money)

Fast-forward 30+ years. DTN now provides its extensive agribusiness services via a number of different online channels, as well as through other more traditional channels, including the print publication it adopted through the acquisition of The Progressive Farmer business.

A marketing analyst might highlight DTN/The Progressive Farmer's many synergies: Services run the gamut from commodities pricing to web hosting, even to email management, all targeting the broader American agribusiness community. DTN/TPF's billing model is a mix of subscription and value-added services, with data collection and aggregation going on in the background. A customer interested in weather data might also be providing crop updates that could prove valuable—in packaged form—to other vendors, farmers, and analysts.

The agribusiness environment is distinct in many ways. For one thing, there is limited standardization in data management.

"ERP solutions are very proprietary in Ag," notes Ross. "There's very little SAP or Microsoft Dynamics. The key players have tools that are uniquely engineered for the agriculture space."

Ross joined DTN/TPF in 2014, and inherited a patchwork of information services connecting across disparate networks. The systems worked, but were often arcane, archaic, and high maintenance. In some cases, the developers who'd created the custom proprietary systems were no longer with the company, and DTN/TPF lacked institutional expertise to upgrade.

Keeping the lights on while managing such a complex network of data systems and services was a big challenge. And Ross recognized that management complexity could limit growth, and hinder product innovation.

The Solution: Connect to Everything … and We Mean Everything

A former consultant with a background in data warehousing, Ross knew DTN/TPF needed a data-integration strategy, and that a traditional dev-oriented approach (e.g., writing a lot of custom PHP code) wasn't a tenable long-term solution.

"I already had a mindset of what a modern data-integration platform [would look like]," explains Ross. "We can take the best of what traditional ETL has to offer, but we need to be able to be more modern. We need to be able to integrate with web services. We need to be able to handle JSON payloads, not just parse CSV and flat files. I wanted to find a tool provider that gives me … ETL experience, but allows me to build public APIs."

After evaluating several technologies, Ross steered DTN/TPF to software from Talend. Key to the decision: Talend's open-source, open-platform approach to data integration. In an agribusiness environment where Ross might potentially need to connect to a Hadoop cluster one day and 1970's-era big iron the next, Talend's flexible extensibility made it appropriate for DTN/TPF.

"[With] Big Data … you can't have a data-integration solution that only works with the new things a company is doing," notes Ross.

Did Ross and DTN/TPF make the right choice? During prototyping, Ross encountered a customer with an-as-yet-unsupported GIS application.

"I found some open-source GIS libraries—JAR files—I loaded them up, wrote a very, very small amount of Java snippets to work with the libraries and pull data out into a stream so that Talend could then work with it," says Ross. "I had built and tested and verified and imported about 30,000 fields in for [that] customer. In the span of three days. I can't do that with any other tool that I've ever had the pleasure of working with."

The Monetization Impact: Better Services, Customizable Extensibility, and a New Platform for Business

Ross and his DTN/TPF team are now in year two of what he calls his "Sync" strategy. It's truly productization of data-integration technology.

"Today, we now integrate with all of those ERP solutions and GIS providers across the full gamut of technologies," says Ross. "You name it, we can get it, and we load it into what effectively is an operational data store in the cloud."

Deploying data-integration technology from Talend has essentially turned DTN/TPF into a hub, creating a networked community of farming and agribusiness concerns. DTN/TPF has reduced its reliance on ad-hoc, manually-prepped data services, and delivers its dynamic data to customers via far-smoother workflows. And DTN/TPF can connect to nearly anyone, regardless of how arcane or proprietary the data source might be.

Here's where it gets interesting. In an industry that Ross admits tends to be "several [technical] generations behind," DTN/TPF's established network is rapidly becoming an industry standard for agribusiness information-sharing.

"Using the data services piece in Talend, we built a public API that we then make available to other technology providers," says Ross. "So the service we offer: We go in and pull all that information for an agribusiness...invoice, customers, inventory, product SKUs, all of that, and now when that same retailer that does business with DTN wants to do business with say, an inventory analytics service, they can point to our public API and for a small fee, they can make that data available to their partner."

