



June 2022

# From data to impact: **ready or not?**

**Creative tech for Better Change**

IDC #EUR148880122

sponsored by





From data to impact: ready or not ?

# Table of contents

- 4 | About this white paper
- 6 | Executive summary
- 8 | What is happening in EMEA, here and now
- 10 | EMEA companies' data-driven maturity status
- 20 | IDC data-driven intelligence framework: the guide toward maturity
- 40 | Co-creating data-driven blueprint with a strategic technology partner for high success rate
- 44 | Conclusion and future outlook
- 46 | Message from the sponsor
- 47 | About the Analyst
- 48 | About IDC

# About this White Paper

This white paper is based on IDC research and a dedicated IDC data-driven survey on EMEA organizations. It informs EMEA companies about the importance of becoming data-driven, the core dimensions of data-driven success, why these dimensions are important, and the benefits of mastering each of these dimensions. **It outlines the data-driven maturity of your peers across EMEA and gives actionable advice on how you can master the dimensions and become data-driven.**

## IDC Data-Driven Research Methodology

IDC's EMEA Data-Driven Intelligence Enterprise Survey, 2021, surveyed and classified companies' maturity in data-driven intelligence across three core dimensions:

- Data strategy
- Data for business
- Data foundation

IDC applied a dedicated IDC Maturity Framework to classify the 700 enterprises surveyed into three groups reflecting their level of maturity:

- Data Beginners
- Data Explorers
- Data Thrivers

Whether you're a CxO working on data strategy, a business manager specializing in translating data into insights to accelerate your business, or a cloud expert on data platforms and foundations, these findings will help you self-assess the state of your organization, get inspired, and take action.

Read the full white paper below for deeper analysis, and **[complete the 10-question assessment](#)** to discover who you are: Data Beginner, Explorer, or Thriver?



# Executive Summary

Data has the power to make or break an organization's digital future. How an organization turns data into insights, how it makes these insights accessible to business decision makers, and how this data is governed and secured are the fundamental principles to succeed as a data-first organization.

***54% of EMEA organizations are aiming to become data-driven.***

EMEA organizations accept that data is a foundational asset for them and they are closely linking data and analytics investment to their business objectives of innovation, business growth, and efficiency.

IDC's EMEA Data-Driven Intelligence Enterprise Survey, 2021, which surveyed 700 EMEA organizations, is the main source for this white paper. The survey reveals that we have crossed the tipping point, with 54% of organizations saying that becoming data-driven is either strategic or fundamental for business and innovation.



## Data to Achieve Five Business Goals

For EMEA organizations, five key business goals can only be realized through investment in data projects:

1. Optimizing business processes and operations
2. Improving fraud prevention, risk management, and regulatory compliance
3. Enhancing product, service, and program innovation
4. Improving financial planning and budgeting
5. Generating new revenue streams (data monetization)

The importance of data for business is now stronger than ever, and this is being translated into investments. The survey revealed that 82% of organizations are spending more than 10% of their IT budgets on data technologies, and that the three key investment areas to become data-driven are:

- Data governance, monitoring, and quality
- Use of cloud platforms
- Developing a data culture (especially among large enterprises)

# What Is Happening in EMEA, Here and Now ?

## Why Becoming Data-driven Is Much More Important Today Than Ever Before

The COVID-19 pandemic has made organizations realize the value of data in staying resilient and innovative in a crisis. It has also highlighted the **strong relation between data-driven insights and the ability to adapt.**

A majority of EMEA organizations admit that the digital future will bring uncertainty, volatility, and even unexpected opportunities. According to IDC's research, 55% of organizations are prioritizing the reduction of business risks and are transforming operational models to prepare for future disruptions.

## Status Quo Is Not Good Enough

EMEA organizations are **under pressure to become data-driven, adapt to market uncertainties, and drive innovation.**

Companies that are more data-driven are better able to withstand volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) scenarios. This was shown in IDC's EMEA Data-Driven Intelligence Enterprise Survey, 2021, with **80% of organizations that used data more strategically and extensively able to increase their profits, compared with only 48% of organizations that were less data-driven.**

The digital world is dynamic and supply chains, customer behavior, regulations, and market forces are changing rapidly. Having real-time insights is vital for survival.

The survey highlighted how **EMEA organizations see real-time analytics and better data searching as more essential than traditional data warehouses** when it comes to being data-driven.

Only data-driven insights can help companies answer key business questions:

- How can I improve visibility on operations and the supply chain?
- How can I quickly pivot to new partners in the event of disruption?
- How can I get more insights into changing customer behavior?

The good news is that almost every EMEA organization we surveyed sees data and analytics investment as critical for innovation, business growth, and efficiency.

**But the journey has only just begun.**

# EMEA Companies' Data-Driven Maturity Status

Most EMEA businesses are still at the starting point when it comes to being data-driven.

## How Do We Know?

The data-driven survey was based on IDC's data-driven maturity framework, categorizing organizations across three levels of maturity:

- Data Beginner — starting level
- Data Explorer — mid level
- Data Thriver — highest level

Only 19% of EMEA organizations demonstrated high levels of maturity and qualify as Data Thrivers or data-first trailblazers.

The organizations are thoroughly assessed across three core dimensions: data strategy, data for business, and data foundation. The framework measures and reveals organizations' maturity across each of these pillars as well as overall maturity. This helps organizations to understand their strengths and weaknesses and to carry out the actionable advice provided by IDC to succeed as a data-driven business.

