

Real-World Data Governance

Building a Data Governance Culture from Top Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Finale of the Monthly Webinar Series Hosted by DATAVERSITY

Robert S. Seiner – KIK Consulting

December 18, 2025 – 11:00 a.m. PT / 2:00 p.m. ET



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**GUARANTEED TO
CREATE A
SPARK!**

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Episode #167 of 167

Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Introduction

Non-Invasive Data Governance / Strikes Again / Unleashed – Books

2014: ISBN 9781935504856 / TechnicsPub.com / Amazon.com (NIDG)

2023: ISBN 9781634623599 / TechnicsPub.com / Amazon.com (Strikes Again)

2025: ISBN 9781634625937 / TechnicsPub.com / Amazon.com (Unleashed)

Find the series on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0DZXYH6DR>

The Data Catalyst³ (Cubed): <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0G7Z6RD71>

Non-Invasive Data Governance / Metadata Governance Online Learning Plans

Most Recent: Business Glossaries, Data Dictionaries and Data Catalogs
DATAVERSITY Training Center – <https://training.dataversity.net>

KIK Consulting & Educational Services

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The Home of Non-Invasive Data Governance®

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/robert-s-seiner-445313/>



Carnegie Mellon University (CMU)

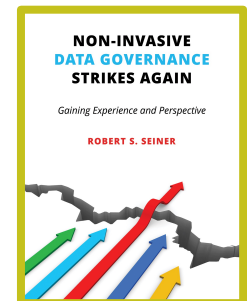
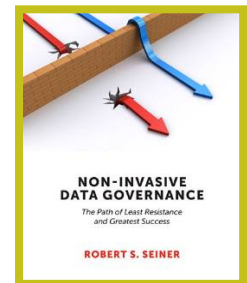
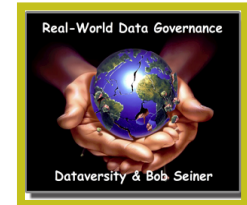
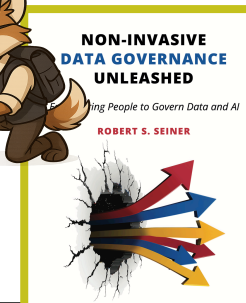
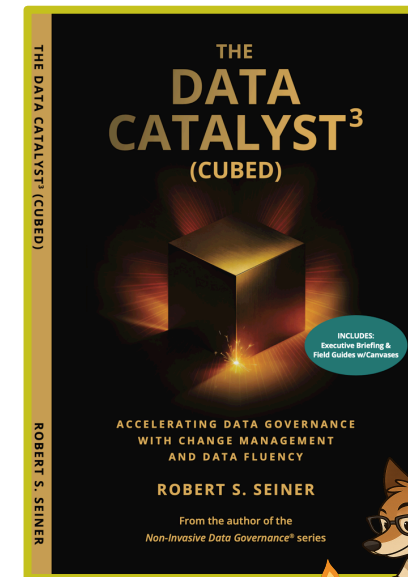
Adjunct Faculty/Instructor: Heinz College Executive Education

Chief Data and AI Officer (CDAIO) Certificate Program

<https://www.heinz.cmu.edu/programs/executive-education/chief-data-ai-officer-certificate>



Available Now!



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

The Final Countdown

- This is it folks! The 14-year run has been incredible.
- You cannot get rid of me that easily! I will still be hanging around. I will be at EDW/DGIQ in May in San Diego. Presenting tutorial on ...
- Not *complete* retirement ... yet! The end of the series!
- Stay connected! Through the DATAVERSITY community. Through LinkedIn, Substack, others ...
- Gratitude where it is due! Something everybody should practice.

**THAT'S ALL
FOLKS!**
...or is it?



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

The Final Countdown – Friends, Partners, and Influencers

- DATAVERSITY / Tony Shaw / Shannon Kempe
- Mark Horseman / Kat Parker / Tami Fertig
- Peter Aiken / Everybody at DAMA International
- Craig Mullins
- John Ladley / Gwen Thomas
- Anthony Algmin
- Steve Hoberman
- John Zachman / Clive Finkelstein
- My Clients ... Too Many to List
- Bill Inmon / Ralph Kimball / Dan Linstedt
- Danette McGilvray / Larry English
- Donna Burbank / Metadata People
- Graeme Simsion / David Hay
- Len Silverston / Darragh Obrien
- David Berger
- Dave Ulicne (CMU) / Dr. John Talburt (UALR)



