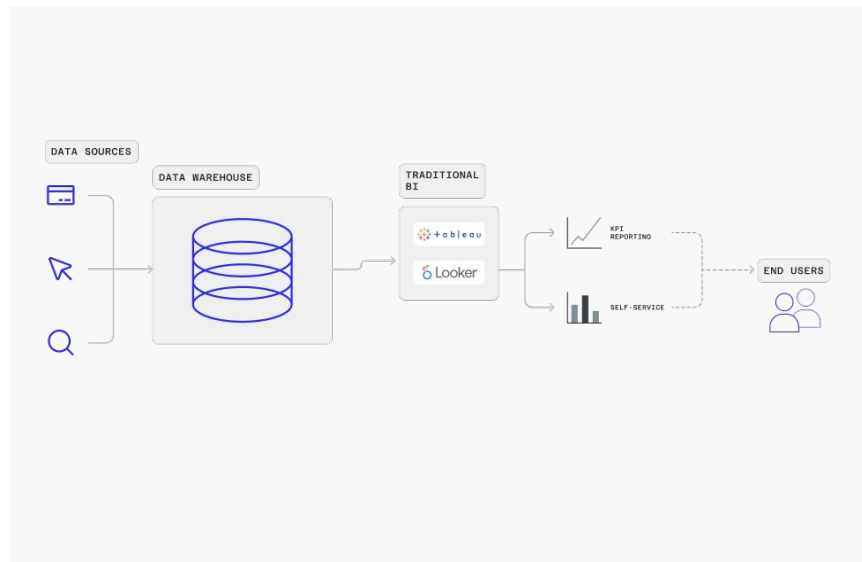# The 4 Tenets of High Impact Data Teams

Who am I?
CEO & Co-founder at count.co
ollie@count.co
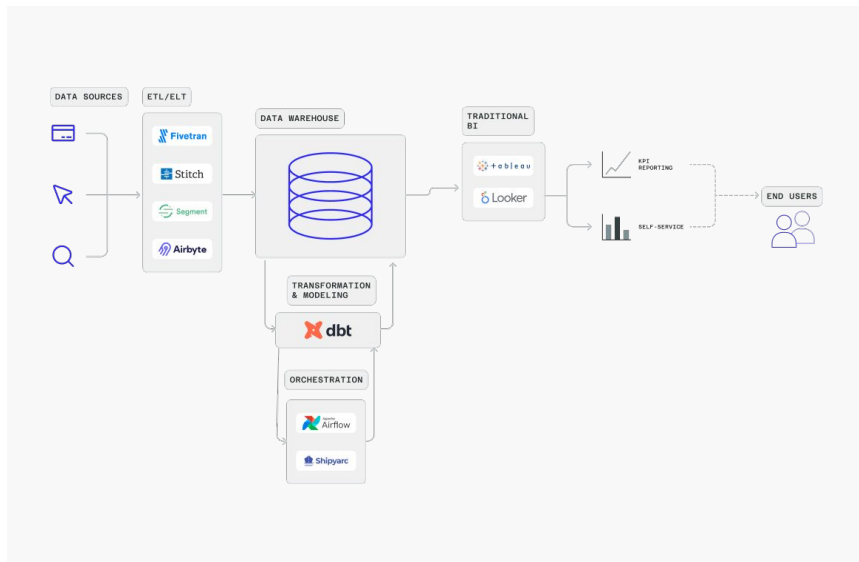
2014

Biggest problems

- Drowning in ad-hoc requests
- Building dashboards no one looks at
- Trying to make self-service possible
- **No one feels like you're directly contributing to company growth**

2025

Biggest problems

- Drowning in ad-hoc requests
- Building dashboards no one looks at
- Trying to make self-service possible
- **No one feels like you're directly contributing to company growth**

We're stuck in
the service trap

The Service Trap

01

Drowning the business with information

The organization has access to more information that it can handle causing confusion, operational bloat and a fragmented understanding.

02

Answering every question the business asks

The business sees the data team as a source of information, creating a service dynamic which under-utilizes the skills of the data team.

03

Minimising time with stakeholders

Data teams set clear boundaries of responsibility between their operation and the rest of the business, creating a transactional relationship.

04

Optimising things the business can't see

The data team spend time on projects with minimal or no ROI.

Signs you're in a service trap

- [ ] Your dashboard:employee ratio is close to 1:1.

- [ ] Your team feels swamped by ad-hoc requests and you feel unable to challenge the business about their value.

- [ ] Your team is spending most of its spare time developing new technical skills

- [ ] Your data team is spending >40% of its time maintaining operational reporting and data quality.