**The survey revealed that 30% of EMEA organizations are Data Beginners, 51% are Data Explorers, and 19% are Data Thrivers.**

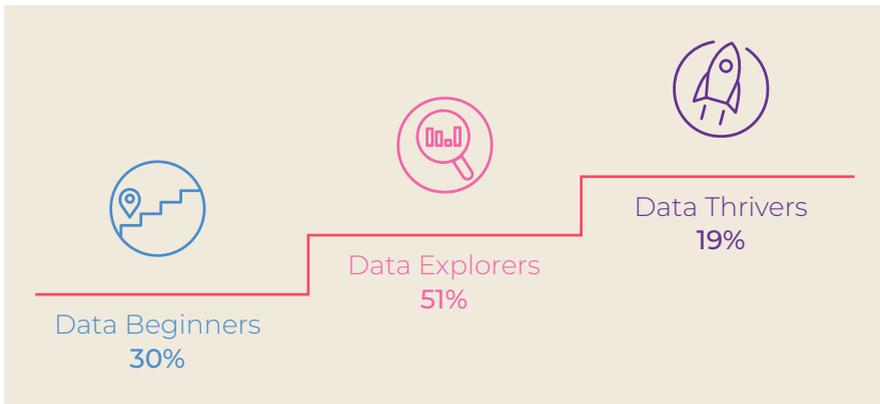
## IDC Framework: Three Stages of Maturity and Three Dimensions

IDC's data-driven research explains the **three core dimensions** — what they are, why they are important, and how they are measured. The three stages of maturity plot organizations in those stages based on their progress across the three dimensions — **strategy, business, and foundation**.

Let's delve a bit deeper into the three stages of maturity and the data-driven framework.

### The Three Stages of Maturity

There are three stages of maturity in the data-driven journey:



Source: IDC's EMEA Data-Driven Intelligence Enterprise Survey, 2021

## Characteristics of Each Stage of Maturity



### **Data Beginners** — 30% of EMEA Organizations

Data Beginners are at the beginning of their data-driven journey. They have some use cases and business decisions driven by existing analytics tools such as batch analytics and traditional Big Data platforms. The business users or data science teams have limited trust in the insights and quality of data. Their data strategies are isolated and heavily driven by IT teams with limited input from business stakeholders. Many of the key data-enabling tools — data management, visualization, analytics — are not ready to accommodate the data volume, variety, or velocity of the digital age.



### **Data Explorers** — 51% of EMEA Organizations

Data Explorers are well underway on their data journey and use data on a wider scale than Data Beginners and actively use insights to drive business outcomes and adaptability to uncertainties. They are aware of the barriers and bottlenecks when it comes to scaling their data strategies and linking them with business outcomes. Data programs, however, are still ad hoc, driven inconsistently and mostly IT led rather than business led. There is inconsistency in data technology architecture where some dimensions such as data visualization are more mature, but there are gaps in data management strategies and limited focus from all stakeholders. These organizations are not yet ready to monetize data or actively use it for innovation of new products and services. The inconsistency is also holding them back from exploring next-gen data enablers, such as AI and ML, at scale.



### **Data Thrivers** — 19% of EMEA Organizations

Data Thrivers take a holistic approach to becoming data-driven and have equal representation from IT, data science, and business teams. They allocate a higher portion of IT budgets to data-driven strategies. 72% of Data Thrivers invest more than 25% of their IT budgets for data, compared with just 33% of Data Beginners. Thrivers are continuously evolving their data infrastructure and continuously adapting their skills and processes and training new staff to maintain their momentum as Data Thrivers. They are also more hands-on in continuously strengthening their data operations, governance, and processes to improve the quality and value of data across the organization. Many are focusing on improving data visualization capabilities to deliver “quick answers” to accelerate time to market.

## **Act Now: The Widening Gap Between Leaders and Laggards Underlines the Urgency to Become Data-driven**

Data Thrivers are far ahead of their peers in embracing innovation accelerators such as AI and ML, and in exploring how to launch data products and services, leverage external data sources, and set revenue targets for data projects. Data Thrivers have outperformed less mature organizations in key business indicators such as revenue, customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, speed to market, and cost efficiency.

Data Thrivers clearly adapt better than their less mature peers to the changes brought by the COVID-19 pandemic (see Figure 1).

### Figure 1 : Business Impact and Value of Being Data-driven

*Q. How prepared was your organization to address the following requirements brought on by COVID-19 in 2020?*

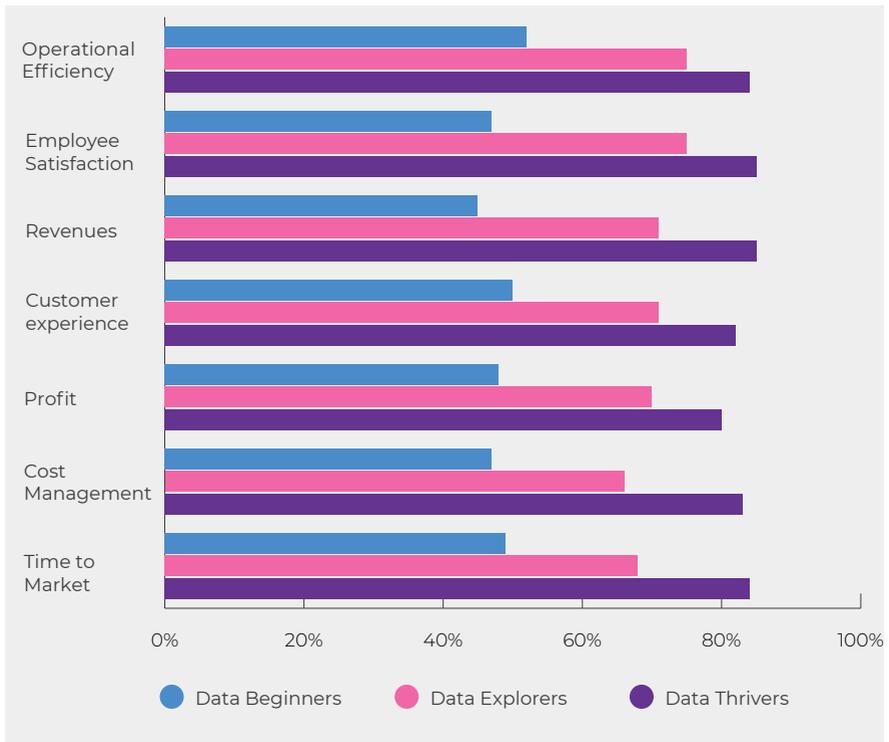


Source: IDC's EMEA Data-Driven Intelligence Enterprise Survey, 2021

Data Thrivers are also able to develop significant competitive advantage compared to their less mature peers (see Figure 2).

