

DATA STRATEGY TRACKS

Value proposition

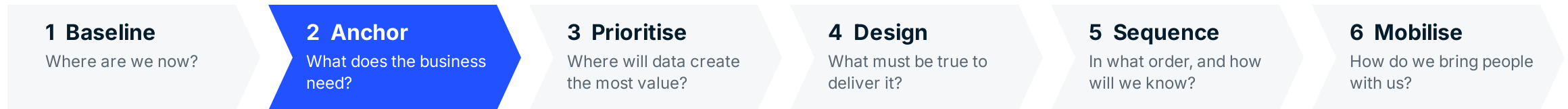
Data can play three different roles for an organisation: a dependable foundation, an enabler of better processes, or an engine for new growth. Deciding the mix is the first strategic choice, because it changes what you build, how you govern it and how you prove it worked.

THE SO WHAT OF THIS TRACK

Write down the mix of foundation, enabler and growth engine explicitly, then make every architecture, funding and measurement choice consistent with it.

Part of stage 2: Anchor

Most data strategies fail quietly because nobody decided what data is for. The platform team optimises for uptime, the business wants faster answers and the board expects new revenue, and each judges the strategy by a different yardstick. Naming the value proposition, and its mix, gives architecture, funding, governance and measures a single reference point. It also sets expectations: a foundation strategy is judged on reliability, a growth strategy on experiments that turn into products.



QUESTIONS THIS TRACK ANSWERS

- Which role does data play for us today, and which role does the business strategy need it to play?
- What mix of foundation, enabler and growth engine do we commit to for the next three years?
- How does that mix change our architecture, governance, organisation and funding choices?
- Which measures prove value for each role, so we stop judging a foundation on revenue or a growth bet on uptime?
- Which strategic goals does each data initiative serve, and through which role?

1

The method

Foundation, enabler or growth engine: choose the mix

Three roles data can play

Every organisation uses all three to some degree. The strategy decides which one leads.

Foundation

Data as a dependable shared service the business runs on: available, fast to reach, quick to extend with a new source or interface. Success is invisible: nobody waits and nothing breaks.

Enabler

Data that makes existing processes work better: sharper targeting and conversion, lower operating cost, earlier fraud detection, maintenance before failure. Success shows in the process measures the business already owns.

Growth engine

Data that creates something new: products, services, pricing models or revenue streams that did not exist before. Success is a pipeline of experiments, a fair share of which become repeatable offers.

SO WHAT

Name the leading role first; the other two become supporting roles with smaller budgets and clear limits.

The mix changes every other choice

The same capability is built differently depending on which role leads.