- [ ] Your CEO/Exec team can't list 3 ways your team has directly contributed to growth in the last quarter.

Breaking the cycle

The Service Trap

01	**Drowning the business with information**
02	**Answering every question the business asks**
03	**Minimising time with stakeholders**
04	**Optimising things the business can't see**

→

High-value data teams

?

Methodology

- Spoke to >100 data teams about how they drive value in their organizations

- Identified 4 key tenets that any data team can apply to add tangible bottomline value

Seek operational clarity > Drowning the business with information

- Make the business feel simple

- Create a common operational context and clear business priorities

- Work just as hard to remove information as creating new information

- Map out your business with metric trees, flow charts and funnels
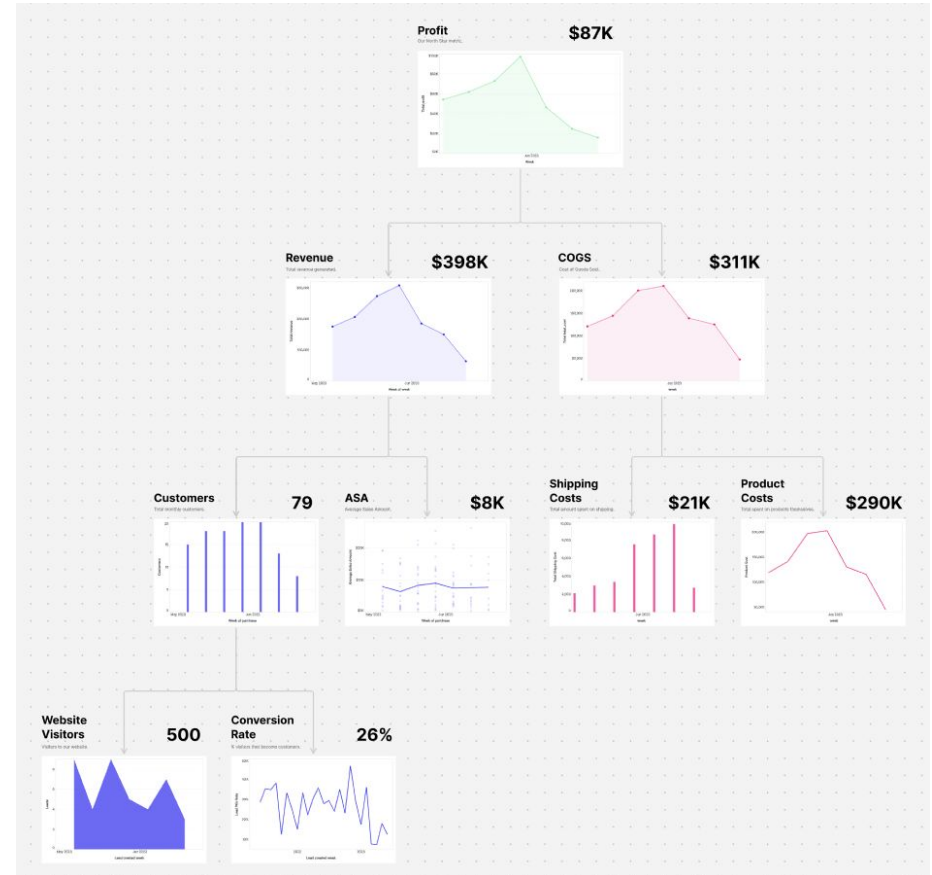
Other examples

Ways we've seen teams deliver operational clarity through technology, processes and people:

Technology	Processes	People
• Creating alert based reporting on core business metrics to trigger only when variation is statistically significant.	• Deprecating all unneeded or outdated data assets in the business on a quarterly basis. • Creating monthly/quarterly overview reports to give gold truth narratives to all key stakeholders. • Implement "Perfect reporting" so each individual has the data they need to do their day-to-day jobs and no more. • Running the OKR process for the company.	• Run regular training for your data team on best practice for concise communication. • Having a named business owner for each operational report in circulation.

Solve business problems > answering every question the business asks

- Work directly with the business to define and solve the biggest challenges that limit growth

- Treating the data team (analysts specifically) as specialist problem-solvers

- Develop a strong sense of domain and business knowledge in the data team

- Develop and value 'soft skills' equally to technical ones

Other examples

Ways we've seen teams deliver problem solving through technology, processes and people:

Technology	Processes	People
• Set up A/B testing frameworks to quickly provide statistically significant results in product and marketing.	• Focus data analyst time on only problems related to quarterly business priorities (OKRs). • Run monthly share-back sessions of analytical projects with data team and wider business to showcase different problem solving techniques.	• Create a progression ladder for data analysts, allowing them to train increasingly in communication, advanced statistical methods and problem solving.