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

The Final Countdown – Friends, Partners, and Influencers

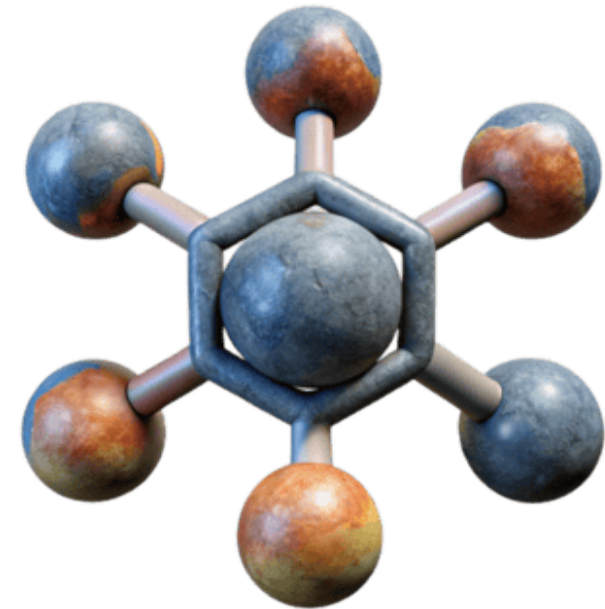
- Matthias Vercauteren
- The Malcolms – Chisholm / Hawker
- Tiankai Feng / Scott Taylor
- Karen Lopez / Kelle O’Neal / David Marco
- Stijn Christiaen
- Nicola Askham
- The Bosses - Maccioce / Berendowski
Daly / Rash / Elis / Skelton
- Partners – Innoscale, Innova COE, Info.Blueprint
- Too many others to list ...



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Abstract

- In this webinar, I will talk about ...
 - Building a Data Governance Culture from Top to Bottom
 - Engaging Leadership in Data Governance Initiatives
 - Driving Grassroots Adoption of Governance Practices
 - Fostering a Governance-First Mindset Across the Organization
 - Success Stories of Governance Culture Transformation



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Definitions – Meaning of Life ... Data Governance ?

- **Overlance:** The execution and enforcement of authority.
"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving."
• **Stewardship:** Formalization of accountability.
"Life is *really simple*, but we insist on making it complicated."
- **Mahatma Gandhi:** The execution and enforcement of authority over data.
"The purpose of life is *to live it*, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience."
• **Mark Twain:** The execution and enforcement of authority over AI.
"The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you *find out why*."
- **Ralph Waldo Emerson:** Formalization of accountability for AI.
"Life is a *journey*, not a destination."
• **Leo Tolstoy:** The purpose of life is *to serve*, and to show compassion and the will to help others."
- **Helen Keller:**
"Life is either a *daring adventure* or nothing at all."
• **Steve Jobs:**
"Your time is limited, so *don't waste it* living someone else's life."
- **Aristotle:**
"The *energy of the mind* is the essence of life."
• **Viktor Frankl:**
"Life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of *meaning and purpose*."



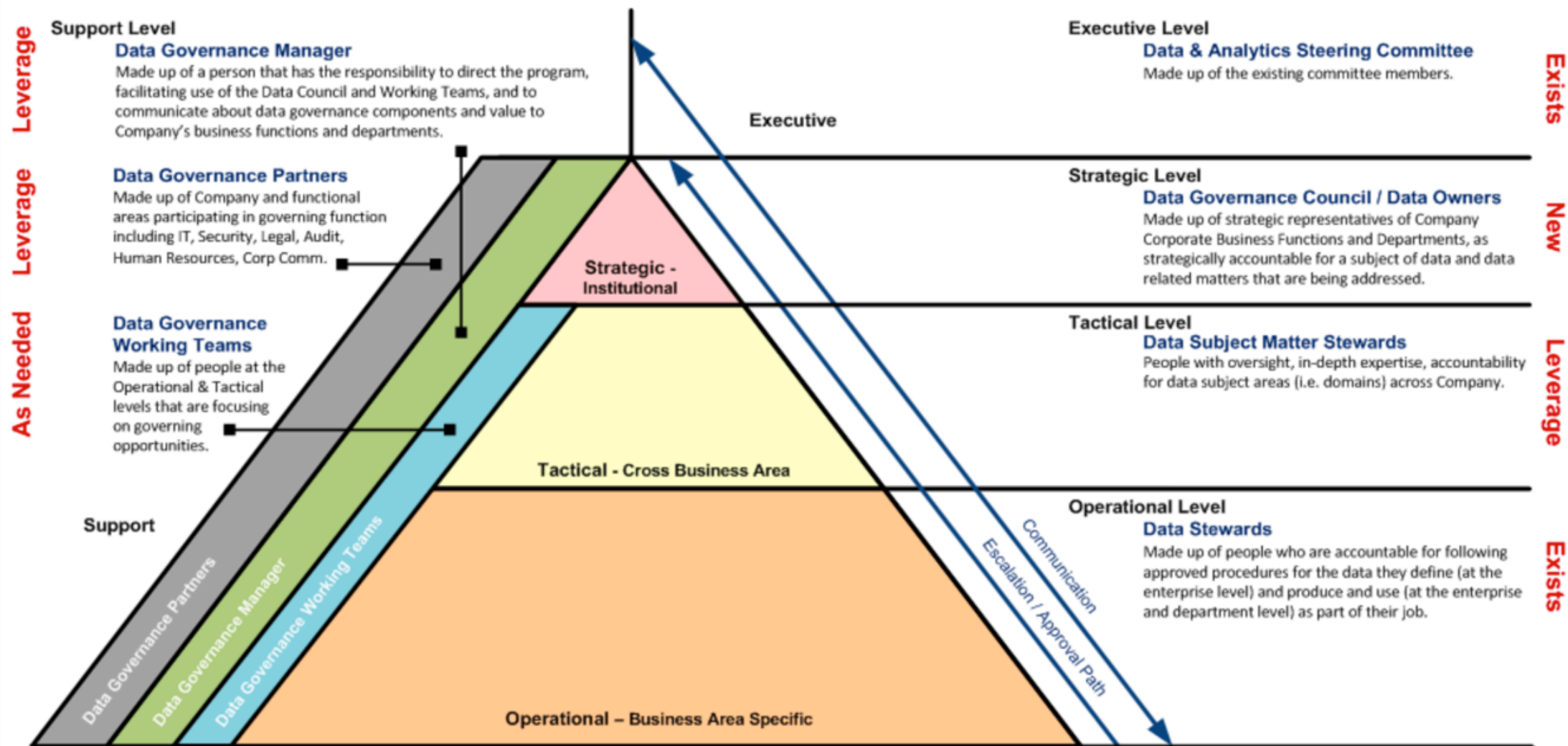
Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Before We Get Started (BWGS)

