Science

Moving from an intuitive mindset to data driven?

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Recently I wrote an article on creating and living a data culture. You can find the first article, which defines what a data culture is? And enlists attributes of such a culture. In the sequel, I focused on those attributes and discussed those pillars of a data culture.

After a couple of days, a connection of mine, Grainne Delaney, reached out to me and said, Chan, it is a great article, even with an art background, I can understand it, but I have a question for you.

How do you go about training those people that have an 'intuitive' mindset, about being more 'data-driven'?

And that question leads me to write this article!

How do you go about training those people that have an 'intuitive' mindset about being more 'data-driven'?

I told her, let me give you my take on this.

Well, it is about asking and, in fact, training them to 'provide data' to support their intuition. Every time they surface their intuition, you should ask them to substantiate it with facts. Otherwise, you can disapprove of their intuition by providing the data that might suggest something different from their intuition.

Then she goes, I don't know where to get data to back up or challenge my intuition…I guess I call you? or Call an expert!

I said the following!

You can get data from competitors, or take from other ppl in your network, or consider even hiring (or asking) an expert.

And then I said,

However, if you still have some doubts, do let me know.

I Would be happy to discuss and elaborate further!

Then she goes

It shows you really listen to your audience!!

Apart from showing my skills, I think she made a few very good points.

First prompting all of us, how we could develop a data culture, which led me to answer that question. And second, think about where you could get the data to support your standing. Third, in pretty much every field, and especially in data science, it is very important to listen well to your audience. Once you do that well, you are already halfway to further solving their problems!

How do you install date culture into your team?

When are you in a similar situation? What is really important is that about how you help? And how would you approach any situation?

What really helps me is the CAR model?

As it's the specific example that will make it more convincing to the reader, I will pick one from my experience. Perhaps it will be something about a result I had, that I used both intuition AND data to reach a more balanced decision. I can follow my nose for many things.

What is really important is *how* you help?

Let me start with an example.

Context: In the early stages of my data science journey, some of my colleagues said we can't apply the agile methodology in data science projects that are different from software development. The challenge was to find some data to support their claim.

Action: I asked them to substantiate their hypothesis with data? There was not much that I could get in the first state?

However, I started asking to follow up questions like

What similarities do you see between data science and software engineering?

What are the differences between the two?

Why do you think you can't leverage agile methodology to benefit from data science?

Have you tried doing it?

After this series of questions, I realized there were more assumptions than facts/ the data. One of the reasons why was simply that the team did not have all the knowledge needed to truly benefit from agile and were equating SCRUM with Agile.

It would often be the case that the team spent more time discussing and getting lost in ideas, with no clear actions or responsibilities coming out of the discussion.

When I brought this with the team, we came up with a plan to do it practically. To cut a long story short, we planned one workshop where we tried applying Agile methodology to solve a few real-life problems.

The goal was to illustrate; if we can apply agile to any problem, it is quite likely that we can apply it for solving data science problems.

Results: Skipping all the details, after the intro to concepts: Agile Framework and Scrum method, we applied this methodology to 3 everyday problems, and in retrospect, we not only found that the team loved the methodology but also started implementing Agile methods into their daily project works.

(Chan How did it benefit them and their work?)

On top of this, many of my team members became curious and started doing formal training and become certified to claim the authority beyond using it into their daily work!

As Grainne said:

In Art, it's often about looking back and seeing work in retrospect, to be able to move forward in new ways!

I think the same is applicable for those of us who are in the data science, we can think about-

Using Data to look forward and backward to help us build a more detailed roadmap for future projects!
There you go, that is an action point for all of you-
The readers to think about this and create a roadmap for your future undertakings!