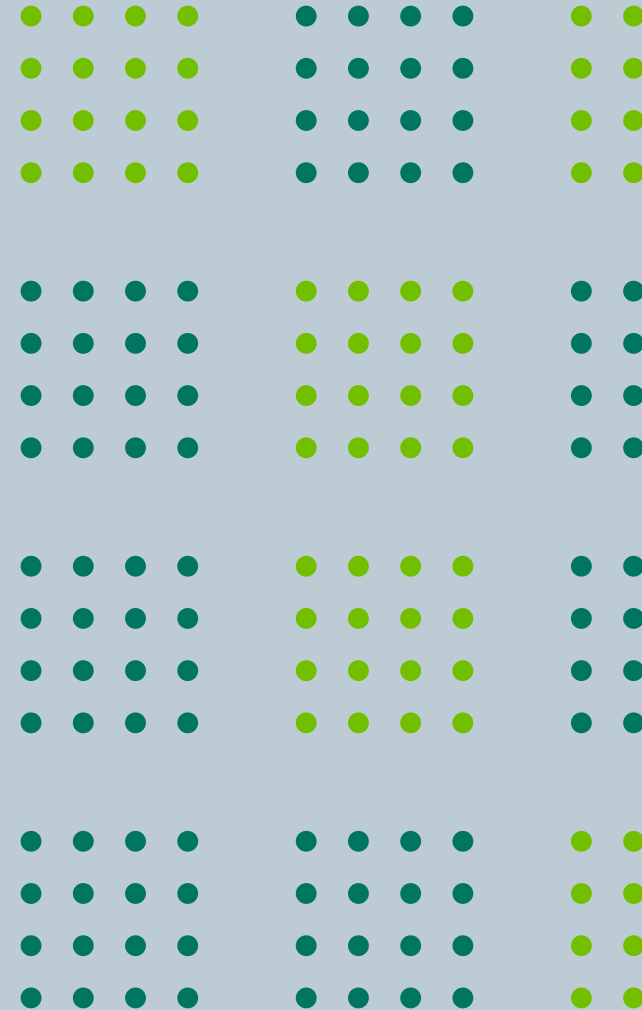


Key Steps to

# Creating a Data-Enabled Organization

Written, April 2019 | Refreshed, February 2020





## The road to Data Intelligence

Data is at the center of all digital transformation, but managing data intelligently is the biggest barrier to success. In data management, it's not just a technology and scale issue, rather it's a people and process problem. To build a data-enabled organization, a new approach is needed to make it easier for all Data Citizens to find, consume and collaborate with data to achieve Data Intelligence. True Data Intelligence means any Data Citizen can uncover and extract the value of their data.

## Seek a definition of data enablement

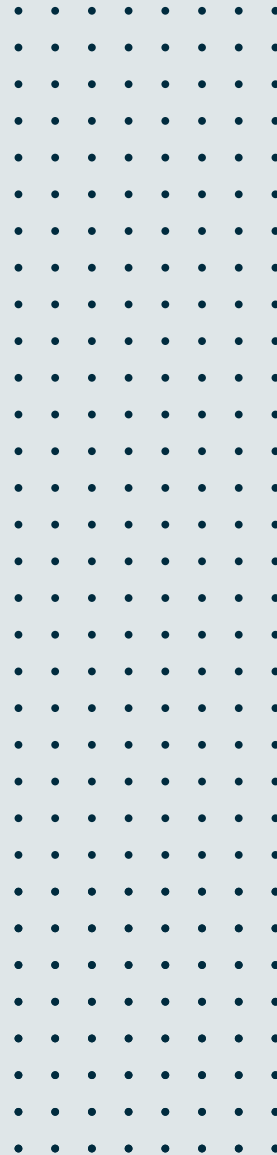
What does a data-enabled organization look like? Before setting off on any journey, it's important to understand your goal. Data enabled organizations are populated by Data Citizens — employees who engage with data in any form. Those Data Citizens should be:

- Collaborating with other groups in the organization around Data Intelligence
- Participating in internal Data Intelligence communities
- Embracing key roles such as “data owner” and “data consumer”
- Working comfortably within the Data Intelligence platform every day
- Adapting to new functionality and tools within the software with some training
- Contributing to the ongoing development of Data Intelligence within the organization

To achieve these outcomes, it's important to think strategically about what the data culture of the organization should be like and how it could support the organization's goals. It's also essential to consider how the data team will evolve and scale over the medium-term.