- BWGS1: Quick Check I
 - Culture & Data Culture
 - Formal Behavior Change
 - Formal Change Management & Data Fluency
- BWGS2: Quick Check II
 - Top Leadership Culture
 - Grassroots Culture



Data Governance Operating Model of Roles & Responsibilities



NON-INVASIVE DATA GOVERNANCE DIGITAL FRAMEWORK

Instructions: Click on a Specific Row to discover more information about a specific Component Level & Slider

	Data	Roles	Processes	Communications	Metrics	Tools
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ESC to Exit

RETURN TO FRAMEWORK

RETURN TO PREVIOUS

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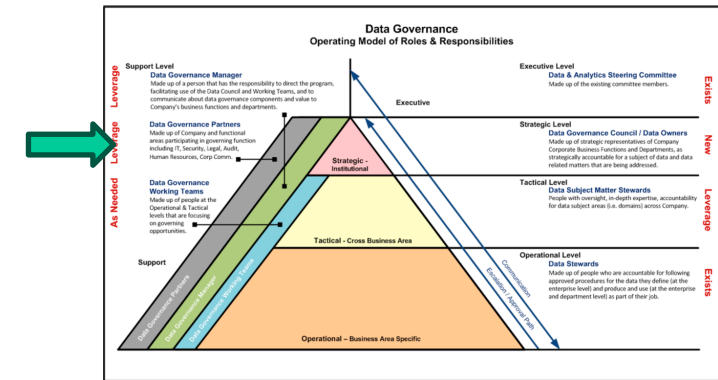
Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Building a Data Governance Culture from Top to Bottom

- The Influence of Building a Non-Invasive Culture of Partners

- Existing Governing People / Functions

- Information Tech
- Human Resources
- Info Security
- Compliance
- Finance
- Legal
- Audit
- Project Management
- Marketing / PR
- Wherever Governance Already Exists
- DG Function Does Not Want to Be Responsible for What These Functions DO
- These Functions Don't Want to Be Responsible for the Data Either



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Engaging Leadership in Data Governance Initiatives

- The Old-Time or Old-Fashion Executive No Longer Exists
- They Know ...
- And ... Are Not in the Mood to be Told Again!
- That Does Not Mean They Are Going to Act
- The Challenge is ... How Are We Going to Get Them to Act ? Or Engage
- Something Needs to Spark Their Attention
- Something Needs to Accelerate Positive Business Outcomes



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Engaging Leadership in Data Governance Initiatives

- With Data Governance – 1, 2, 3 Strikes ... Your Out! – How We Engage Leadership Matters
 - Compliance
 - Over and Above
 - Control
 - Enablement
 - Passive
 - Allow to Do
 - Catalyst
 - Spark to Make Things Happen
 - Cubed – Exponential ... Not Additive
 - Command and Control
 - Thou Shall
 - You *Will* Do This
 - Traditional
 - Field of Dreams
 - You *Should* Do This
 - Non-Invasive
 - Governance Exists
 - You *Already* Do This



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Engaging Leadership in Data Governance Initiatives

Why Your Data Governance Strategy is Failing



Why Your Data Governance Might Fail, And How To Make Sure It Doesn't.



You Did Everything Right — So Why Is Data Governance Still Failing? **APGAR**

Reasons for Data Governance Program Failure

DataManagementU

Five signs your Data Governance initiative is failing

Nicola Askham
THE DATA GOVERNANCE COACH

Why Data Governance Is Failing (And What We Can Do About It)



Your Data Governance Is Failing: Why Business Units Are Going Rogue and How to Fix It

Medium

6 Reasons Why Companies Fail at Data Governance



This Is Why Your Data Governance Strategy Is Failing



Why data governance keeps holding enterprises back



Data Governance Is Failing — Here's Why

cdo CHIEF DATA OFFICER
MAGAZINE

Why Top-Down Data Governance is Failing



Understanding the Potential Failures of a Data Governance Program

DATAVERSITY

Data Governance is Broken

INFORMATION
WEEK

Why 67% of Data Governance Efforts Fail—And How to Avoid the Same Fate



Why Companies Fail to Implement a Data Governance Strategy

datAvail

Why So Many Data Governance Initiatives Fail



14

Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Engaging Leadership in Data Governance Initiatives

