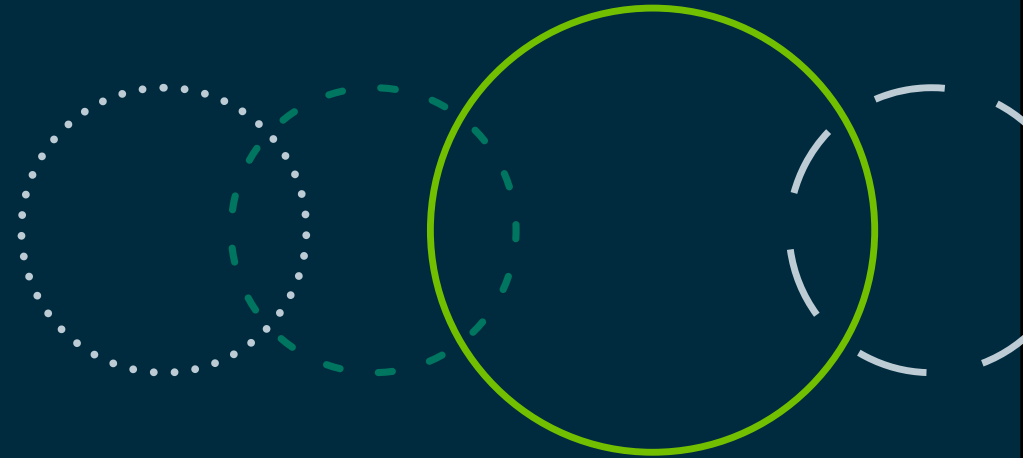
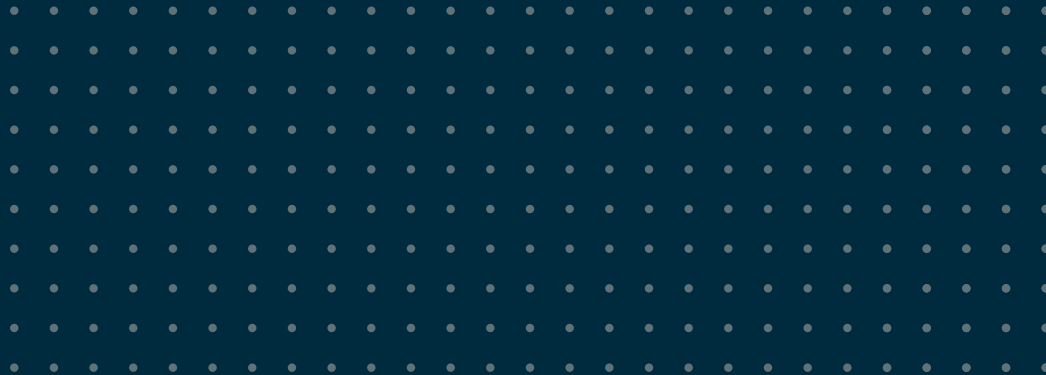


