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This is an initial summary of the key actions within the topics we discussed. This is not exhaustive of the issues tabled and discussions in the room and we will continue to pull together wider notes which will be shared in later correspondence.

Organisation Design, Operating Models and Governance:

For me two key areas came through in this debate:

1. **Centralisation versus Federation** of Insight across the business. There were lots of aspects of this debate which also closely touched people & skills and I'm sure it could be the subject of future books by management consulting gurus. I would like to propose that SAS (and potential consulting partners) should be providing some better guiding principles and we discussed having specific use cases which made sense to centralise versus those which made sense to self-serve. There is clearly a tools angle from a SAS perspective here, but I would like to start above this and layer on the technology components. This is an action I will validate internally and pursue forward.
2. **Speed of Insight deployment.** This was a concern raised from almost all attendees and again varied in the issues such as tensions between agile and waterfall methodologies, management expectations, channel owners with different business metrics, target architectures versus quickest ways to get the job complete. To move this forward, I would like to propose a small research project (probably 1 or 2 days per customer) to document these challenges with a view to specifically being able to measure this more objectively and even look to benchmark across our customers and industries. This would need to be a combination of a senior business consultant and someone from a technology perspective as the issues between business and technology are hugely intertwined.

People & Skills:

This was a strong discussion across the group initially with a definition of the roles in place (or being put in place) across the CI landscape (we will record these roles formally in the summary notes). There was a lot of debate about becoming more proactive with insight to drive innovation into the business rather than being a reactive supply of information to a business request. Specifically good was described as being able to act as business partners positively challenging the strategies as a result of new insight. We discussed the tooling issues and how companies were managing preferences of the data science community to work in tools that weren't part of target architectures. Finally we debated the topic of people development and using career paths to better drive retention of talent in a hot market. SAS is a company that wins many industry prizes around its employee engagement and I observed that some of these strategies are good ways to manage the people in the data ecosystem that have some unique characteristics, for example ways that we put emphasis on careers paths for Individual Contributors to the business. I will take forward an action here to look at how SAS could publish stronger guidelines around talent management that our customers could consider as part of their own talent strategies. As a final point to this section we covered how the roadmap from SAS (specifically Viya) was removing the issue of data scientists working in open source tools by providing much stronger integration of model lifecycle regardless of the development language. SAS was asked to provide some directional messaging that could be used as part of data scientist recruitment strategy.

GDPR:

This discussion was largely a sharing of experience where in most cases the regulation and May deadline was seriously understood by your companies. The discussion was largely focussed on the

interpretation and enforcement of the regulation and the strategies that you are adopting. We agreed a nice way to summarise this was for SAS to build out some notes into a template which would be edited by each of you and then shared collectively across the group. The resulting asset can then be used by you as a benchmark of where you are tracking versus some peers across Europe. There was a specific observation and question of how SAS was trying to influence or lobby the regulators, given the implications of potentially too severe regulation or enforcement in this area – I will find out and report back.

Artificial Intelligence:

This was probably the weakest of the 4 topic areas discussed which largely confirmed that AI strategies were still in experimental thinking at the moment. Most of the demonstrators being built or shown were related to chatbots, with a potentially strong business case when for example applied to reduction in call centre operatives. Data scientists see the AI technology more as a new area to play rather than a threat to their own roles at present. There weren't any specific areas of issue that were called out by the group although collectively the feeling that AI would significantly influence the industry in future (self-driving cars etc.). The feedback to SAS was to provide greater thought leadership on the topic and particular ways these techniques (alongside image recognition, deep learning etc.) could provide concrete examples of value in tomorrow's world.

I do hope that you enjoyed and got value from the discussion and importantly learned something together with your peers. My personal reflection is that these topics are not simple by nature hence why they don't naturally get solved, however I do think SAS can provide more support and we can use the benefit of this network to tackle some of these issues head on. Hopefully we will collectively improve as a result.

We will send out further formal notes and actions over the coming days but I wanted to again say thank-you and I am personally committed to taking some of these issues forward within SAS. I hope that we also agree that these types of events with some more tweaking, follow-up of actions above and additional customer input will be of interest to you in 2018.