feature

The Efficiency Equation:

Assessing Your Data Governance for Improved Workflow Performance

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As we transition into the digital era, the management of data becomes paramount. In the environmental industry, discussions regarding data governance frequently revolve around the challenges of implementing databases and workflows. However, what receives less attention is the necessity for a comprehensive approach to achieve optimal efficiency and seamlessness in workflows, engaging all stakeholders.

Disconnections occur when consultants dictate solutions based solely on their processes, while industry clients dictate data management methods, which may not always align with the outcomes required in environmental data management. Fortunately, an alternative exists. Sure, a large, customized-to-your-business solution might seem like a quick fix, but it's not a cure-all for all your data management problems. What your business needs is the right tool with the right architecture to seamlessly integrate with existing systems, providing a comprehensive solution.

Think of data governance like building a house. It requires careful planning and execution, just like assembling a team of experts for construction. It's all about finding the right partners, asking the right questions, and ensuring the integrity of the entire process. When you're looking for a data management solution, it's not just about the price tag. You also need to consider factors like data structure, customer service, and security. But more importantly, usability.

We've seen examples in the procurement process where 'big data' with their overly customized solution, often come out on top. But sometimes, the victory is short-lived when the solution doesn't properly fit business needs. Strict contractual obligations can tie you to continuous spending without getting the timely implementation you need. It's like holding a ticket for the Titanic and deciding to stick with a sinking ship. It's time to rethink our processes, allowing the users to be brought to the decision-making table is a step in the right direction.

Usability leads to talent retention. Just as you invest in your software solutions, investing in your skilled personnel are part of this equation. Involving them in implementation and training processes allow them to take ownership and be engaged for business success.

So, instead of trying to reinvent the wheel with a large custom solution, break down your process into smaller parts and seek help from experts in each area. Talk to lab service providers, data management consultants, user employees, and others individually to find the best standardized solution for your needs. Then create the workflow and management process, even if it means implementing a standardized system into your current structure to optimize data governance.

When evaluating solutions:

1. **Lab service provider preferences:** Ask about the lab service providers' preferred system and assess its compatibility with your existing infrastructure, especially regarding LIMS integration and data delivery.
2. **Expertise of software provider:** Investigate the credentials and experience of consultants in handling environmental data. Ensure they possess practical experience in the sector and understand the nuances of environmental data structures. Bigger doesn't always translate to better.

3. **Implementation assurance:** Make sure the vendor ensures completion of implementation and timely delivery of the finished product or service. If your implementation is not effectively being delivered don't wait until a crisis erupts.
4. **Quality over convenience:** Don't fall for the temptation of one-stop-shop solutions and assess each component's quality independently. Consider if the solution aligns with your specific needs rather than opting for convenience. Recognize Environmental Data Management Systems (EDMS) specialization when seeking expertise in data management and governance, which is essential in the digital age, a good EDMS can complement existing systems effectively and improve efficiency.
5. **Flashiness vs. functionality:** Ensure that the solution integrates seamlessly with your current systems and provides the necessary functionalities, particularly within niche environmental sectors. Prioritize functionality over aesthetics. Evaluate if the solution meets the fundamental requirements for effective data architecture and management.
6. **Collaboration and support:** Assess the availability and quality of customer service and support, considering the importance of human connection, especially in the current digital landscape. Emphasize the importance of listening to users and tailoring solutions to their specific needs for successful collaboration.
7. **Trust and reliability:** Prioritize established specialists with a track record of reliability and client satisfaction. Inquire about the security audits and accreditations undergone by the supplier, particularly regarding data storage and hosting security.
8. **Evolution and adaptability:** Evaluate how the company has evolved its processes and user experience based on direct user feedback, ensuring continual improvement and adaptability.

By carefully considering these factors and having open discussions, businesses can make informed decisions and implement data governance solutions that best fit their workflow processes and requirements.

As environmental specialists, we're all about thorough testing for accuracy. But to really shine, we need to focus on getting our data management processes spot-on. By encouraging open communication and striving for better implementation, we not only maintain our integrity but also raise the bar for excellence.

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