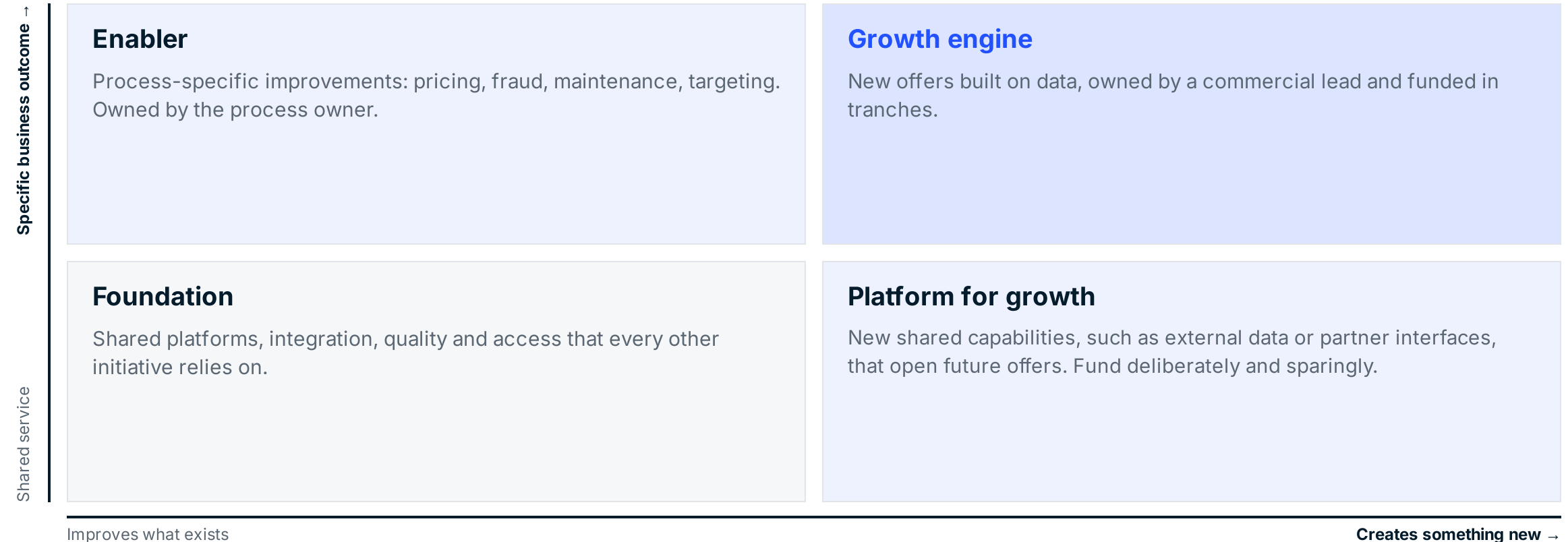
Dimension	Foundation	Enabler	Growth engine
Architecture	Standardised, resilient, reusable platform; strong integration and service levels	Data products shaped around specific processes; embedded in operational systems	Flexible sandboxes, fast access to new and external data, easy promotion to production
Governance	Central standards, certified definitions, strict change control	Fit-for-purpose quality set by each process owner, shared core definitions	Light guardrails for exploration, tighter gates when an idea goes live
Organisation	Strong central platform team, service management discipline	Data people embedded in business teams, hub-and-spoke support	Cross-functional product teams with a product manager and commercial owner
Funding	Run budget, priced like a utility service	Business co-funding tied to process outcomes	Venture-style tranches released at stage gates
Skills	Engineering, operations, reliability	Domain analysis, process redesign, change management	Data science, experimentation, product and commercial skills
Measures	Availability, time to access, time to onboard a source	Conversion, cost per transaction, loss avoided, process cycle time	Experiments run, share that repeat, revenue from new data-led offers

SO WHAT

If your architecture, funding and measures point at different roles, the strategy will pull itself apart.

Where your current initiatives sit

Plot today's portfolio by how established the process is and how new the value is.

