



Question No. 7 to develop your safety excellence strategy

What data-driven priorities and objectives are of strategic value? If you have been following along in this 10-question series, at this point in the strategy development process you know what success looks like. You've identified your customers. You've specified the value you want to deliver to them. You've determined the rationale, story and scope. You've examined what supports or conflicts with your ability to succeed. You've gained buy-in to go further. Now it is time for exploration: to look at the data you have and what you need to generate.

As you go through your decision-making process, think about things you can take off the table.

How you frame your story (question No. 4) will tell you what type of data you need. Your data will suggest which path to take. You need to see what's relevant. We all swim in data; yet more information

doesn't mean we are better informed. The opposite may be true. Data overload can be stupefying. Narrowing your options may be a better choice.

Big data just keeps getting bigger. Big data allows for vast numbers to be visualized and crunched into finer and finer detail. We know a lot more about a wide range of topics. But this doesn't necessarily make choosing among options easier. Which data is most useful to improve performance? Which data tells you how accepted your proposed intervention will be? What data exists about beliefs, values and behaviors?

The signal we are looking for can be lost in the noise, and this is the challenge. More choices can overwhelm the human mind to the extent that not choosing becomes the default. As you go through your decision-making process, think about things you can take off the table. Limiting choice is effective, but the difficult question is: How will you narrow your options? How will you decide?

Your organization may have a formal decision-making process. Can that methodology be leveraged here? Are the things you already measure leading to insight?

There will always be constraints because your culture must be able to absorb your intervention. You want improvement, but you don't want to rock the boat so much that it sinks. This is why you're looking for data that will allow you to make small changes that will lead to big effects/results. You want data upon which to act.

The following questions will help you answer No. 7 in your strategy development processes: What data do you want? What data is available? How easy is it to access? Is it understandable? What information will you need to generate? What capabilities currently exist? Which capabilities could reasonably be learned? Are your research questions designed to confirm your preformed opinion? How are you avoiding leading questions? Which biases might skew what you look for? Who will interpret your data? What expertise or insight is needed to interpret your data? What do operational performance indicators tell you? What will the data allow you to do?

Interpreting data isn't easy. You need a programmer to debug a software application. You need a physician to interpret

an MRI. And to complicate matters, two doctors may disagree on the meaning of the same data. Judgment is human. Who has the right capability to actually interpret what you're seeing?

For your strategic choices, what data-driven priorities and objectives would be of strategic value? Upcoming articles will continue to focus on the three remaining questions that must be asked and answered to create your safety excellence strategy.

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