Your data strategy checklist.

Ten data issues you need to know about.

Is your data strategy complete? Have you considered all of the key issues? If you're not sure, it's time to check in...

1. **Data Proliferation**

   Daily communications, mobile solutions, social media strategies, CRM systems – there's an endless list leading to the same result: your organization is producing data at an accelerated rate. Are you storing it safely and efficiently? Is it providing value to your organization, or just generating growing costs?

2. **Mobile Solutions**

   From tablets to smart phones to laptops, the workforce is going mobile. Not only does this contribute to data proliferation, it creates the issue of an expanded IT footprint. Have you enabled greater efficiency through secure, quick access to data, from anywhere? Are you providing a satisfactory end-user experience?

3. **Security**

   The safety of your organization's data is paramount – and the risks are growing. In the latest Rotman-TELUS Joint Study on Canadian IT Security Practices, Canadian organizations reported that the average number of breaches increased from just three in 2008 to 11.3 in 2009, and the resulting annual losses nearly doubled in the same period. If your security strategy hasn't changed, how safe is your data today?

4. **Availability**

   Your organization depends on secure, instant access to data. It's an IT responsibility that's far more complicated than 99.99% uptime. Instead of focusing on individual components, such as clients, server, or storage, you need a holistic, end-to-end view of availability. Are you approaching the problem from an end-user perspective? Are you concentrating your limited resources on the critical elements that drive business?

5. **Scalability**

   Your data strategy needs to keep pace with the organization's needs. And with the exponential rate that data is growing, that means expanding capacity with cost-efficient solutions that can be deployed quickly. Can you make the business case for increasing capital expenditures? Have you evaluated outsourcing as a solution for scalability?

6. **Performance**

   The adage that "time is money" isn't the only driver behind your organization's need for speedy access to data. In today's business world, data is generated, updated, and disseminated at ever-increasing rates. Does your data strategy deliver the performance necessary for timely reporting and meaningful strategic analysis?

7. **Data Integrity**

   Corrupt data is not only useless data, it can also lead to business disruptions, erroneous conclusions, and faulty strategic moves. Do you have the assurance that your network provider's Quality of Service (QoS) is sufficiently meeting your organization's business communications demands?

8. **Delivering Insight**

   Data is your organization's most valuable asset – but only if it can be profitably utilized. Is your data storage an issue, or a strategic driver? Can important stakeholders access business intelligence? Can your organization profit, and customers ultimately benefit, by how you have enabled the data to be used?

9. **Physical Space**

   Data storage may be more costly than you may think. When evaluating in-house solutions, do you account for costs associated with the physical plant, climate control, physical security, administration, maintenance and management?

10. **Staffing**

    As new, business-centric expectations are being added to the IT portfolio, maintaining basic operations has become part of a budgeting balancing act. Personnel need to be as capable thinking in terms of ROI as they are in IT. Can your data strategy hold up to a shrinking budget share, and a changing IT skill set?