2024

Data Services
Buyer's Guide

bluemargin

Data expertise that increases profit
for mid-market industrials and
services companies

Getting Started

According to Salesforce, *"94% of business leaders feel their organization should be getting more value out of it's data."* At Blue Margin, we are committed to helping companies unlock this potential, transforming data from a byproduct of operations into a strategic asset that drives decision-making and growth.

Our proven approach, *backed by over a decade of experience and hundreds of successful implementations*, is designed specifically for mid-market companies. We understand that each organization has unique challenges and opportunities, which is why our solutions are tailored to meet the specific needs of our clients. As a Microsoft Partner, we bring unparalleled expertise in the Microsoft data stack, ensuring our clients benefit from the most advanced, scalable, and secure data solutions available.

Purpose of the Guide

This guide assists potential clients in selecting a data management partner, providing insights and steps for making an informed choice.

Target Audience

Designed for Private Equity firms and mid-market companies seeking to leverage data for operational efficiency and business growth.

This Buyer's Guide is designed to help you navigate the complexities of selecting a data management partner. Inside, you will find detailed information about the benefits of properly managed data, the implementation process, and real-world examples of how our solutions have driven significant improvements for our clients.

Whether you are just beginning to explore data transformation or are looking to optimize your current strategies, this guide provides the knowledge and tools you need to make informed decisions and achieve your business goals.

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Chapter 1: Data Management Terms Explained

Efficient data management is essential in today's business environment. For example, according to McKinsey & Company, "Companies that leverage customer behavior insights **outperform peers by 85% in sales growth and more than 25% in gross margin.**" Transforming data into strategic assets involves these key steps:

Data Collection
Definition: The process of gathering data from various sources.
Tools: Data pipeline tools like Azure Data Factory, SQL Server Integration Services (SSIS) and Python scripts are used to automate and streamline data collection processes.

Data Storage
Definition: The method of saving data in a secure and organized for easy retrieval and analysis.
Tools: Services like Azure Data Lake Storage provide scalable and secure storage solutions.

Data Integration
Definition: Combining data from different sources to provide a unified view.
Tools: Platforms such as Microsoft Synapse and Fabric provide the tools to allow reporting across disparate data sources

Data Quality Management
Definition: Ensuring that data is accurate, complete, and consistent.
Tools: DQS (data quality services) and well-designed data extraction and transformation pipelines perform data cleansing and validation processes to maintain high quality data.

Data Governance
Definition: Establishing policies and procedures to ensure the proper management and usage of data.
Practices: Data governance frameworks, defining ownership, and compliance with regulations.

Data Security
Definition: Protecting data from unauthorized access and breaches.
Tools: A robust cyber security framework including encryption, access controls, regular security audits, backups, and disaster recovery tools and plans.

Data Analytics
Definition: Analyzing data to extract meaningful insights and support decision-making.
Tools: Power BI and Tableau enable advanced data analytics and visualization.

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Chapter 2: Benefits of Effective Data Management

Effective data management provides multiple advantages that propel business success. Forrester research has found that "***businesses that rely on data management tools to make decisions are 58% more likely to beat their revenue goals*** than non-data-driven companies." The advantages of a good data system collectively provide a competitive edge, enabling businesses to leverage data as a strategic asset for growth and innovation.

Improved Decision-Making

Effective data management ensures that data is accurate, reliable, and readily available, enabling informed decision-making. With real-time access to insights and enhanced analytics, organizations can quickly identify trends and make strategic decisions that drive success.

Increased Efficiency

Streamlined data processes reduce manual effort and errors, boosting operational efficiency. By automating workflows and centralizing data, organizations improve collaboration and accelerate operations, allowing resources to be focused on strategic initiatives.

Enhanced Data Security

Robust security measures protect sensitive data from breaches and unauthorized access. Encryption and access controls ensure data is only accessible to authorized users, while regular audits identify and mitigate vulnerabilities. These measures help businesses maintain trust, avoid costly breaches, and safeguard their reputation.

Cost Savings

Reduce costs related to storage, retrieval, and processing. By optimizing storage solutions, automating routine tasks, and minimizing data duplication and errors, businesses can significantly cut expenses. These savings can then be reinvested into other areas, fueling further growth and innovation.

Competitive Advantage

Gain a competitive edge by providing strategic insights and driving innovation. Analyzing market trends and customer behavior identifies opportunities, while data-driven insights fuel product development. This agility allows businesses to quickly adapt to market changes, stay ahead of competitors, and continuously innovate.

