



VALERIUS  
CONSULTING

# Guide:

## Decision Process Improvement

How to align your analytics efforts across the enterprise for speed and scale.

## Why DPI?

Most organizations operate in a dynamic environment, where internal operations and external influences are constantly in flux, creating complexity that makes decision-making challenging.

We are quickly moving into an era with sophisticated, commercially available AI solutions that hold tremendous promise, particularly for knowledge worker productivity. But these new AI capabilities will introduce new layers of complexity as organizations try to understand how to harness the power of these new tools for decision-making while mitigating the potential risks.

The objectives remain the same – faster, better decisions – but how organizations achieve them must change. With powerful AI solutions on the desktops of all knowledge workers, from business analysts to software developers, it will be possible to dramatically improve the capabilities at each step of the decision value chain. The upside is significant, but to realize the benefits, organizations need to instill significantly greater discipline in decision-making processes across the enterprise, aligning efforts to increase the speed and scale.

This is what **Decision Process Improvement (DPI)** is designed to do.

## Who is DPI for?

DPI is ideally suited for organizations committed to using analytics as a competitive advantage and that have established an analytics Center of Excellence (CoE) or robust community of practice responsible for scaling and maturing capabilities across the organization. As DPI is a critical component of analytics transformation organization-wide, it makes sense for a group with enterprise-wide responsibility, like CoEs, to lead the charge in promulgating DPI methods and practices.

Additionally, given the current stage of AI solutions, such as those incorporating Large Language Models just recently released in beta form, it stands to reason that an internal group with R&D responsibilities becomes the first-line evaluators and testers of these new solutions.

## How Does it Fit with my Existing Processes?

The DPI analysis is conducted during the Discovery phase of an analytics project before detailed technical or business requirements are gathered. Using stakeholder interviews and documentation reviews, teams use the DPI analysis to establish the conditions, or

context, under which the new solution will be deployed. This is important for two reasons:

1. Improving a decision process involves more than just a technical solution, and
2. Adopting the technical solution can be challenging, particularly when considering advanced analytics with broad organizational impact.

The DPI analysis forces teams to understand how things work now, related to processes, data, and analytics that support the decisions the new solution aims to improve. In addition, the analysis helps teams think through the impact the solution will have and the resistance they will experience as it is deployed across stakeholder groups.

Fundamentally, DPI encourages teams charged with building a technical solution to be more process-oriented first before diving into the technical or functional requirements. One way to think about it is that DPI is like a project charter on steroids, bridging high-level business objectives and the analytics solution.

## How Does it Work?

Nearly every organizational decision, large or small, is supported by a decision process and analytical tools. Decision processes are managed by people engaged in knowledge work (business analyst and technical) at every stage. These tasks include asking the right questions, building a robust analysis, clarifying decision-making accountability, and making sound judgments.

THE DPI ANALYSIS CAN BE USED AT THE BUSINESS UNIT LEVEL TO HELP IDENTIFY AND SCOPE ANALYTICS PROJECTS THAT TEAMS CAN EXECUTE LOCALLY.

DPI is designed to examine this process, or decision workflow, supporting strategic or operational decisions and exposing areas for improvement.

DPI can work within existing decision frameworks like RAPID designed to clarify accountability for decisions involving multiple stakeholders. The difference is DPI goes beyond a static snapshot focused on roles and responsibilities, offering a more dynamic approach focused on measurement and improvement. With DPI, you go from “who is responsible?” to “how can we improve this?”

The DPI analysis can be used at the business unit level to help identify and scope analytics projects that teams can execute locally. In addition, the output from DPI can be used as part of enterprise-wide analytics project prioritization process, with the DPI analysis artifacts helping make the business case for a project and documenting the change impact (see: [Guide to CALM Change Process](#))

The graphic below shows how DPI analysis can help align your organization across three different levels: 1. At the business unit level, helping clarify requirements (in this case, related to a new sales forecasting model), process inefficiencies, and capability gaps at the unit level, 2. At the capabilities level, helping reveal gaps across people, data, and analytics housed within a centralized analytics team or distributed organization-wide, and 3. At the enterprise data and analytics strategy level, ensuring projects align with organizational priorities.

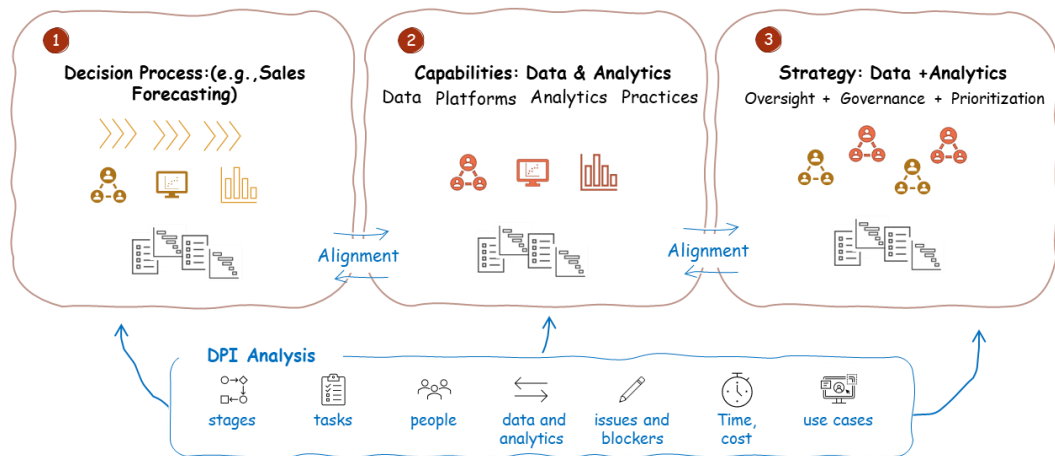


Figure 1: DPI Alignment Graphic

Figure 1 shows the three key points of alignment enabled by a DPI Analysis.