You read that right: Thanks to Talend's and Ross' successful "DTN-Sync" strategy, DTN/TPF is now so far ahead of its competitors in client system integration that those competitors pay DTN/TPF for the use of the DTN/TPF customer-connection network.

For DTN/TPF, data integration isn't just an IT activity. It's a core part of its business, and an essential contributor to bottom-line operational revenue. That's direct data monetization at its finest right there.

And in case you were wondering, DTN continues to service tens of thousands of those old-school '80's DTN systems that are still installed and functioning in barns around the U.S. I'm not sure the marketing folks will lead with it, but as DTN/TPF's experience proves, yes, you *can* use Talend software to connect to the Commodore 64 platform.

A Case Study in Supply Chain Agility: How Celestica Got Predictable with Sisense

Celestica is a leader in contract manufacturing. Headquartered in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, Celestica client base is global. The company employs more than 25,000 people in facilities in twelve countries. Celestica specializes in electronics fabrication, and serves customers in aerospace, defense, semiconductor, enterprise communication, and energy markets.

As a contract manufacturer, Celestica is in the (big) business of making things for others, preferably as cost-effectively as possible. Ensuring efficient use of materials, capacity, and especially capital requires accurate forecasting—The better Celestica can predict its production volumes, the better it can utilize its resources.

The Challenge: Too Many Spreadsheets, Not Enough Agility/Efficiency

Data analyst James Davison joined Celestica in 2012. His new company leveraged centralized IT infrastructure (e.g., one data warehouse for all global operations facilities), but capacity planning responsibility was typically left to regional managers. Though their work was visible to corporate, it was ad hoc, with individual regional managers measuring and planning capacity quite differently.

Those regional managers did most of their planning using spreadsheets. The capacity planning model worked, as long as those individual managers were accurate enough with their forecasting, and as long as the supply chain didn't become too stretched.

But the spreadsheet approach had limitations. Data was only as fresh as the last time the manager had pulled it from the data warehouse. And the data volume often limited analysis scope: For example, materials information that exceeded a million spreadsheet rows would have to be sampled, or analyzed in separated batches.

Celestica's facilities planners knew what they were doing, but Davison recognized that their agility was limited by the reliance on spreadsheets. Frequent demand forecast fluctuations led to inventory carrying-cost overruns. And to cover for cycle-time hiccups in production scheduling, Celestica often had to rush production jobs, and then rely upon expensive ("5 to 10X") expedited shipping.

"We needed … to give [our team] the tools to scale up and provide real solutions on a global scale," explains Davison, "rather than emailing around eight versions of the same spreadsheet."

The Solution: Getting to Supply-Chain Agility with Sisense

As part of a broad "Agile Analytics" initiative, Davison worked with Celestica BI stakeholders to roll out Sisense to Celestica managers worldwide. The goals were 1) unify capacity planning best practices, 2) accommodate larger (much larger) data sets, and 3) improve forecasting.

Using Sisense dashboarding, Davison and team introduced an internal Demand Analyzer tool tied to centralized data repositories. Putting it in the hands of regional managers essentially put Celestica in front of its data. Rather than reacting to static (and often as infrequent as monthly) reports, Celestica regional managers could now see

near-live data and plan accordingly. It effectively changed Celestica demand forecasting from a reactive activity to a proactive one.

"Everybody wins," says Davison. "[The customers] get a more accurate plan, we get a more agile supply chain … In the contract manufacturing space, it's all about predictability. You can build a heck of a lot, as long as you know it's coming."

The Impact: Predictability Leads to Agility and Efficiency

Deploying Sisense at Celestica had an immediate impact on inventory management: With better predictability and improved manufacturing-line transparency, Celestica could better manage work-in-progress (WIP) inventory, thereby moving closer to just-in-time delivery manufacturing ideals. Even better, Celestica now rarely has to resort to expensive expedited shipping.

"If my forecast is very, very reliable, I don't have to hold inventory," says Davison. "Think about the perfect world, where I know exactly what I'm going to build: I don't have to actually surplus anything, I can buy exactly what I need to build. And that's huge, because I'm not tying up capital in inventory I don't need … There's a huge monetary implication."

Creating a unified, single-source-of-truth data window with Sisense has had a positive impact on more than just production efficiency.

