

## FROM THE IDMA DESK



**FAROUK YASSINE**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
IDMA

It is critical to keep a pulse on employees' mental and physical health, especially after the past two years plus. We all should understand that our teams have lives and other commitments outside of work, and we should welcome that. Our effectiveness is not measured by the percent of time that we are on a project, it's measured by our total impact in the organization: client projects, internal programs, networking, certifications, and lunch and learns. These metrics are used for recognition as well as promotions.

Another interesting metric is what consultants call time on the bench, or time that is not spent working on billable client projects. Recent research from McKinsey, tracking this metric quarterly, indicates it hovers in the five percent range. McKinsey also recommended that by tracking this metric, at least quarterly, organizations are able to confirm who might be over-tasked and who has an opportunity between projects to grow in their roles. Data leaders shouldn't look at non-billable work as downtime, but really time that teams can use to deepen their data training and take their own careers up a notch.

Data doesn't stand still, and neither do generations. Today's aspiring data leaders want to feel valued, and to add something of meaning to the world and their company. In my experience with older generations, they've been more heads-down in their attitude about work. These days I think people are more internally motivated and we may not have the external drivers and motivators that other generations do, and we need to take this into account in our employee retention programs.

All of these factors – culture, demographics, generation, continuous learning – play a role in creating a thriving data culture. It's up to us as data leaders to use whatever is at our disposal to show how they can come together and create a place where colleagues not only want to stay but recruit by the example of their happiness and engagement.

I hope you consider IDMA your partner in training and continuing education for your data teams.

*Farouk Yassine*



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**By Neil Richards**

*BI Lead, JLL*

## Moving beyond Data Literacy and Data Fluency

Where do you stand on data literacy versus data fluency? And is it a debate worth having? Or should we focus on building confidence in data skills?

Although I used the term data literacy before coming to my current company, it was interesting to see that JLL uses the term data fluency. I completely understand why, since data fluency may be considered a little less intimidating than literacy, and those who haven't completed data literacy training are unlikely to enjoy calling themselves data illiterate. But are the two terms in fact matters of degree?

You could argue that data literacy represents a working understanding of the techniques, terms and concepts of data, while data fluency defines the ability to turn data into stories. Here's an example through the lens of language itself.

### **Sprechen Sie Data?**

To make the argument for data literacy in the past, I tended to think of data not as a first language but as a second one. When I was in school I enjoyed learning German very much. Of course, I grew up in the UK, so I was only taught to a level of what I would call literacy. If you were to ask me, "Were you fluent in German?" I would say, "No, of course not." I had skills in German, but I was far from fluent. If I wanted to get better in German, I would have no hesitation in taking a course called German Literacy, German Fluency or German Skills. I think of that analogy in terms of data as well, and it's why I'm a big advocate for using the term "data skills." This is my personal opinion, but I think data skills have a wider remit.

## AI AND DATA ETHICS: WHAT A DATA LEADER NEEDS TO KNOW

BY RAFAEL ALVARADO  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, SCHOOL OF DATA SCIENCE, UVA

Organizations of all types are trying to make sense of AI and what it means for them. I put its potential on the order of the discovery of electricity and believe it is too soon to assess its long-term impact, even if some business analysts call it overhyped today. However, the impacts of AI may not be obvious since AI is being misrepresented and misperceived, as computational innovations always have, dating back to the 1950s. GenAI based on large language models (LLMs) is unlikely to meet science fiction-tinged expectations that it will accomplish any intellectual task we give it, but is likely to have significant impact where its effects are less visible and less widely perceived.

One area to pay attention to is the effect AI will have on replacing work currently performed by cognitive professionals, such as those in medicine, law, engineering, etc. The effect here will be twofold – the disruption of labor and the impact of recipients of the services provided by these professions. This is why the ethics of AI is a subject that we can't overlook.