## Figure 2 : Data-Driven Approaches Proved Valuable for Pandemic Recovery

*Q. How did your organization perform over the past 12 months on each of the following indicators?*



Source: IDC's EMEA Data-Driven Intelligence Enterprise Survey, 2021

Organizations that are serious about their digital future need to take action to close the gap.

**Why are Data Thrivers so far ahead? They have a solid foundation built on insights and digital technologies** to better execute on new capabilities such as AI- and ML-driven products and services, automation across data life-cycle management, and empowering data and business users with better visualization tools. **They can also rapidly evolve a top-down data-driven culture and upskill their professionals**, and are willing to test modern data architectures such as cloud data lakes, data warehouses, and data mesh architectures. **Their long-term road map is also more mature** compared with less advanced organizations, with strategies such as operationalizing data governance and compliance, and enabling data self-service.

## What Can We Learn From Data Thrivers?

Success begets more success. Data Thrivers can move much faster and even attract and retain strong data-focused talent.

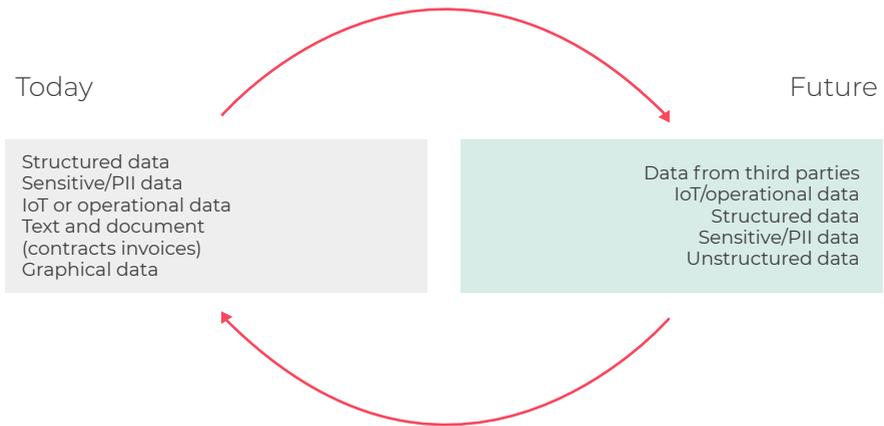
The digital future is not viable if organizations can't become data-driven. IDC predicts that by 2023, 60% of enterprise intelligence initiatives will be business specific, purpose built for business, shortening the data to decision time by 30% and driving higher agility and resilience.

## The Clock Is Ticking: Time to Make Some Fundamental Changes to Become Successfully Data-driven

- **Progress across the three dimensions needs to be aligned.** An organization cannot become fully data-driven by enhancing or mastering just one or two of the three dimensions. They are all co-dependent and require a balanced approach around technology, people, process, and stakeholder transformation.
- **Start with a solid data strategy with a top-down approach,** enterprisewide alignment of data-first culture, frequent datathons, skills upgrades, and clearly defined data ownership to get maximum value from data. Then develop strong business links and prioritize data projects to meet business objectives. Data-driven success depends on defining clear business outcomes with data and delivering on them as demonstrated by Data Thrivers in Figures 1 and 2 above.
- **Turn the data strategy and clearly defined business objectives into reality by using the right data technology foundation built on modern pillars such as cloud platforms,** cloud data lakes, cloud storage, query tools, modern databases, new visualization tools, and managed services where necessary. For about 6 in 10 EMEA organizations, data-driven strategies and initiatives are still led by IT and not by business. This must change and business needs to play an active role.

Finally, prepare for a paradigm shift — the future is different. The survey highlighted how newer data types, the need for real-time analytics, and higher governance requirements are becoming more important in data-driven strategies (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3 : Newer Data Types on the Horizon in 2022 and Beyond: What Data Type Is Key Today and in the Future**



Source: IDC’s EMEA Data-Driven Intelligence Enterprise Survey, 2021

Other considerations such as digital sovereignty and use of sovereign clouds are also becoming more prominent. Becoming data-driven is only part of the story. Staying data-driven is equally important and continuously evaluating progress in the three pillars is essential to keep on top of the game.

The data-driven future is bright for organizations that “get” this and make it a core priority for their digital future.

Not all organizations have the same maturity when it comes to creating business value with data.

## Where do you stand?

Complete this 10-question assessment to discover if you're a Data Beginner, Explorer, or Thriver.

[Take the test](#)

# IDC Data-Driven Intelligence Framework: The Guide Toward Maturity

Moving from data to information to insights to impact is rewarding, but it's a multiyear journey requiring a holistic approach.

