

Business Process Integration:

How to maximize the return
of your big data project

How to make your Big Data integration of marketing, sales and business development a success.

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Introduction

Big Data integration without the right processes is like a new express train without passengers: technically impressive, but not very effective if everyone continues to drive to work in their cars.

Many years of experience confirm that even the best data basis does not produce measurable success if it is not utilized correctly. To better understand the challenges of transitioning to a truly data-driven management approach, let us first look at who the primary beneficiaries of cross-

process data integration should be, and which goals result from that.

Subsequently, we will present a solution approach on how the potential of a common data basis can be exploited more effectively across departments.

The focus of this article is on market-oriented activities, from strategic planning to communicating one's value proposition to sales success.

For whom is data integration interesting?

Why have businesses and scientists been looking into the topic of Big Data integration so extensively for years now?¹

There are many good arguments for connecting data silos and making them available to the broadest possible user base. Most obvious is the issue of reducing costs by avoiding unnecessary data redundancy, maintenance, and acquisition. Even more important, however, is maximizing benefits through synergy effects and optimizing how the data are applied. Drawing on the right figures and analyses at the right time is the hallmark of a modern, „data-driven“ management approach that takes advantage of all the benefits of digitization.²

Unimaginable amounts of data are created every day.³ These often exist in isolated silos which are difficult to access. Increasingly, enterprise-wide data lakes are being created, which in theory significantly improve accessibility and visibility, but in practice are not yet usable by end users due to their unprocessed state.⁴

Therefore, data integration aims to provide a business-ready, trusted data pipeline from multiple sources⁵ that can be used for operational and analytical purposes.⁶ Many software companies such as IBM, MODELYZR or Oracle offer comprehensive and customizable business solutions for this purpose. Some platforms, such as Informatica or MODELYZR, also have frontends for business users in their portfolio, which is especially helpful if a specific process chain is to be supported first via a partial integration through a single vendor. This approach reduces the cost, complexity, and runtime of a project.

A typical example of such a chain is the market-oriented activities of a company. Its main actors consist of business development, marketing, and sales.

Providing these departments with a common, trusted database generates measurable successes in the company's own pipeline. But what needs to be considered on the process side for such a project to succeed?

¹ https://scholar.google.de/scholar?q=big+data+integration&hl=de&as_sdt=0,5

² <https://www2.deloitte.com/de/de/pages/trends/zukunft-der-entscheidungsfindung.html>

³ <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/267974/umfrage/prognose-zum-weltweit-generierten-datenvolumen/#professional>

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Data_lake

⁵ <https://www.ibm.com/analytics/data-integration>

⁶ <https://searchdatamanagement.techtarget.com/definition/data-integration>

The main actors and their needs

Although business development, marketing and sales usually differ from each other in their target agreements, they ultimately work towards the same goal, which is to sell more products on the market. These departments play the main roles in the go-to-market.

Business developers plan furthest ahead, always looking at the next one to two fiscal years. They affect many business units in their efforts to identify and evaluate markets and develop plans to leverage those potentials. Geographical and firmographic data are taken into account, market and trend studies are evaluated, and key sales and success figures for the company's own product portfolio are used to develop successful strategies.

Marketing also tends to work with a longer time horizon of 6 to 18 months, although this varies greatly depending

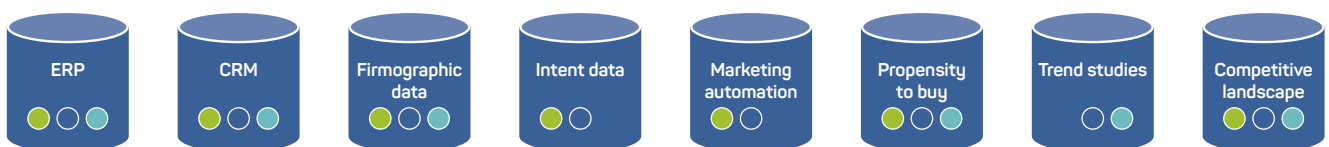
on the activity, from long-term awareness campaigns to telesales initiatives that ideally generate warm leads in a short period of time. The wide range of activities is also reflected in the data required: from market forecasts to propensity-to-buy models to intent data, a wide variety of information is used. CRM also plays an important role.

In sales, people usually rush from one quarterly target to the next, but always with the next quarters in mind. CRM is at the center of activities. In new customer sales, additional market data is used, as well as intent data and any other information that is available about the potential customers.

It is easy to see that due to the large number of data points required, each unit already has its own need for data consolidation and integration.



Data Sources and their relevance



If one imagines the planning horizon of their respective activities along a timeline, it becomes clear why it can be considered an interrelated process chain of market-oriented activities.

Therefore, there is an incentive not only for the individual departments to have access to a consolidated and integrated database of all relevant sources, but also across departments.

But sharing data and information liberally is not always a given. Due to the aforementioned differences in performance measurement across the departments, there is also a lack of incentive to keep an eye on the big picture and act in a coordinated manner.