**The following steps provide a framework for creating a truly data-enabled organization.**





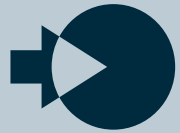
# Recognize your starting point



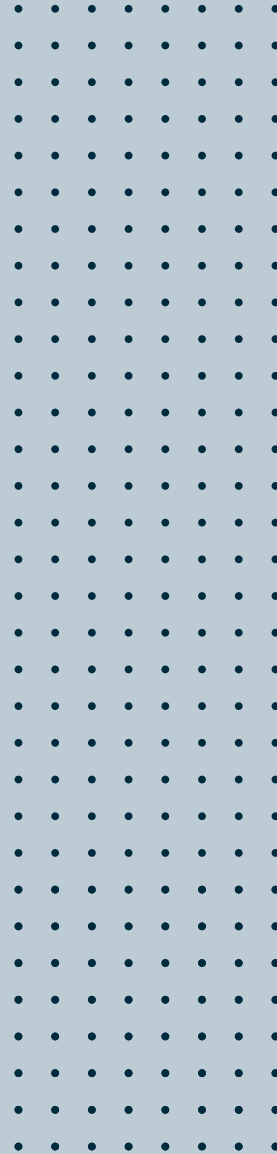
**You can find data teams in many different locations on the organizational chart today. While there is no “right way” to create a data team, where the team is placed often depends on the history and the culture of the organization. Locations, where data teams can be found, include:**

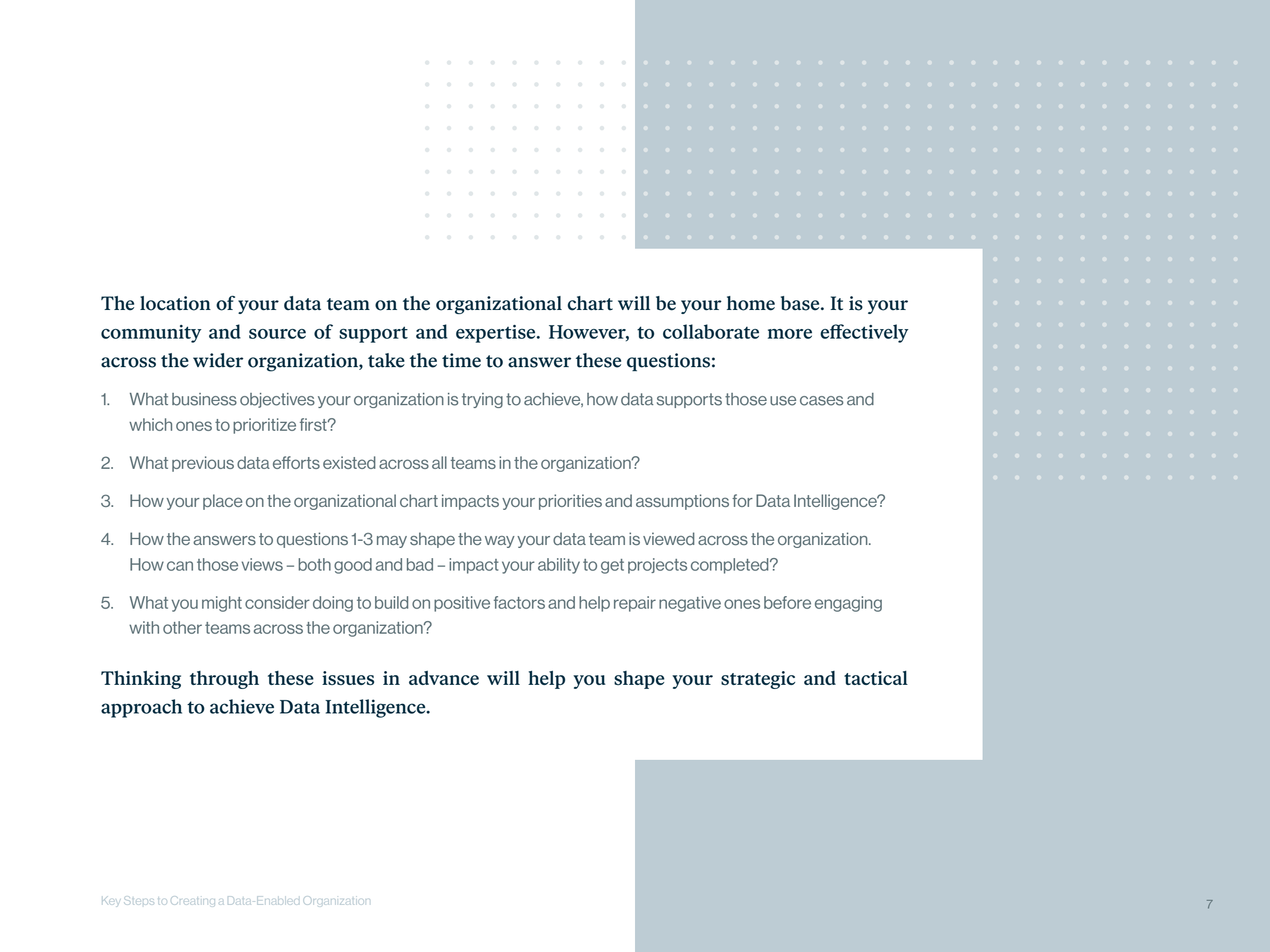
- Under a chief data officer (CDO)
- Within the IT department
- Inside a business line
- Inside marketing, finance, HR or another support team

