If you manage risk in your organization, you’re probably surrounded by paper right now. After all, you need reports to help mitigate your risk.

BUT HOW EFFICIENT IS YOUR PROCESS AND HOW ACCURATE IS YOUR ANALYSIS?

Spreadsheets, boxes of files, multiple systems, long response times, and inconsistent formats can make managing data painful. What’s worse, trends and underlying issues can go undiscovered, compounding inefficient processes, creating additional work, and perhaps most important, increasing risk for your organization.

The proliferation of business data has forever changed the way we work. Gone are the days when data was managed solely within the IT group or with data analysts.

Risk managers, claims administrators, and safety managers are self-managing enormous amounts of data from multiple sources. There’s been a significant shift to democratization of data and analytics across the business, where everyone, regardless of role, is responsible for understanding and managing data.

So what’s the best way to explore your data, answer questions about your risk, and uncover trends that light the bulb above your head? Enter data discovery.
TRADITIONAL REPORTING VS DATA DISCOVERY

Static reports are no longer sufficient to satisfy stakeholder demands. Seamless collaboration among business owners, outside vendors, and cross-functional teams is not only desired, it’s expected. Uncovering trends – both negative and positive – is part of any successful business model, but not an easy task with traditional reporting.

Traditional reporting is linear process: numbers are entered into a spreadsheet, spreadsheets are combined from different sources, and a report is generated. Some of this data may be used to create pie charts or bar graphs that are copied into a presentation that is sent to various departments for review or approval. Next month, the process starts again as numbers change and custom report requests come in. This is a cumbersome, time-consuming process.

On the other hand, data discovery is an interactive, visual tool that pulls and aggregates data from any number of sources. By definition, it encourages exploration by allowing the user to select their own path into data analysis, which in turn, helps to uncover important trends and patterns. Through smart visualization and collaboration, everyone in the organization has quicker access to the data, increasing understanding and lowering critical response times.

Why is this important?

With different ways to view and analyze multiple sources of data, users gain deeper insight that can help drive organizational change and ultimately reduce risk. Whereas traditional reporting and business intelligence tools make it difficult to find answers to simple questions because they require advanced reporting knowledge, custom report development, and the running of multiple reports, Data Discovery provides the flexibility to search through complex information naturally and in a way that the user finds intuitive.
NO LONGER ARE BUSINESS USERS LIMITED TO PRE-DEFINED DRILL PATHS OR PRECONFIGURED DASHBOARDS.

With Data Discovery, users can search through complex information naturally and without limitations that traditional reporting and business intelligence tools are known for.
ALL ANALYSIS IS NOT EQUAL

Just as recognizing the important difference between traditional reporting and data discovery, so too is understanding the different types of analysis that can be performed.

Most often, businesses perform Descriptive Analytics, a process that uses traditional, number-based reporting methods and tools such as spreadsheets to uncover “what happened.”

With data discovery, however, users gain insights through Diagnostic Analytics to answer the critically important question, “why did it happen?” True business transformation can begin when users start to see the trends and patterns in their risk ecosystem in areas such as overall spend, number and frequency of incidents, organizational response times, and claims by location, to name only a few.

The final piece of the analysis puzzle is to understand “what is likely to happen” through Predictive Analytics – an advanced analysis to help organizations better predict the future based on data and statistical algorithms.
INSIGHT IS EVERYONE’S JOB

Data discovery is driven by true business need. Organizations are generating incredible amounts of data from every department, and it’s become everyone’s job – not just those in IT – to use that data to streamline processes and increase efficiencies with an eye on improving the bottom line and reducing risk. Users who are not technical experts need ways to analyze data without having to rely on IT or data specialists.

It’s predicted that by 2017, most business users will have access to self-service tools to prepare data for analysis. Organizations need to develop a data literacy culture and provide tools that improve business processes, generate better outcomes, and heighten shared knowledge. The most data-driven, successful companies are focused on continuous improvement, and give users the right tools and technology to lead them towards greater efficiency and profitability.

In order to drive true organizational change, users need to get behind the numbers to uncover trends, make accurate forecasts, and truly understand organizational risk.

1 Gartner Says Power Shift in Business Intelligence and Analytics Will Fuel Disruption http://www.gartner.com/newsroom/id/2970917
Data discovery can help increase efficiencies across the organization, making complex data more understandable and more important, actionable.
MAKING THE SHIFT TO DATA DISCOVERY

The explosion of available data calls for tools that are quick to learn and easy to use, yet provide a depth of analysis and insight that stakeholders demand. In the past several years, many data discovery tools have been introduced into the market, but not all are created equally.

To obtain the most benefit, there are key areas to consider in a data discovery tool, including:

- Data reliability and integrity
- Embedded analytics
- Flexibility and ease of use
- Smart data visualization
- Agility and speed
- Collaboration and sharing

With the right tool, data discovery can help increase efficiencies across the organization, making complex data more understandable and more important, actionable.
DRIVING BETTER DECISIONS

Regardless of how much data is amassed or how many reports are generated, decisions are still made by people within your organization. In today’s data-intense business environment, the most successful companies use data to make better decisions throughout the organization, and everyone is expected to provide meaningful insight to drive those decisions. But this calls for a paradigm shift from a reporting culture to a collaborative, analytical culture – one that uses data in a way that seemed impossible only a few short years ago.

Finally, you’re able to go beyond the numbers on the page to tell the true story of your organization’s risk environment. The flexibility and depth of analysis that data discovery provides will give you unprecedented insights into your risk, and more importantly, help you mitigate it.

By providing meaningful analysis **that is actionable**, you’ll find that data discovery becomes one of the most important tools you have to successfully manage your risk.