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.

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. Limiting choice is effective, but the difficult question is: 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? As you go through your decision-making process, think about things you can take off the table.

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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? 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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