**There are many locations for data teams today — best practice is still evolving alongside the development of the discipline, but the closer to the business, the better.**



# Get a new perspective





**The location of your data team on the organizational chart will be your home base. It is your community and source of support and expertise. However, to collaborate more effectively across the wider organization, take the time to answer these questions:**

1. What business objectives your organization is trying to achieve, how data supports those use cases and which ones to prioritize first?
2. What previous data efforts existed across all teams in the organization?
3. How your place on the organizational chart impacts your priorities and assumptions for Data Intelligence?
4. How the answers to questions 1-3 may shape the way your data team is viewed across the organization. How can those views – both good and bad – impact your ability to get projects completed?
5. What you might consider doing to build on positive factors and help repair negative ones before engaging with other teams across the organization?

**Thinking through these issues in advance will help you shape your strategic and tactical approach to achieve Data Intelligence.**





# Build knowledge diversity into your data team



The need for diversity on a data team may not seem obvious at first – surely it would be best to populate the team with data experts, who have come up through technology, right?

Often mono-culture data teams struggle to successfully engage with other parts of the business. This is because they have a single perspective on data and Data Intelligence goals. This can be particularly true if the team is drawn entirely from IT.

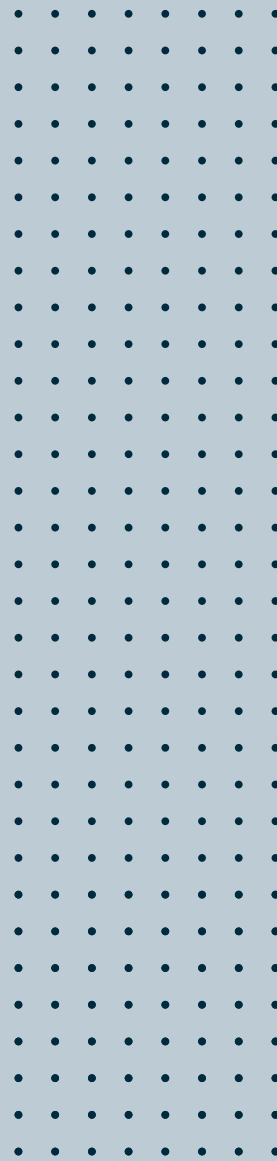
The strongest data teams are composed of data-oriented people from across the organization. Each member can bring different perspectives and insights into the issues that both creators and users have within their part of the business. Different perspectives will help the data team meet the needs of the organization more effectively, eliminate issues that arise early on, and develop holistic business solutions.