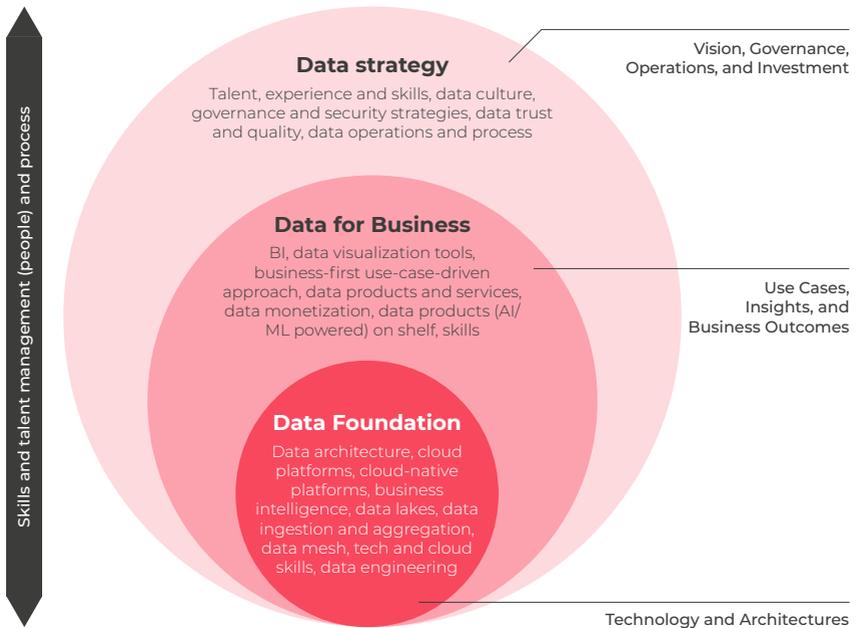
IDC has built the Data-Driven Intelligence Maturity Framework to **give organizations a blueprint for success**. The framework is built on IDC's in-depth survey assessing the characteristics and attributes of data-driven intelligence to measure the maturity of EMEA organizations. The framework helps organizations identify their current status and their unique strengths and weaknesses, giving them actionable advice to invest in the right areas to deliver impactful results and make tangible progress in their data-driven journeys.

The three key dimensions that IDC has identified are:

- Exemplary data strategy
- Delivering data for business
- World-class data foundation

These core dimensions cut across technology, business, people, and processes. They are the fundamental building blocks and need to be aligned for success (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 : IDC's Data-Driven Intelligence Framework



Source: IDC's EMEA Data-Driven Intelligence Enterprise Survey, 2021

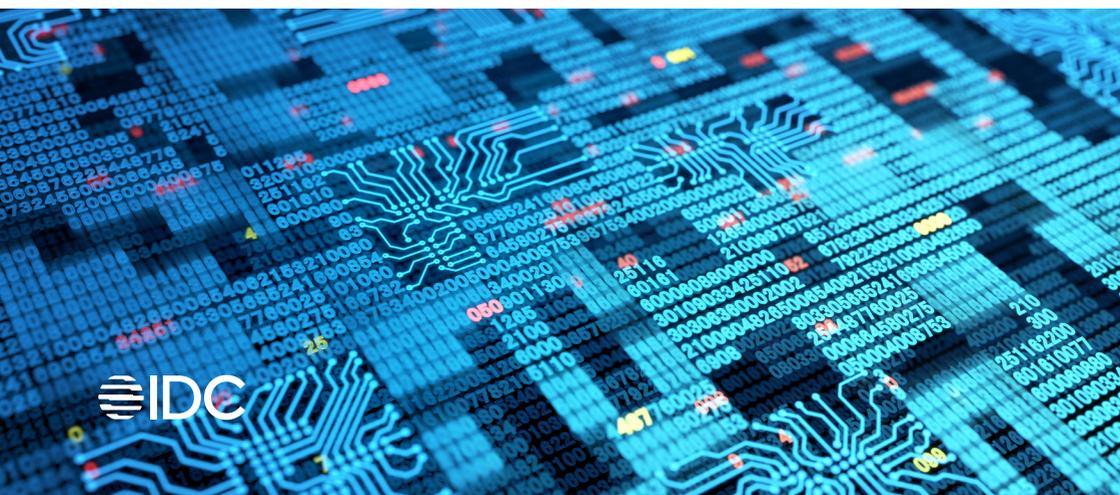
Let's delve into the attributes of each of these dimensions.

## Data Strategy: What, Why, Success Factors, and EMEA Organizations' Current Maturity in This Dimension

Data exists in every business. But every business does not have a process or strategy to identify which data is valuable and turn that data into insights for business decisions. This is what differentiates highly mature data-driven organizations from the rest. Every business needs a data strategy to successfully transform data from “potential” to “asset and capability.”

Organizations need a solid understanding and vision around the value of data for business opportunities and long-term digital innovation.

*Only 16% of EMEA organizations IDC surveyed are **Data Thrivers** in the data strategy dimension. 35% are **Beginners** and 49% are **Explorers** in this category.*



## So, Why do Data Thrivers Excel in Data Strategy and What Are the Key Criteria?

81% of Data Thrivers in the data strategy dimension have operationalized their data strategy at scale, compared to just 6% of Data Beginners and 35% of Data Explorers.

Nearly 90% of Data Thrivers say their senior management is driving or are heavily involved in data strategy by driving data governance and compliance, data quality and access, culture and skills, and use of cloud platforms to execute on their data vision. At the same time, 38% of Data Beginners admit that data strategy receives minimal attention and support from senior management and the wider business.

Data Thrivers invest in core areas such as data-driven culture, skills development, data governance, breaking silos, and using next-generation tools to better leverage and visualize data in the long term.

59% of Thrivers in data strategy take a holistic view and focus on adopting new cloud platforms, BI tools, and data management that encompasses all the three dimensions. They demonstrate sharper acumen in data strategy and this helps them accelerate their data-driven journey faster than the market average.



## At a Glance: Criteria for Maturity in Data Strategy

- Build a vision and outline clear, achievable objectives to leverage data companywide
- Develop a top-down vision to become data-driven and an action plan developed by senior management to execute on this vision by including all stakeholders
- Operationalize a data strategy at scale
- Nurture and grow a data-driven culture, skills development, and data governance; identify and break silos; and promote the use of data-enabling technologies
- Identify gaps and plug those gaps organically or inorganically
- Build a proactive strategy to attract and retain the right data professionals

## Benefits of a Data Strategy

A well-outlined data strategy is the first and most critical step to becoming an intelligent digital enterprise, as it enables organizations to turn data into valuable insights for business advantage.

Focusing on a data strategy helps organizations better articulate the data projects that will yield maximum results for the business. It also demonstrates commitment from all the key stakeholders and helps to drive an enterprisewide culture of leveraging data.

Data strategy helps organizations understand the limitations and better address core principles such as data governance, developing skills, breaking silos, determining data ownership, and outlining use cases right at the design point.