"If you're extremely predictable, and extremely good at delivering and helping the customer, you also can command a premium," says Davison. "[Y]ou're going to be a much better partner to work with … Your competitors might have a cheaper piece price, but if it's a pain to work with them, it'll cost the customer more in the long term than you. So it can be a competitive advantage as well."

Celestica's deployment of a Sisense-based BI solution was more than a technology rollout. It was a re-engineering of the way Celestica leveraged its data. The result of Celestica's new capacity-planning forecasting predictability is new money from data: no more expedited shipping reduces expenses, improved inventory management lowers carrying costs, and more transparent customer service is so valuable a commodity that it allows Celestica to charge more. All of that translates to a better bottom line, and maybe almost as good, a powerful competitive advantage.

Key Learnings

To recap:

1. **Sears Auto Center** employed data-integration capabilities from Domo to gain better visibility into operations. Direct value impact is substantial cost savings through enhanced productivity. Indirect impact included more-effective regional marketing benefit. The initiative has led to better efficiency, transparency, accountability, control, and continuous improvement.

2. Using GoodData software, **MediGain** reinvented its dynamic reporting, and strengthened customer relationships. Indirect value impact is significant competitive advantage, specifically marketing differentiation in a crowded healthcare services space. MediGain's GoodData work has led to better transparency, speed, accountability, and control.

3. **DTN/The Progressive Farmer** used Talend to bring its disparate data connections together, creating new platforms for customer delivery and partner engagement, and in effect, modernizing an existing network to create a new commercial data business model. Direct value impact is new revenue from new and extended service offerings, all enabled by the Talend solution. And that work has led to better visibility, control, speed, and agility.

4. For contract manufacturing giant **Celestica**, success is all about supply-chain management, and its deployment of new Sisense data analytics capabilities has made the company nimbler, and delivered unprecedented predictability to its manufacturing operations. Direct value impact is in cost-reduction and incremental revenue gains from new (rationalized) premium pricing.

So why did the data-integration, data-prep, and data-analytics efforts at Sears Auto Center, MediGain, The Progressive Farmer, and Celestica lead to measurable data monetization? There is a commonality that exceeds others in importance, and it may not be what you'd expect.

In these examples, each enterprise found ways to recognize new value in data—as a revenue-generating solution, a cost-saving efficiency, a marketing differentiator, or supply-chain accelerator. But these success stories are about more than their lucrative outcomes. Great technologies from Domo, GoodData, Talend, and Sisense enabled these data leaders to move forward. But it was the individual stakeholders' vision, opportunism, and commitment to their data-monetization initiatives that drove success. These case studies are all—at their core—business-re-engineering narratives, all based on the unique recognition on the part of those key stakeholders that their respective enterprises could derive value from its data in a new way.

When it came to evaluating data monetization-enabling technologies, Sears Auto Center, MediGain, DTN/The Progressive Farmer, and Celestica *first* idealized operational workflows (were they decision-making or sales-oriented or supply-chain-focused). Only then did they look at appropriate technology adoption criteria, including **price, operating expense, capabilities, ease of use, scalability, integration complexity,** and **data-source extensibility**.

When Data-Monetization Efforts Fail

The enterprises featured in this report succeeded for many reasons, not the least of which was the data vision of their stakeholders. As you approach a data-monetization effort, avoid these potential red flags:

- ***No buy-in.*** You have the vision. You have the plan. But if upper management—or worse, one single silo-specific manager—become blockers, your project can die on the vine.
- ***No capacity to consume new data.*** True of many digital transformation projects, but especially applicable to data-monetization initiatives: If you produce rich new dashboards but your customers have no bandwidth to consume the greater data volume, let alone analyze it, you're not adding value, you're taking it away with added human-resource bandwidth consumption.
- ***No automation.*** Data-monetization ideals will crumble under the weight of manual-effort bottlenecks. ("Where are the new cycle-time metrics?" "Sorry, Karl's on vacation.") Get to insight faster—automate as much data integration, data prep, and (in some cases) analytics that you can.
- ***Hazy or poorly-defined metrics.*** ROI measurement is a good start of most goal-setting project phases, but don't overlook the simple bottom line. If you are unable to attribute new value (be it direct or indirect) to your data-monetization initiative, then it's time to reassess.
- ***No trust.*** Your data consumers—be they internal or external customers—MUST trust the (typically new) data. If they don't, you'll be fighting a counter-productive battle over whose individual data is better. And it will go downhill from there. (See "No buy-in" above!)
- ***No continuous improvement.*** One-time, static, point-in-time data monetization projects may succeed. But if you want to do it right, ensure that you (and all stakeholders) are re-evaluating progress as you go. (How will you make it even better in the future?)