In short, diversity in the data team will increase the likelihood of successfully becoming a data-enabled organization while simultaneously covering risks related to ethics and privacy.





# Focus on the Data Council



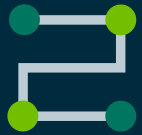


A Data Council is different from your data team. The Data Council provides oversight of the data governance program, including its policies, procedures, and various projects.

Diversity, as with a data team is particularly important for the Data Council because it's such an important body within the whole Data Intelligence framework. The most productive Data Councils have a wide range of key Data Citizens who are aligned with the organization's overall business goals from the start. The knowledge and influence these Data Citizens can provide will be important information for the data team.

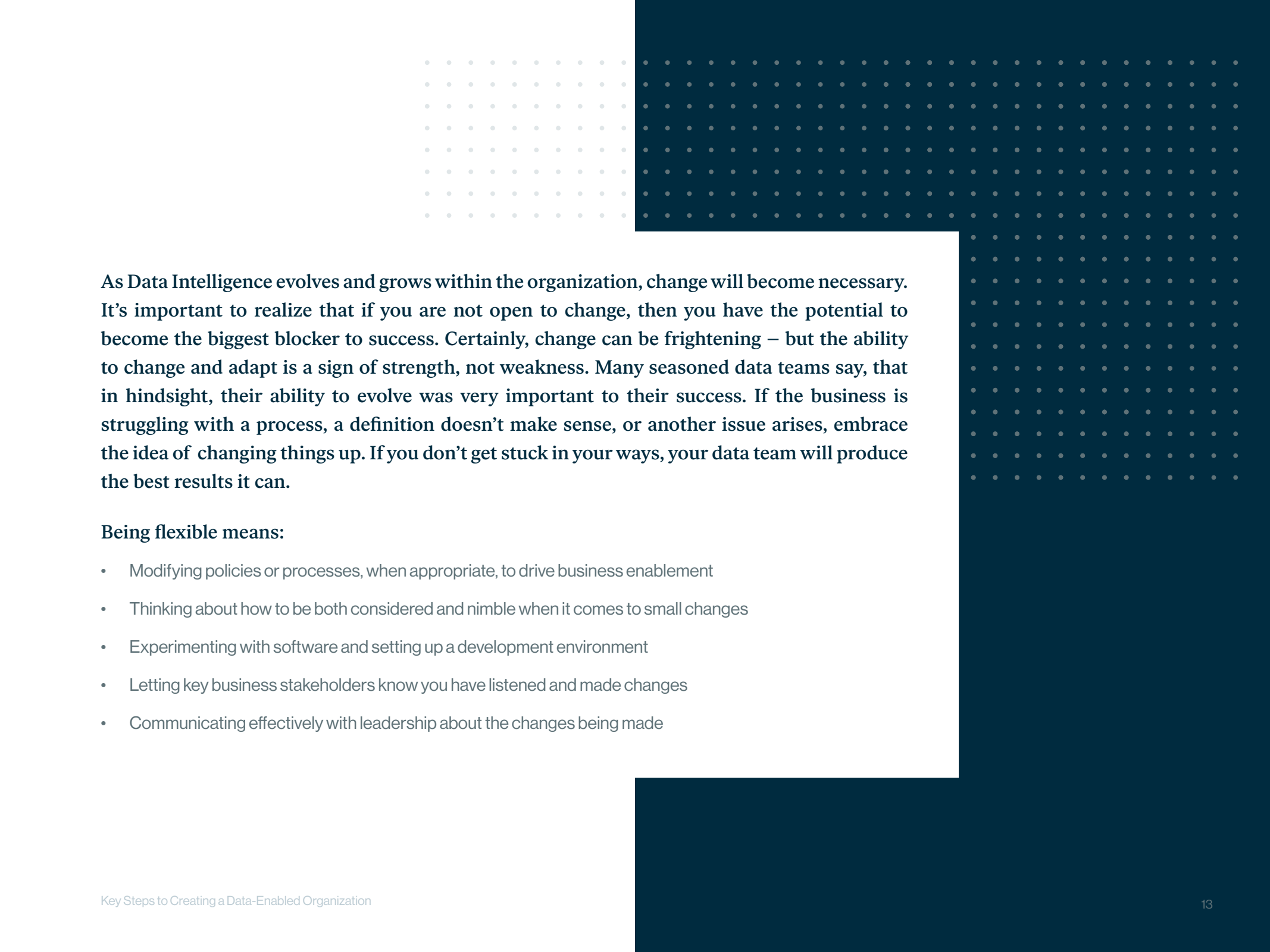
Make sure to invite critical voices to the table; you don't want a room of "yes men" when you're making crucial decisions for the company. Getting issues and concerns out on the table makes it easier to address and resolve them, helping the team to more successfully deliver data enablement.

