

FORRESTER®

# The Importance Of Unified Data And Analytics

Why And How Preintegrated Data And Analytics  
Solutions Drive Business Success

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FORRESTER OPPORTUNITY SNAPSHOT: A CUSTOM STUDY COMMISSIONED BY SAP | AUGUST 2020

## Overview

Actionable data insights are critical to all organizations, and in today's world, gaining these insights while increasing agility becomes even more imperative. However, firms have notoriously struggled with getting these insights — accessing the right data, presenting it at the right time, and distributing it in the right format — to necessitate action. Traditionally, gathering and acting on these insights has been done through discrete data and analytics platforms, but while these can allow for some initial convenience along the way they are largely more problematic than they're worth. Organizations are now looking to preintegrated solutions — data and analytics platforms with integrated or shared data models/schemas, metadata, and security — that will help streamline their platforms and provide a multitude of strategic and technological benefits.

## Key Findings



While many organizations are currently prioritizing integration and innovation initiatives to become more insights-driven, room for growth continues to exist.



Organizations experience diverse challenges in both their data warehousing and analytics platforms, with one underlying theme: the lack of integration between data platforms and analytics platforms.



Those organizations that choose a preintegrated data and analytics solution outperform others that are manually integrating their platforms by experiencing a greater amount of benefits.

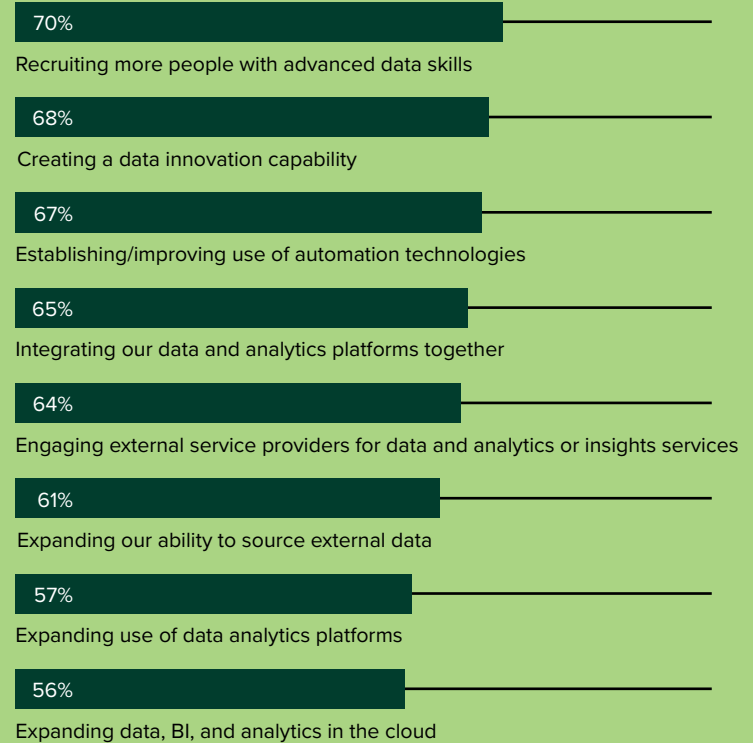
## Organizations Focus On Innovation, Integration, And Automation

Organizations are actively trying to improve their data and analytics capabilities to become more insights-driven by integrating their current disparate data management and analytics components. Two-thirds of respondents said that integrating data and analytics platforms together was a critical or high priority over the next 12 months, among other key innovation initiatives.

However, most respondents are somewhere in the middle of this integration journey: 48% said that their organization used a point-solution approach, and only 18% had established a preintegrated platform. While common, point-solution approaches hold firms back from providing business value, as integrating data models, metadata, and security protocols between multiple platforms requires significant effort, which takes away time and resources from delivering solutions.

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### “How much of a priority are each of the following for your data and analytics strategy over the next 12 months?”



Note: Percent includes high + critical priority  
 Base: 420 global data warehouse/analytics strategy decision makers  
 Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of SAP, May 2020

## While Confident In Their Current Ability, Most Firms Have Plenty Of Room For Improvement

Respondents view their current data management and analytics strategy as agile and actionable. More than two-thirds agree that they have an agile strategy which supports new and emerging use cases — 62% say they're able to consistently turn data into actionable insights. Yet, despite these abilities, only one-third of data strategies are enabling self-service capabilities. Without self-service capabilities, firms can only be agile to a certain extent — to truly cross boundaries and become more innovative, firms will need to place extra focus on self-service. Further, almost half of organizations report their IT teams devote more time to integration than delivering business solutions. By focusing more on integrating data models, metadata, security, and data privacy of multiple disparate platforms, they spent proportionately less time on broader strategic goals that are more likely to propel business growth.

