Driving better data quality

As digitalization sweeps across the public sector, Departments of Motor Vehicles (DMVs) around the country are looking to modernize their legacy systems to new technology. A modernization is a big undertaking that requires financial investment and a great deal of time and effort. The benefits of such investment, however, include improved service to the citizens you seek to help, increased operational efficiency, and better data quality to inform every decision your agency makes. If your Department is currently undergoing a modernization project, or plans to in the future, follow these five tips to drive better data quality and avoid some of the common challenges DMVs face.

1. **Figure out your point A**
    When undertaking a modernization, it's important to assess the current state of your systems first. Often, legacy databases can contain poor-quality data, such as outdated information or unstandardized data formats. Before you can begin planning your data conversion, or determine an appropriate timeline, you need to know what you are working with. Conducting a full-volume analysis of the information in your systems can help to give you better visibility into the types of data within your database and help you to understand the aspects of data quality you should prioritize.

2. **Chart your route**
    Planning is the most important aspect of any modernization effort. You should always have the end in mind when you determine the roadmap for your conversion. You must consider the timeline, budget, people, and tools you will need to successfully complete the conversion. Will you migrate all your data at once, or will you do it in phases? How much budget do you have allocated for tools and resources to complete the migration? Who will lead your modernization project, and which stakeholders from across the business will be included? What tool or combination of tools will help to ensure success?

When it comes to modernizing your systems, all of these details matter. Considering the alarming rate at which organizations fail when modernizing systems—approximately 80 percent—thoroughly planning your course is essential to getting it right.[1]

3. **Choosing the right vehicle**
    Extract, transform, and load (ETL) tools that organizations rely on for their modernizations might not necessarily give you insight into the quality of your data, or where you should standardize or improve it before the conversion. This is where a data quality tool complements an ETL tool, helping you to figure out where you are starting and significantly ease the process moving forward. According to our 2017 global data management benchmark report, 44 percent of U.S. organizations believe that data quality issues delayed their data migrations. To avoid potential conflicts, consider investing in a data quality solution from the start. Especially for DMVs, there tends to be a great deal of duplicate records, which can create significantly more work (and cost more time and money) for a conversion if they are not identified and remedied.

4. **Out with the old**

   As agencies approach modernization projects, they are confronted with large volumes of old, outdated, and otherwise inaccurate information. When moving information from a legacy system to a target system, you should aim to move the smallest amount of high-quality data. For many DMVs, this will mean choosing not to migrate information that could instead be archived. As previously discussed, DMVs often have a number of duplicate records for the drivers they serve. By consolidating records, you can significantly reduce the amount of information you need to convert while also achieving a single source of truth on which you can make decisions and inform all interactions with your constituents.

5. **Less is more**

   The less data you convert to a new system, the less it might cost, the less time it could take, and the less complicated the overall process could be. Rather than going in with the mindset that more data is better, you should remember that less is more. A data conversion is the perfect opportunity to downsize the amount of information in your system by archiving or decommissioning certain information, or by cleansing and consolidating required information. With a data quality tool like Experian Pandora, you can remove the guesswork from the conversion process by prototyping changes before you make them. Further, by generating mapping specifications from the old system to your new system, you can reduce the need to conduct User Acceptance Testing—a step in traditional conversions that typically results in additional rework.

A modernization is the perfect opportunity to kick your data quality program into high gear. It's a great chance to clean the data within your system and to define the data quality standards you wish to adhere to moving forward. Maintaining quality data requires ongoing attention, however. Even once your conversion is complete, Experian Pandora can help you keep your information accurate over time. Featuring robust data monitoring capabilities, automatic alerts, and dashboards, Experian Pandora helps you take control of your data by granting you instant insight into the quality of data across your systems. The tool can detect and resolve issues as they arise, so you can feel confident that you have accurate information at all times. With high-quality data and modern systems, your agency will be on the road to success.

Experian Pandora is a powerful tool that can help you kick your data management program into high gear.

Learn more

Sources

1. "Risks and Challenges in Data Migrations and Conversions." Gartner. 25 Feb 2009. 16 March 2017. Web.

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