Data Beginners and Data Explorers should actively develop a strong data strategy that aligns with their digital vision and mission.

## Data for Business: What, Why, Success Factors, and EMEA Organizations' Current Maturity in This Dimension

Data programs and initiatives need to be linked to business outcomes. Only one in six organizations can demonstrate quantitatively that data-driven decisions have a positive impact on business outcomes, however. The ability to consistently leverage data to positively impact business outcomes is what makes an organization intelligent. But only 8% of survey respondents said all business decisions are currently driven by data and analytics.

***31% of EMEA organizations are Data Beginners in the data for business dimension; 50% are Data Explorers and 19% are Data Thrivers in this dimension.***

### So, Why do Data Thrivers Excel in Data for Business and What Are the Key Criteria?

86% of Thrivers are driving more than half of their business decisions with data, compared to 20% of Beginners and 51% of Data Explorers.

67% of Data Thrivers can demonstrate quantitatively the positive business impact of data-driven initiatives “to a great extent.” In comparison, only 4% and 14% of Data Beginners and Data Explorers respectively can do this.

Lack of maturity in this dimension can also have a negative impact. For example, as seen in Figure 5, organizations with limited reliance on data for business decisions saw a higher decline in key business metrics compared to those that are highly data-driven.

Just as higher reliance on data helped Data Thrivers improve their profits, revenues, and customer experiences (see Figure 2), the research also revealed that without data, these indicators can decline, especially when faced with unexpected market developments (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5 : Lack of Data-Driven Approach Results in Decline in Key Indicators**

*Q. How did your organization perform over the past 12 months on each of the following indicators?*



Source: IDC's EMEA Data-Driven Intelligence Enterprise Survey, 2021

## Data Initiatives Driven by IT Alone Are Risky for Data for the Business Dimension

The survey revealed that IT still takes the lead in designing, implementing, and managing data-driven strategies and technologies. 6 in 10 organizations said IT (CIOs/CTOs/heads of technology) are the ones that sign off data/analytics initiatives. However, when it comes to data users, a diverse set of personas, including data teams, business teams, and IT teams, rely on data — suggesting that all expectations from data are not successfully met if IT solely holds the reins.

The strategies, approaches, and technologies preferred by IT are different from the approaches and technologies preferred by business, digital, or data. For example, the survey showed how non-IT personas valued openness of platforms and investment in better searches (federated searches), monitoring, and decentralized data platforms compared to IT users.

Data for business requires everyone to be empowered to use data in their decisions. Data Thrivers are shifting away from this IT-heavy approach to a balanced approach involving business teams. For Data Thrivers, personas such as CEOs, heads of operations, and chief digital officers are significant in signing off new data-driven initiatives. As line-of-business (LOB) users are increasingly deciding or at least influencing data investment decisions and use case requirements, tech leadership is in a unique position to coordinate the C-suite in driving an enterprisewide agenda.

## At a Glance: Criteria for Maturity in Data for Business

- Identify and outline business use cases that can be enhanced with insights — better customer experiences or supply chains, for example, or better reporting and forecasting
- See, search, and use analytics data and measure the business outcomes — this requires a fundamental shift in how investments are made across business units, and align them to an enterprisewide strategy
- Develop AI/ML-driven data products and services or monetizing data
- Leverage data visualization, automation, and search capabilities to find quick answers to business questions
- Communicate with the strategy and IT teams to align and collaborate
- Focus on skills and training among business users to improve interaction and exploit data for business advantage
- Reward and amplify the business success driven by data and encourage corporatwide use of data

## Benefits of Advancing in the Data for Business Dimension

Having data projects that are not linked to business outcomes is like buying a new car without an engine. Linking data programs to business outcomes and clear use cases helps to better measure the benefits and attributes. This linkage also helps to maximize the value of data projects and to adapt programs better.

Ensuring maturity in the data for business dimension **helps businesses use data to improve performance, optimize operations, generate new revenue streams, build relevant products and services, improve customer experiences, and build adaptability.**



## Data Foundation: What, Why, Success Factors, and EMEA Organizations' Current Maturity in This Dimension

Data foundation is the technology framework that helps organizations execute on their data strategy vision and meet their data for business objectives. It includes the technology pillars that help a business put into action its data-driven plans today and tomorrow.

The data foundation enables organizations to build a world-class technical foundation to address all the aspects of the data life cycle — from storing to analyzing and transforming the data foundation to meet modern data for business needs and tackle the bottlenecks and challenges that will determine an organization's success in becoming data-driven.

*28% of organizations are Data Thrivers when it comes to architecting a solid data foundation. About 47% are Explorers and 25% are Beginners.*

The higher number of Thrivers in data foundation compared to Thrivers in data strategy or data for business is a result of data strategies being heavily IT led. But it's clear that organizations cannot be fully data-driven without a solid data strategy and tight alignment with business outcomes.