“Please rate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.”

69%

We have an agile data management strategy to support new and emerging use cases.

62%

We consistently turn signals from data into actionable insights.

54%

We support real-time data and analytics for the business.

50%

We efficiently automate the integration of various data sources.

43%

We enable self-service monitoring.

41%

Our IT department spends more time on integration than building/ delivering business solutions.

36%

We enable self-service analytics.

## All Firms Are Challenged By Data And Analytics Platform Integration

Finding success in data and analytics platform integration can quickly become an overwhelming challenge. For both data warehouse platforms and analytics platforms, integration and a lack of tools to make these efforts effective is a key challenge. As a result of these challenges, firms report spending too much time on integration initiatives (51%), missing insights from data they already have (37%), duplicated work (35%), and long project timelines (28%). Struggling to integrate via outdated methods creates a cascade effect within firms that impacts other value-add functions. After all, the actual top- and bottom-line tangible benefits, such as new or improved revenue streams and improved profitability, come from insights, business applications, and solutions, and not necessarily integration.

### CHALLENGES WITH DATA WAREHOUSE PLATFORMS



**45%** High integration effort, which is time-consuming



**41%** Too much data movement/data replication



**39%** Lack of integration among tools to provide end-to-end facility



**37%** Inability to manage a variety of data types

### CHALLENGES WITH DATA ANALYTICS PLATFORMS



**37%** High integration effort, which is time-consuming



**36%** Lack of integration among tools to provide end-to-end facility



**45%** Lack of budget to support various tooling end-to-end facility



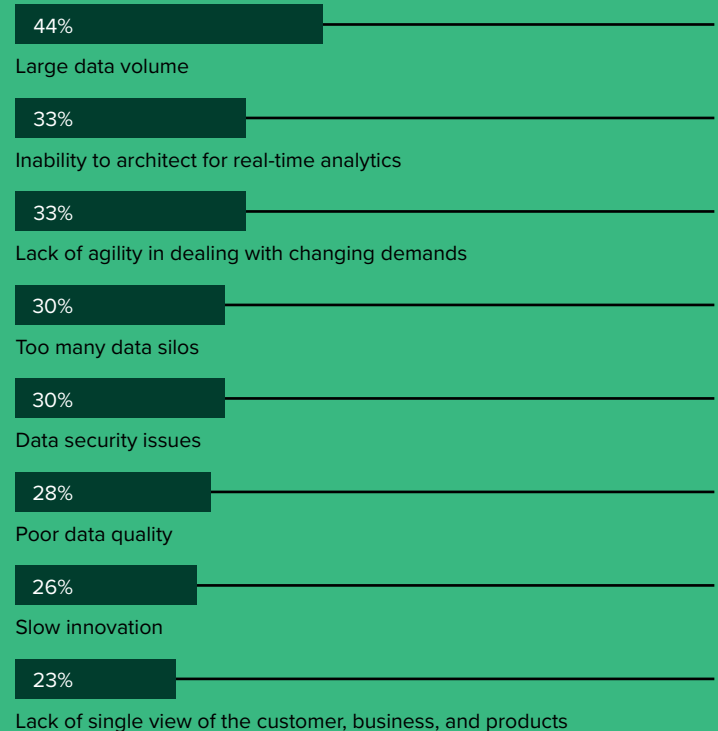
**34%** Lack of centralized knowledge management repository

## Business Initiatives Are Negatively Impacted By Multiple Platforms

As the need for data and analytics platform integration persists, many organizations start manually integrating multiple platforms, inadvertently slowing down their business insights and initiatives. In doing so, they become overwhelmed with the volume of data, the multiple data and analytics silos, and the inability to keep up with real-time analytics and changing demands. Synchronizing data security policies also poses more of a challenge for those that are trying to manually integrate various data platforms and warehouses, impacting governance and compliance mandates.

Despite efforts to maximize data and analytics platforms by integrating them together, doing so manually will leave organizations with more technology problems to solve than business benefits to capitalize on. Instead of being able to fully embrace the benefits that this type of integration offers, organizations are left to deal with issues that only manual platform integration presents, i.e., process inefficiencies and missed insights.

### “What challenges are you experiencing as you attempt to integrate data and metadata from multiple platforms on your own?”



## Preintegrated Data And Analytics Platforms Propel Organizations Toward Innovation And Automation Success

Organizations expect to experience myriad benefits from using a preintegrated data and analytics platform. From both technological and business perspectives, the achieved benefits are well-suited to not only address the most common challenges but to also support organizations' innovation and automation priorities.

