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Overcoming Barriers to Embracing Data



+1 919 261 5830

info@remarquesystems.com

remarquesystems.com

The Importance of Building a Data-Driven Organization

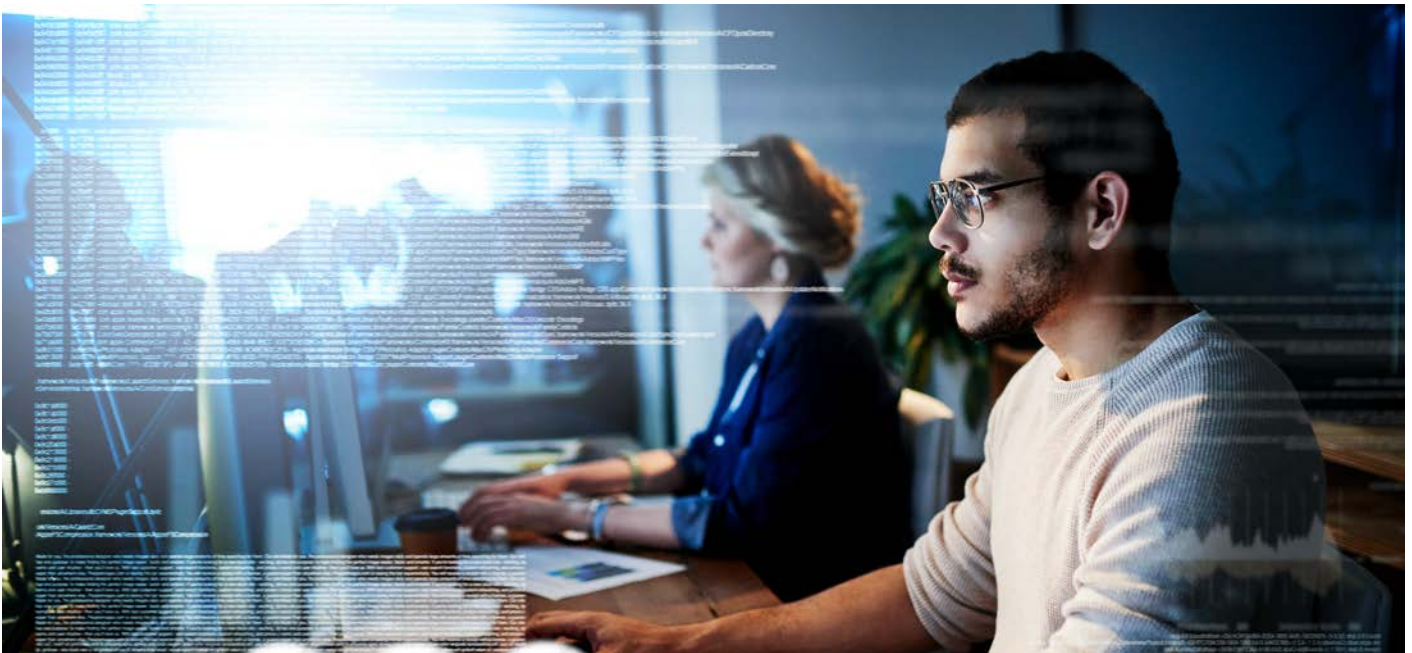
As an industry, we are drowning in data. But are we using it effectively? We know that the best way to make truly informed decisions is to ground them in facts—and that only by seeing all the data as a whole are we able to have the necessary context. Yet often, we don't act on that knowledge. Instead, we look at the data in discrete chunks.

That is no different from someone with a medical issue moving from one specialist to the next but never having the doctors share information among themselves, which makes diagnosing a rare condition much more challenging. If instead, the doctors work together, they are far more likely to reach an accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment plan—and they will reach it far faster. Likewise, to get a complete picture of a clinical trial, researchers need to see safety data in context with dosing data and PK data; otherwise, they make decisions in a void.

**The answer:
Build a data-driven
organization.**

What exactly is a data-driven organization?

A truly data-driven organization uses data to inform every decision. Every meeting is focused on data analytics. Every discussion is grounded in facts. This approach not only drives faster, better-informed decision-making but also encourages teams to focus on the areas of highest risk, thus minimizing or eliminating threats. For instance, researchers can detect early warning signs of issues in a novel compound or biologic using real-time data and address them before they become a problem. That, in turn, increases patient safety and leads to better trial outcomes.



Changing mindsets and adopting new habits

To build an effective data-driven organization, first, there needs to be agreement from the top down that all decision making will be grounded in data. Without the support and direction of senior management, the initiative is unlikely to succeed. With their support, follow these four steps to create a culture of data.

Understand where your organization falls on a data maturity scale

Considering the use of data in your organization, where does it fit along this continuum?

1. Is your organization not using data at all? Are your teams resistant to data?
2. Does your organization realize the potential of using data but hasn't acted on that knowledge?
3. Does your organization only use data sometimes? Do certain groups base decisions on data and analytics, and other groups ignore it?
4. Does your organization fully embrace data and use it to inform every discussion and decision?

The goal, of course, is to move towards number four on the scale. Knowing where your organization is now can help you identify pockets of resistance and craft a plan to move along the scale until you are entirely data-driven.

Share data across the organization at all levels

Without access to the data, it is impossible to use it to drive decisions. This seems obvious, but organizations often ignore this step, siloing information and making it available only on a need-to-know basis.

Invest in technology that supports data analytics and the use of data

Spreadsheets can only take you so far. One single integrated solution that connects clinical trial data, centralizing all data sources, with built-in analytics capabilities enables your organization to collate and process data in ways that are useful to all teams and ensures that everyone is leveraging the same data insights. Be sure there is secure, widespread access to enable collaboration across teams. Consider a system that harnesses machine-generated analytics, which can uncover hidden patterns, leading to better decisions short-term and greater innovation long-term. Implement strong data governance, so every department has confidence in the data.



Train your staff

People are not inherently data-savvy. Even the best technology and processes are pointless if the people using them aren't data literate. Ensure your teams are technologically capable—which likely will involve additional training. Everyone in the organization should feel confident identifying, analyzing, and interpreting data.

The Importance of Building a Data-Driven Organization

Data is a valuable strategic asset. Don't let it go to waste.

Becoming a truly data-driven company—embedding data into your organization's very identity—may require a serious attitude adjustment on the part of many team members. Expect resistance. You will need clear direction from the top and advocates or evangelists within every group. Yet, if you succeed, you will have unleashed a powerful asset that can deliver insights, catalyze innovation, and speed success.