- Changing the Narrative
 - Modern CD ... AEIOU ... ROM ... O
 - If That is What They Are Seeing ...
 - Data Governance is Not Failing
 - The Way People Talk About It Is
 - Organizations Already Govern
 - People Already Steward
 - Stay Non-Invasive My Friends 😊



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Engaging Leadership in Data Governance Initiatives

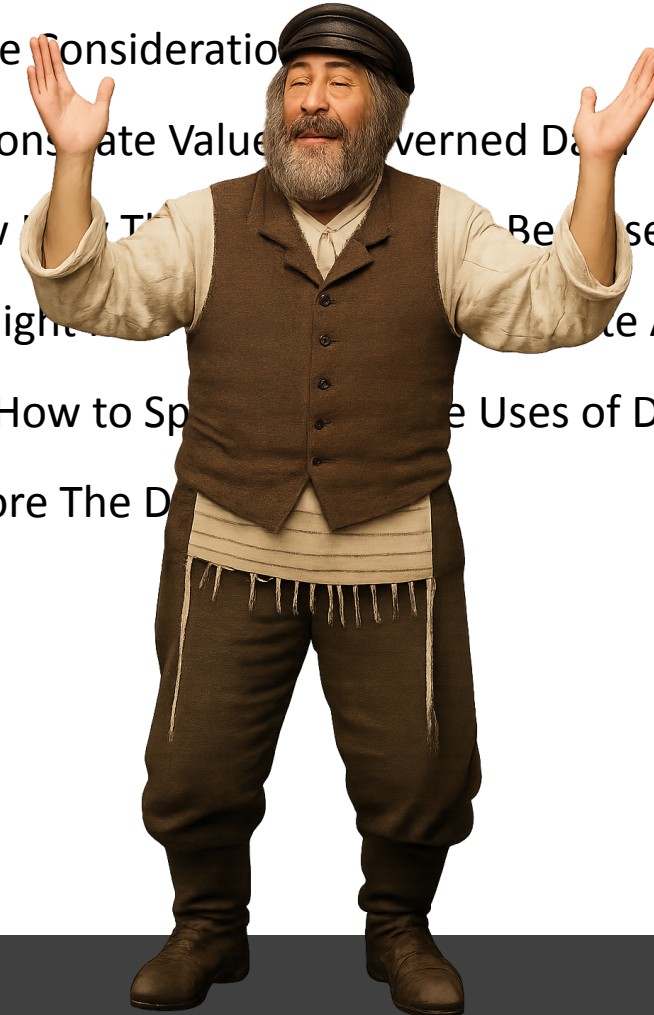
- Ways to Engage Leadership

- Traditional

- Speak Their Language
 - Focus on Outcomes
 - Attention to Reducing Risk
 - Support Decision Making
 - Provide Leadership Data

- Innovative Considerations

- Demonstrate Value of Governed Data
 - Show How The Business Benefits from Use of Data
 - Highlight Specific Actions and Results
 - And How to Support the Uses of Data
 - Explore The Data



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Engaging Leadership in Data Governance Initiatives

- Ways to Engage Leadership
 - **Connect Governance Directly to Business Outcomes (Not Data Activities)** – Leadership engagement begins the moment governance becomes relevant to what leaders already care about: reducing risk, improving decision-making, accelerating AI readiness, enhancing customer experience, and reducing operational drag. Executives do not connect to governance *as a discipline* — they connect to the business outcomes governance unlocks. NIDG makes this simple by tying accountability to how data is defined, produced, and used in the processes that already exist. The more clearly you link governance to strategic outcomes, the faster leaders lean in.
 - **Show Value Early Through “Non-Invasive Wins”** – Leadership believes what leadership sees. Executives do not need a massive governance program launched with fanfare; they need small proof points that demonstrate NIDG in action. When you surface hidden risks, eliminate redundant reports, streamline decision bottlenecks, or clarify a critical definition — and do it without disruption — you earn credibility. Early, visible wins demonstrate that governance is not overhead, not bureaucracy, and not “more meetings,” but a catalyst for speed, clarity, and confidence.



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Engaging Leadership in Data Governance Initiatives

- Ways to Engage Leadership
 - **Formalize Accountability Without Threatening Authority** – Leaders avoid governance when they fear losing control, gaining extra work, or being blamed for data problems. NIDG eliminates those fears by clarifying existing responsibilities rather than assigning new ones. Executives must understand that accountability sits where the data is defined, produced, and used — not where org charts suggest it should reside. By presenting governance as a reinforcement of what leaders already oversee, rather than an audit of what they haven't done yet, you pull them into the model instead of pushing them into it.
 - **Give Leaders a Role They Can Perform — and a Narrative They Can Champion** – Executives need a clear, dignified, realistic role in NIDG. When you provide them with a simple decision-rights model, concise expectations, a shared language, and a compelling narrative (“governance as a catalyst, not a constraint”), they know exactly how to lead. You're not asking them to attend weekly meetings or memorize policy text; you're asking them to sponsor clarity, consistency, and confidence in the data. When leaders can repeat the story of governance easily — and believe it — they become its most powerful advocates.