Lastly, the Data Council can help transform the all-important "tone from the top" into the right "music in the middle." Having a variety of stakeholders can help ensure that the right data culture is transmitted across the organization.



# Be flexible





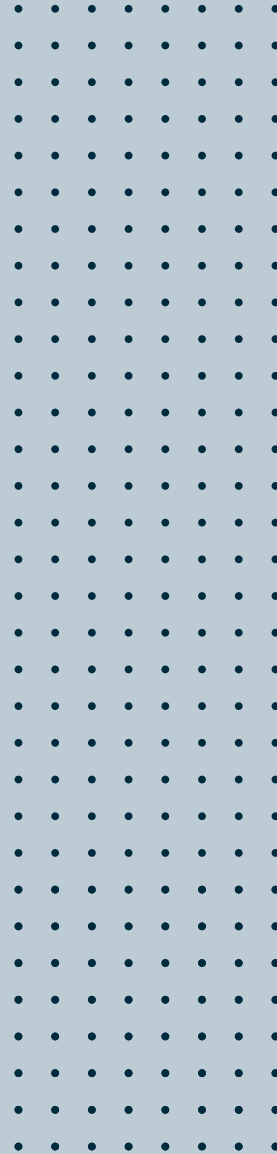
As Data Intelligence evolves and grows within the organization, change will become necessary. It's important to realize that if you are not open to change, then you have the potential to become the biggest blocker to success. Certainly, change can be frightening – but the ability to change and adapt is a sign of strength, not weakness. Many seasoned data teams say, that in hindsight, their ability to evolve was very important to their success. If the business is struggling with a process, a definition doesn't make sense, or another issue arises, embrace the idea of changing things up. If you don't get stuck in your ways, your data team will produce the best results it can.

#### Being flexible means:

- Modifying policies or processes, when appropriate, to drive business enablement
- Thinking about how to be both considered and nimble when it comes to small changes
- Experimenting with software and setting up a development environment
- Letting key business stakeholders know you have listened and made changes
- Communicating effectively with leadership about the changes being made



# **Evangelize strategically and constructively**







To create a data-enabled organization, effective communication is required. The communication will both create the data culture and provide Data Citizens with important information they will need to do their jobs effectively.

Key actions include:

- **Building a strong communications strategy.** It's important to put thought into how the data team communicates with the business. Consider creating clear talking points to use. These should both support the type of data culture that you want to create and align with the organization's goals.
- **Having a clear vision or mission.** Having the right statement can help the organization better understand what it is you are here to do. Keep it simple. Use it whenever you engage with Data Citizens.
- **Speaking at every appropriate opportunity.** Keep abreast of internal events and find out if it would be right for the data team to have a speaking slot to introduce the audience to Data Intelligence.
- **Providing lots of training opportunities.** Individuals learn differently. Provide different kinds of training if possible, including classroom/tutorials, online training, videos and printed materials.