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## THE VALUE OF DIVERSITY IN DATA ORGANIZATIONS

BY PAUL CHAPMAN  
GLOBAL DIRECTOR OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT, BI AND INNOVATION, JLL

Why have a more diverse data organization in your company? As I've witnessed while spinning up a large global team of about 130 people over the past year, variety and diversity are key to an evolving organization.

The more diversity, the more ideas. The topline benefits of a more diverse culture for me are clear:

- Stronger data models. Just as someone with a liberal arts background has a different approach to data than someone with a scientific one, people who hail from different cultural, racial and gender backgrounds look at modeling differently. [Recent research](#) demonstrates that women and men have different viewing patterns when looking at the same imagery, so having different contributors share their perspectives has made our team more open-minded about considering different visualizations.

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## HOW CAREER SPONSORS CAN BUILD THE NEXT GENERATION OF DATA LEADERS

BY MIMI LI  
GLOBAL HEAD OF ANALYTICS & INSIGHTS, STRIPE

Mentorship and sponsorship are both highly valuable ways to cultivate leaders, but career sponsorship remains less discussed and understood despite the significant impact it can have on career progression. I've been lucky enough to benefit from both throughout my career.

Mentors taught me everything from the ins and outs of pricing strategy to how to write concisely for impact, because no pricing theory or business writing class can prepare you for the reality of the workplace quite like a mentor with a few years of experience on you. Sponsors allowed me to observe close-up how things worked at higher levels, provided me access to opportunities and advocated for me in rooms I couldn't yet access. In many ways, while mentorship is critical to early career progression, sponsorship is more vital to fostering long term career progression into leadership.

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# Is your data culture a catalyst to drive better business outcomes?

Discover where you are on your journey to becoming data-guided and how you compare to industry peers through our Insurance Industry Benchmark Report.

## Take the Insurance Data Culture Scorecard

Complete the scorecard to get the Insurance Data Culture Benchmark Report.



Using the CLEAR™ approach to building a data-guided culture, this scorecard highlights the strengths of your data culture and where to focus your actions to gain further improvement.

### How CLEAR™ is your data culture?



#### Communicate

Changing the culture takes continuous communication of the right message, at the right time, to the right people, in the right way.



#### Lead

Establish the foundation, cultivate a strong network, magnify your influence, and champion the data vision.



#### Educate

A genuine learning organization provides diverse avenues for teams to interact, ensuring they comprehend their crucial role in maintaining data's trustworthiness.



#### Act

Acknowledge the range of contributions from the diverse approaches and recognize their value, empowering your teams and propelling your data culture.



#### Relate

Foster a data community with business colleagues and find innovative ways of working together to achieve shared results.



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# AND THE WINNER IS...

CONGRATS TO THE A  
OCTOBER 2023  
TRIVIA WINNER!

**Randi Rejelon**  
Farmers Insurance  
Group

## ANSWER TO OCTOBER 2023 TRIVIA

**Frank Crowell, one of the IDMA founding members, was the first IDMA president in 1983.**

INSURANCE DATA MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION  
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## TRIVIA

### NOVEMBER 2023 TRIVIA / WIN \$25

Take one full cup of coffee a drink  $\frac{1}{6}$  of it. Replace what you drank with milk. Now, drink  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the coffee/milk mixture. Again, replace what you drank with more milk. Now, drink  $\frac{1}{2}$  of what is in the cup. Once again, replace what you drank with milk. Now drink the entire cup of mixed coffee/milk.

The questions are:

1. Have you had more milk or more coffee?
2. How much of each have you had?

Submit your answer to [team@idma.org](mailto:team@idma.org).

**A \$25 Amazon.com gift card prize will be awarded to the randomly-drawn person among the first five who solve the question correctly. You may only guess one time. The correct answer and winner's name will be published in next newsletter issue – December 2023 issue.**

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Everybody's ready for AI except your data.

GET READY

Where data & AI come to



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

PARTNER EVENTS

January 30 - February 1, 2024, Boca Raton, FL - Data Now Program 2024

Registration Open



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