# Navigating the Labyrinth

An Executive Guide to Data Management

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**For DAMA International**

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*To meditate is to sail a course, to navigate, among problems many of which we are in the process of clearing up. After each one looms another, whose shores are even more attractive, more suggestive. Certainly, it requires strength and perseverance to get to windward of problems, but there is no greater delight than to reach new shores, and even to sail, as Camoëns says, "through seas that keel has never cut before."*

— José Ortega y Gasset, *Man and People*

# Foreword

Data management professionals have long struggled to balance their work with sharing *why* data is so important, assisting with the culture change needed to bring data to the forefront, and finally soliciting leadership commitment to improvement. This balancing act is even more important today as the sheer volume, variety, and velocity of data increases exponentially.

As good data people, we turn to books to help us. More specifically, we turn to the DAMA-DMBOK2. The tome of 600-odd pages is a mammoth read and often dives deep into important data management concepts. Great for building your data management framework, but pretty unrealistic when trying to get the point across to the boss.

We need something between the proverbial elevator pitch and the DAMA-DMBOK2. Something that simply and pragmatically enables leadership to understand the importance of effective data management – not only for the success of the organization, but also for their own personal success. Something that doesn't weigh more than a small child, is small enough to be carried around in a laptop bag and provides the executive précis (the cliff notes) of data management.

And this is what Laura has so aptly managed to create in *Navigating the Labyrinth*. It's a pocket edition of the DAMA-DMBOK2, something that every data management professional should get two copies of – one for themselves and one for their manager (or, better yet, for the executive most likely to understand data as opportunity). This book will become their go-to reference and their lifeline. It will become dog-eared from use, notes will appear in the margins, and peers will all look longingly at it and wish for their own copy.

DAMA International is incredibly proud of the DAMA-DMBOK2. Many years of work and well over 100 people have put huge effort into creating what we believe is "the" framework for data management. Now *Navigating the Labyrinth* is poised to break that executive barrier and deliver data management where it belongs – right up there with all the other business imperatives.

On a personal level, I am proud of the DAMA-DMBOK2, but I am even more proud of this lightweight yet incredibly valuable addition to the DAMA fold. I believe that for each person who buys and reads the DMBOK2, it's very likely that three to four or more will buy and read *Navigating the Labyrinth*. Thank you, Laura.

Sue Geuens
President, DAMA International

# Introduction

You've sensed it, you've read it, you've seen it. Reliable, well-managed data is critical to organizational success in the twenty-first century. Whatever sector you work in – financial services, health care, insurance, manufacturing, technology, retail, education, and beyond – your organization requires data to transact business and serve customers. This data not only fuels your business processes; it also provides you the business intelligence needed to measure organizational success. As importantly, the data your organization produces can be mined for insights about current operations—insights you can apply to improve your processes and advance your organization's strategy.

But reliable data is not produced by accident. In today's complex world, well-managed data depends on planning and design, governance of business and technical processes, and the commitment of your organization to high-quality results. It also means ensuring that information about customers, products, and business operations is kept safe and secure, so that it cannot be used for criminal or malicious purposes.

Reliable data depends on successful execution of the functions and activities that comprise the field of data management. These are described in detail in DAMA International's *Data Management Body of Knowledge* (known as the *DMBOK2*). Understanding the breadth and depth of functions that make up data management can be daunting. At first glance, they can appear quite complicated (see Figure 1).

*Navigating the Labyrinth: An Executive Guide to Data Management* gives you a perspective that reduces this complexity. Based on the *DMBOK2*, it provides a high-level overview of how data should be managed to support organizational success. It also explains what can get in the way

of this success. Understanding the principles and best practices for data management will help you identify and act on your organization's opportunities to get more value from its data.

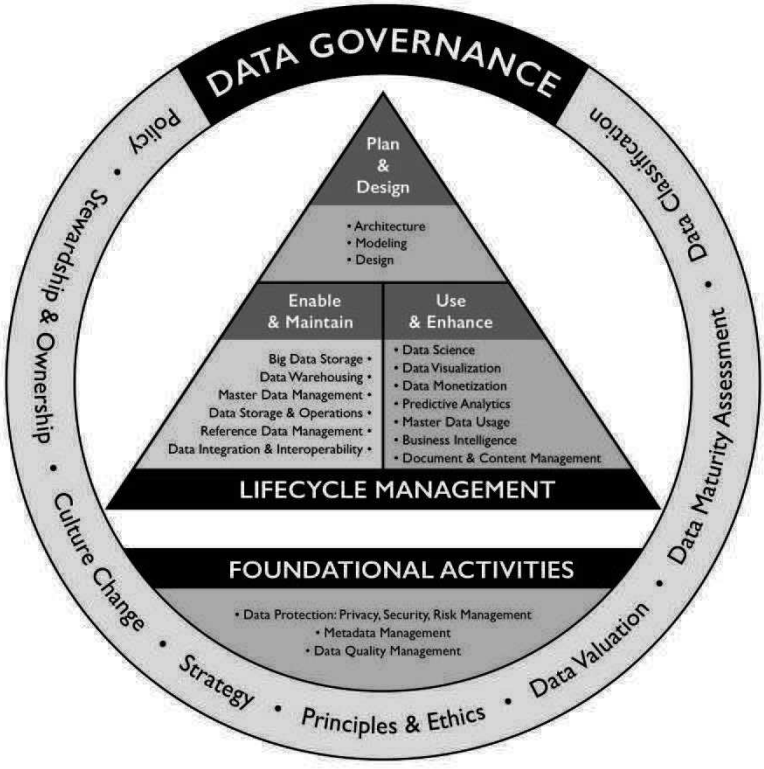


**Figure 1: Data Management Functions (DMBOK2, p. 44)**

The first four chapters provide an overview of data management:

- **Chapter 1: The Importance of Managing Data** – Explains what data management is, and how managing data as an asset can help your organization.
- **Chapter 2: Data Management Challenges** – Outlines why managing data differs from managing other assets and resources.