

DATA STRATEGY TRACKS

Capabilities and gaps

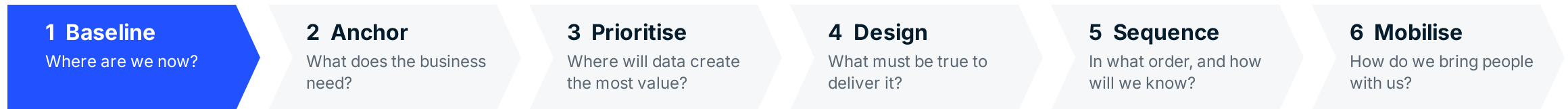
Assess each data capability twice: where it is today, and where the chosen value proposition actually needs it to be. The gaps that matter become the roadmap; the rest are deliberately left alone.

THE SO WHAT OF THIS TRACK

Fix only the gaps the chosen value proposition depends on, and write down the gaps you are deliberately leaving open.

Part of stage 1: Baseline

Maturity assessments usually produce a long list of weaknesses and an implied instruction to fix them all. That spreads money thin and ignores the strategy. Comparing current capability with the level the strategy requires turns a maturity score into a set of choices: invest where a gap blocks a strategic goal, hold where the capability is good enough, and stop over-investing where it already exceeds what is needed.



QUESTIONS THIS TRACK ANSWERS

- Which capabilities does our chosen value proposition depend on most?
- Where is each capability today, on evidence rather than opinion?
- What level does the strategy actually need for each, not the highest possible level?
- Which gaps block a strategic goal now, and which can wait?
- Where are we over-invested relative to what the strategy needs?

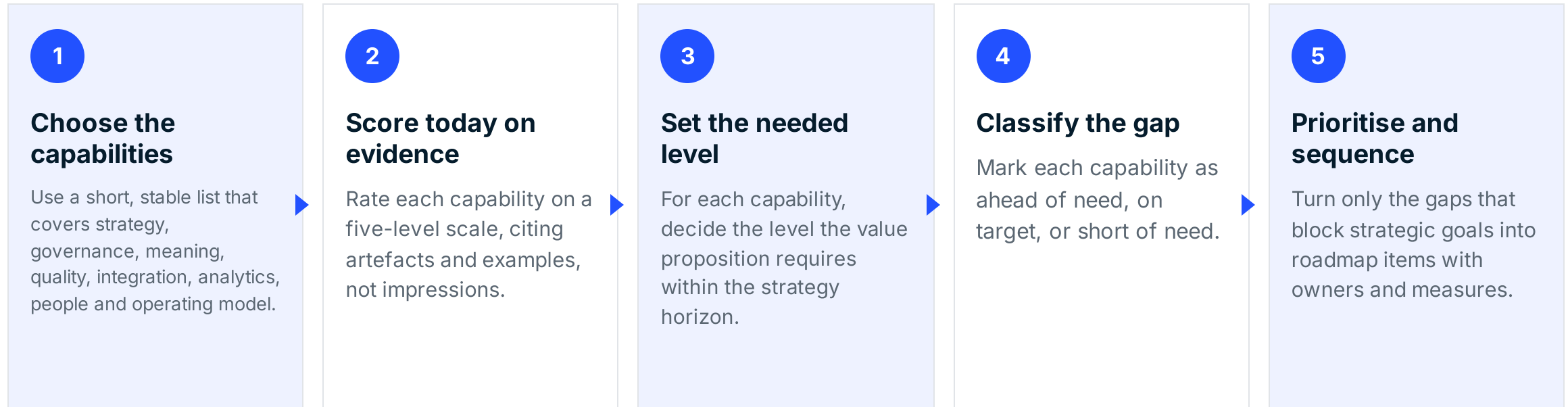
1

The method

Compare what you have with what the strategy needs

From assessment to roadmap

Five steps turn a maturity score into strategic choices.



SO WHAT

The needed level is a strategic choice; debate it with theme owners, not just the data team.

Three states, three responses

Ahead of need

Capability exceeds what the strategy requires. Hold investment steady or redeploy effort to a gap.

On target

Capability matches the need. Sustain it, monitor it, and avoid gold-plating.

Short of need

Capability falls below what the strategy requires. Fix it if a strategic goal depends on it; otherwise record it as an accepted gap.

SO WHAT

Reporting all three states keeps the conversation balanced and makes over-investment visible.

The needed level depends on the value proposition

Illustrative emphasis: the same capability can need a different level under each role.