Minimizing time to decision
>
Minimizing time with stakeholders

- Data team takes ownership of decision-making process across the business

- Optimize efficiency of the business over efficiency of the data team

- Work closely with the business to understand the requirements behind their requests instead of just answering them

Other examples

Ways we've seen teams deliver speed to decision through technology, processes and people:

Technology	Processes	People
• Implement a version-controlled data model of the business's core metrics to allow simpler, faster data analysis. • Using an LLM to automatically score leads against a set of criteria.	• Send out board pre-read deck 1 week in advance and ask for questions and feedback so all information is provided ahead of the meeting. • Automating manual processes such as reviewing customer comments data.	• Educating the business about common cognative biases and decision-making frameworks.

Measuring yourself
>
Optimizing things the business can't see

- Data team constantly measures itself to improve its speed, quality and costs

- Be able to quantify the ROI of any project you're working on to avoid over-engineering

- Tracking business outcomes from decisions you've influenced

- Knowing that even imperfect measurement can be helpful to improve culture

Other examples

Ways we've seen teams measure themselves through technology, processes and people:

Technology	Processes	People
• Implement data tools which track usage levels of data assets including hours spent to build and maintain.	• Keep a log of all adhoc request received. • Monthly review of compute costs. • Create a quarterly prioritisation process for all business projects to score effort x impact.	• Creating a daily/weekly pulse report for each team member to estimate time spent by various types of activity.

The Service Trap

01	Drowning the business with information
02	Answering every question the business asks
03	Minimising time with stakeholders
04	Optimising things the business can't see

→

High-value data teams

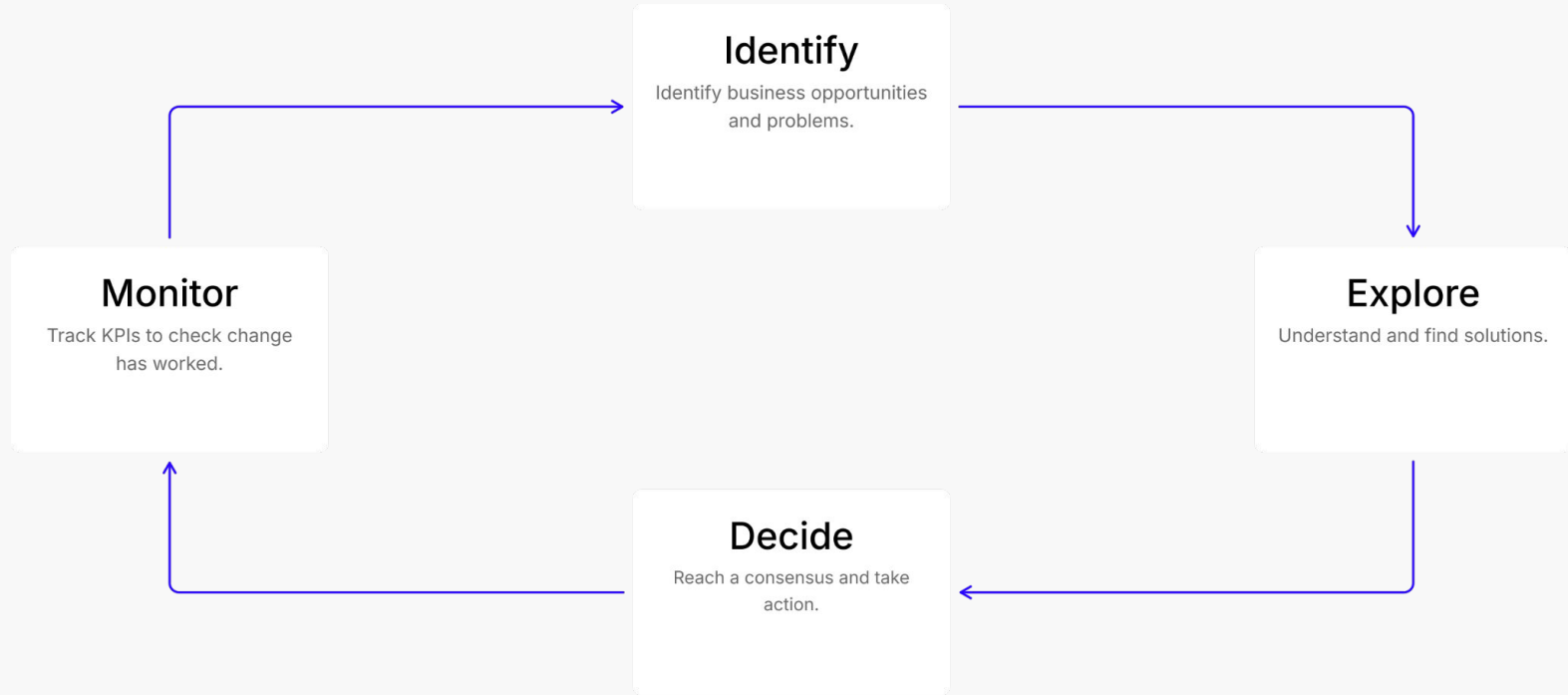|	
01	Seeking operational clarity
02	Solving business problems
03	Minimising time to decision
04	Measuring yourself

