

When it comes to managing your data, trust the experts

 By [Iniel Dreyer](#)

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Data is arguably the most critical component of any business today, and yet for many organisations, data management is an afterthought, secondary to hardware and software requirements.



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However, the insight that can be gained from data, as well as the actual data itself, is invaluable. In fact, effective data management underpins the success of many other IT initiatives. Organisations should look to partner with a specialist data management provider to leverage numerous benefits throughout the business.

Data management is often overlooked simply because organisations are unaware of the need to incorporate data management solutions into their IT portfolio. There is a misconception that as long as hardware is under warranty and software is up to date, and that sufficient storage is in place, then data is effectively managed. While these are important considerations, this is not the whole picture.

With data increasing at an exponential rate, organisations frequently 'run out' of storage capacity. Instead of examining their data to see if it is really necessary to be storing it all, organisations determine that the issue is a lack of storage space. Resellers are often complicit in this problem, since they are incentivised to sell hardware, and if the customer does not ask the right questions, they will often simply be sold additional storage capacity.

This approach creates a number of problems, chiefly that organisations end up with masses of very expensive, yet unnecessary, Tier 1 storage, which leads to overspending on budgets. In addition, capacity planning is impossible, continuity problems are often created, and businesses have no idea where their critical systems and data reside, which is essential for Disaster Recovery (DR). This in turn leads to compliance problems, since data audits require organisations to prove that they have business continuity planning in place, and that data is accessible. In addition, the Protection of Personal Information (PoPI) Act requires that businesses know where their data is so that they can delete information if requested by a customer.

Without data management processes in place, it is impossible to meet compliance objectives, or to leverage any additional value from data. It is essential to understand where data resides, and what types of data are stored where, as well as to incorporate indexing and search capabilities. Once an understanding of data is created, storage can be optimised according to the need to access it, the type of data and so on, reducing storage expenses. In addition, data that does not need to be maintained can be deleted, further reducing storage requirements and associated costs.

Data management should, in fact, be applied first. From there, hardware and software can be obtained to meet the actual data requirements of the organisation. Partnering with a niche, focused data management organisation will ensure that organisations can leverage expert knowledge and skills for the effective management of this crucial business asset. An effective data management partner will be driven by solutions, not products, and can assist to map your data requirements according to business needs, not just storage capacity.

The value of information is highly specific to each business. There is no blanket, one-size-fits-all approach to the management of data, and there are no defined rules or sets of steps that can be followed to apply data management. A specialist data management partner will have experience from a broad range of industries and will be equipped to apply an approach that works best for your specific business. This means you can control your data better, optimise your storage infrastructure, comply with relevant legislation, and leverage maximum value from your data assets.

ABOUT INIEL DREYER

Iniel Dreyer is managing director of Data Management Professionals South Africa (DMPSA), a European specialist in complete solutions for secure and reliable data management. He is passionate about Information Technology and started his career working in a Personal Computer (PC) upgrade centre but gained extensive international experience early on in his career working on a number of international projects.

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