

Data Modeling for the Business

A Handbook for Aligning the Business with IT using High-Level Data Models

Did you ever try getting Businesspeople and IT to agree on the project scope for a new application? Or try getting Marketing and Sales to agree on the target audience? Or try bringing new team members up to speed on the hundreds of tables in your data warehouse — without them dozing off?

Whether you are a businessperson or an IT professional, you can be the hero in each of these and hundreds of other scenarios by building a High-Level Data Model. The High-Level Data Model is a simplified view of our complex environment. It can be a powerful communication tool of the key concepts within our application development projects, business intelligence and master data management programs, and all enterprise and industry initiatives.

Learn about the High-Level Data Model and master the techniques for building one, including a comprehensive ten-step approach and hands-on exercises to help you practice topics on your own. In this book, we review data modeling basics and explain why the core concepts stored in a high-level data model can have significant business impact on an organization. We explain the technical notation used for a data model and walk through some simple examples of building a high-level data model. We also describe how data models relate to other key initiatives you may have heard of or may be implementing in your organization.

This book contains best practices for implementing a high-level data model, along with some easy-to-use templates and guidelines for a step-by-step approach. Each step will be illustrated using many examples based on actual projects we have worked on. Names have been changed to protect the innocent, but the pain points and lessons have been preserved. One example spans an entire chapter and will allow you to practice building a high-level data model from beginning to end, and then compare your results to ours.

Building a high-level data model following the ten step approach you'll read about is a great way to ensure you will retain the new skills you learn in this book.

As is the case in many disciplines, using the right tool for the right job is critical to the overall success of your high-level data model implementation. To help you in your tool selection process, there are several chapters dedicated to discussing what to look for in a high-level data modeling tool and a framework for choosing a data modeling tool, in general.

This book concludes with a real-world case study that shows how an international energy company successfully used a high-level data model to streamline their information management practices and increase communication throughout the organization—between both businesspeople and IT.

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Print ISBN: **9780977140077**

Kindle: **9781935504375**

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