# How to become a data governance expert

Written, April 2017 | Refreshed, December 2019



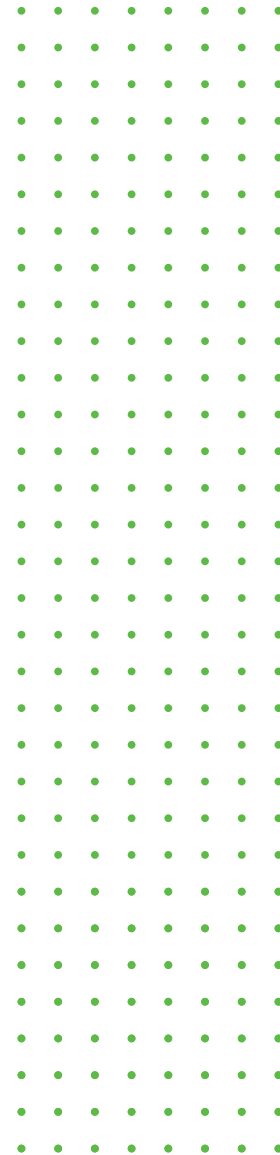
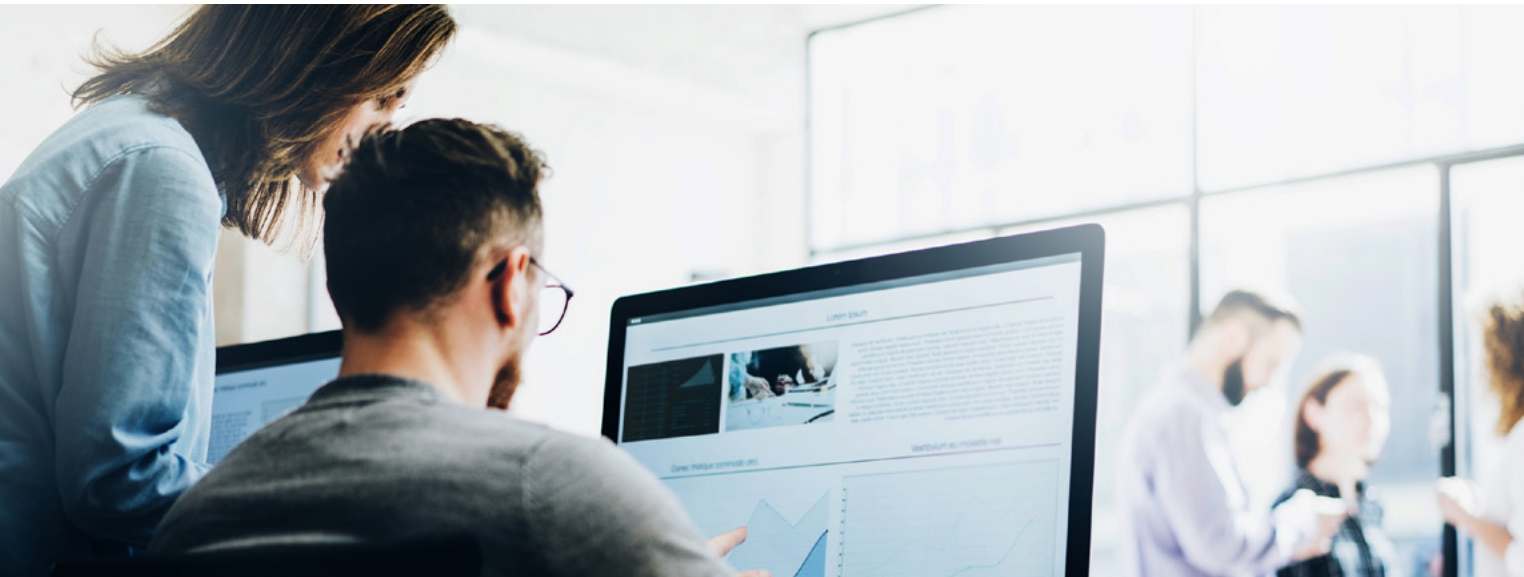
# You're already a data expert

You've been working with enterprise data for years.  
You've seen the good, the bad and the downright ugly.  
You've watched the business of data change.

## The end-game is no longer a better data warehouse

The objective is to deliver value to the business via data. And for that data to mean something, it needs to be consumable by everybody in the organization, not just the data experts.

Today, more and more businesses want to put high quality data into the hands of the people who need it to do their jobs. That means organizations must build processes that define who owns what data and how it can be used. They must enable Data Citizens to find, trust and access data to generate insights.



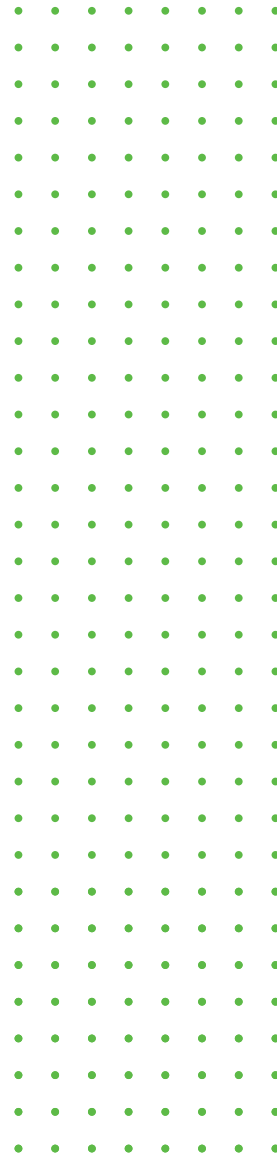
# Data governance is the skill set that is taking off

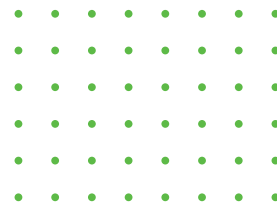
Like life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, we believe that well-governed data is a fundamental right for every Data Citizen. Of course, you might have more immediate reasons to become your data governance expert.