The advantages are obvious:

- **All information is available to all parties at all times**
- **People talk about the same data for the same customers**
- **Marketing and sales processes are supported and mapped end-to-end**
- **Reduction of required data governance (if one data point is updated, all users benefit)**

The road to success

Data integration should always be viewed as a change process and not just as a purely technical project.

On the one hand, this process has a cultural component. Employees should be encouraged to share knowledge and information, and to collaborate across departments in order to create a culture of information exchange.⁷ In this way, cost for data acquisition can be shared. It also reduces silo formation from the outset.

In other words, the solution lies in a collective understanding of success.

Supported by a regular exchange between the departments at management level, this understanding is carried across the board. All parties should regularly align on whether the jointly developed strategy is being pursued in a target-oriented manner and if any adjustments are required.

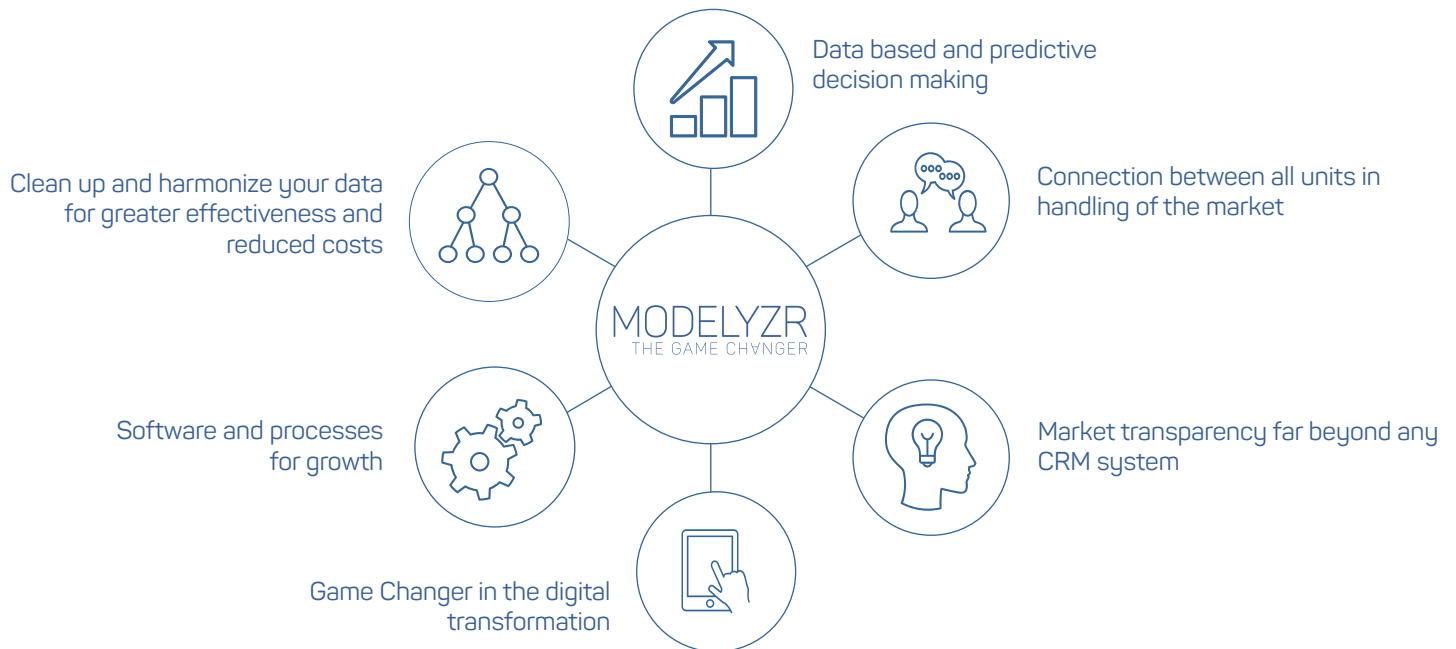
This brings us to the other component of the change process. In numerous projects, it has proven to be a best practice to place a newly defined, dedicated office or unit with a specially developed target system alongside the existing players. This link is intended to ensure jointly coordinated creation of value along the entire, market-oriented process chain.

This ensures not only that the other departments are relieved and supported, but also that the existing data platform is used in the most optimal way.

To take up the analogy from the beginning once more, these steps enable the data-driven express train to deliver its passengers to their customers faster and more efficiently than they could ever have reached them with their own vehicles.

⁷ <https://status.net/articles/data-silos-information-silos/>

Your benefits at a glance:



We are ready when you are ready.

- The MODELYZR software is already used in more than 100 countries globally and has been widely integrated in complex, highly customized business scenarios.
 - Data-driven demand management including indirect sales channels was implemented by us with proven success.
 - We cooperate with the best data providers worldwide.
- Want to create new connections?
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