

How strong data management becomes a real game-changer

For one video game company, a data-driven culture meant gigs of innovation.

■ The better the question

How can powering off data siloes help power on data insights?

Mergers and acquisitions can open doors, but strategic data management is the key to a higher return on investment.

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Successful mergers and acquisitions (M&A) can provide a streamlined path to increased market share, but having a solid integration plan is key. With so many moving parts, lucrative M&A transactions require keen attention to the alignment of employees, systems, processes and the plethora of data that comes with the coalition. A strong data management system can help provide adequate data visibility and heightened data analytics, while a well-thought-out data organization can boost productivity and break down previously established organizational silos. So how can a company create a unified data strategy that supports innovation to better meet customer expectations?

For one rapidly growing video game company, a next-generation operating model and future-forward organization were key to building a data-driven culture and establishing cross-organization collaboration. After several acquisitions, the gaming company had conflicting ownership and misalignment between the various data organizations, and a multitude of data collection and analysis processes and controls.

While a large amount of useful information was being collected, each newly acquired business had a unique way of organizing, storing and evaluating its data. These infrastructure challenges led to operational inefficiencies and hindered future gaming innovations. With the goals of minimizing business disruptions, maintaining organizational independence and [optimizing data analytics and insights](#) for more strategic business decision-making, the gaming company needed to refine its current data governance, architecture, operating model and organization design.

While ongoing acquisitions were rapidly scaling this gaming company's organization, they were also creating data challenges that needed to be addressed. Ernst & Young LLP (EY) professionals recommended advanced technologies for data analytics and a strong data organization for human capital management.



Strong data plans connect people and processes

This gaming organization leveled up through a well-structured data and analytics operating model.

A collaborative EY Consulting and People Advisory Services (PAS) team worked to help this gaming company accelerate its [data and analytics transformation journey](#). After an initial assessment, it was determined that a well-defined data governance and architecture plan, and a strong operating model and organizational design would help with the data integration efforts among the various organizations.

To strengthen the integrity of the data collected, the EY teams recommended the creation of a data governance framework comprised of two connecting layers – enterprise and studio. The recommendation proposed the enterprise set the data standards and key guiding principles, while the studios apply the governance locally to their datasets. As a result, downstream data utilization would increase, further advancing gamer innovations.

A standardized inventory of data and easily accessible analytics were also important in addressing each studio's business needs. With a cloud-enabled agile telemetry core metrics platform and a universal data catalog, analytics and comparative benchmarking were easily accessible at the enterprise level and at each studio.

The EY teams also recommended the enterprise appoint a chief data officer (CDO) to unleash the power of its data. Aligning all data and analytic functions under one leader would allow the enterprise to gain organizational efficiencies and facilitate better teaming. And by having a seat at the leadership table, the CDO would help drive business transformations through data-driven decision-making.



Data-led cultures established by CDOs better connect fragmented organizations.

Faisal Alam
EY Americas Technology Solutions and Markets Leader

“Data-led cultures established by CDOs better connect fragmented organizations,” said Faisal Alam, EY Americas Technology Solutions and Markets Leader. “Mergers and acquisitions can bring complexity around managing disparate data. While it can be incredibly challenging due to varying degrees of data maturity, the right plan can centralize and communicate data into valuable insights.”

The cornerstone that brought all the recommendations together was the establishment of squad-based resourcing – a group of people, built from multiple cross-disciplinary teams (engineers, scientists and analysts), pulled together to form a fit-for-purpose team. With a squad leader and other supporting team members, these agile teams help ensure each studio has dedicated data and analytics talent supporting game development, launch and live services. For the enterprise, this model brings key data and analytics resources under one team to increase efficiencies, streamline communications and help maximize results.

With a new squad member onboarding process that takes less than

15 days

employee satisfaction scores are up.

To help ensure a smooth transition incorporating the new processes and organizational changes, the joint gaming and EY teams created a change management plan. The plan included a tailored case for change, an understanding of the organizational-level and employee-level impacts, and an activation roadmap with key implementation milestones.



It's "game on" with a strong data management plan

A cohesive trusted data source allows for fresh perspectives and innovative advancements.

Due to its many mergers over the years, identifying a company-wide data strategy was the key to this gaming organization's success. The joint development of a centralized data source and a leading-edge data organization is allowing this company to synthesize and analyze its abundance of data while simultaneously building a culture of collaboration and communication to accelerate future gaming innovations.

As a result of stronger data management practices, the video game company is seeing more efficient operations, higher analytics efficacy, increased studio customer satisfaction and lower turnover rates. While the team is excited to report the majority of their ad-hoc data requests are now being tracked, even more impressive is the fact that these requests have gone down considerably due to the availability of real-time

analytics and comparative benchmarking reports. And with a less than 15-day new squad member onboarding process, employee satisfaction scores are up. Finally, costs have been reduced due in part to better alignment among the data and analytics teams and a rationalized tech stack.

By 2025¹, global data creation is expected to reach 175 zettabytes. And while data will undoubtedly be a future game-changer, it can easily be misunderstood, misanalyzed or simply overlooked. As such, organizations are scrambling to redefine their data strategy with stronger governance models and more effective utilization strategies. As growing organizations navigate today's data-saturated world, building a next-generation data organization equipped with leading technologies and modern processes can be the power needed to turn data into intelligent insights supporting innovative advancements.

¹ 175 Zettabytes By 2025. (2018) Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tomcoughlin/2018/11/27/175-zettabytes-by-2025/?sh=6a5e45105459>

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