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Driving Grassroots Adoption of Governance Practices

- Accelerate Data Governance Adoption Through ...
 - Change Management
 - Behavior Change
 - Formalize It
 - Must Be Intentional
 - Stress Non-Invasive
 - Provide a New Narrative
 - Data Fluency
 - Not Same as Literacy
 - Shared Language Reduces Drama
 - Fluency is a Behavior – Not Skillset
 - Raises at the Baseline, Not the Ceiling
 - Strengthens NIDG While Shortening Time



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Driving Grassroots Adoption of Governance Practices

- Accelerate Data Governance Adoption Through ...
 - Change Management
 - Make governance **personally relevant** by connecting each role's daily decisions to the risks, delays, and rework caused by poor data behaviors.
 - Embed “micro-changes” into existing workflows so **people adopt new behaviors** without feeling disrupted or overloaded.
 - Use storytellers and peer influencers – not just leaders – to **socialize** wins, **normalize** new practices, and **reduce** resistance.
 - **Build clarity early** with simple, visual artifacts (like canvases, glossaries, and RACI-style maps) so expectations are obvious and aligned.
 - Create momentum loops by **celebrating small successes publicly and reinforcing them** with ongoing coaching, nudges, and fluency-building moments.



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Driving Grassroots Adoption of Governance Practices

- Accelerate Data Governance Adoption Through ...
 - Data Fluency
 - **Normalize a shared language** by defining and socializing core business terms so teams stop interpreting data through their own personal dictionaries.
 - Raise the baseline – not the ceiling – by giving everyone simple, **role-relevant fluency skills** that make data feel usable rather than intimidating.
 - **Embed fluency moments** into everyday work (meetings, dashboards, decisions) so learning happens naturally instead of through isolated training events.
 - Equip leaders to **model fluent behavior** by asking better questions, challenging unclear metrics, and demonstrating how to reason with data.
 - Use real organizational use cases – not hypothetical lessons – to teach teams how data works, why it matters, and how their **choices shape downstream impact**.



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Fostering a Governance-First Mindset Across the Organization

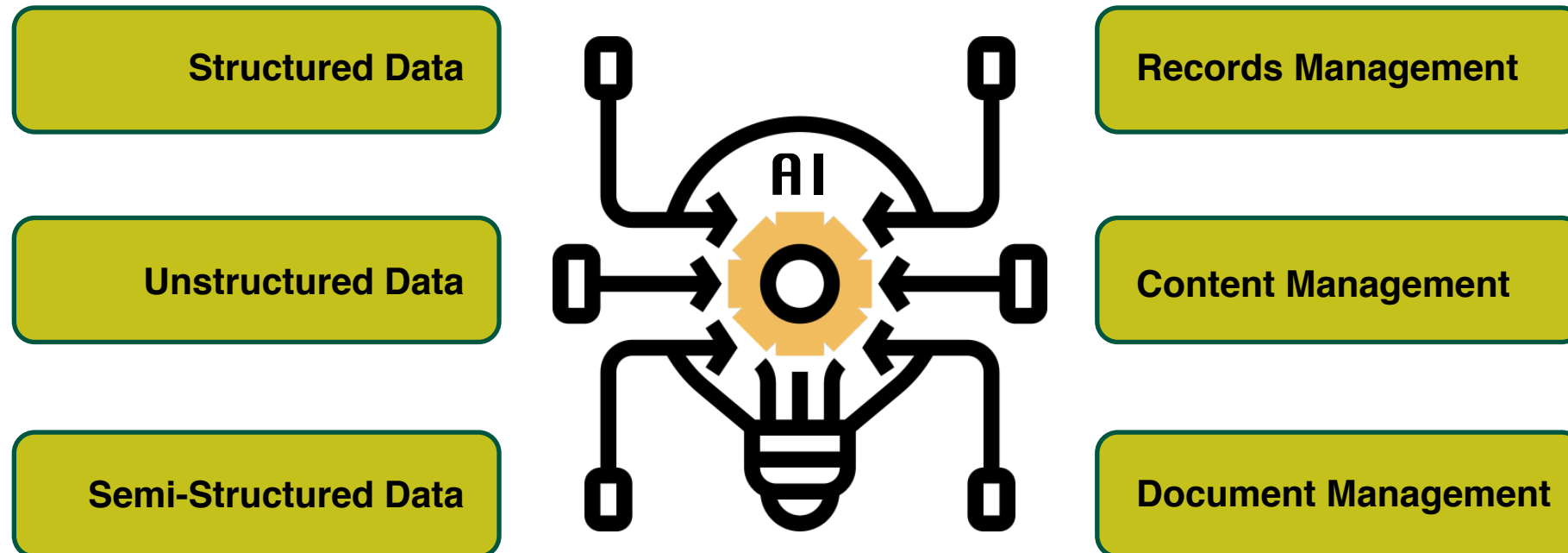
- AI Does Not Care Where It Gets Its Data From
- Data Governance is Up Against A Lot
 - Data Governance vs. Data Management
 - Data Governance vs. Information Governance
 - Data Governance vs. AI Governance
- Data Governance as The Data Catalyst³ (Cubed)



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Fostering a Governance-First Mindset Across the Organization

- AI Does Not Care Where It Gets Its Data From



The Great Convergence



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Fostering a Governance-First Mindset Across the Organization

