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*Executive Dialogue Luncheon Series 2016*  
Building Data as a Strategic Asset



Back Row (Left to Right): Kai Koberstein, Vodafone Hutchison Australia; Craig Sims, ANZ; Sebastian Gray, NewsCorp; Tom Sawyer, Commvault; Julian Moorhouse, GrainCorp Operations Limited; Mark Murphy, TAL Life; Owen Taraniuk, Commvault; Paul Douraguine, Thomson Reuter; Adam Wardell, Novartis.

Front Row (Left to Right): John Sutherland, Ramsay Healthcare; Tim Hill, Commvault; Pascal Nizri, HSBC; Paul Grundy, Westpac; Paul Ormonde-James, NIB.

## Executive Dialogue Luncheon Series 2016

### Building Data as a Strategic Asset

Earlier this month, 15 of Sydney's leading CIOs, CTOs, and Heads of Technology attended the second installment of OmniChannel Media's Executive Dialogue Series entitled 'Building Data as a Strategic Asset'. The event was hosted by OmniChannel Media in partnership with Commvault.

The forum presented an opportunity for technology leaders to discuss the challenges ahead for information management as the proliferation of data takes a central role in enterprise.

The keynote speaker was Craig Sims, Chief Operating Officer of Enterprise Services at ANZ. Moderated by Matthew Egan, OmniChannel Media's Editorial Director, also on hand to provide some unique insight was Tom Sawyer, Commvault's Australia Sales Director.



Gavin Whyte, TAB



# Introduction

ANZ's Craig Sims began the talk by positioning how data plays out in the world of IT.

He told the group: "The reality is that we are all grappling with the digital agenda... and data is the one thing that is going to unlock that world."

Data was a way to better understand the customer, he said, it was the fuel that drives the digital engine.

"We spend a lot of time working within our company educating everybody that data is a strategic asset," he said.

"It doesn't matter whether you work in a technology data entry role, or a sales force role... if we don't all take the view that data is an asset then we aren't going to get value out of it."

## Data as an Asset

From here the conversation moved quickly into a discussion about the challenges facing organisations as they confront the intricacies of managing data.

The baseline was one of definition. As in, how do data managers transform plain data into a strategic asset?

Data can be used as predictive modeling. But how can data be used to increase relevance to an organisation's customers?

"You want the 'top of the house' to have a mandate," Sims said.



The reality is that we are all grappling with the digital agenda... and data is the one thing that is going to unlock that world."

**Craig Sims**

Chief Operating Officer of  
Enterprise Services  
**ANZ Bank**



“Our CEO sets a number of priorities every year; we specifically call out data and the dimensions of data around compliance, management, ourselves and the customer as what we want to turn the dial on.”

The second major insight for Sims is to recognise that while technology is vitally important it is not the solution, only the enabler.

“In our world culture is king,” he said. “How do you educate people in terms of data? In our world we are either dealing with data or working with data someone else is managing.”

In the end, Sims said, one cannot entirely rely on IT: it has to be a partnership between all sectors of an organisation, “all the way.”

## Data and the C-Suite Challenge

The conversation turned to the challenge of transforming the culture around IT and data.

There was a suggestion that IT in some organisations was a kind of ‘roadblock’, getting in the way of projects, hurting their momentum. This creates a mood where the value of data is diminished.

Further, there was some commentary around the issue of compartmentalisation of data versus the centralisation of data. But to ‘silo’ data would seem a redundancy, asked a guest. Isn’t the source of the data transparent?

So, what is the role of IT in the world of data? One answer Sims suggested, was to recognise that “unless people can see it and touch it, [data] is perceived as intangible.”

Sims suggested that this creates a level of difficulty with C-Suite engagement.



There was also some commentary to the point that what data managers here are facing is an issue of perception: the C-Suite does not see data as an asset.

Instead data's value lies in its potential as a generator of revenue. However this takes resources, commitment, and funding to establish the right platform.

"If your underlying data isn't right," Sims said, "you are losing speed."

Sims suggested organisations undertake 'small proof of concepts' that can produce tangible outcomes. That way, "[C-Suites] can see the value."

"Getting the right data to the right people so they can make [crucial] decisions about it faster" is a core principle, he concluded.

## Who Owns the Data?

A key point emerged over ownership and precedence, and how they are intertwined, in terms of data management. For instance, in a financial organisation, what is the relationship between finance and risk?

Sims brought this insight to the problem: "We are lacking speed and agility because we are replicating the same functionality five times over and there is the cost associated with that activity." He said that finance and risk need to have the same trust in the data.

One solution, he suggested, for those organisations that do not have clearly defined hand-off points in the value chain, is to outsource to deep data scientists in order to educate the customer units on how best to use data.

This raises the question of how best to manage data strategy. One suggestion was that for some organisations operational and business should go 'hand in hand'. But there is an argument that says that the key is to manage source to solution.

This is because if there is no clear focus in an operational system data can never be clean enough.

What was agreed by the group was the need for technology teams to establish a line of command internally about who owns the data. With that comes the responsibility of quality and protection of it.





# Converting Data into Strategy

When the conversation turned to strategy, the need for definition and clarification became central to the dialogue.

There was some debate about what the stakes were as organisations move forward. Some teams within an organisation require different kinds of data at different times.

The data then must be 'fit for purpose' – but that can mean different things in a mobile environment or a web environment.

The Internet of Things (IoT) will only put a further accent on the issue of immediacy.

The discussion suggested that organisations will need to address this question quickly since customers are already impatient with interface processes that show lag.

The feeling in the room was that innovation could emerge at a rapid rate if data was to come in real time thus producing a better prediction capability and consequently an improved offering to customers.

Getting the IT team 'out of the way' – perhaps outsourcing a project - was a strategy discussed in depth. For some it defined the true essence of agility and flexibility.

"It comes down to common purpose and common intent," Sims said.

Clarity of purpose from the top of the organisation was the only way forward, Sims concluded.



## Conclusion

After much discussion and debate the group landed upon certain specific insights that they agreed would be invaluable in moving forward.

Amongst them was the practical and strategic necessity to outsource. This leaves data managers in IT to 'drive the value button' and use the uncovered data in meaningful ways without the need to build warehouses, which can be left to specialists.

As for the challenges, it is the search for the 'a-ha' moment.

There was an agreement amongst the gathered experts that data science was about 'looking for what you don't know'. But for this philosophy to be valuable it must be underwritten by commercial acumen and creativity or else mathematical rigor is meaningless and the 'a-ha' moment may never come.

The cost of data is a source of friction in organisations but the consensus amongst the group was that that was negligible when balanced against not engaging in the space. "We are probably drifting toward digital as the new game," Sims told the luncheon. "So business is showing more ownership of that."

He said from now on business and its tech experts must ask themselves:

"What's the experience you want to create? Complex data will be both the answer and the enabler to that question and that project."



## About OmniChannel Media:



OmniChannel Media is one of Australia's leading online tech publications for Australian CXOs. We create a range of digital content, as well as host industry events that look at how technology, innovation and disruption is impacting the way CXOs approach business enablement.

## About Commvault:



**COMMVault**

Commvault's data protection and information management solutions provide mid- and enterprise-level organisations worldwide with a significantly better way to get value from their data.

All of the applications in Commvault's end-to-end data protection and information management solutions offer flexible deployment options and are built from the ground up, on the same platform. As a result, they talk to each other, work with each other and look like each other.

Commvault can help companies protect, access and use all of their data, anywhere and any time, turning data into a powerful strategic asset.

*Make your data work for you.*