Why do the tenet's make sense?

The Improvement Cycle - How data Drives value

Identify
Identify business opportunities and problems.

Explore
Understand and find solutions.

Decide
Reach a consensus and take action.

Monitor
Track KPIs to check change has worked.

BI tools don't help this…

Identify
Poor clarity on business priorities leads to more data requests as business tries to understand itself.

Explore
Lots of un-auditable, un-repeatable "adhoc" analysis stopping data team working on the most important questions.

Monitor
Business swamped with dashboards.

Decide
Slow iteration across multiple tools as business tries to make decisions.

How to get started

How to begin

01   **Start by mapping out a business process**
Create a common understanding of the current status.

02   **Identify the biggest problems in that process**
Make sure your analysts are leading here.

03   **Work with the business to solve the biggest problem**
Make it a shared goal to improve the problem you've identified.

04   **Calculate and share the ROI**
Quantify the ROI of the improvements you've made. Share credit (of course) with your business partners. Share with the business to teach others how to work with you next time.

What is Count? And how does it help?

Count is the first analytics and data modelling platform built
with the tenets of high impact in mind.

Map out metric trees, process flow diagrams with live data or build long-form reports to increase **operation clarity** for any use case.

All the tools analysts need to **solve problems**: python, SQL, low-code and powerful visuals plus screenshots and business assets in a flexible infinite canvas.

Flexible and collaborative by default, giving data teams an agile collaborative workflow which **reduces time to decision** by 50%/

Track user activity, time spent and actions to fully understand how your data team and business uses data.
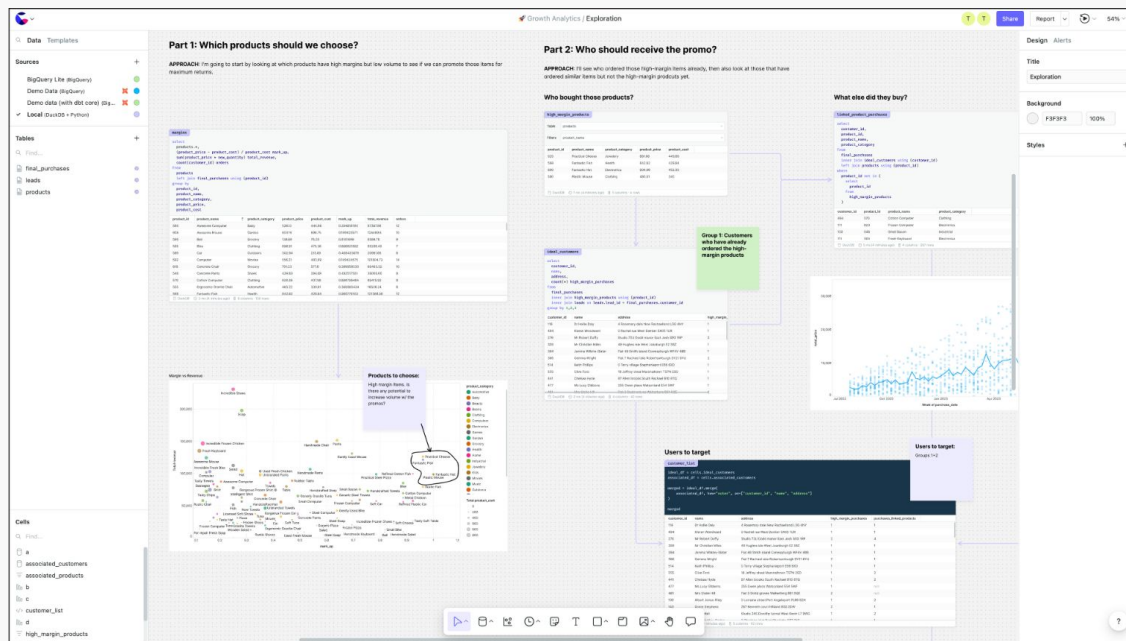
Thanks!

Learn more:
count.co
ollie@count.co