

## **Convincing the C suite to use predictive analytics by tying into their business strategy**

The challenge I face is convincing executive managers in existing organizations to move toward innovative ways in solving their current business problems by capturing new data opportunities. Data analytics processing and architecture can be described as seeking a single version of the truth that results in solutions that enable a business to make fact based decisions from the data that has been elevated into information then knowledge. When selling to the C Suite it is helpful to understand their challenges since businesses are in different phases of becoming analytics run organizations.

The C Suite in every business is aware of analytics. Generally they are either Innovators<sup>1</sup> (10%), Practitioners (49%) or Novices (41%) just starting to think about switching to a data driven decision making. Overall businesses are optimistic about their future success in building analytics solutions.

According to an Accenture 2014 study based on a survey<sup>2</sup>, 92% of users are satisfied with the business solution and 94% feel that their business requirements are being met. Overall the solutions have started small in one area with a pilot or proof of concept and iteratively built the internal support for the enterprise solution. One of the biggest obstacles is the lack of qualified talent (41%), budget (47%) and security (51%) issues. Hiring consultants (57%) help bridge the talent gap with 54% providing internal training and 50% offering vendor training to their employees.

Deloitte<sup>3</sup> describes the analytic revolution (about making good and better business decisions based on data) as gathering the data, building skills, and changing the business to decision making analytics by embedding into the business process. This is a paradigm shift from previous development projects. The development managers need to know how the decision makers will use and apply their work throughout the process (Kemelor, 2014).

---

<sup>1</sup> Ransbotham, Sam, Kiron, David, Prentice, Pamela, Kirk, Beyond the Hype: The Hard Work Behind Analytics Success, MIT Sloan Management Review in collaboration with SAS, Spring 2016, <http://sloanreview.mit.edu/projects/the-hard-work-behind-data-analytics-strategy/>

<sup>2</sup> Big Success with Big Data, 2014 Executive Summary, [https://www.accenture.com/us-en/\\_acnmedia/Accenture/Conversion-Assets/DotCom/Documents/Global/PDF/Industries\\_14/Accenture-Big-Data-POV.pdf](https://www.accenture.com/us-en/_acnmedia/Accenture/Conversion-Assets/DotCom/Documents/Global/PDF/Industries_14/Accenture-Big-Data-POV.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> The Analytics Advantage We're just getting started, <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/Deloitte-Analytics/dttl-analytics-analytics-advantage-report-061913.pdf>

Converting managers to analytic supporters is a key requirement that can be managed through executive leadership and training. The transition is an analytics journey that needs to be integrated into perception and how work is done rather just purchasing tools and hiring analytics talent. If managers don't buy into fact based decision making, the solutions will not rise to solve strategic problems but only will be of tactical value. To summarize analytics, it needs to "solve a problem, be predictive and implementable."

Another factor in presenting an analytics proposal is providing the C Suite<sup>4</sup> with a roadmap to recognize the quantitative and qualitative reasons why they should consider an analytics solution, as well as changing to an analytics process and architecture (Balda, 2015). The ROI should directly tie into the business strategy and communicated to all departments without duplication of resources. For example data and information needs to be brought out of their silos such as Excel spreadsheets and made available to the organization that can reuse it. A data dictionary enables employees to identify available data and locate it. This data is developed once then periodically updated and available for reuse. An implementation plan should be developed that is directly aligned to the business strategy. Each employee, whether in the C Suite or staff member, continues changing their mindset that influences the cultural behavior needed to use data as a decision driving force with the previously used experience and intuition evaluation methods.

Anticipating questions<sup>5</sup> that your client has not yet considered helps them to know your proposal team understands that you have already thought through the long term solution. There are different reasons why C Suite members consider Predictive Analytics including competition or increasing revenue. The Gotham Culture consulting group created a checklist for presenting to the C Suite; see appendix.

Building from scratch is complex but can benefit from outside consulting firms that have already been through the change management phases. This way a business can benefit from other's hard

---

<sup>4</sup> Balda, Colleen, 4 Steps to Gaining C-level Support for Analytics in Your Organization, Avnet December 10, 2015, <http://www.services.avnet.com/en-us/insights/blog/Pages/gaining-c-level-support-for-analytics.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> Chadderdon, Rachel, HOW TO SELL CHANGE TO THE C-SUITE: TIPS FROM AN INTERNAL CHANGE AGENT, OCTOBER 11, 2016, GOTHAM CULTURE, <HTTP://GOTHAMCULTURE.COM/2016/10/11/HOW-TO-SELL-CHANGE-TO-THE-C-SUITE-TIPS-FROM-AN-INTERNAL-CHANGE-AGENT/>

lessons learned and experience rather than to go through the pain themselves. Hiring talent on a consulting basis then growing internal staff into these roles can speed up the conversion process.

Hiring top C Suite talent<sup>6</sup> (like a Chief Strategy Officers (CSO), Chief Data Officer (CDO) or a Chief Analytics Officer (CAO), is another way of internally managing analytic changes especially because infrastructure and architectural changes will affect the entire enterprise across departments which need strong and effective leadership. Changes include changing mindsets, a data strategy, identifying what to buy/build/rent, finding the right analytic talent, activating and deploying resources across business functions and departments, and creating new business processes and functionality. The organization structure and interactive will need to realign based on the transformational updates occurring.

Providing examples of other businesses that have already found success in incorporating analytics will give C Suite members reasons for considering making a decision for their own business. What are the improvements, successes and how were the internal changes made?

Presenting to the C Suite requires a fully thought out strategy for identifying specifically the exact stage their company is presently regarding analytics and how they would need to build out the solution you are presenting.

---

<sup>6</sup> Brown, Brad, Court, David, Willmott, Paul, Can Your C-Suite Handle Big Data?, October 10, 2013 Harvard Business Review, <https://hbr.org/2013/10/can-your-c-suite-handle-big-data>