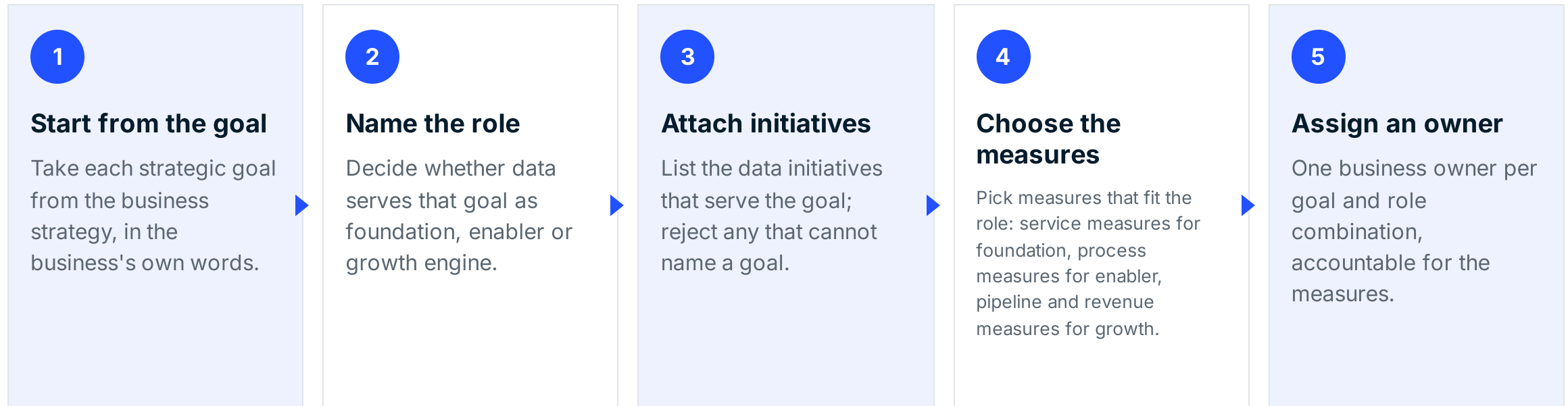


SO WHAT

A portfolio crowded in one quadrant tells you the mix you actually run, whatever the strategy says.

Link goals to initiatives to measures

Every initiative should trace to a strategic goal through one named role.



SO WHAT

An initiative with no goal or no role is a cost, not a strategy; stop or reframe it.

Example measures by role

Role	Leading measures	Lagging measures
Foundation	Time to onboard a new source; time from request to access; share of requests self-served	Platform availability; business hours lost to data outages; cost to serve per data product
Enabler	Adoption of the data product in the process; decisions made with it; data freshness	Conversion gained; operating cost removed; losses avoided; cycle time cut
Growth engine	Experiments started; time from idea to first test; share of experiments repeated	Revenue from new data-led offers; customers using them; margin on them

SO WHAT

Judge each initiative by the measures of its role, never by another role's yardstick.

Signs the mix is wrong

Too much foundation

- Excellent platform, few business decisions changed
- Business units build their own shadow analytics
- The data team is seen as a cost centre to be squeezed

Too much growth engine

- Many pilots, few reach production
- Every experiment rebuilds its own data pipeline
- Trust in reported numbers falls while innovation spend rises

SO WHAT

Rebalance at the annual refresh: growth bets need a trusted foundation, and a foundation needs bets to justify it.

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Tools and evidence

Score it, measure it, see it in six industries

Which role should lead your data strategy?

Answer six questions about your business strategy. The result is a starting point for the leadership debate, not a verdict.

Question	Options
What does the business strategy say most loudly?	Run reliably, comply and reduce risk; Improve margins and efficiency in what we do; Enter new markets or launch new offers
How much do leaders trust today's reported numbers?	Little: we argue about whose number is right; Mostly, with known gaps; Well: core reporting is certified
Where would a data win show up first?	Fewer outages, faster access, cleaner reports; A process measure the business already tracks; A new revenue line or customer offer
How regulated is the core business?	Heavily, with active supervisory attention; Moderately; Lightly
How do business units fund data work today?	They do not; it is a central IT cost; They co-fund projects that improve their processes; They invest in new data-led offers
What is the appetite for experiments that may fail?	Low: we need predictable delivery; Moderate, inside existing processes; High, if failures are cheap and fast

What each answer points to

Foundation leads

Your strategy depends first on reliable, trusted, fast-to-reach shared data. Win the right to do more by making data dependable and easy to use. Invest in integration, quality, certified definitions and service levels Fund the platform as a run service with clear cost to serve

Enabler leads

Your strategy wins by making core processes measurably better. Put data products into the processes the business already owns. Embed data people with process owners and co-fund with them Build reusable data products around a few high-value processes

Growth engine leads

Your strategy expects data to create new offers and revenue. Run a disciplined pipeline of experiments on a trusted core. Set up product teams with commercial owners and stage-gated funding Give exploration fast access to new and external data, with guardrails

SELF-CHECK

Is this in place today?

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

#	Statement	Score
1	Our leadership has agreed in writing which role data leads with: foundation, enabler or growth engine.	
2	Every funded data initiative names the strategic goal it serves and the role it plays.	
3	Each initiative is measured with the measures of its role, not one yardstick for all.	
4	Our architecture, funding and governance choices are consistent with the chosen mix.	
5	The mix is revisited at each annual refresh of the strategy.	