One of our clients benefitted from a…

10% production increase

due to effectively managed data.

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Chapter 3: What to Expect from a Data Partner

Initial Consultation

Objective: Understand your data needs.
- Kickoff Meeting: Introduce their team, outline the process, and set expectations.
- Needs Assessment: Identify your data challenges, goals, and opportunities.
- Stakeholder Interviews: Engage key stakeholders to understand how they use data and their desired outcomes.

Data Environment Assessment

Objective: Evaluate your current data infrastructure.
- Data Inventory: Catalog all data sources and systems.
- Data Quality Analysis: Evaluate data accuracy and consistency.
- Infrastructure Review: Assess performance, scalability, and security.

Proposal and Alignment

Objective: Align their solutions with your goals
- Customized Proposal: You should receive recommended solutions, project timeline, and pricing.
- Solution Design: In should include a detailed design of the proposed data architecture.
- Alignment Meeting: Review the proposal, gather feedback, and ensure alignment.

Onboarding and Setup

Objective: Ensure a smooth transition and implementation.
- Project Plan: Develop a comprehensive onboarding plan.
- Data Migration: Build pipelines and copy data into the new environment.
- System Configuration: Set up the new data platform, including integration workflows, security protocols, backup processes, and disaster recovery configuration.

Training and Support

Objective: Equip your team with the knowledge and tools they need.
- Training Sessions: Conduct training for administrators, analysts, and end-users.
- Ongoing Support: Offer continuous support through dedicated account managers and helpdesk services.

Monitoring and Optimization

Objective: Maintain and enhance the data platform for long-term success.
- Performance Monitoring: Regularly monitor platform performance.
- Feedback Loop: Gather input on performance and areas for implementing improvement.

Chapter 4: Selecting a Data Partner

According to Forbes, "*those that position their organizations to manage data correctly and understand its inherent value will have the advantage*." In order to move beyond the status quo, you need a quality team. Technical expertise is just the starting point, the ideal data partner will collaborate closely with your team to deeply understand your unique challenges and goals, delivering tailored solutions that seamlessly align with your strategic objectives.

Expertise and Experience
Look for a strong track record of successful data management implementations. Verify their experience through case studies, client testimonials and direct client referrals.

Proven Process
Check in to make sure they have a proven process so they can guide you on your journey effectively.

Comprehensive Service Offerings
Be sure they provide end-to-end data management services and can tailor solutions to your specific needs.

Technological Proficiency
Evaluate the vendor's proficiency with the up-to-date tools and their ability to scale their solutions with your business growth.

Data Security and Compliance
Assess their data security measures and their knowledge of industry regulations to ensure compliance and protect your data.

Support and Training
Prioritize ongoing support and comprehensive training programs to help your team effectively use and maintain the data system.
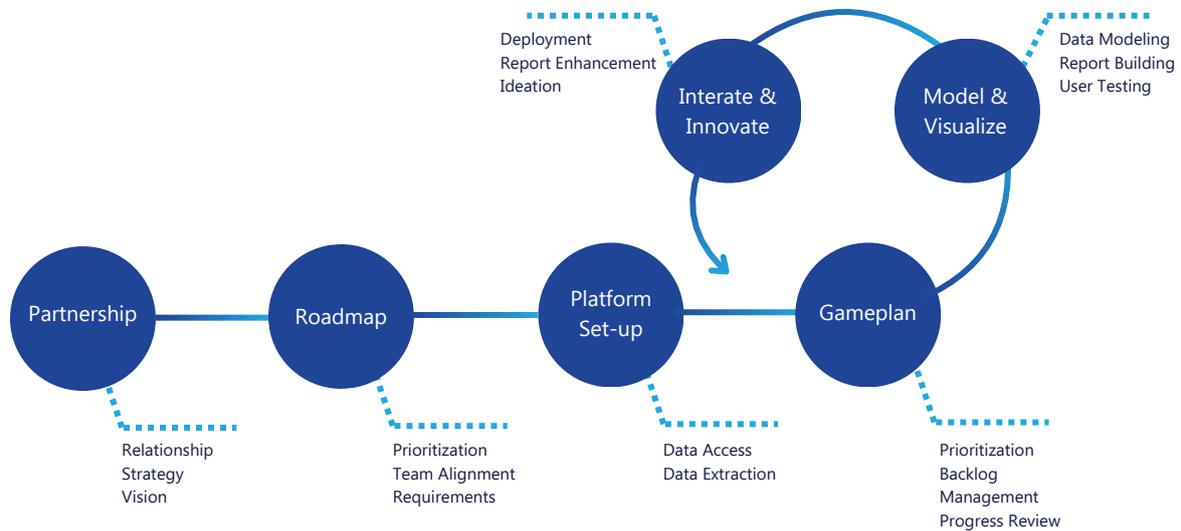
Client-Centric Approach
Pay attention to ensure the team prioritizes customer success and is committed to building long-term partnerships.

