Creating a Data-Driven Organization: Practical Advice from the Trenches

Carl Anderson
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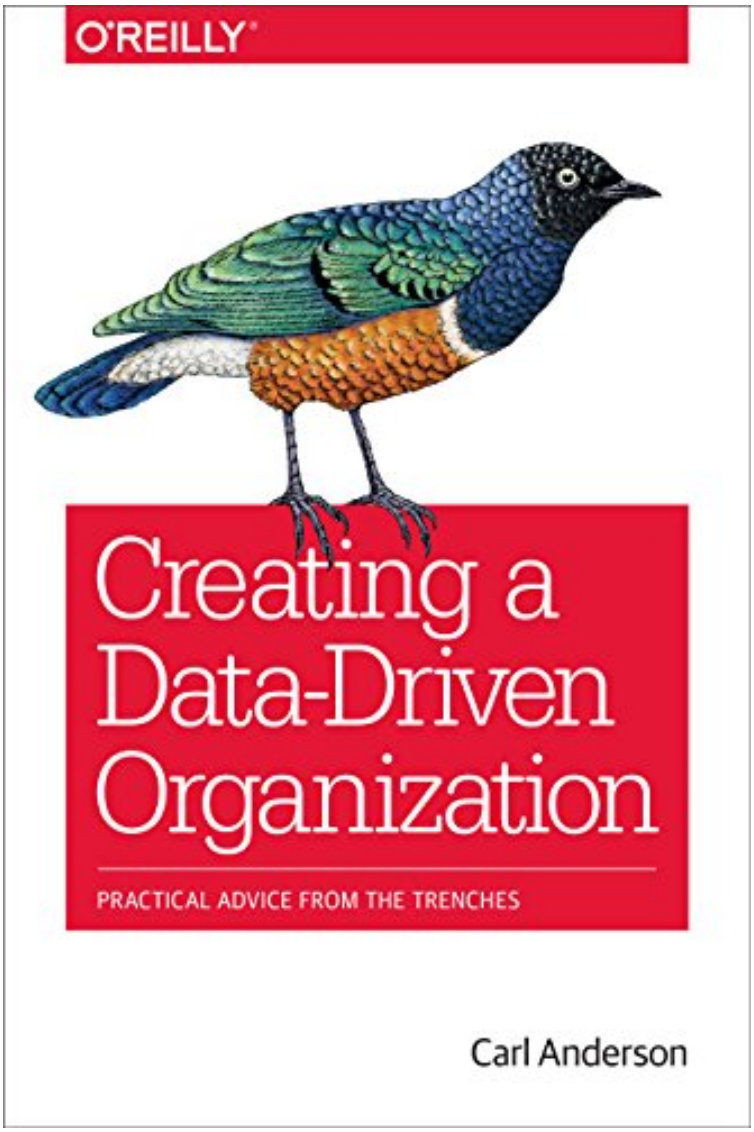

#238089 in eBooks 2015-07-23 2015-07-23File Name: B012UDK3KG | File size: 22.Mb

Carl Anderson : Creating a Data-Driven Organization: Practical Advice from the Trenches before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Creating a Data-Driven Organization: Practical Advice from the Trenches:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Practical guide to creating a data-driven cultureBy CustomerA data-driven organization is one that is deeply ingrained in data culture in which data collection, data quality metrics and analytics are integrated in a prescriptive and predictive context and in a data leadership environment to augment or

