

Grappling with the Challenges of Big Data



Over the past ten years, the flood of data that corporations have had to deal with makes a hurricane look like a spring shower. During this period, we have seen global Internet traffic grow from 8.6 million Gigabytes of data to 1 billion Gigabytes. We send 183 billion emails every day and search Google 4 million times *every minute*. We're transmitting, exchanging and integrating big data 24/7 and the challenge continues to grow.

Now bring on the *Internet of Things* (IoT), connectivity of devices and systems that go beyond machine-to-machine communications and cover a vast array of protocols, domains, and applications. It's estimated that more than 30 billion devices will be wirelessly connected to the Internet of Things by 2020...*big data extraordinaire!*

Big data is a game changer for every business, even more so for those focused on the Affordable Care Act's direct-to-consumer markets. The ability to gather, store, analyze and interpret big data is now table stakes...where to put it, what to do with it and how to turn it into value. Ingesting big data, structuring information and creating actionable insights to inform strategy and drive in-market tactics is a huge differentiator in today's intensely competitive healthcare and insurance landscape.

For many, big data is a big mystery. A majority of companies across all industry verticals are struggling to know how to get value from their data. The volume of data is so large it's now measured in Zettabytes, or one sextillion bytes. Most of the information created and used by an enterprise is categorized as unstructured data, and at the C-Suite, many feel underprepared to deal with the big data explosion.

Healthcare is a prime example. It's a sector rapidly expanding to more sophisticated "connected health delivery platforms" that leverage mobile, wearable, social and cloud technologies to unite fragmented health systems and add intelligence as to how health information is accessed and shared. The "dataization" of healthcare is upon us – 84% hospitals and 51% office-based MD practices using fully functional Electronic Health Records.

Consumers are demanding access to comparative, accurate data for cost, quality, and satisfaction measures for insurers, doctors and hospitals. For payers, elimination of pre-existing condition exclusions, tight pricing parameters and millions of previously uninsured high-risk new customers have actuaries working overtime to re-engineer data-driven risk management tools. For providers, post health reform means figuring out how to use data to optimize public payment levels and rethink population management tactics as millions of ailing patients with shiny new health insurance ID cards show up for services.

Realizing big data's value, while navigating the maze of data security and privacy challenges, is no easy task. Healthcare and insurance organizations, like most business disciplines, need an enterprise data strategy and sequenced action plan. Tackling big data is often put in the context of the "Four Vs" –

- **Volume** – ingesting vast amounts of data generated inside and outside the organization.
- **Velocity** – managing speed at which data is produced and flows across business functions.
- **Veracity** – determining trustworthiness of data being handled and processed.
- **Variety** – juggling different types of data being generated, communicated, and distributed.

Managing big data creates a better understanding of customer segments. It helps construct a complete snapshot or "unified view of the customer" to help attract, acquire and retain the best customers for your business. It also enables sophisticated approaches to product development, marketing and sales by linking data to core business strategies and in-market tactics. *The ROI of business solutions that incorporate data-driven predictive business analytics can approach 250%.*

For many, the conundrum is how to integrate and manage data to realize yet another "V"... Value.

Here's one way to look at it — **R.A.R.E.**

Relevance...Is data directly related to understanding your customers in a way that will help you acquire and retain the best customers?

Actionability...Can the business do what needs to be done? Is data informing decisions that are tied to core strategies and tactics? If not, move on to the things that can get done.

ROI...Will in-market data-driven activities deliver a positive ROI? A lot can be done to influence customer behavior the key is discipline to focus on what improves the bottom-line.

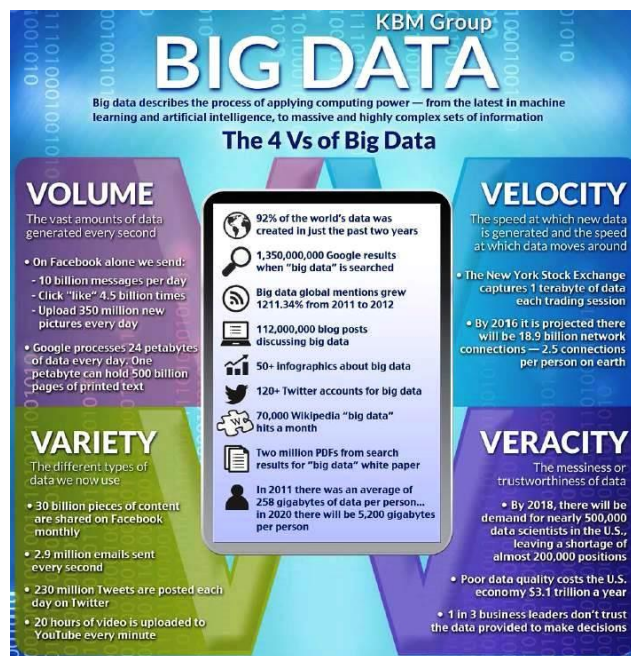
Engagement...Are the types of engagement strategies and tactics realistic in terms of the organization's ability to deliver resources, timing, and capabilities?

All too often, the customer lifecycle is viewed as a series of disconnected events or actions, generated from fragmented organizational silos. Integrating data from across a healthcare or insurance enterprise enables a multi-functional approach to communication that fosters a more personalized, lower-cost/higher-yield customer relationship. Achieve synchronized 360° engagement and big data doesn't have to be as RARE as you think!

A practical, integrated approach to big data enhances a company's ability to influence customer behavior. With enriched data-driven insights—core demographics, purchasing habits, lifestyle or life stage attributes, and attitudinal or behavioral indicators—you create tighter, better orchestrated customer engagement by knowing where they go, what's important to them, who's at risk of leaving, who they're talking to...and what they're saying.

A well-orchestrated big data enterprise strategy enables cross-functional approach to customer engagement. The result is more personalized lower-cost customer relationship that improves bottom-line performance and optimizes customer LifeTime Value.

This **Infographic** will help put the challenges of big data in context as you put the strategies, tools and technologies in place to make data work for you.



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