

Putting the two-speed IT paradigm to work:

An innovative approach to data management



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Introduction

Every company wants to be an innovator, but many organizations lack the strategic foresight and resources to make it happen in a sustainable way. Instead of investing in ways to leverage their data to expand their product offerings or to add industry-leading features, many companies focus their IT energy on playing catch-up.

Maintaining the integrity and continuity of your products and services is unarguably critical to your company's success. However, unless your business operates in a vacuum, you'll need to find ways to enhance your products to stay ahead of your competitors. As consumer-grade technology continues to advance, your customers' expectations of your products will evolve accordingly.

The speed with which technology is changing consumer expectations is unprecedented, and companies need to adapt in order to survive in an increasingly competitive market. However, it

would be imprudent for organizations to ignore the processes and the people who keep their services up and running. In order to maintain essential IT operations while also investing in the necessary forward-looking projects, organizations have been shifting to a two-speed, or bimodal, IT paradigm.

To do this, many organizations have structured their IT departments into two teams that work independently, yet synergistically, to meet ongoing business needs. While one team (traditional IT) is dedicated to ensuring the continuity of services and products, the other IT team (agile IT) is dedicated to working on more forward-looking initiatives that improve upon products or leverage the business's data to create new streams of revenue.

For an in-depth look at the two-speed IT paradigm, check out our white paper, "Embracing a two-speed IT paradigm."

[Click here](#)

Why implement a two-speed approach?

Your business generates a lot of information, so to be successful, your organization will need to develop proactive data management and governance practices in order to make sense of it all. By harnessing this information, you will be better positioned to understand your customers and drive revenue growth.

Last year, we surveyed 1,400 data professionals for our annual global data management benchmark report, and we found that many organizations tend to approach their data management programs in a reactive fashion. In fact, 65 percent of the organizations we surveyed wait until there are specific issues with their data until they address and fix them. This reactive approach to their data management processes can lead to diminished productivity and a loss in revenue.

By implementing a two-speed approach in your data management program, you can transform your IT department from reactive resource into a proactive part of your business strategy. With a team dedicated to leveraging your organization's information, you can unlock the potential in your data.

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From IT to data strategists

Organizations today generate and collect large amounts of information, but many of them do not adequately harness the power of their data. Not because they don't want to, but because they're intimidated by vast the opportunities their data affords them. How do you possibly know what projects to prioritize until you consider them all? While 98 percent of companies have a desire to turn their data into insight, according to our research, up to 12 percent of them have no plans to actually introduce a strategy for analyzing this data.

A two-speed IT approach is unique in that it creates an opportunity for your IT department to transition away from a maintenance-centric position to that of a data strategist within your organization. By creating a faster, more agile team within the department, you'll be able to respond more quickly to the needs of the business by leveraging your data.

Breaking down the walls between business and IT will place your IT department at the heart of business strategy and decision-making, with your data pumping through its veins.



How to implement a two-speed approach

If you're implementing a two-speed IT approach in your data management program, it's important to remember that no two businesses are exactly alike, so what worked for another company might not work for yours. Success, however, can be achieved by striking the right balance between the two IT teams. To help you get started, we've put together some best practices.

Establish guidelines and define responsibilities

A best practice whenever you implement changes to a process is to ensure clarity for the stakeholders who will be affected. This is no different when it comes to implementing a two-speed approach within your IT department. The Chief Information Officer (CIO) should ensure that each IT team is clearly defined and that business processes are assigned to each team respectively. This way there will be no ambiguity among your employees as to what their responsibilities are.

While the CIO is defining each team's responsibilities, the Chief Data Officer (CDO) should be working to define how each team will interact with the company's data. The traditional IT team should work to define a data governance policy and develop a data management strategy. By focusing on these critical areas, the traditional IT team will help to improve the integrity, accuracy, and security of your products as a whole. While the traditional IT team focuses on securing your data, the agile team should be looking for new ways to leverage your existing data to enhance your products or to create new streams of revenue for the business.

By defining responsibilities and roles clearly, you can establish a consistent understanding of the two-speed IT paradigm for your business and enable individual stakeholders to understand the leadership's expectations.

Invest in your greatest assets

When it comes to driving innovation successfully, you must invest in your people, processes, and technology. These three pillars form the core of your organization, and each contributes to an effective data governance program. If any of these pillars are weak, however, the entire system is jeopardized and the sustainability of the program is diminished.

The same concept applies when utilizing a two-speed approach within your data management program. The first step is to find the right people in your organization who will thrive in either team. For instance, individuals on your traditional team should be detail-oriented and process-driven, and individuals on your agile development team should be forward-thinking and passionate about digital transformation. By selecting the right people for each team, you'll maximize their effectiveness and set yourself up for success.

At the same time, you should also be investing in your processes and technology to ensure that your people can work efficiently. There are data management programs available that can help you to ensure data quality and governance standards are upheld, while also allowing you to quickly access your data for analytics and reporting.

Be innovative, take calculated risks

How do you exceed your competition in a constantly evolving market? By developing new products or features, and taking calculated risks on them.

This is where a two-speed approach truly shines. Because your agile team is not responsible for the continuity of your services, they are inherently set up to be more experimental. This team is able to take on projects that help to advance the business, but which can also be abandoned if the business's needs no longer support the project. This doesn't mean you should bet the house on developing and testing a new product, however. Like any other business decision, it's important to make a calculated choice based on a pre-determined level of risk you're willing to assume.

When applying a two-speed approach to your data management program, it's important to create a safe environment for experimentation. In order to do their jobs well, the agile IT team should not be bound by the same security restrictions or governance standards as the traditional IT team.

So in order to minimize risk to the business, your agile team should take advantage of a hypothesis or sandbox environment to test the programs and features that they are building. The benefit of this approach is that it allows them to use real customer data, but without the risk of affecting the original source data if something goes wrong. This strategy allows them to build and test features in an iterative fashion much faster and with less risk to business continuity.

Stay true to your values

Your company operates in a fast-paced world, so you need to be agile with your delivery methods, but you also need to uphold your data governance and security standards. This is exactly what a two-speed IT approach is meant to accomplish. However, this is only attainable if both IT teams are working on projects that align with your organization's mission and values.

When you begin to explore the vast capabilities of your data, it's easy to become excited by all of the cool projects you can take on. Before you begin investing time and resources on a project, determine how the intended product or feature fits into your current portfolio and how it fits in with your brand. Then, think about the scope of the project and whether it would be better suited for your traditional IT or agile IT team.

It may be up to the CIO or CDO at your organization to have oversight into this process in order to determine which projects receive the green light. As they have the long-term strategic vision in mind, they will be able to decide whether a data project truly meets the company's mission.

Experian Pandora allows you to analyze and enrich data without affecting source information.

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Conclusion

Whether you're developing a data management strategy from the ground up, or overhauling an existing strategy, embracing a two-speed IT approach can help you be successful. By implementing a two-speed approach in your data management program, you can transform your IT department from passive resource into a vital part of your business strategy, and finally start leveraging your data as an asset.

It's not as hard as you think to go from a reactive IT model to a proactive approach, and using a two-speed IT paradigm can help get you there. To be successful when applying a two-speed approach at your organization, remember to define roles and responsibilities clearly; to invest in your people, processes, and technology; to take calculated risks; and to stay true to your business's core values. By implementing a two-speed IT paradigm, you can use data to drive innovation while maintaining the products and services that are so integral to your business's success.



Every business has data, but the most successful organizations use their data to make strategic decisions. See how Experian Pandora's robust data management features empower your business to start leveraging data as an asset.

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