- Perhaps your team has asked you to take the lead on your company's data governance strategy
- Perhaps your boss just requested you to determine a way to tame the data chaos at your organization
- Perhaps you are looking for a new job or thinking about your next promotion
- Maybe you work in one of the many industries where regulatory scrutiny demands better control of data. (Do BCBS 239, CCAR, Solvency II, GDPR, HIPAA, MACRA or CMS Star Ratings ring a bell?)
- Or you might be examining the big issues in the market

Big data has big potential, but finding the right information and extracting meaning from all those data sets are not easy. Your business may have initiated a new master data management project, but it lacks cross-organizational collaboration and stewardship. Highly paid professionals continue to engage in data brawls where they spend hours arguing about their data's meaning and quality.

- Without dedicated cooperation and collaboration from key stakeholders, your BI project may never launch.





## Why become a data governance expert?

While business trends rise and fall, we have seen consistent markers that indicate data governance is no longer a “nice to have;” rather, data governance is a business imperative

- Data governance helps analysts find the data that matters—fast
- Data governance helps make big data meaningful
- Data governance provides a framework for collaboration
- Data governance makes data lineage, ownership and stewardship clear

Data governance empowers Data Citizens and makes confident about where the data is coming from and what it is saying.



# The rise of the Chief Data Officer

The amount of data available will continue to grow. To get ahead of the data tsunami, organizations have been adding new crucial team members. Authority over data is shifting to the Chief Data Officer, who must transform data into strategic business assets and her first order of business is to master the available data.



## Regulatory oversight

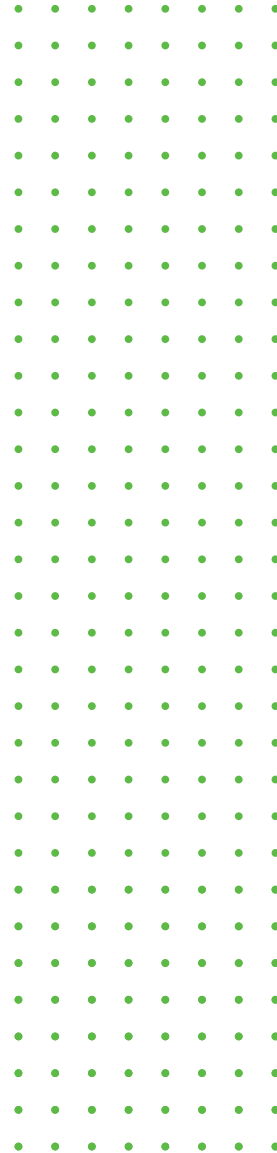
Highly regulated industries, like financial services and healthcare, are being asked to respond to requests for information more quickly and transparently. Regulations like GDPR have a significant impact on virtually every industry around the globe. Organizations with well-governed data are better equipped to mitigate risk and avoid steep penalties for non-compliance.



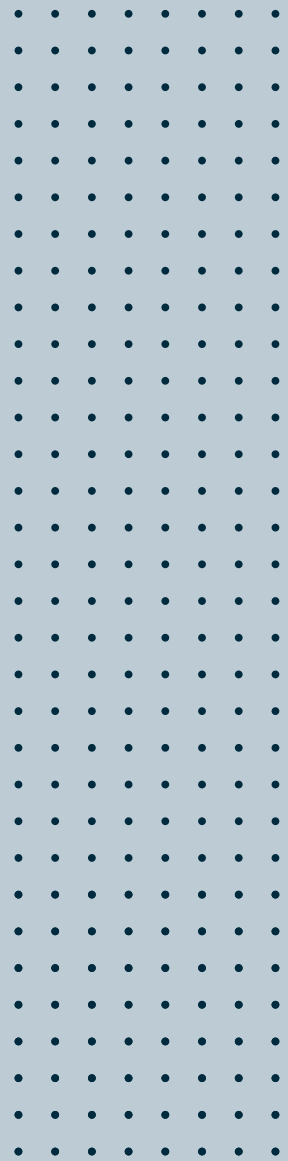


## Deliver insights and value

Companies no longer simply talk about being “data-driven;” they are actively implementing practices and processes. For BI projects to be effective, business users need to be able to find the significant data. Data governance is key to making data to actionable across the organization. Data governance is all about understanding, trusting and accessing quality data. And being a data governance expert requires passion for people, processes and technology. Data governance is more than simple tools. It is about getting data into the hands of the relevant Data Citizen — the people on the front lines, putting the data to work.