Data Monetization Recommendations

Counsel for Enterprises

- **Get to the single source of truth.** Unify your data sources and remove misinterpretation risk from the equation.
- Carpe diem. Now. There's gold in them thar numbers—you just have to find it and grab it. **Establish a culture of data opportunism** in your enterprise. You'll be surprised how data can help you achieve yet-unthought-of goals. To start, set out to *disprove* these statements: "Data can make our operations more efficient," "Data can improve our customer relationships," "We can integrate new/more data to create new products/services," "Better data will help us differentiate our products/services in the market," etc.
- **Set measurable value delivery objectives.** If your data initiative isn't going to make you money, save you money, or deliver intangible value to your enterprise, walk away … now.
- **Get buy-in**: from above, from below, from beside. One ornery resource can bottleneck—even cripple—data-monetization success. Work to ensure that data-monetization efforts are in all stakeholders' common interest, throughout your enterprise.

Counsel for Data Tech Vendors

- When it comes to promotion, **put business solution ahead of technology**. Some companies are ahead of the curve on this one—Informatica, for one. At a recent data governance roadshow event in Vancouver, Informatica Chief Architect Justin Glatz spoke to a technical audience not about data architecture, but about how best to evangelize data governance initiatives internally. (Vision, mission, strategy, etc.)
- Train sales leaders to **be more management consultants than technology salespersons**. The Sears Auto Center deployment succeeded in no small part because the *one* Domo systems engineer understood not only the data science, but the regional auto-service business model. His proposals weren't about technology, they were about re-engineering business operations ... using data (integrated, ultimately, with Domo).
- **Emphasize data monetization in both marketing and product management**. Two examples in the data integration/data prep space: Tamr and GoodData, companies that structure their messaging around specific data-driven value-delivery use cases.

[5] Refer to Toph Whitmore's August 2016 piece, "What I Believe (About Data)."

Conclusions

For Sears Auto Center, data integration with Domo software has lifted productivity, improved marketing efficacy, and reinvigorated a staid bricks-and-mortar business. MediGain used GoodData technology to create new differentiation for its services in the healthcare market. DTN/The Progressive Farmer uses Talend to connect to (and then integrate) a broad range of data sources, creating new business opportunities. And Celestica's supply chain is all the more agile thanks to new analytics capabilities delivered by Sisense.

As powerful as the enabling data-integration, data-prep, and analytics technologies can be, data monetization can be achieved only when forward-looking business leaders recognize opportunities to derive value from data, and then effectively seize upon them. These four case studies feature cool data technology business applications, but those solutions wouldn't have worked without the vision and commitment of Brian, Joe, Ian, Michael, and James and their respective teams.

So what exactly *is* data monetization? It's the successful (and planned-for) outcome of a digital transformation led by data visionaries—let's call them the new data opportunists—who capably enable their organizations to derive value (direct, indirect, or intangible) and reap benefits (improved transparency, efficiency, control, speed, accountability, continuous improvement, trust, etc.) from data. Want to succeed with data monetization? Start with a value target and don't look back. Carpe diem: Time to seize the data.

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Toph Whitmore is a Blue Hill Research principal analyst covering the Big Data, analytics, marketing automation, and business operations technology spaces. His research interests include technology adoption criteria, data-driven decision-making in the enterprise, customer-journey analytics, and enterprise data-integration models. Before joining Blue Hill Research, Toph spent four years providing management consulting services to Microsoft, delivering strategic project management leadership. More recently, he served as a marketing executive with cloud infrastructure and Big Data software technology firms. A former journalist, Toph's writing has appeared in GigaOM, DevOps Angle, and The Huffington Post, among other media. Toph resides in North Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, where he is active in the local tech startup community as an angel investor and corporate advisor.

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