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As we endeavor to make fact-based decisions informed by the data that is Visible, information that is Accessible and understandable, and knowledge linked in context to evolve wisdom, we must assess the degree of Trust we have in the constituent pieces and parts, as well as the process by which they are matured. Thus, it is imperative that we first ask ourselves, do we have the right Question and the correct Data, which is at the core of the issue and the overriding foundation of data operations.

All too often, we spend an inordinate amount of time trying to answer the question at hand to solve the problem we believe is impacting us. However, it soon becomes apparent that not only are we looking at the manifestation of the issues as we endeavor to fix them, but we also realize more quickly that we don't even have the correct data to address the issues before us. Thus, it is imperative that we understand the pedigree and the heritage of the data before we establish a reliance upon in an effort to make informed decisions.

➤ *What is the veracity of DATA and what is the quality of it?*

➤ *Where is the INFORMATION and how do I get access to it?*

➤ *When is the application of KNOWLEDGE affect our desired end states?*

Today's myopic focus on efficiency precludes a full awareness of the effects, which, in turn, prevents adding value to the organization. This penny-wise, pound-foolish approach is counterproductive, as it devalues efforts underway and precludes harnessing the inherent power of information. Thus, it is imperative that we begin with the end in mind through an iterative process to ensure our efforts are focused on producing value. To that end I would suggest a four-step process:

> ➢ *Identify what Problem you are solving for*

> ➢ *Illustrate the Process that you are using*

> ➢ *Innumerate the Potential you intend to actualize*

> ➢ *Initiate the Proposals that harvest value for the organization*

Today, many are endeavoring to learn for the sake of learning, lacking the quintessential focus necessary to structure their efforts to achieve effective contextual understanding. Embarking upon a journey of exploration requires a well-formulated thesis proposal that serves to scope the purpose of one's objectives. Thus, it is essential to have a well-defined question that guides the engagement in service to the fulfillment of the organization's goals. Therefore, I would suggest a simple approach to actualize the inherent value resident in our data:

> ➢ *Access the pedigree from WHERE our data is derived . . .*
> *done through prescriptive modeling*

> ➢ *Characterize the relationships of WHAT it depends . . .*
> *done through predictive modeling*

> ➢ *Enlighten the context as to WHEN its developed . . .*
> *done through potential modeling*

We cannot presuppose having all the data, or even surmise the quality of the data available to us. Still, we must be cognizant of what we know, approach the unknown with an open mind, and be aware of the potential of the unknowable. This journey offers the opportunity to learn by consistently applying measures that increase data veracity through validation, resulting in a better understanding of its application dependencies. Throughout its maturation process, we have the opportunity to apply it in ways that inform the essential knowledge needed to make wise decisions.