Transparency and Communication
Assess whether you think the provider communicates clearly, provides regular updates, and has transparent pricing to avoid hidden fees.

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Why Blue Margin?

Our Proven Process

Deployment
Report Enhancement
Ideation

Data Modeling
Report Building
User Testing

Interate & Innovate

Model & Visualize

Partnership

Roadmap

Platform Set-up

Gameplan

Relationship
Strategy
Vision

Prioritization
Team Alignment
Requirements

Data Access
Data Extraction

Prioritization
Backlog
Management
Progress Review

Our approach begins with a deep understanding of your unique business challenges and strategic goals. We work alongside your team to tailor our solutions, ensuring alignment with your objectives and a focus on driving tangible results. Our partnership goes beyond mere technology deployment; it's about building a lasting relationship based on trust, clear communication, and a commitment to your success. We specialize in rapidly consolidating company data into a data lakehouse—in as little as two weeks—enabling quick access to centralized, reliable data. This positions your business to fully utilize advanced analytics, machine learning, and future AI analytics tools.

Blue Margin's Managed Data Service is a key component of this strategy, providing continuous support and optimization to ensure your data remains a powerful asset that drives faster improvement and higher enterprise value. With over 300 clients served, we pride ourselves on being a nimble, agile team that adapts as your needs evolve, offering real-time collaboration and the flexibility to adjust as priorities shift. Choosing us as your data partner means you're not just selecting a service provider; you're engaging with a team dedicated to enhancing your enterprise value and supporting your long-term growth.

Get started with our fractional data team.

Contact Us ⟶

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Case Studies

Manufacturing Case Study

Client: International Manufacturer
Challenge: The client faced inefficiencies in production processes and high employee turnover.
Solution: A comprehensive data platform was implemented that integrated data from various sources, providing real-time insights into production metrics and employee performance.
Results:
- Increased Production: ***Production increased by 30%***.
- Reduced Turnover: ***Employee turnover decreased by 50%***.

Healthcare Services Case Study

Client: Outpatient Medical Imaging Provider
Challenge: The provider needed to decrease turnaround times and increase physician referrals.
Solution: A tailored analytics solutions was created to track patient flow, imaging turnaround times, and referral patterns.
Results:
- Decreased Turnaround Times: ***Turnaround times for imaging reports were reduced by 25%***.
- Increased Referrals: ***Physician referrals increased by 20%***.

Professional Services Case Study

Client: Marketing Technology Firm
Challenge: The firm struggled with productivity and high levels of unbillable work due to inefficient data management.
Solution: Automated dashboards were developed that provided daily metrics on project performance and resource allocation.
Results:
- Productivity: ***Significant improvement in overall productivity.***
- Reduced Unbillable Work: ***Decreased unbillable work hours by 40%.***

> *"Blue Margin's Managed Data Service has been a huge help in establishing our data lake and allowed us to focus on other important projects while they build reports based on our requirements."*
>
> Dan Welter, Director of IT | Standard Iron & Wire Works

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Additional Resources

We offer a wealth of resources to support your data management
journey. Here are some key resources that can provide further insights
and help you make informed decisions:

Whitepapers and eBooks

- The Dashboard Effect Book
- Guide to Data and Generative Ai
- Dashboard Design to Ensure Adoption

Blog and Articles

- Advantages of a Fractional Data Team in the Mid-Market
- How to Become a Data-Driven Organization
- A Turn-Key Fractional Approach to Data Management
- What to Look for When Hiring a Power BI Consultant

Tools and Worksheets

- ROI Calculator for Data Transformation Projects
- Middle Market Playbook

Podcast Episodes

- How to Fire Your BI Vendor
- The Strategic Edge of Outsourcing Your Data Platform
- Blueprints for Building an Internal BI Team
- 7 Strategies for Effectively Managing Data Teams

