How to make your dbt implementation successful

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Budapest Data+ML Online 2023

Marielle Dado

- Freelance Analytics Engineer
- Rolled out dbt & cloud data warehousing at 2 companies
- Love at first sight with dbt

Eva Schreyer

- Lead Data Analyst
- Disliked dbt in the beginning
- Now a dbt superfan

You’re not just implementing a tool, you’re leading a change

New tools shift the way your org thinks about data—and that shift might not be welcome!

Engineers, be a steward, not a hero. Work in partnership with business teams to think about data differently.

Analysts, learn to embrace change. Let data modeling be your new superpower!

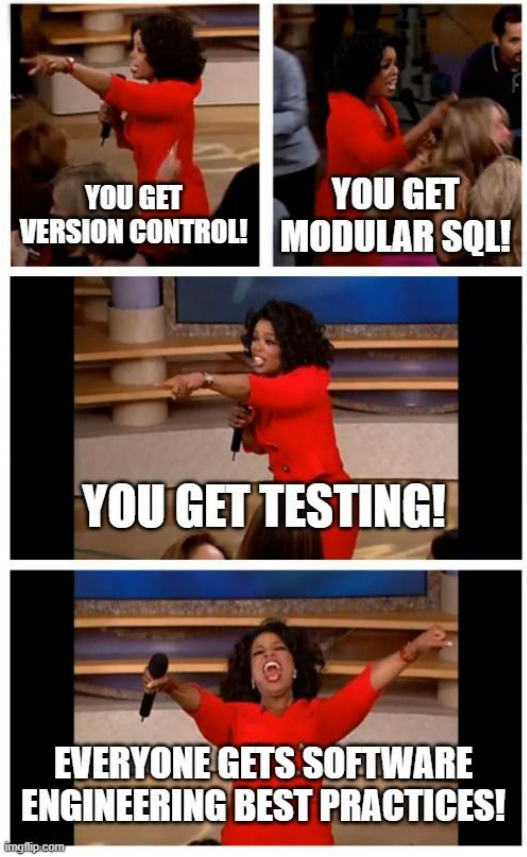
How it started

Analysts create data models directly in dashboards, sometimes on demand

Data models don’t hold up and dashboards break. Data is inaccurate.

A data engineering team is hired to set up a modern data stack

How it started: Engineers be like



How it’s going: Analysts be like

What is happening? A shift in power

THEN	Experts in querying data and building dashboards	Visible quick fixes in code create a sense of power and visibility	Stakeholders expect a certain flexibility from the analysts
	⇩	⇩	⇩
NOW	Data modeling in dbt, dashboarding almost a self-serve approach	Changing tables and DAGs increases data reliability	Data modeling follows processes and principles

Truth 💣: The benefits don’t sound like benefits

The “benefits” of dbt sound like blockers

Business teams are now “expected” to work like software engineers

Engineering teams tend to think they know better

The 🏠 is not on 🔥

but a ⛈️ is brewing

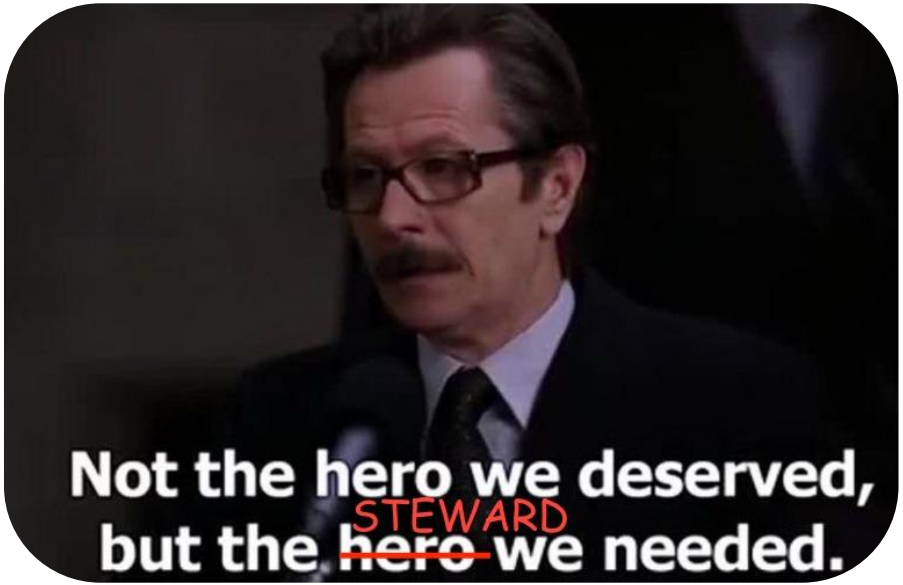
You need to convince people for the need for change

Dear engineers: Be a steward, not a hero

Leverage people's current skill sets

Model the desired behavior

Introduce change incrementally



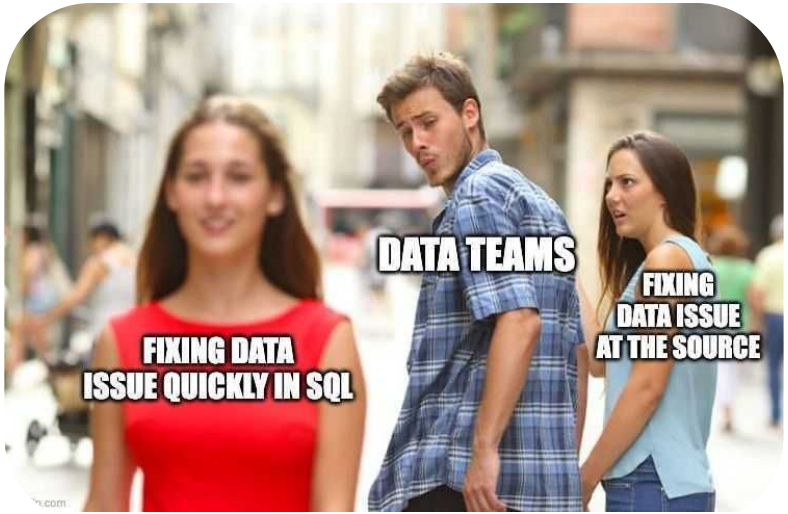
Dear analysts: Data Engineering is your friend

Version control actually makes sense!