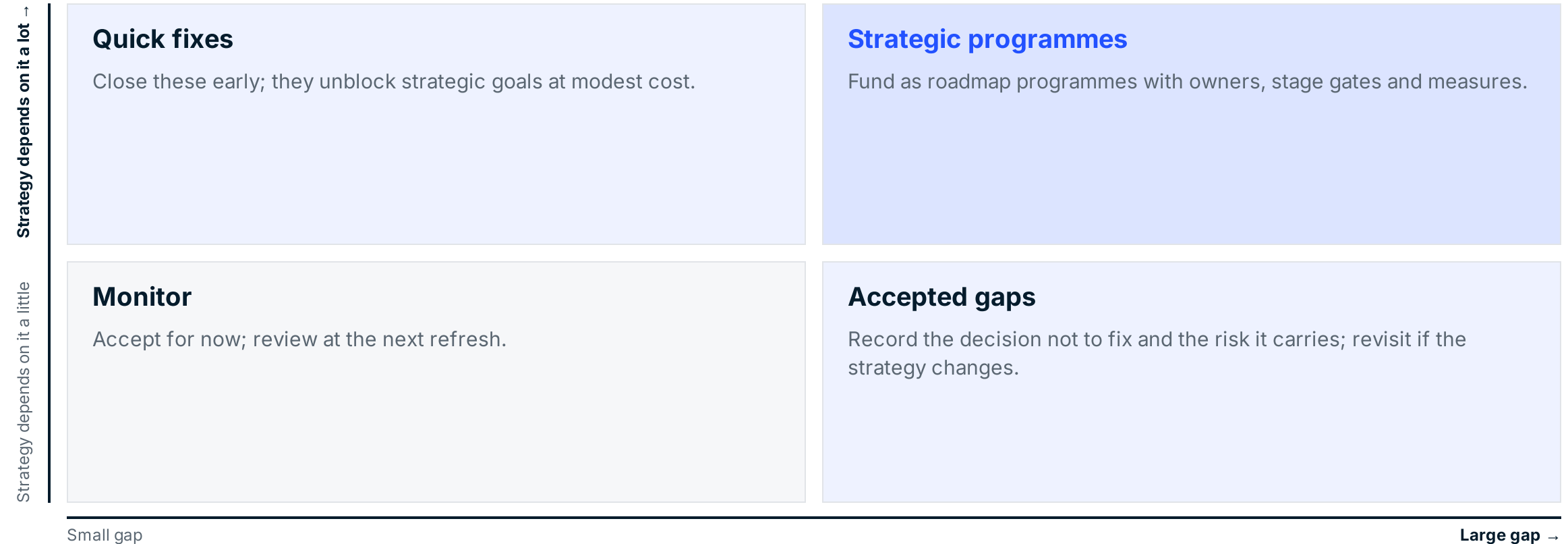
Capability	Foundation leads	Enabler leads	Growth engine leads
Governance and trust	High: certified and controlled	Medium: core shared, rest fit for purpose	Medium: guardrails, tight at go-live
Metadata and meaning	High: full lineage and glossary	Medium: around priority processes	Medium: discoverability first
Data quality	High across reported data	High in the processes served	Variable: good enough to test
Integration and architecture	High: resilient and standard	Medium: process-shaped products	High: fast access to new data
Analytics and AI	Low to medium	Medium to high	High
People and literacy	Engineering and operations	Domain and process skills	Data science and product skills

SO WHAT

Do not set every capability to the top level; the strategy needs a profile, not a perfect score.

Prioritise the gaps

Plot each gap by how much the strategy depends on it and how large it is.



SO WHAT

Writing down the accepted gaps is as important as funding the strategic programmes.

Scoring on evidence

Evidence that counts

- Artefacts in use: policies, definitions, lineage, service levels
- Measured results: quality scores, access times, adoption
- Decisions changed by the capability, with examples
- Independent views from business users

Evidence that does not

- Tools purchased but not adopted
- Plans and roadmaps not yet delivered
- The data team's own optimism
- One strong team generalised to the whole organisation

SO WHAT

Score the weakest common practice, not the best example, or the gap will be hidden.

2

Tools and evidence

Score it, measure it, see it in six industries

TOOL

Capability gap map

Set where each capability is today and the level your strategy needs. Gaps that matter rise to the top. Defaults are placeholders: replace them with your own evidence.



Filled dot: current level. Open dot: level the strategy needs. Illustrative defaults; score your own.

Closing the gaps that matter

Capability	What it covers	First fix
Strategy and value	Data initiatives are derived from business goals, prioritised on value and tracked against baselines.	Link every funded initiative to a strategic goal and a measured baseline.
Governance and trust	Ownership, decision rights, policies and certified definitions are in place and used.	Name owners and stewards for the critical data behind the top objectives.
Metadata and meaning	A shared glossary, catalogue and lineage let people find, understand and trust data.	Publish a glossary and lineage for the metrics the executive team reviews.
Data quality	Quality rules on critical data are measured, published and acted on.	Define quality rules and publish scores for critical data elements.
Analytics and AI	Analytics and models reach production and are monitored for value and risk.	Take one high-value use case to production with monitoring and an owner.
People and literacy	Roles, skills and literacy match what the strategy requires.	Run a literacy baseline and a targeted programme for decision makers.
Operating model	Central and business teams know who does what, and how to engage.	Agree the operating model and publish the engagement path for business units.