- Clarify the Differences and Similarities of Data Governance vs. Data Management

Category	Data Governance	Data Management
Core Purpose	The execution and enforcement of authority over how data is defined, produced, and used.	The execution of the activities required to manage, move, store, and operationalize data.
Primary Focus	Formalizing accountability so the organization handles data consistently, confidently, and responsibly.	Delivering the operational capabilities – quality, storage, integration, security, analytics – that make data usable.
Key Question Answered	“Who is accountable for this data and how should it be handled?”	“How do we actually manage, process, and deliver this data in practice?”
Role in the Organization	Sets the rules, expectations, standards, and decision rights that guide data-related behavior across teams.	Performs the technical and operational work required to make data available, accurate, and accessible.
Drivers	Behavior, decision-making, accountability, culture, and trust.	Tools, processes, architecture, and operational efficiency.
Typical Activities	Approving definitions, clarifying responsibilities, escalating issues, enforcing standards, enabling decisions.	ETL/ELT, data modeling, storage, cataloging, quality checks, metadata collection, access provisioning.



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Fostering a Governance-First Mindset Across the Organization

- Clarify the Differences and Similarities of Data Governance vs. Data Management

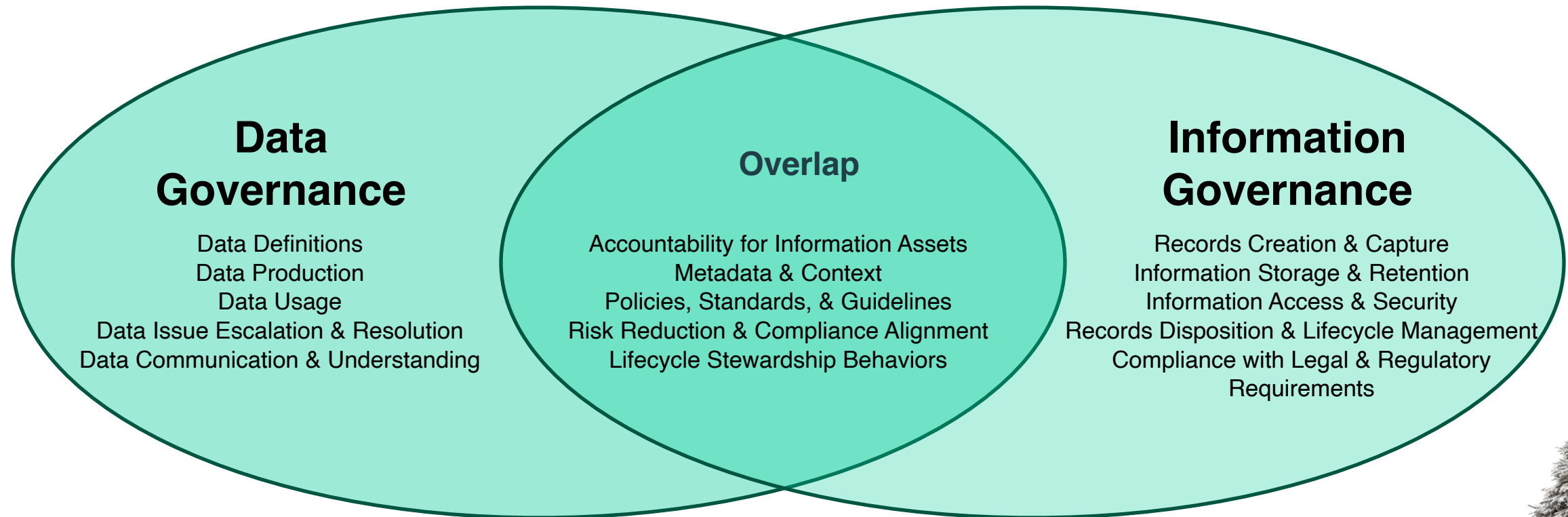
Category	Data Governance	Data Management
Who Participates	Everyone who touches, defines, produces, or uses data – embedded in their existing roles via NIDG.	Data engineers, architects, analysts, platform teams, and others responsible for technical delivery.
How Success Is Measured	By trust, clarity, consistency, reduced friction, and improved decision-making.	By performance, reliability, quality, availability, and throughput of data assets.
Philosophy	Governance is not about control – it's about enabling people to work with data confidently and non-invasively.	Management is about implementing the mechanisms that make governed data available and useful.
Relationship to Each Other	Provides the structure, expectations, and authority that guide data management.	Implements the work that governance defines, approves, and stewards.
In the Age of AI	Ensures AI is fueled by trusted, accountable, well-understood data and responsible human behavior.	Builds and operates the data pipelines, features, and platforms that feed AI systems.