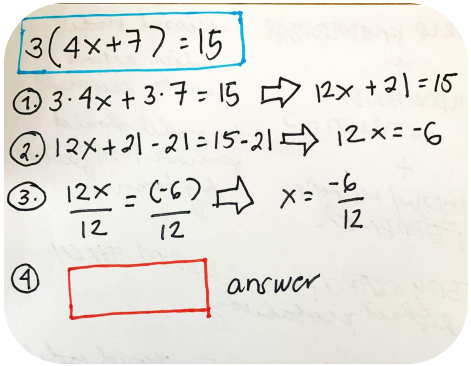
Data engineers rely on you to build the right models

You can catch bad data much earlier

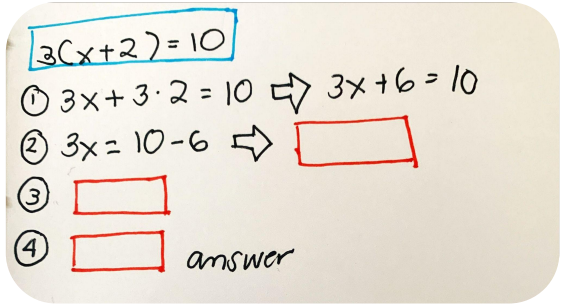
Data modeling is your new superpower!



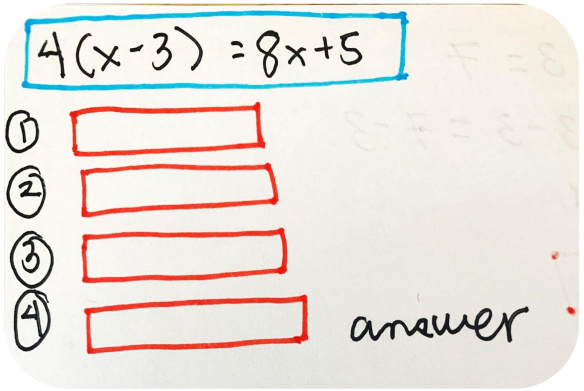
Instructional scaffolding



Present an almost-complete solution, except for the last step...



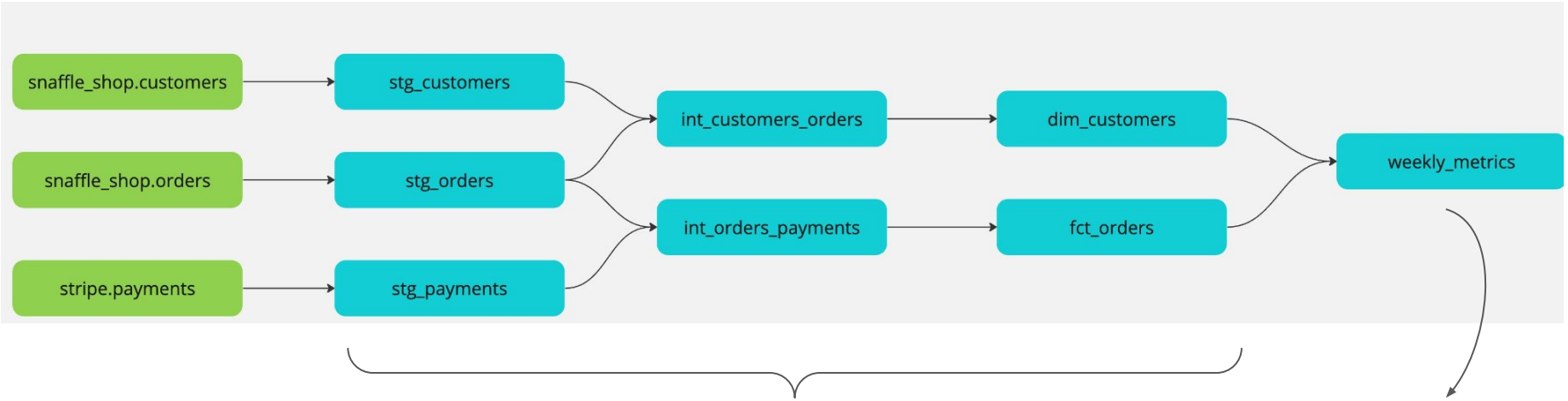
...then let learners finish off more and more steps... (i.e., fade out the solution)



.... until the can complete the task by themselves!

🙌

Instructional scaffolding with dbt



Engineers should prep staging, intermediate and fact/dim tables

Let analysts create reporting tables

Instructional scaffolding with dbt

This technique achieves the following:

✅ Leverage people's current skill sets

✅ Models the desired behavior

✅ Introduces change incrementally

Instructional scaffolding with dbt

Analyst knows their data ✅

Changing of some code in a well known model

Adding tests to the model

Creating new model and tests

Introduction to the lineage graph and staging models

Analyst understands and uses dbt

What now?

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Stay in touch!

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