In order to achieve these benefits, organizations seek solutions that feature real-time insights (45%), end user self-service (45%), the ability to handle increased data volumes (45%), security integration (43%), and an easy data and metadata integration process (40%).



**100% of organizations expect benefits from using an integrated data and analytics platform.**

### TECHNOLOGY BENEFITS



**45%** Better data security



**40%** Faster analytics/insights



**39%** Improved data quality



**37%** Improved scalability/performance



**35%** Faster data access

### BUSINESS BENEFITS



**47%** Faster time-to-value



**44%** Better business agility



**41%** Improved customer experience



**50%** Increased innovation

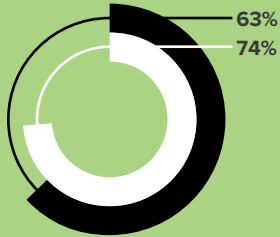


**37%** Ability to make better informed business decisions

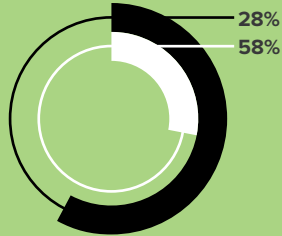
## Unified Data And Analytics Platforms Outperform Manually Integrated Offerings

Effective preintegrated solutions also solve for the challenges created by manual integration efforts. Preintegrated platforms allow organizations to outperform those that integrate manually. They are more than twice as likely than those that manually integrate to efficiently automate the integration of various data sources; additionally, they are also more likely to garner actionable insights and enable self-service. Turning to a more efficient solution allows organizations to speed past the hurdles that come with manual integration and immediately capitalize on the benefits of preintegrated data platforms.

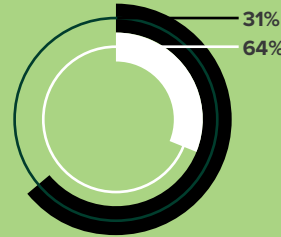
● Manual ● Preintegrated



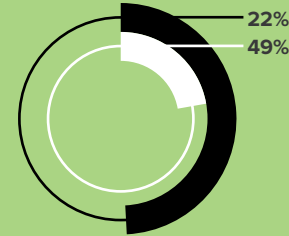
We consistently turn signals from data into actionable insights.



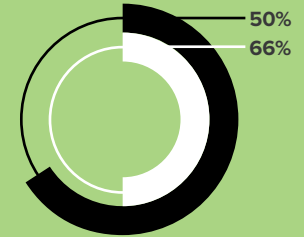
We enable self-service modeling.



We efficiently automate the integration of various data sources.



We enable self-service analytics.



We support real-time data and analytics for the business.



## Conclusion

Insights-driven organizations see more business benefits than those that still struggle with transformation to become more advanced, successful, and effective in their capabilities. However, in order to reap more benefits, and realize them faster, firms must:

**Concentrate on delivering insights-driven solutions and applications.** Holistically integrated insights solutions and applications are empowering business users to quickly turn data into insights and actions — a key competitive advantage to continued growth and profitability.

**Minimize data and technology integration efforts to accelerate use cases.** Manual data and analytics platform integration effort takes time and resources away from addressing key business challenges. And poorly integrated systems lead to poor business decisions, reduced customer satisfaction, and slowed growth.

**Take advantage of the preintegrated components to drive business innovation and growth.** Leveraging a unified data and analytics perspective, particularly one that is preintegrated and in a self-service format, helps reduce time-to-value. This gives businesses more time to focus on delivering essential business solutions rather than platform integration.

### Project Director:

Megan Doerr,  
Market Impact Consultant

### Contributing Research:

Forrester's Enterprise  
Architecture and Application  
Development & Delivery  
research groups

## Methodology

This Opportunity Snapshot was commissioned by SAP. To create this profile, Forrester Consulting supplemented this research with custom survey questions asked of 420 data warehouse/analytics strategy decision makers from around the world. The custom survey was completed in May 2020.

### ABOUT FORRESTER CONSULTING

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## Demographics

### REGION

33% North America

39% EMEA

25% Asia Pacific

6% Southern Europe

### COMPANY SIZE

49% 1,000 – 4,999 employees

38% 5,000 – 9,999 employees

14% 20,000+ employees

### LEVEL

16% C-Level executive

35% Vice president

49% Director

### RESPONSIBILITY

93% responsible for data warehousing strategy

92% responsible for data analytics strategy

\*Note: respondents could select both data warehouse and data analytics strategy responsibility

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