



Med Devices Regulatory teams, don't go back to NORMAL

COVID showed all companies the possibilities, opportunities and risks. Take advantage of this learning to move towards “data” culture and away from “gut & manual” culture. So don't go back to previous NORMAL of manual processes and documents world!

While businesses across the world are trying to make more effective use of data, analytics, and AI, a key impediment is holding many of them back: The lack of a culture that truly values data/analytics capability and the superior decision making that can flow from it. Yet as we'll describe, it's possible to create a data-driven culture and accrue the competitive benefits that result.

In companies with strong data cultures, important decisions are informed by data and analytics and executives act on analytically derived insights rather than intuition or experience. While digital-native companies have strong digital cultures, many traditional companies are struggling to make progress. That's mostly because few undertake initiatives directly aimed at achieving the desired culture change.

Thus, it shouldn't be surprising that a 2019 Deloitte survey of U.S. executives found that most – 63% – do not believe their companies are data-driven and 67% say they are not comfortable accessing or using data from their software systems and resources.

Senior Leader's Role

Clearly, culture depends in large part on the orientation of senior leaders. There is little doubt that a senior leaders own reliance on data – or lack thereof – in decision making and improving the business sends a powerful message to the rest of the organization.

Culture Change Programs

Two types of change programs can move an organization in the right direction.

Carefully planned **educational programs** should be pushed into every level of the organization. Experiential programs such as design thinking exercises, group problem-solving and hands-on workshops tend to be more effective than talking heads. Position-appropriate exercises for staff at different levels and functional areas can illustrate the benefits of data-based decisions; for example, executives can focus on framing the problem, and front-line employees can interpret the implications of data for core problem solving.

Education should focus not only on attitudes and knowledge about data, automation, and AI, but also on skills for finding and manipulating data at every level, including senior management levels. A survey sponsored by the data analytics vendor Splunk of 1,300 senior executives found that while 81% of the executives agree that data skills are required to become a senior leader in their companies, 67% say they are not comfortable accessing or using data themselves. Seventy three percent felt that data skills are harder to learn than other business skills, and 53% believe they are too old to learn data skills. Effective education initiatives can prove them wrong.

Leading by example is also important. This requires showcasing leaders who visibly use data and automation in internal programs to spread the value of the approach across an organization. Senior leaders exemplary behavior can also include modeling the desired attitude about data and analytics in meetings; leaders should frequently ask, “Do you have data to support that point?” and encourage others to do likewise.

Putting it all together

- » Highlight successes by early adopters and enlisting them to help get others engaged;
- » Forming cross-functional teams that combine people with backgrounds in data analytics, business, and technology to bring diversity and innovate thinking to projects; and
- » Launching programs across the organization, including open houses, forums, educational initiatives, and a leadership groups

Technology is everyone’s job

Today, every job requires an orientation toward technology. With basic tech-savvy, employees have not only the fundamental skill they need in a fast-evolving competitive environment, but the mindset required to support a flourishing data, analytics and automation culture.

Cultural changes take a long time to mature, and culture is influenced over time by every leader who joins an organization. It’s important for someone to monitor changes in the data/analytics orientation of the leadership team. In creating a data-driven culture, there’s no rest for the teams. There are organizations that were hugely focused on data and analytics, but when the senior leader(s) who were the champions left, teams drifted back to their old gut-based thinking and decision-making. From senior leaders to analytics and data leaders, everyone who believes in this focus should work to persuade others to adopt and maintain it.