How it looks in six industries

Industry	Situation	The move	Measure
Manufacturer	Margins squeezed by input costs and price-downs, with a large installed base of parts in the field.	Lead as enabler on pricing and plant performance, with a growth bet on service revenue from the installed base.	Margin recovered on priced quotes; service contracts sold from installed-base data.
Retail bank	Supervisory findings on risk data aggregation and reporting; growth must come from existing customers.	Lead with foundation: certified risk data and lineage first, then enabler use cases on primary relationships.	Regulatory reports produced from certified data; products held per primary customer.
Retailer	Rich loyalty data, falling full-price sell-through, stores and online planning stock separately.	Lead as enabler on pricing, ranging and one stock pool, with growth tests on personalised offers.	Full-price sell-through; markdown cost; uplift from personalised offers.
Hospital group	Long waiting lists, blocked beds, a privacy incident and a coding audit.	Lead with foundation on governed patient data and coding, then enabler work on patient flow.	Coding accuracy; privacy incidents; delayed discharge days.
Telecom operator	High churn, evenly spread network capital, separate billing and CRM per line of business.	Lead as enabler on churn and network investment, with a growth engine for business customers.	Churn among targeted segments; return on network capital; business revenue from new offers.
Insurer	Combined ratio above target, claims leakage and fraud, brokers frustrated by slow quotes.	Lead as enabler on pricing, claims and fraud, on a foundation of trusted regulatory data.	Loss ratio by segment; leakage and fraud avoided; broker quote turnaround.

Measures for the data scorecard

Measure	Definition	Lead or lag
Initiatives traced to a goal	Share of funded data initiatives that name a strategic goal and a role	Lead
Time to onboard a source	Working days from request to a new source being available and governed	Lead
Time to access	Working days from a user's request to usable access to existing data	Lead
Data product adoption	Share of target process decisions made using the intended data product	Lead
Experiment repeat rate	Share of growth experiments that become repeatable offers or processes	Lead
Process value realised	Benefit confirmed by finance from enabler initiatives against baseline	Lag
Revenue from data-led offers	Revenue from products and services that depend on data to exist	Lag
Platform availability	Share of business hours the shared data services meet their service level	Lag

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Making it happen

Traps, the first 90 days and where SCIKIQ fits

Traps to avoid

One yardstick for everything

Foundation work is judged on revenue and growth bets on uptime, so both look like failures. Counter-move: Assign each initiative a role and measure it with that role's measures.

The unspoken mix

Different leaders assume different roles for data and judge the strategy accordingly. Counter-move: Agree the mix in a leadership workshop and write it on the strategy on a page.

Growth without a foundation

Pilots multiply, each with its own pipeline, and trust in reported numbers falls. Counter-move: Tie every growth bet to shared, governed data products and fund the foundation it needs.

Foundation as an end in itself

The platform is excellent but few decisions change, and funding is cut. Counter-move: Pair every foundation investment with an enabler use case that shows value within a quarter.

Copying another organisation's mix

The strategy borrows a growth narrative the business strategy does not support. Counter-move: Derive the mix from your own business goals, regulation and trust in today's data.

The first 90 days

Days 1-30: Diagnose the mix you run today

- Map current initiatives to foundation, enabler and growth engine
- Interview theme owners on what they expect data to deliver
- Note where measures and roles do not match

Days 31-60: Agree the target mix

- Run a leadership workshop with the picker results as the starting point
- Agree the leading role and the limits on the others
- Link each strategic goal to initiatives through a named role

Days 61-90: Make it operational

- Set role-appropriate measures and baselines for each initiative
- Align funding models to roles: run, co-funded, staged
- Publish the mix on the strategy on a page and schedule the annual review

Where SCIKIQ fits

Logical Enterprise Model

Maps value chains and processes to data domains and decisions, so each initiative can be traced to the goal and process it serves.

Metrics and Knowledge Fabric

Holds certified measures with definitions, so foundation, enabler and growth measures are defined once and reported consistently.

Virtual Data Fabric

Connects and federates sources in place, shortening time to access and time to onboard a source for foundation work.

Outcome and Observability

Tracks outcomes of decisions and actions, giving enabler and growth initiatives evidence of realised value.

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-value

scikiq.org/data-strategy