The right approach to communications is important, so take time to design a plan that works for your organization and is sustainable for your team.





# Meet the business in the middle

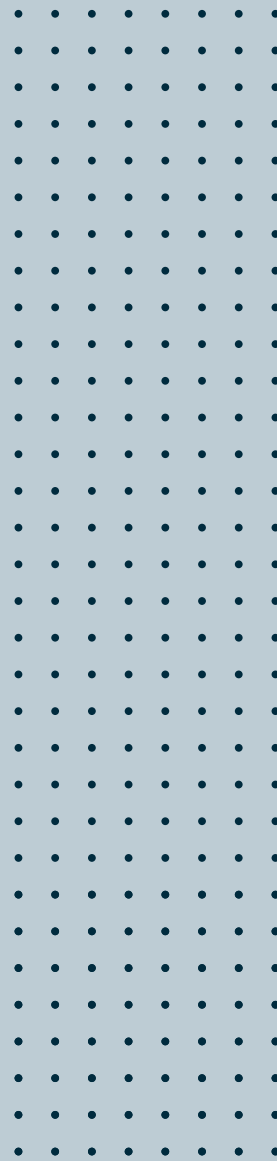
Communicating with the business is enhanced when business approaches are used. They can include:

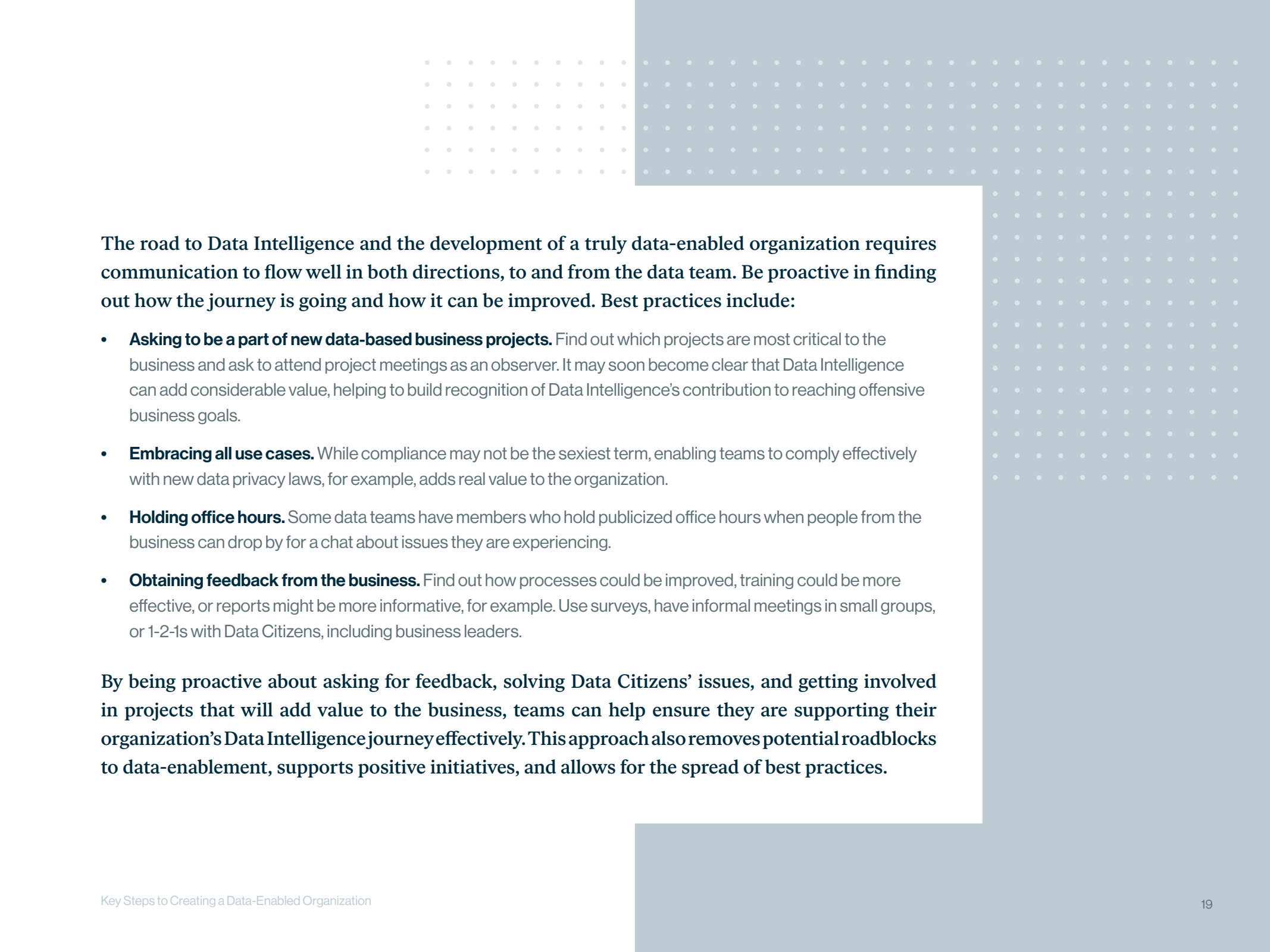
- **Doing demos across the business.** Demos can be very effective at eliciting engagement, by showing how the software can help individuals in their jobs day-to-day.
- **Developing “plain English” materials.** Use technical writers to develop user guides, functionality guides, change notifications, and capability launches that are easy to understand for the non-IT people among your Data Citizens.
- **Enabling the business to do things for themselves.** Show the business how individuals can be empowered by Data Intelligence. Emphasize the self-service aspects of Data Intelligence and the opportunities those create for the business.
- **Creating metrics.** Before projects begin, measure key metrics for the business. Then re-measure those metrics at regular points in the project to demonstrate value through improvement.
- **Having individuals with communications experience.** Marketing, training, public speaking, etc. on the data team can be a real asset.