SELF-CHECK

Is this in place today?

Score each statement 1 (not at all) to 4 (fully, evidenced).

#	Statement	Score
1	We assess data capabilities on evidence, not on impressions or tools owned.	
2	For each capability we have agreed the level the strategy needs, not just the current level.	
3	Our roadmap addresses the gaps that block strategic goals, and only those.	
4	Gaps we have chosen not to fix are written down with the risk they carry.	
5	We repeat the assessment at each annual refresh and track movement.	

How it looks in six industries

Industry	Situation	The move	Measure
Manufacturer	Strong plant systems but weak shared product and customer definitions across five plants.	Close the gap in metadata and quality on product and price data; hold plant integration at its current level.	Quotes priced from certified product and cost data.
Retail bank	Supervisory findings expose weak lineage and quality on risk data.	Treat governance, metadata and quality as strategic programmes; accept a gap in advanced analytics for a year.	Risk reports with full lineage and passing quality rules.
Retailer	Advanced analytics talent, but stock data split between stores and online.	Fix integration of one stock pool first; analytics capability is already ahead of need.	Share of stock visible and sellable across channels.
Hospital group	Privacy incident and coding audit reveal governance and quality gaps.	Raise governance, quality and literacy for clinical coders and managers; defer predictive work.	Coding accuracy and privacy incidents per quarter.
Telecom operator	Good network analytics, separate billing and CRM per line of business.	Close the gap in a shared customer view and metadata; hold network analytics steady.	Customers with a single view across mobile, broadband and business.
Insurer	Strong pricing models, weak claims data quality and slow broker data flows.	Prioritise quality and integration in claims and broker data; models are already ahead of the data feeding them.	Claims records passing quality rules; broker quote turnaround.

Measures for the data scorecard

Measure	Definition	Lead or lag
Capabilities assessed on evidence	Share of capabilities scored with cited artefacts and measured results	Lead
Strategic gaps with owners	Share of strategy-blocking gaps with a named owner and roadmap item	Lead
Gap closure progress	Average movement toward the needed level on prioritised capabilities, per quarter	Lead
Accepted gaps recorded	Share of unaddressed gaps with a written decision and risk note	Lead
Over-investment flagged	Number of capabilities ahead of need with spend reviewed	Lead
Goals unblocked	Strategic goals whose blocking capability gaps have closed	Lag
Capability profile met	Share of capabilities at or above the needed level at the annual refresh	Lag

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Making it happen

Traps, the first 90 days and where SCIKIQ fits

Traps to avoid

Fix everything

Every weakness becomes a project and money is spread too thin to move anything. Counter-move: Fund only the gaps that block strategic goals and record the rest as accepted.

Top level everywhere

Every needed level is set to the maximum, so the gaps look enormous and arbitrary. Counter-move: Set the needed level from the value proposition, capability by capability.

Scoring by opinion

Scores reflect who filled in the survey, not what is in use. Counter-move: Require evidence for each score and calibrate across business units.

Ignoring over-investment

Capabilities ahead of need keep absorbing budget. Counter-move: Report the ahead-of-need state and redeploy effort to the gaps that matter.

A one-off exercise

The assessment is filed and never repeated, so progress is unknown. Counter-move: Repeat it at each annual refresh and show movement on the scorecard.

The first 90 days

Days 1-30: Assess on evidence

- Agree the capability list and the five-level scale
- Collect evidence and score current levels with business input
- Calibrate scores across units in one session

Days 31-60: Set the needed profile

- Set needed levels from the chosen value proposition
- Classify each capability as ahead, on target or short
- Plot gaps by strategic dependence and size

Days 61-90: Build the gap roadmap

- Turn strategy-blocking gaps into roadmap items with owners
- Record accepted gaps with their risks
- Add gap closure measures to the data scorecard

Where SCIKIQ fits

Enterprise Discovery Engine

Profiles and maps the existing estate, giving an evidence base for current capability scores rather than survey opinion.

Semantic and Ontology Construction

Builds the shared glossary, concepts and business rules that close gaps in metadata and meaning.

Governance Gate

Applies policies and approvals consistently, raising governance and trust capability without a manual process for each team.

Outcome and Observability

Measures quality, usage and outcomes over time, so gap closure is tracked on evidence.

Take it further

- The SCIKIQ Data Strategy Framework: the cascade this track plugs into
- Strategy Cascade and Scorecard Workbook: add this track's objectives and measures
- Run the interactive tool and self-check at scikiq.org/data-strategy#track-gaps

scikiq.org/data-strategy