



# 10 years with Collibra

## The NetApp story

How NetApp's business-led approach to data governance has stood the test of time.



NetApp is a Fortune 500 global technology company with 10,000 employees that supports clients in more than 150 countries. They are the leader in cloud data services, empowering global organizations to change their world with data.

With data at the core of the company, it is natural that NetApp is a longstanding customer of Collibra. The two companies began working together in 2010 as NetApp sought to combat companywide inefficiencies around data governance. Over that time, Peggy McCoy, former Chief Data Steward in the Enterprise Data Management division, and Shirley Pargaz, Glossary Steward, have been the driving force behind NetApp's data governance program.



## Partnering for a decade

When NetApp first partnered with Collibra in 2010, data governance was still a relatively nascent discipline. The first task that McCoy faced back in those days was to consolidate the data dictionaries that the company had amassed internally. More than 50 were identified and they were stored in a variety of siloed formats, from spreadsheets and documents to SharePoint libraries. “Some of the content wasn’t even written down. We had to sit down, ask the relevant SME and take notes while they spoke,” recalls McCoy.

Since those early years, NetApp has worked closely with Collibra to evolve the features and functionality within its business glossary. The company also helped found Collibra’s original user groups, at first meeting informally with fellow customers to discuss common ground around data governance, and later in more formal settings.



## Being led by the business

Over the last ten years McCoy and Pargaz have learned many lessons when it comes to data governance. But, they have always stayed the course. “Our strategy has been about business adoption and keeping it simple,” says Pargaz. “We are always looking to engage with our business colleagues to figure out their challenges and how we can prototype something to solve that,” she adds.

This business-led approach is reflected in the federated governance model that NetApp has evolved. The company has more than 160 data stewards distributed across its various business lines and operating units - each of whom owns at least one data asset.

**“We talk about the data governance program and how we can support what they’re doing ... 99% of the time they support what we are doing. Having sponsorship from an executive owner is a great place to start because it gives you deferred authority.”**

—Peggy McCoy    Former Chief Data Steward in the Enterprise Data Management division

This list has grown steadily over the years as more data domains have been brought into the governance program. As part of that process, the data governance team have always sought to elicit sponsorship from senior business executives - a key to success. Every new domain that is onboarded begins with a meeting with the executive heading up that business.

The team recognizes that even with sponsorship from senior business executives, they still need to ensure that engagement levels remain high. That is why they have always maintained a semi-annual review process to keep content current. “Data stewards don’t necessarily do the job without a gentle push,” notes Pargaz.

## Driving adoption and engagement



# 200%

### Increase in usage

“One of the things we did was to implement a ‘find a definition’ widget on our corporate homepage, which drove up usage by more than 200%,” says McCoy.

Maintaining an accurate and current business glossary requires continuous effort, but the benefits have been clear. The data governance team has been able to foster accuracy and consistency across the company’s data assets, enabling different business units to use consistent definitions, discover more datasets and understand the context around that data.

To maximize those benefits, the team has had to publicize its efforts and ensure employees know about the glossary and have easy access to it. “One of the things we did was to implement a ‘find a definition’ widget on our corporate homepage, which drove up usage by more than 200%,” says McCoy.

Another initiative, the team collaborated with their colleagues in Human Resources to make sure all new hires are made aware of the NetApp business glossary and provided with information on how and why to use it. This not only spanned full-time employees, but also a huge number of contractors who would not go through the typical onboarding process.

The team is always ready to engage with stakeholders across the enterprise and evangelize the benefits of data governance through every channel at their disposal - including company newsletters, conferences and face-to-face meetings.

## Strategic and steady progress

One lesson the team has learned over their ten years with Collibra is to take a strategic and measured approach to data governance. “We’ve learned over the years that if you try to boil the ocean, your stakeholders will run and hide. We’d rather prioritize what’s most important. We’ll ask our colleagues ‘what are your top policies?’ and ‘what causes most confusion on your team and would really help to be documented?’ Once we tackle the most pressing problems, invariably over time they will volunteer more information and come to us,” says Pargaz.

Looking forward, Netapp is excited to continue their partnership with Collibra. The data governance team continues their work to drive engagement amongst their data stewards and to stay relevant with their business users with the ultimate goal of driving adoption and enabling trusted decision making across the organization.