# Determine how you can help





The road to Data Intelligence and the development of a truly data-enabled organization requires communication to flow well in both directions, to and from the data team. Be proactive in finding out how the journey is going and how it can be improved. Best practices include:

- **Asking to be a part of new data-based business projects.** Find out which projects are most critical to the business and ask to attend project meetings as an observer. It may soon become clear that Data Intelligence can add considerable value, helping to build recognition of Data Intelligence's contribution to reaching offensive business goals.
- **Embracing all use cases.** While compliance may not be the sexiest term, enabling teams to comply effectively with new data privacy laws, for example, adds real value to the organization.
- **Holding office hours.** Some data teams have members who hold publicized office hours when people from the business can drop by for a chat about issues they are experiencing.
- **Obtaining feedback from the business.** Find out how processes could be improved, training could be more effective, or reports might be more informative, for example. Use surveys, have informal meetings in small groups, or 1-2-1s with Data Citizens, including business leaders.

By being proactive about asking for feedback, solving Data Citizens' issues, and getting involved in projects that will add value to the business, teams can help ensure they are supporting their organization's Data Intelligence journey effectively. This approach also removes potential roadblocks to data-enablement, supports positive initiatives, and allows for the spread of best practices.



# Create a successful data-enabled organization



Getting an organization's culture right – so that it becomes truly data-enabled – requires taking the right steps on the Data Intelligence journey. It is also necessary to have the right policies, processes, collaboration forums, communications channels and technology support for data-engaged individuals. Success is satisfying – for leadership, for the business, and for the Data Intelligence team. Through data-enablement of the organization, all of these groups can effectively collaborate to create and deliver real value.



**Learn more about how to build a data-enabled organization through free courses at Collibra University and by exploring the resources Collibra has to offer on [collibra.com](https://collibra.com).**