

Rethinking Data



Learn how to close the gap between analysis and action!

Organizations are facing a big problem when it comes to data. It used to be that we didn't have enough. Now, it's the opposite; we have way more than we need. As a result, too many organizations are focusing in the wrong place.

See inside for details about the workshop that we can bring on-site at your company!

Workshop Overview

Rethinking Data is an eight-hour workshop that improves leaders' efficiency and effectiveness at making data-driven decisions. This workshop is not a numbers crunching course. *Rethinking Data* takes the next step, addressing the common pitfalls that prevent leaders from being able to use data to drive decisions. The workshop is based upon Avail Advisors' **Eight Rules for Rethinking Data**, and is facilitated by the founder, **Brad Kolar**.

Why Rethinking Data is Crucial

Presentations are littered with tables, charts, graphs and visualizations. That is not where the value lies. The value in data is not the numbers – it's action. The more time you spend looking at numbers, the less time you have to act upon them.

The problem is that people don't know what to include and what to exclude when making and communicating data-driven decisions:

- They gather more data than they need or the wrong data
- They build recommendations using incorrect or faulty logic
- They confuse “simple” with “superficial”
- They leave out critical context while driving into needless detail
- They focus on numbers rather than decisions and actions

Brad Kolar has developed four techniques to help individuals drive simple, clear and actionable decisions.

- 1. Decision Breakdown Tree** – quickly identifies the exact data needed to drive a decision
- 2. What, Why, And, But** – Report status in under 3 minutes
- 3. Six-Slide Recommendation** – Deliver a full recommendation in under ten minutes using just six slides (or paragraphs)
- 4. Decision-Based Reporting** – Organize reports around answers rather than numbers

Outcomes:

- Understanding and managing the three key biases that inhibit data-driven decision-making
- Quickly defining the data needed to make a decision so that you spend more time thinking about what the data is telling you and less time searching for it
- Turning data into actions that drive decision-making
- Creating reports that provide answers rather than numbers, thus significantly decreasing the time it takes to make a decision
- Creating simple, logical, fact-driven recommendations and presentations that speed up and drive audience decision-making

Components:

- **Rethinking how we think** – Provides an overview of how our brains process data and information. Introduces common thinking and decision-making errors/biases and shows how traditional ways of reviewing and presenting data actually contribute to those errors.
- **Aligning data and decisions** – Focuses on honing in on the data that is relevant to making a decision. Improves leader efficiency by providing a structured approach to exploring data.
- **Turning information into action** – Introduces the “Value through Information” model which moves leaders from simply summarizing facts and figures to telling a comprehensive data-driven story. Focuses on building an evidence-based argument that drives decisions and actions.

Facilitator Bio – Brad Kolar



Brad Kolar, founder of Avail Advisors, has spent the last 20 years focused on one thing – bringing clarity, simplicity and resolution to complex issues. He combines expertise in business, psychology, process improvement and technology to help his clients find unique solutions to their problems. More importantly, it fundamentally changes the way they approach their work.

Brad holds a BA in Economics and a MA in Communication from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. As for Brad's professional background, he served as the Director of Learning and Performance Strategy for Accenture and held the position of Chief Learning Officer for the University of Chicago Medical Center. Currently, he serves on the Advisory Board for the Department of Communication at the University of Illinois. In terms of consulting, Brad's experience spans various industries including healthcare, financial services, government, consumer products and professional services. His clients are leaders ranging from front-line managers all the way to C-Suite Executives.

Client Success Stories

1. Creating clarity and focus (Fortune 100 Financial Services Company)

Problem:

Every six months, the marketing team needed to develop its plan. They'd receive over a hundred ideas for marketing initiatives. Meetings were long, cumbersome and often didn't result in a unified list. As a result, they would have to meet several more times until they culled their list.

Solution:

The team used Brad's **Decision Breakdown** technique to clarify, document and agree upon the criteria that would be used to prioritize and select marketing initiatives. The tree ensured that every initiative was being presented and assessed using the same criteria.

Results:

- Meeting prep time was reduced
- Meeting time was cut in half
- Decisions and consensus were reached almost always in the first meeting

2. Getting leaders up to speed simply, quickly and clearly (Fortune 100 Insurance Company)

Problem:

The Vice President had 30 minutes on an agenda to give the board an update on her operations. Her past presentations tended to run over their allotted time. She also received prior feedback that her presentations were often too detailed, didn't provide a clear story and she came across as scattered, lacked credibility, and appeared to lack confidence.

Solution:

The VP used the **What, Why, And, But** framework to structure her presentation. The framework focused on telling a simple story about her business results.

Results:

- Her entire presentation took ten minutes, followed by just five minutes of follow up questions from the board.
- Board and C-Suite leaders provided feedback that it was the best board update (among anyone) they had seen in years.

3. Speeding up the decision-making process (Fortune 100 Insurance Company)

Problem:

The client was considering whether or not to move a currently out-sourced process back into the organization. The process involved about \$20 million in resources. She was asked to make a recommendation to the company's COO and two Senior Vice Presidents. She was given 30 minutes.

Solution:

This manager used Brad's **Business-driven story** template to develop and structure her presentation. The presentation itself took five minutes (with less than ten slides). There was a five-minute Q&A and the leaders made their decision.

Results:

- Executives made a \$20 million decision in under 15 minutes (total, from the start of the presentation). The client said she never had an executive team make a decision so quickly.
- One of the Senior Vice Presidents commented that it was the best presentation he had seen in years. In particular, he noted that "She provided more clarity and insight in five minutes than we normally get in 45 minutes to an hour."