Third Party Sources

- Top Trends in Data & Analytics by Gartner
- The Customer Insights Function is Ripe for a Boost by McKinsey
- How to Pick the Right Data Partner for Your Company by Forbes
- State of Data and Analytics by Salesforce
- Redefining Business Success in a Volatile Market by Forbes

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For more information and to access these resources, visit our website at
bluemargin.com.
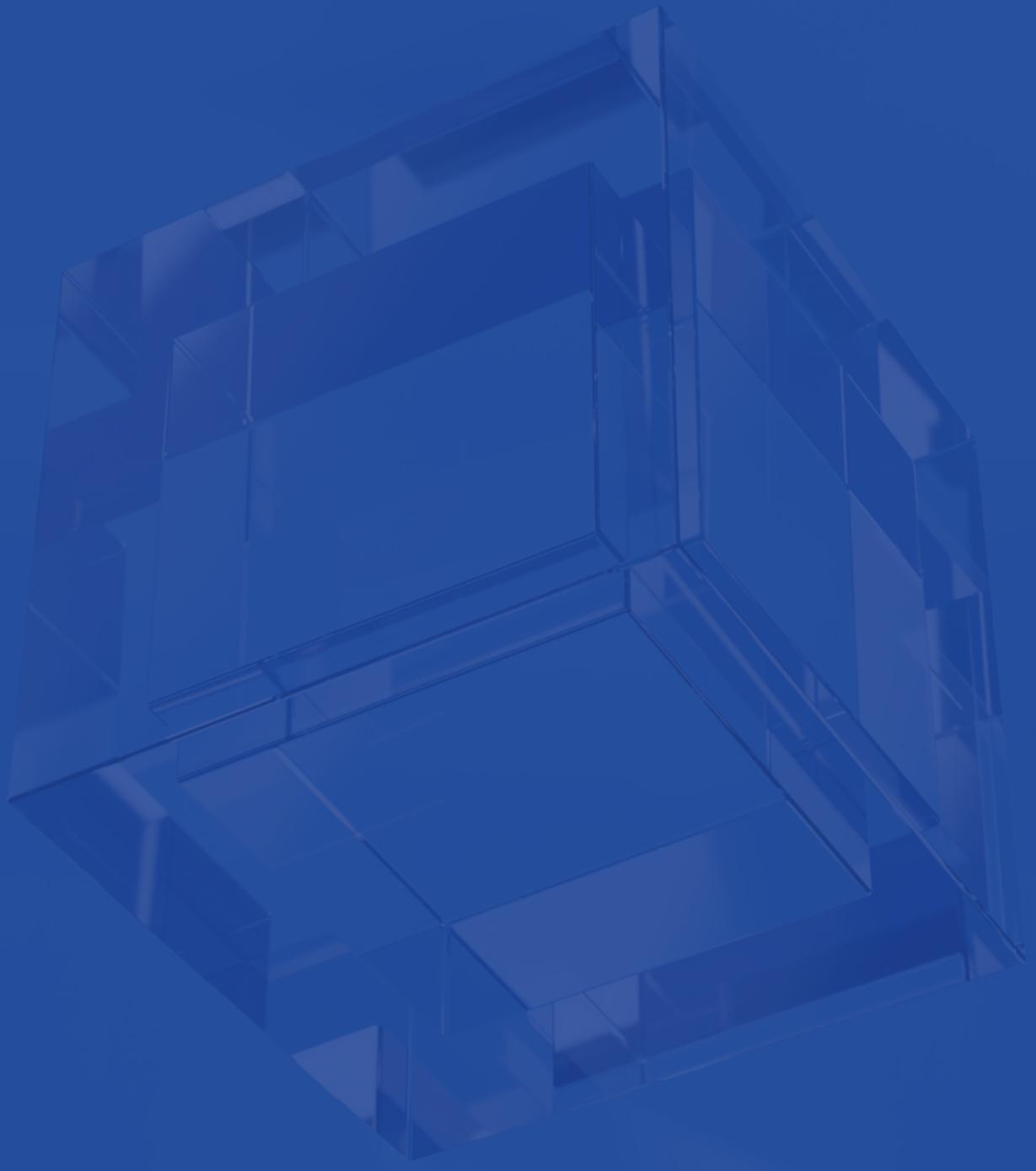
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330 South College Ave
Fort Collins, Colorado
8 am - 5 pm
800.865.6350