drive business decisions and hence have a direct impact on the business. In this book, the author attempts to answer two fundamental questions: what it means for an organization to be data driven, and what it takes to go there.The book covers the basics of a data-driven organization from data collection, data quality, data analytics metrics design to insights and leadership that drive actions. These form the basis for a data-driven culture in which the analytics value chain - the flow of data to final impact on business - is realized. The author thoroughly explains the analytics value chain through interviews and examples from data scientists and analytics leaders in various industries. It is filled with practical advice from the industries. You'll learn what works and what doesn't, and how to build a data culture that works for your organization.The book is well written and organized into bite-size pieces that are easy to understand. If you want to develop a data-driven culture with the desire to turn data into actions quickly and efficiently, you will find this book helpful and worth your time.3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. "Without data, you're just another person with an opinion."By EpiladyAnderson attempts to answer two basic questions: what it means for an organization to be "data-driven" and how to get there. Just because an org has KPI (key performance indicators) or a cool dashboard of metric doesn't mean they are "data-driven," according to Anderson, because it lacks context, is often backwards looking, a doesn't have a causal link between the metric and outcome, and the data do not drive action. In his view, data driven organizations are forward looking at predictive models, answering "when, why, who, what, where," then using that to make decisions. Key to a data-driven organization (although it might seem obvious, it's actually not) are timely, relevant, and trustworthy quality data. He covers this topic pretty well, in a general way that would be good for non-data people to read. Although GIGO (garbage in, garbage out) is well-known by data wonks, sometimes management is more interested in the cool-looking interactive metric, even when it is relatively meaningless.Anderson talks a lot about an "analytics value chain" (data drives reports, to deeper drives and further analyses that get to a decision maker who changes strategies). Anderson emphasizes the culture of the organization is very important in being able to implement this type of work, and recognizes that the culture shift may take a while to occur. He also covers storytelling with data, a/b testing, an ideal data-driven culture set-up, and privacy, ethics and risk. There are good number of references, although the visualization, decision making, and a/b testing are a little light. Another topic that is missing from the book is results-based accountability, which can be helpful for groups drowning in metrics or data and can't choose (or don't know how to) because there are so many potential options.It's pretty conversationally written, so it's a pleasant enough read, and is definitely worth the time for leaders (or people who are managing up) to think about ways to really drive forth data to action.4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Data will make your head explode ...By New England YankeeReview preface - I'm the enterprise data architect in one of the largest financial services firms in the US. My comments pertain to such environments.I found this book ... conventional. Perversely, I suppose, I found it too data-centric! Data does NOT drive the organization. Data - or better, information - informs it, and the difference goes a lot further than subtleties. The author takes things a bit far, IMHO, when it comes to suggesting C-level roles for data and analytics.Data management issues are legion and getting more complex all the time. You cannot fix, solve, correct, or compensate them for them in the ways suggested by the author. Mind you, that does not obviate the need to take many of the steps covered in the book. After all, if you have a need for mastered data in a particular context, you have the need. Addressing data quality, especially narrowly focused on an issue, will always be necessary.But none of the data management topics in the book, and that's what they are, will really address the information needs of a large, complex, modern corporate environment except at the margins. The goals, beyond simple monitoring mechanisms like dashboards and KPIs (the bane of my existence) are sometimes put in an analytics framework. They might be articulated as descriptive, prescriptive, and predictive, for example. Reporting strategies. Models. Etc. All of these are a house of cards built on assumptions of ownership, control, quality, security, and enforcement that are increasingly irrelevant. Want hardening of the company data arteries? Put modern "data management" in place. If it doesn't consume your company's entire budget or drive you to the bin, it will leave you holding, in a few years, a figuratively unoccupied leash wondering where the dog went as everyone, every business process, every vendor system, every legacy situation, every new technology, and every bit data freely available everywhere and anywhere undermines and obviates your strategy.Here's the heart of it. State. We increasingly need ALL of our data in every conceivable state, in motion or at rest, even temporary and error-ridden, in infinitely possible combinations. Oh, and the rest of the world's data too, in the same way. No matter what your data management activity perspective, the problems just became insurmountable. The fact that most data forms don't carry sufficient state or sematic information complicates things further.Doubless, I'm preaching to the choir here. But wait, you say, how about the more limited usages mentioned earlier? Doesn't that validate the need for data management structure? Well, yes and no. I'll stipulate the value of (data) control and definition within the context of a business operational process. But recognize that NON-operational data use, process-bound or not, is made more difficult by those controls and definitions. I'll note in passing that non-documented and unofficial processes exist (sometimes properly) WITHIN the boundaries of a larger business process ... and it is often the data in THIS context that is wanted by someone over yonder! (Just ask your nearest auditor.)Finally, consider how any particular data is becoming increasingly irrelevant. (Again, all of this in the context of a very large organization or corporation.) An insufficiently appreciated phenomenon of truly vast data availability is that data compensates for data. What if you had, as a vendor

who recently presented at my firm has, 30,000+ data points per person, tracked within thousands and thousands of tiny geographic boundaries? Don't have this or that data? This bit is old or of suspicious quality? Don't have access to yet something else? Guess what ... you can impute that data with astounding (and known) statistical accuracy. Um, your PII data policies aren't gone - you're going to be held to them, possibly to criminal violation levels, but it's now security theater and better viewed as a cost burden rather than a control.By all means, have at the activities in "Creating a Data Driven Organization." It is well-written and clear (hence the 4 stars). You really have to to be able to operate. Just don't expect it to actually rise to the title's promise in the modern world.Parting shot - expect "the organization" to fragment, too.

What do you need to become a data-driven organization? Far more than having big data or a crack team of unicorn data scientists, it requires establishing an effective, deeply-ingrained data culture. This practical book shows you how true data-drivenness involves processes that require genuine buy-in across your company, from analysts and management to the C-Suite and the board.Through interviews and examples from data scientists and analytics leaders in a variety of industries, author Carl Anderson explains the analytics value chain you need to adopt when building predictive business modelsmdash;from data collection and analysis to the insights and leadership that drive concrete actions. Yoursquo;ll learn what works and what doesnrsquo;t, and why creating a data-driven culture throughout your organization is essential.Start from the bottom up: learn how to collect the right data the right wayHire analysts with the right skills, and organize them into teamsExamine statistical and visualization tools, and fact-based story-telling methodsCollect and analyze data while respecting privacy and ethicsUnderstand how analysts and their managers can help spur a data-driven cultureLearn the importance of data leadership and C-level positions such as chief data officer and chief analytics officer

About the AuthorCarl Anderson is the Director of Data Science at Warby Parker in New York overseeing data engineering, data science, supporting the broader analystics org, and creating a data-driven organization. He has had a broad-ranging career, mostly in scientific computing, covering areas such as healthcare modeling, data compression, robotics, and agent based modeling. He holds a Ph.D. in mathematical biology from the University of Sheffield, UK.