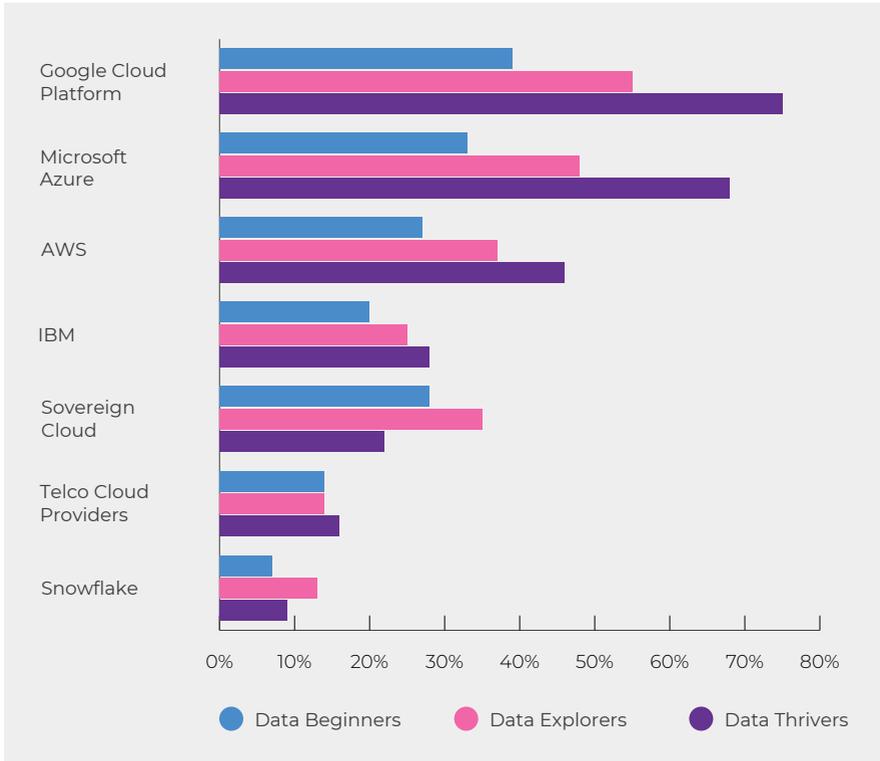
## So, Why do Data Thrivers Excel in Data Foundation and What Are the Key Criteria?

96% of Data Thrivers in data foundation use cloud platforms more robustly for data needs, compared to 74% of Data Beginners. Within the Thrivers, about 27% have cutting-edge modern cloud data infrastructure to explore newer data architectures, such as data mesh at scale. Only a handful of Data Beginners and Explorers are doing this.

As seen in Figure 6, Data Thrivers use public cloud platforms at scale for their data-driven initiatives a lot more than their less mature peers.



Figure 6 : Current Use of Cloud Platforms to Become Data-driven



Source: IDC's EMEA Data-Driven Intelligence Enterprise Survey, 2021

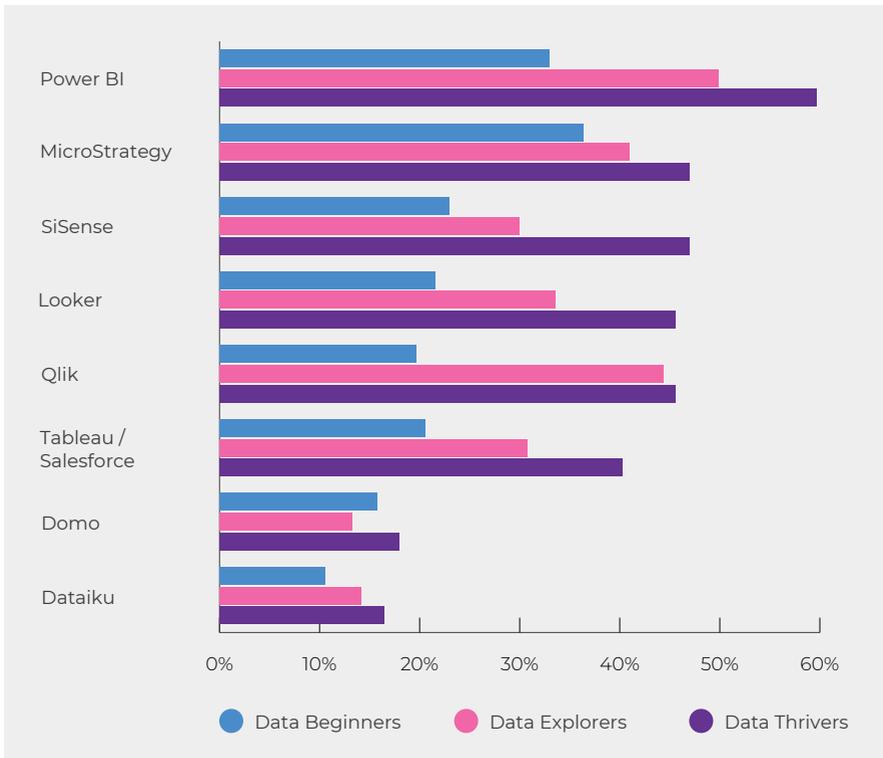
Data Thrivers are boosting their data foundation maturity further and faster across the board, including cloud platforms, BI tools, and other technology capabilities.

For example, 33% of Data Thrivers are enriching their cloud foundation with self-service capabilities, compared to just 12% and 23% of Data Beginners and Data Explorers respectively. Thrivers also

exhibit higher maturity in using modern search and monitoring tools, focus on improving data visualization experience, and are ahead in using automation.

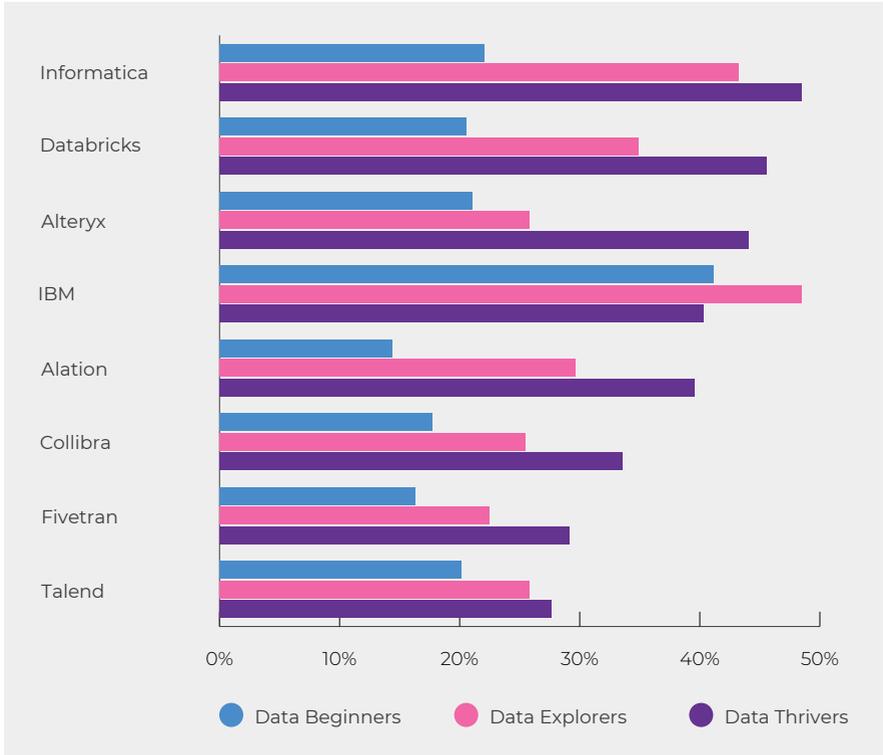
Figures 7 and 8 below also reveal how Data Thrivers lead in the use of BI technologies and data governance, management, and quality solutions to strengthen their data foundation dimension.