1. **Aligning Decision Processes improvement and current D&A capabilities:** At the business unit level, you examine your decision processes to expose gaps in people, tools, and processes and identify specific improvements to increase the speed and quality of your decisions. This analysis, which is done during the Discovery phase of a new project, and before any solution design or application development, serves as the baseline description of the problem that the technical solution needs to solve. Further, the decision process analysis goes beyond the technical solution to highlight changes in process or people required to improve decision-making, providing a blueprint for the change management effort. Finally, you have a roadmap for current and future enhancements, in the form of use cases.
2. **Aligning current D&A capabilities and future D&A requirements:** At the organizational level, D&A capabilities are often delivered by a centralized enterprise analytics group. With DPI, Enterprise Analytics (EA) teams use the results of the business-level analysis to help identify gaps in current EA capabilities. Given their enterprise-wide viewpoint, EA teams can use DPI

analyses from across business units to better understand organization-wide gaps in skills, data, technology, and processes that drive D&A roadmap decisions. DPI allows for a more consistent approach at the business unit and enterprise analytics level to determine what changes should be made to people, service models, and technical capabilities.

- 3. **Aligning future D&A requirements and D&A strategy:** The DPI roadmap, drawn from analysis done at the business unit and EA level, identifies opportunities for improvement that help guide investments in future capabilities. For organizations with established governance bodies, the DPI analysis supports a standardized approach for current project prioritization and R&D investment decisions. By standardizing the process for evaluating decision processes using DPI, using consistent criteria and metrics, leaders across IT, analytics, and business functions can spot recurring gaps in people, processes, tools, and data that drive future priorities and investments. DPI analysis thus becomes a critical feedback tool for identifying opportunities to improve decision-making.

With AI-assisted decision-making becoming a reality and increasing knowledge worker productivity, the question of improving a decision process now becomes: “How can we improve this using AI?”

Unfortunately, there is no simple answer to that, hence the need to operate with a continuous improvement mindset, breaking down your existing decision process and looking for opportunities to improve decision speed and quality.

WITH AI-ASSISTED DECISION-MAKING BECOMING A REALITY AND INCREASING KNOWLEDGE WORKER PRODUCTIVITY, THE QUESTION OF IMPROVING A DECISION PROCESS NOW BECOMES: “HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THIS USING AI?”

### The DPI Process

The steps in the DPI process are listed below, along with the objectives or potential opportunities for improvement at each stage. It’s important to note that the improvements identified don’t have to involve major process redesign or systems development.

Especially initially, look for points of leverage where a small change can yield measurable results and near-term value. Also, improvements can be incremental and rolled out over time, focusing first on what is actionable and impactful while documenting, via a roadmap, the longer-term changes.

DPI Step	Improvement Opportunities
 <p><b>Mapping the major stages</b> of the current decision process.</p>	<p>What steps could be eliminated with process redesign or automated using technology?</p>
 <p>Listing the <b>task and activities</b> occurring at each stage.</p>	<p>What specific tasks can be augmented, automated, or eliminated? What new knowledge can staff access to work smarter and faster?</p>
 <p>Identifying the <b>people involved</b> and their roles and relationships, highlighting key stakeholders like the internal “suppliers” of information and “customers” of the output.</p>	<p>How can you streamline the process, ensuring that only essential stakeholders are involved? How can you make decision-makers better prepared and “smarter” going into decisions? Which stakeholders will be impacted by any changes?</p>
 <p>Documenting the <b>inputs</b> (data) going into the process as well as <b>outputs</b> (analysis) produced at each stage.</p>	<p>What other untapped sources of knowledge can support the decision process? How can you make the analysis more robust, relevant, and timely?</p>
 <p>Logging <b>issues and blockers</b> at each stage.</p>	<p>What is getting in the way of faster, higher-quality decisions? What is the prioritized roadmap for fixing the issues?</p>
 <p>Capturing the <b>time, effort, and cost</b> by stage and cumulatively for the entire process (hours, days, FTEs).</p>	<p>What is the upside opportunity related to time, cost, and decision quality?</p>
 <p>Creating <b>use cases</b> for potential future solutions.</p>	<p>What should we work on concerning new solutions – near-term or longer-term? What is the R&amp;D lab working on? What are high-priority vendor solutions for the near-term and medium-term?</p>

## What is the Output?

The output from the DPI analysis is a roadmap for transforming the decision process that includes recommendations for process redesign, people roles and skills, data, and analytics, and also prioritizes use cases. The DPI roadmap helps inform decisions about near-term project priorities and enables clearer alignment with enterprise data and analytics strategies.

Critically, the roadmap provides the context for change management activities required to ensure people are aligned, motivated, and on board with the new solution you are

launching. Simply put, without adoption, there is no impact. And, as we look to the future, the change brought about by new, more powerful AI solutions will be significant, and resistance across stakeholder groups will be substantial.

Organizations can use the DPI Analysis as part of the project charter documents or other project planning documents that help set the project's purpose and potential impact.

## Getting Started

You can start small. Begin by identifying a decision, be it tactical, operational, or strategic, and work backward from the point at which you made the decision (e.g., approving a project or new hire). As you start to unpack the process, you can use DPI to provide the consistency, structure, and rigor necessary to expose leverage points for decision-making improvement and enable a repeatable methodology that can scale across multiple use cases and business units.

We are here to help at [Valerius.us/contact](https://valerius.us/contact)