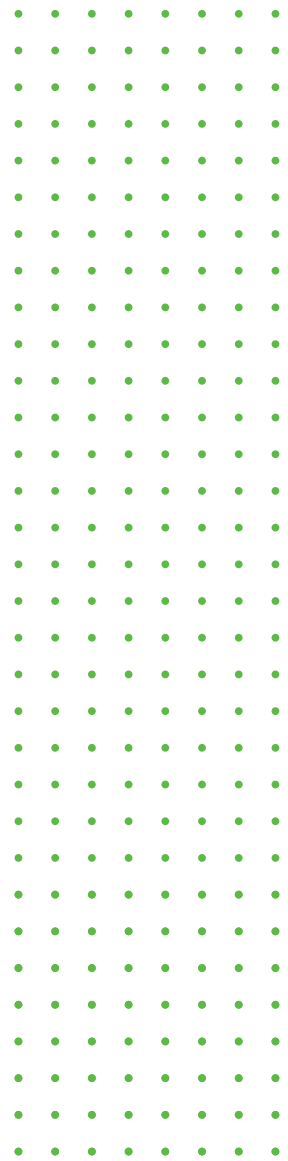




# Key actions for data governance experts

**A data governance expert understands people own the data.**

Data governance necessitates collaboration to be successful, but getting people to collaborate is harder than it may seem. People want to collaborate, but when data is handled poorly, reputations suffer. When reputations suffer, behaviors change — usually for the worst. There are a number of steps that leaders can do to empower their organization around data.



## First, recognize that data is more than records, fields and tables.

Good data needs good owners. Good owners take responsibility for their data's quality, access and management.

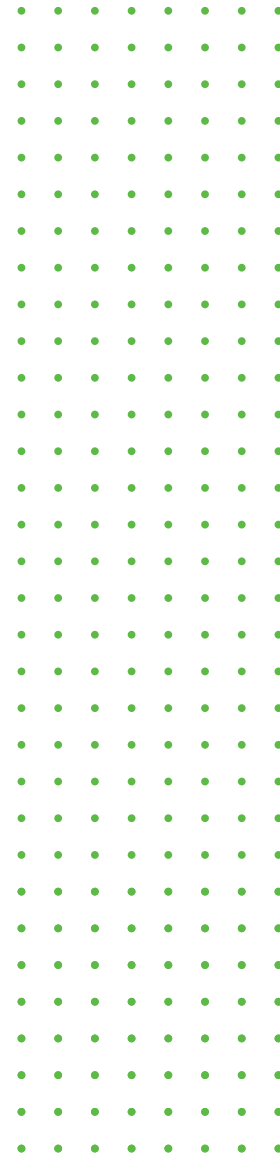
## Second, identify the exceptional Data Citizens and those who will be effective stewards of their data.

They will likely be subject matter experts with business expertise and a passion for details. They are the “go-to” people in your organization — the individuals who always know where the data lives and what it means. That exposure has made them great data diplomats. Recruit these Data Citizens to serve as members of your data governance team. Ask them what matters to their business units. Learn how changes will affect these business units and incorporate that knowledge into the processes you build.

After engaging the leaders and stakeholders, a data governance expert must **involve all lines and levels of the business** because the business owns the process. Put the business in the driver's seat because the aim of data governance is not just pristine data — it is to help people use data confidently to pursue business goals.

## Articulate the value of data governance to business users—data governance will make data easier to find, understand and trust.