Figure 7 : BI Solutions in Use



Source: IDC's EMEA Data-Driven Intelligence Enterprise Survey, 2021

Figure 8 : Data Governance, Management, and Quality Solutions in Use



Source: IDC's EMEA Data-Driven Intelligence Enterprise Survey, 2021

Data Thrivers have the right building blocks to give businesses quick, data-driven answers to their questions. As a majority of data initiatives are currently IT led, this is what a best-in-class data foundation looks like for Data Thrivers:

- Data infrastructure at scale with strong tech pillars and data accelerators
- Access to a rich ecosystem of strategic data infrastructure partners
- Beyond infrastructure to modern data architecture capabilities such as modern analytics, BI, and visualization platforms
- Multiple analytics platform management for simplicity
- Expertise in data foundation modernization services, dynamic resource management for cost efficiency, cloud-native platforms, analytics at scale, and data ingestion at scale

## At a Glance: Criteria for Maturity in Data Foundation

- Use agile, scalable, and modern technologies such as public cloud platforms, cloud-native capabilities, and modern data aggregation, ingestion, and analytics tools
- Cope with the volume, velocity, and variety of data and accommodating batch and real-time analytics needs
- Eliminate data silos, management complexities, security risks, and rising costs
- Pivot to cloud-based data warehousing, data lakes, and data management platforms
- Create data self-service capabilities
- Embrace modern BI, data visualization, and search and monitoring capabilities
- Leverage automation at scale for speed and efficiency of data operations
- Enable newer methodologies such as master data management, DataOps, data federation, and data hubs

## Shining a Spotlight on Data Foundation as the Cornerstone to Becoming Data-driven

Data-driven organizations have a simple mantra — **technology has to move at the speed and scale of data**. Public cloud — with its highly scalable infrastructure and innovative data technologies — gives data professionals access to all the tools they need to drive value.

With cloud being everywhere for everything, organizations are not viewing it as an infrastructure to store data. The view is only a starting point — they want to leverage first-party data technologies, cloud databases, data engines, data lakes, and query tools in the public cloud to drive their data strategies at the speed and scale of data. IDC believes that successful organizations use modern compute tools such as serverless, containers, and microservices architectures in the cloud with modern data tools to speed up their innovation and intelligence journeys cohesively.

Forward-thinkers are leveraging public cloud capabilities and can deliver business value with greater impact than non-cloud users. 82% of Data Thrivers are looking to use cloud as their data foundation at scale, enrich their cloud foundation with modern cloud-friendly processes, or even add modern cloud data lake houses or data mesh architectures; only 27% of Data Explorers are doing the same.

Alongside cloud, data management platforms such as first-party cloud storage, container data services, backup platforms (that can ingest software as a service or SaaS data or historic data into data pipelines), and observability tools that help monitor microservices and mesh environments can help build resilient IT environments for data-driven outcomes.

One thing is clear — becoming data-driven is an enterprisewide initiative and requires complete buy-in from all stakeholders, including management, business users, IT, governance, developers, and data science teams. It all starts with a data strategy, aligning data strategy with business objectives, and bringing the strategy to action with data foundation.



# Co-Creating Data-Driven Blueprint with a Strategic Technology Partner for High Success Rate

Becoming a data-driven organization is a multiyear journey involving transformation of three dimensions. This is no mean feat and requires organizations to work with a transformative partner that has expertise and experience in cloud platforms as well as tools and strategies to address data for business and data strategy needs. This helps EMEA organizations to use the technology expertise, scale, and experience of the strategic partner to plug skills gaps. This co-creation can also help organizations focus better on their competencies and IP to create a unique and successful blueprint. For data-driven success, EMEA organizations should move beyond a transactional partnership to a long-term strategic partnership.

## How to Choose the Right Technology Partner and Co-Crete Success

Becoming data-driven is a team sport and requires organizations to be in complete control of several attributes across the data strategy, data for business, and data foundation dimensions. IDC believes that by partnering with an experienced data technology provider, the organizations can tap into the provider's expertise to

co-create the strategy, assess strengths and limitations, prioritize actions, and design a personalized path to become data-driven.

When looking for a partner, here is a checklist of questions:

- Does the partner bring the experience and a rich portfolio of data foundation technologies that align with your data strategy vision?
- Does it give you the flexibility and integration expertise to enable you to progress at your pace and on your terms?
- Can the partner deliver full-stack capabilities to enable you to eliminate complexities and management overheads and focus more on developing new data products, improve security and quality, and empower data teams?
- Is the partner continuously innovating and engineering newer capabilities? Is the technology foundation future ready and does it enable you to add accelerators such as AI and ML, search capabilities, and data mesh architectures as you go along?
- Does it have a good reputation to deliver continuous support, transparency, and cost optimization?