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Fostering a Governance-First Mindset Across the Organization

- Data Governance vs. Information Governance



Build Foster

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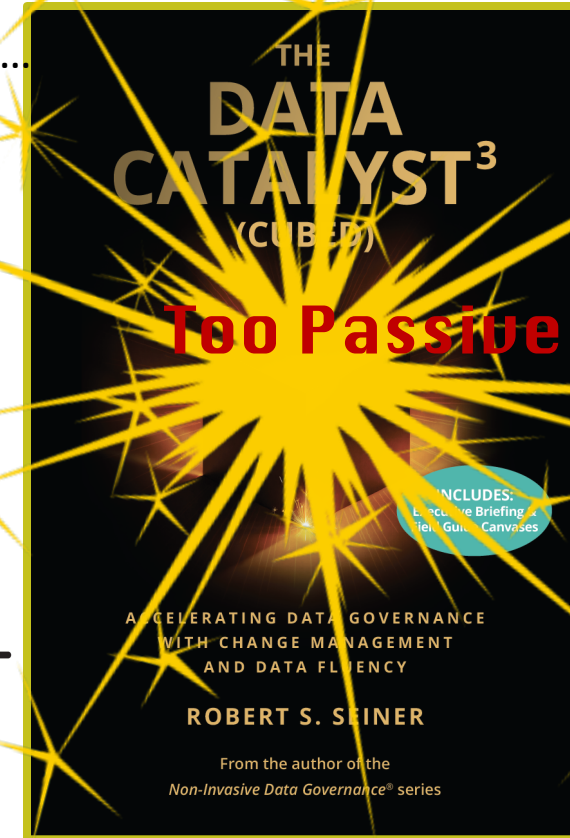
Data Governance	AI Governance
1. What Is Being Governed	
Data governance focuses on the definition, production, and usage of data – ensuring it is trusted, high-quality, and understood before it's used anywhere else. It manages the raw ingredients that feed every downstream system, including AI.	AI governance focuses on the models, algorithms, and decision-making logic that operate <i>on top</i> of the data. It ensures AI behaves responsibly, explains itself, and does not introduce risk or unintended consequences.
2. Primary Source of Risk	
The risks stem from inaccurate, incomplete, inconsistent, or misunderstood data that leads to flawed insights long before AI becomes involved. Without strong data governance, the organization's core decision-making foundation becomes unstable.	The risks come from model behavior – bias, drift, hallucinations, poor transparency, and unethical or unpredictable outcomes. Even perfectly governed data can lead to risk if the model itself is not governed.
3. Who Is Accountable	
Accountability lies with the people who define, produce, and use data every day – your natural data stewards embedded across the business. The Non-Invasive Data Governance (NIDG) approach formalizes what these people already do without assigning new or artificial roles.	Accountability expands beyond data stewards to include model developers, data scientists, AI product owners, and compliance partners . These roles must collectively ensure that model outputs are safe, explainable, and aligned with organizational values.
4. How Trust Is Established	
Trust is built through clarity – clear definitions, lineage, metadata, and transparent processes that show where data came from and how it should be used. When people understand the data, trust becomes a natural byproduct rather than something forced.	Trust is built through validation – model testing, monitoring, bias detection, explainability techniques, and accountability frameworks. People trust AI only when the organization demonstrates that the model consistently behaves as intended.
5. How Success Is Measured	
Success shows up as higher data quality, fewer decision delays, improved reporting confidence, and more efficient operational workflows . The metrics reflect how well people use, interpret, and rely on the data in their daily work.	Success shows up when AI models produce reliable, ethical, safe, and repeatable outcomes that improve business performance without introducing harm . The metrics reflect behavior – fairness, transparency, auditability, and the ability to continuously improve the model.



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Fostering a Governance-First Mindset Across the Organization

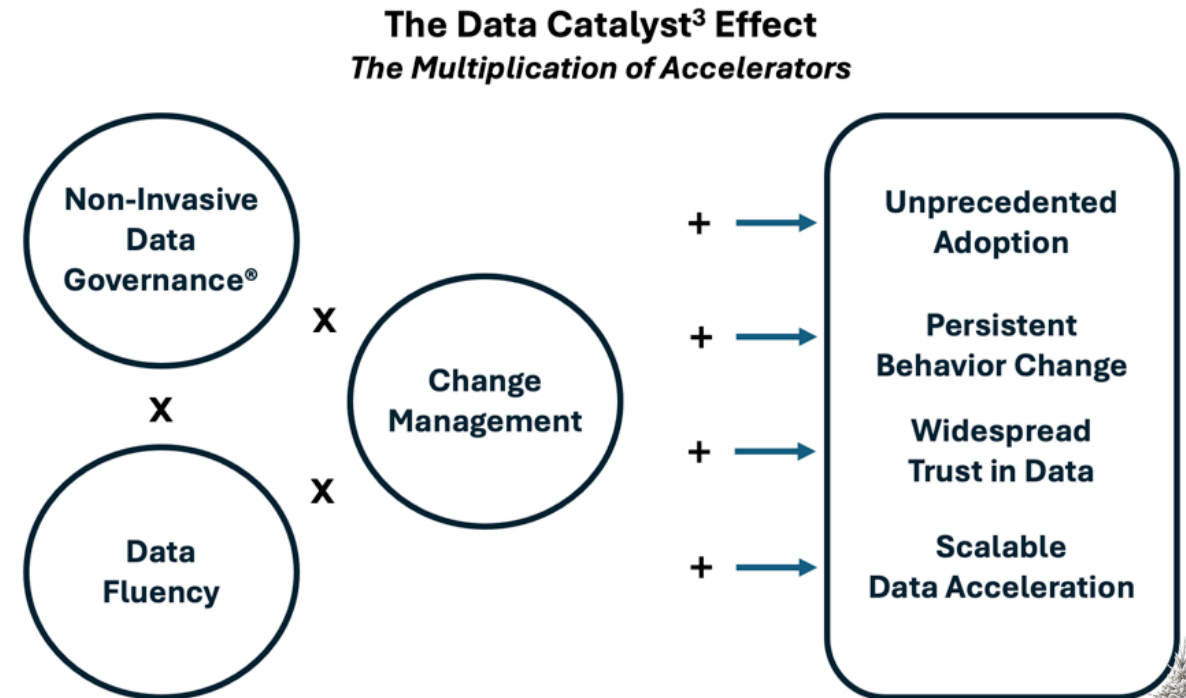
- Data Governance as The Data Catalyst³ (Cubed)
 - Promote Data Governance as a Discipline that ...
 - Accelerates
 - Activates
 - Ignites
 - Incites
 - Motivates
 - Sparks
 - Rather than ...
 - Allow
 - Assist
 - Equip
 - Enable
 - Prepare
 - Support