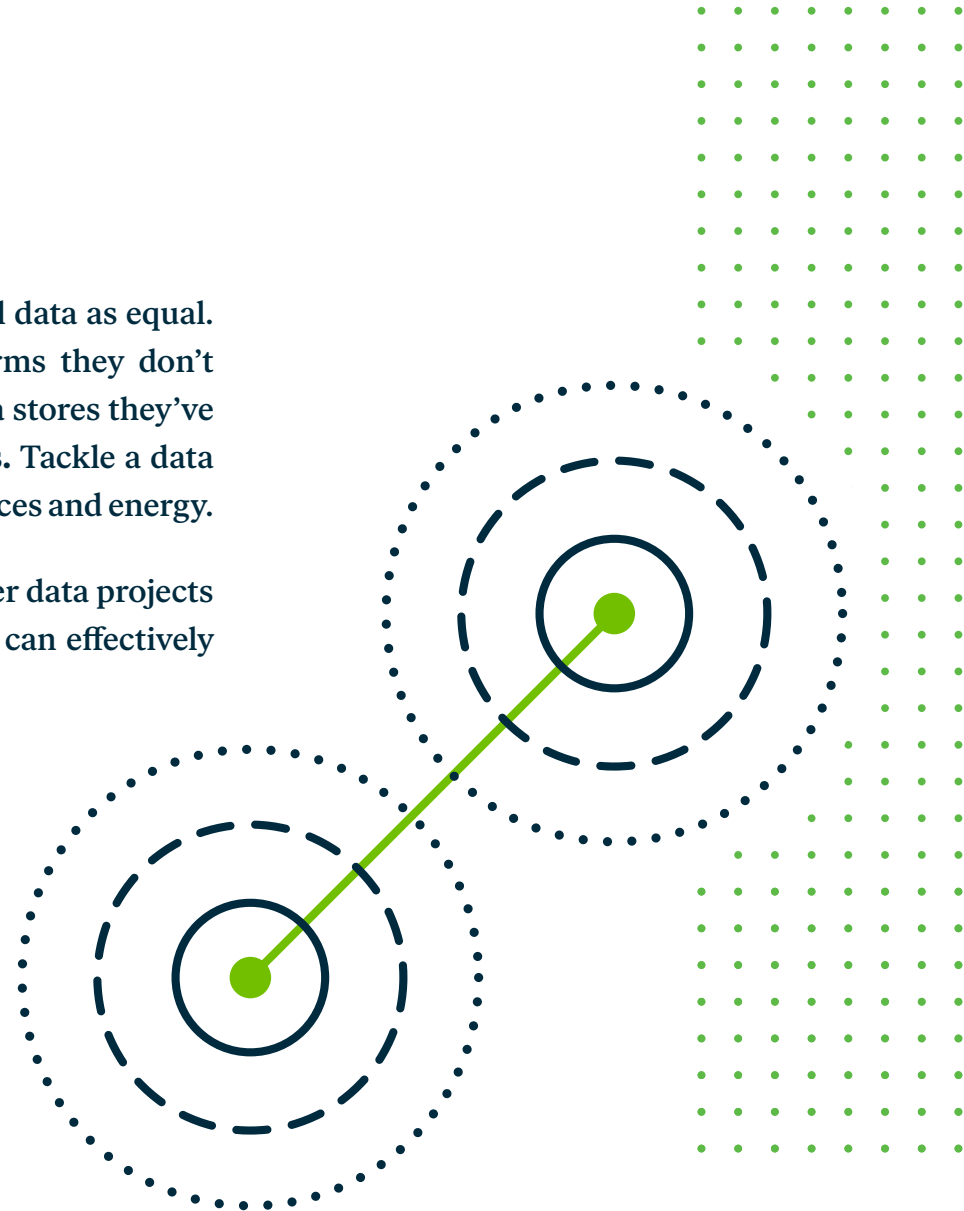
Ask business users to prioritize the information they need and to determine the people who can have access to it. That allows IT to focus on those critical data elements first, making them easier for business users to find.



## Acknowledge the disconnect between IT and the business.

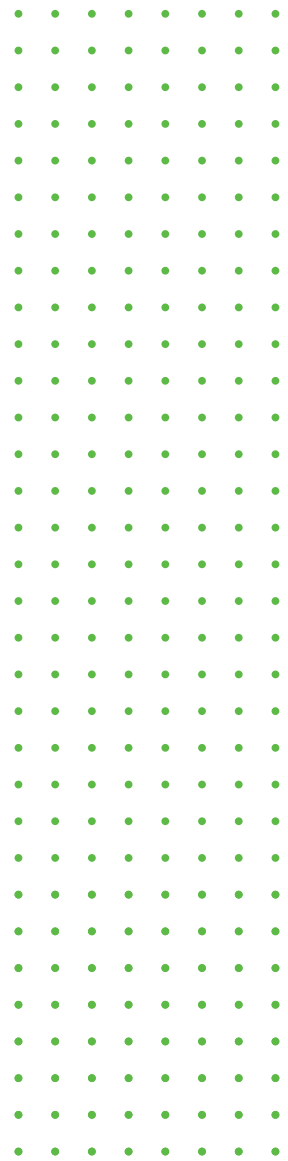
Business users value data for what it can do, whereas IT views all data as equal. Business users get frustrated by data couched in technical terms they don't understand. IT gets frustrated when no one uses the massive data stores they've sweated to implement. Take small steps to **break down the silos**. Tackle a data management issue or a data sharing agreement. Focus your resources and energy.

