PRIMER #2:

FOSTERING AND DISTRIBUTING INSTITUTIONAL DATA CAPACITY

Taking steps to avoid consolidating and siloing of data skills and resources, and instead catalyzing such capacity to filter into daily institutional operations.

WHY

Organizations across sectors can increase the societal and organizational value created through data re-use by bolstering their personnel's data skills and ensuring those skills are distributed throughout the organization. When data skills and resources are relegated to small teams or units, organizations are unlikely to maximize the societal and organizational value of data re-use. Instead, capacity needs to be distributed evenly to ensure people in all parts of the organization understand the data they have, can use it to create value, and are willing to forge internal and external relationships around it. Focused efforts to invest in, foster, and distribute data skills can help an organization become more evidence-based and systematic across all its operations.

HOW

Building an Organizational Culture of Learning: The state of the art in data science and data stewardship is constantly evolving. New technologies and methodologies regularly emerge. Decision-makers can help their organization achieve the benefits of the Third Wave of Open Data by championing professional development and training programs. They can also enshrine policies, procedures, and support mechanisms to encourage personnel to bolster their data skills. These skills can be technical in nature, involving

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training to collect, analyze, and derive insights from large datasets. These skills can also be related to issues of governance, related to defining problems, promoting data ethics and responsibility across an organization, or communicating and contextualizing data-driven insights.

Breaking Down Vertical and Horizontal Silos: Open data concerns itself with breaking down silos and increasing access to data for decision-making. Organizations can take steps to break down barriers between *vertical* domains, those silos preventing data being used across sectors toward a singular purpose. They can also take steps to break down barriers between *horizontal* silos, those barriers between disciplinary backgrounds that can stymie collaboration among actors working toward similar goals . Organizations stand to benefit from opening cross-departmental communication channels, creating interdisciplinary teams, and initiating peer-learning opportunities to ensure that data capacity feeds into normal business operations.

Nurturing Senior-Level Data Competency: Decision-makers who are responsible and accountable for setting organizational priorities can benefit from data science know-how. Even if these leaders are not likely to manipulate or analyze data, they will be better-positioned to make informed decisions in data investments if they are conversant in data science and data stewardship principles and practices.

MORE

[Open Data Policy Lab Data Stewardship Training](#)*:* Course offerings from The GovLab's Open Data Policy Lab initiative aimed at supporting decision-makers in the creation of a data re-use strategy.

[Solving Public Problems with Data](#): The GovLab's series of online lectures from data experts on important data skills and competencies.

[Open Data Institute Courses](#)*:* Data competency training programs from the Open Data Institute.

[Data Skills for Public Servants](#): A collection of openly accessible data competence training resources and course offerings curated by *apolitical*.

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