Non-technical criteria are equally important. Some criteria to include in the checklist are:

- Credibility and track record in helping EMEA organizations become data-driven
- The presence of a strong data stewards and talent team that can work closely with your internal team to co-create success
- Ability to help you in adjacent areas such as developing skills and culture, or identifying new use cases, breaking down silos of teams and data platforms, and aligning data foundation to business outcomes



Many organizations are stuck in the Data Explorer category, indicating that the final journey toward maturity is the hardest and requires end-to-end transformation.

Working with the right partner can help organizations to flourish in all three dimensions and view business data through a fresh lens. IDC believes that technology partnerships can help them to adapt to new market contexts such as the impact of digital sovereignty.

Only 18% of organizations have mechanisms in place to ensure that their cloud and data platforms adhere to the principles of digital sovereignty of data residency and operational controls. But 31% of organizations are planning to use sovereign clouds for data platforms. Mature organizations are more aware of the importance of digital sovereignty in building trust with their customers, ecosystem, and government. 42% of Data Thrivers say they plan to use sovereign clouds.

Telco clouds are also becoming more prominent. IDC believes this may be because EMEA organizations plan to leverage telcos' 5G capabilities to build out their edge data stewardship.

# Conclusion and Future Outlook

The future is bright for organizations that are better prepared to adapt, pivot, and seize new opportunities. Data Thrivers are quickly reimagining their business future with new data architectures to get more value from their data.

## Rise of DataOps as the Next Frontier

IDC sees newer methodologies such as DataOps becoming more strategic. DataOps is not one tool, but a full pipeline comprising multiple tools and technologies that are connected. To prepare, organizations need to:

- Treat data as a product and build self-service analytics
- Support more integration and automate testing at various points within the data life cycle
- Take a cloud platform approach to data management
- Explore data mesh architectures to improve autonomy and flexibility with decentralized infrastructure and teams but centralized governance
- Ensure faster collaboration between smaller autonomous teams to improve the speed of data for business

IDC predicts that by 2023, 60% of organizations will start implementing DataOps programs to reduce data and analytics errors by 80% and to boost trust in analytics outcomes and the efficiency of data workers.

## 10 Best Practice Steps to Start Implementing Today

- 1.** Always start with a business purpose and a clearly defined data strategy involving key stakeholders.
- 2.** Identify the right use cases and the right data associated with them. Identifying customer pain points and working backwards is key to success.
- 3.** Know the roadblocks on your data journey, whether it be lack of trust in insights, limited skills, lack of buy-in from key stakeholders, a disconnect between business outcomes and data initiatives, or complexities in synthesizing multiple sources of information. This can help identify the right architecture for your needs.
- 4.** Adopt cloud-native and cloud platforms to meet data objectives.
- 5.** Make compliance, governance, and data ownership center stage. Having data contracts and a culture of ownership can help improve data quality.
- 6.** Having a common data layer where all data is continuously cleansed and curated and ready for use by different data consumers is a powerful strategy. But ensure that enough flexibility is built in so data professionals can use the platforms of their choice.
- 7.** You are as good as your weakest link. Don't ignore any aspect of the data life cycle when modernizing the data foundation.
- 8.** Learn from Data Thrivers. Continuously move to the next frontier — investing in responsible AI, ensuring AI and ML models are compliant, and associating explainability with security are all table stakes.
- 9.** Choose a technology partner that can turn ideas into production at the speed of data.
- 10.** Make sure your data counts in the best possible way to have a positive impact on your employees, customers, industry, and wider society and economy.



## Message from the Sponsor

For Devoteam, moving from being data-driven to becoming insights driven is crucial to become smarter about every aspect of your business.

Companies understand the importance of data and have begun to collect it to exploit it. But the challenge is how can data be transformed into knowledge to create business value?

A key element is to combine technical expertise with profound business knowledge.

“Insights-driven” organizations have the power to extract from the data the knowledge that continuously and at scale feeds their decisions, experiences, and innovation. Being insights driven enables these organizations to create competitive advantage, drive tangible business impact, and stay ahead of their competitors.

Devoteam helps all its clients master the key competencies to scale insights-driven principles across the business — strategy, governance, people, data, and technology.

### **Jose-Luis de la Fuente**

Data-Driven Intelligence  
Director, Devoteam

### **Laurent Letourmy**

Head of Data, Devoteam  
France

# About the Analyst



## **Archana Venkatraman**

Research Manager

IDC European Datacenter Research

Archana Venkatraman's primary research coverage is cloud data management. She covers multiple topics including data protection, edge to cloud data trends, application and data availability, compliance, data integration, intelligent data management, DataOps, data quality, and multicloud priorities.



## About IDC

---

International Data Corporation (IDC) is the premier global provider of market intelligence, advisory services, and events for the information technology, telecommunications, and consumer technology markets. IDC helps IT professionals, business executives, and the investment community make fact-based decisions on technology purchases and business strategy. More than 1,100 IDC analysts provide global, regional, and local expertise on technology and industry opportunities and trends in over 110 countries worldwide. For 50 years, IDC has provided strategic insights to help our clients achieve their key business objectives. IDC is a subsidiary of IDG, the world's leading technology media, research, and events company.

### IDC UK

5th Floor, Ealing Cross,  
85 Uxbridge Road  
London  
W5 5TH, United Kingdom  
44.208.987.7100  
Twitter: @IDC  
idc-community.com  
www.idc.com

### Copyright and Restrictions:

---

Any IDC information or reference to IDC that is to be used in advertising, press releases, or promotional materials requires prior written approval from IDC. For permission requests contact the Custom Solutions information line at 508-988-7610 or [permissions@idc.com](mailto:permissions@idc.com). Translation and/or localization of this document require an additional license from IDC. For more information on IDC visit [www.idc.com](http://www.idc.com). For more information on IDC Custom Solutions, visit [http://www.idc.com/prodserv/custom\\_solutions/index.jsp](http://www.idc.com/prodserv/custom_solutions/index.jsp).

### Corporate Headquarters

140 Kendrick Street,  
Building B, Needham,  
MA 02494 USA  
508.872.8200  
www.idc.com





**Creative tech for Better Change**