Don't limit the reach of your data governance efforts. Look at other data projects and working groups. Get them to voice their pain points, so you can effectively demonstrate how governance address their challenges.



# Implementing technology

A data governance expert understands that technology should be strategic. It's not enough to simply store your data all in one place. That logic has been driving data warehouse projects for over a decade and it's an approach that has largely failed. We know that data lives in multiple systems across the organization and that's not likely to change. Ultimately, your complete data ecosystem should be transparent across every department and business unit.



## Implementing technology

- 1** Acknowledge that, as a data governance expert, you are no longer managing a departmental project, but an enterprise-wide initiative.
- 2** Implement a system of record that's about more than data elements. For data governance to work, your data system of record needs to support processes—things like requesting access to data, approving data or making changes to data. A system of record should also help business users identify and fix bad data and inform people after stewards have made changes.
- 3** Create a data catalog that organizes useful collections of data across systems, organizations and geographies. The data catalog should empower Data Citizens to discover the data they need and trust it is accurate and compliant.



# Keep pace with **change**

**A data governance expert is always learning.**

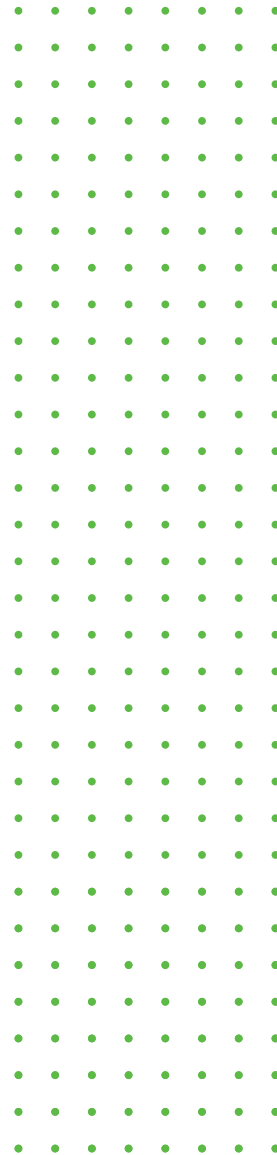
The world of data governance will continue to grow as businesses recognize that the strategic use of data can be a competitive differentiator. To be effective, the data governance expert must master multiple disciplines: IT, business management and more.



## First, stay abreast of industry trends.

Learn broadly about business drivers, challenges and opportunities. Talk to experts across your organization about your company's potential and how to reach it. Become familiar with industry publications, in the world of IT and beyond. Some good data governance blogs and resources to track include

- [The Collibra blog](#), where CDOs, data stewards and all Data Citizens go to learn about true data governance
- DAMA International's [DMBOK \(Body of Knowledge\)](#)
- Dataversity's [Data Blogs | Information from Enterprise Leaders](#)



## Second, participate in online user communities and attend conferences.

The annual Collibra Data Citizens Conference is the world's largest gathering of data professionals focused on transforming their organizations through data governance and Data Intelligence. Other events, like DGIQ (Data Governance & Information Quality), offer annual conferences covering topics like establishing data governance programs, data stewardship, agile data governance and more. Collibra Community is a vibrant online community and knowledge repository that provides valuable information and data governance resources. The Data Governance Institute provides vendor-neutral best practices and guidance.

## Finally, educate yourself with courses and certifications.

Classes give you an advantage over the industry competitors and credentials can increase your earning potential. At Collibra University, offers training and certifications from industry practitioners and has thousands of users every month.



# Conclusion

Becoming a data governance expert takes time, dedication and intellect. But most of all, it requires a willingness to engage with all Data Citizens. To be the data governance expert your organization needs, you must be a change agent and empower all Data Citizens.



If you are interested in learning more, please visit [collibra.com](https://collibra.com)