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Fostering a Governance-First Mindset Across the Organization

- But Seriously Folks ...
 - Governance Comes Down to Behavior
 - People Respond to Meaning
 - Fluent People Trust the Data
 - The Narrative Has Failed – The Catalyst³ Effect
 - The Exponential Power of the Cube
 - Change Your Data Governance Mindset



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Success Stories of Governance Culture Transformation

- Hold Up ...
- Been Feeding You Success Stories at the End of Webinars for Years
- Let's Make This One Different – Because the Idea of The Data Catalyst³ is Brand New!
- Paint a Perfect Picture in a 4-Act Play and See If It Is Achievable
- Guess What the Story Will Be About ...
 - Data Governance (Non-Invasive ... of course)
 - Change Management
 - Data Fluency
 - Making Something Happen!



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Success Stories of Governance Culture Transformation

- Act I — The Wake-Up Call
 - The organization had plenty of data but zero shared understanding – every team brought their own metric to meetings the way people bring their own side dish to a potluck.
 - Leaders finally admitted that decision-making felt like guesswork disguised as confidence, and trust in reports had fallen to all-time lows.
 - Nobody wanted to “own” anything; everyone wanted someone else to fix it.
 - A bold leader observed, “We don’t have a data problem – we have a people and clarity problem,” and quietly asked for a better way.



“The moment we realized confusion wasn’t a failure – but a signal – that’s when transformation began.”



Building a Data Governance Culture from Leadership to Grassroots Adoption

Success Stories of Governance Culture Transformation

- Act II — The Non-Invasive Turn
 - NIDG was introduced gently – not as a mandate, but as a mirror showing people the roles they were already performing.
 - Instead of assigning new stewards, leaders formalized accountability around the definition, production, and usage of data people already touched daily.
 - Change management framed the work as behavioral evolution, not a governance overhaul; small wins were celebrated, not forced.
 - Data fluency sessions eliminated jargon and replaced it with shared language that made data feel human, not technical.



“Governance didn’t slow us down
– it finally removed the invisible
friction that had been there
for years.”



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Success Stories of Governance Culture Transformation

- Act III — The Cultural Spark
 - Teams began asking better questions because they finally understood the data they were using – and the data they should be using.
 - Changes were adopted naturally because responsibilities were clear, not forced, and people saw the personal benefits of reducing rework.
 - Leaders gained confidence because the organization developed a predictable rhythm for decisions, escalations, and communication.
 - AI and analytics teams suddenly produced insights faster, because they no longer spent half their time rewriting definitions or reconciling mismatched metrics.



“Once people spoke
the same data language,
collaboration didn’t just improve
– it ignited.”



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Success Stories of Governance Culture Transformation

- Act IV — The Transformation
 - The organization built repeatable momentum using the Catalyst³ formula: governance (structure), change management (behavior), and fluency (understanding).
 - Teams trusted data, trusted each other, and trusted the processes that guided both – creating a culture shift that stuck.
 - The business moved from reactive firefighting to proactive insight generation, turning data from a burden into a competitive advantage.
 - What once felt like “governance overhead” had become the organization’s catalyst for speed, confidence, and innovation.



“In the end, we didn’t adopt data governance – data governance helped us adopt who we needed to become.”





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Q & A - Contact Information

- Robert S. Seiner

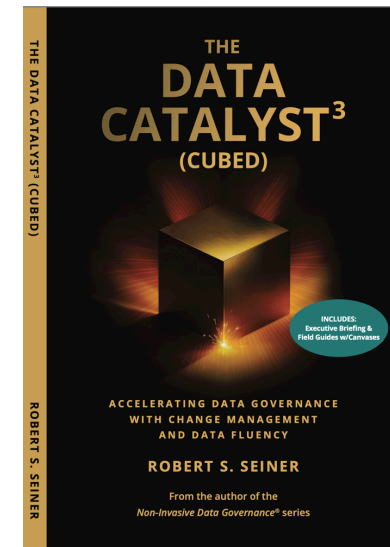
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Thank You



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