One-Pager Checklist: Aligning Data Strategy with Business Strategy

Based on the ADAPT Framework – For CTOs, Data Leaders, and Strategy Teams

A. Aspire – Define the Business North Star

- Clear business goals (growth, efficiency, innovation, compliance) are defined
- Goals are measurable and time-bound
- Data's role in achieving each goal is understood
- Executive sponsors are aligned

D. Diagnose – Assess Data Maturity and Gaps

- Current state of data sources, tools, and pipelines is documented
- Data quality, accessibility, and ownership are evaluated
- Governance roles (stewards, custodians, owners) are assigned
- Skills and cultural readiness for data-driven work are assessed

A. Architect – Build Fit-for-Purpose Infrastructure

- Architecture is modular, scalable, and aligned to use cases
- Real-time, batch, and archival needs are balanced appropriately
- Data platforms are interoperable, observable, and secure
- Operational and analytical workloads are decoupled
- Future-proofing is considered (e.g., GenAI readiness, cloud strategy)

P. Prioritize – Map Use Cases to Business Value

- High-impact use cases are clearly linked to business KPIs
- Feasibility (data availability, skills, effort) is evaluated
- A mix of quick wins and long-term bets is selected
- Business owners and delivery timelines are committed
- ROI or strategic value is estimated and tracked

T. Tune – Govern, Optimize, and Evolve

- A cross-functional governance body is in place
- Business value from data initiatives is regularly reviewed
- Data and platform usage metrics are tracked
- Architecture and data stack are reviewed at least annually
- Teams are upskilled in data literacy and tools
- Feedback loops between tech and business are embedded

CTO's Tip

Don't ask, "What's our data platform?"
Ask, "What capabilities must this platform enable to deliver business results?"