Magazine

DATA GIST

Insights Journey Impact



Navigating Multiple Disciplines

Emphasizes growth, adaptability, and experience.

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NAVIGATING MULTIPLE DISCIPLINES

In an era where organizations are increasingly relying on data to drive strategy, the ability to bridge technical expertise with business understanding has become more valuable than ever. For Edidiong Esu, that intersection is where his career has flourished.

With over six years of experience spanning data analytics, business intelligence, and data engineering, He has built a reputation for helping organizations transform data into actionable insights and sustainable decision-making processes. His journey into data was not a conventional one. Originally trained as an Electrical and Electronics Engineer, he discovered an interest in data during his NYSC year—a curiosity that would eventually evolve into a career dedicated to solving business problems through data.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my career has been the opportunity to work across analytics, business intelligence, and data engineering. While each discipline serves a different purpose, moving between them has given me a broader understanding of how data creates value within organizations and influences decision-making.

The most challenging transition was moving from analytics and business intelligence into data engineering. It required me to shift my perspective from simply generating insights to understanding how data is collected, processed, and delivered at scale. Learning concepts such as distributed systems, data pipelines, and cloud-based architectures pushed me outside my comfort zone and reinforced the importance of continuous learning.



con..: Navigating Multiple Disciplines

Adaptability has been a recurring theme in my professional journey, from being the first data hire in my early career to working across industries with varying levels of data maturity, I have often found myself navigating uncertainty, building structure where none existed, and creating solutions in complex environments. These experiences taught me that success in the data profession is not defined by mastery of a particular tool, but by the ability to understand systems, solve problems, and continuously evolve.

One lesson that has remained constant is that the quality of decisions depends on the quality of data. Despite advances in AI and the growing abundance of information, challenges around data quality, accessibility, and trust remain as relevant today as they were when I first entered the field. Over time, I learned that meaningful analysis begins long before the analysis itself—through strong data preparation, asking the right questions, and establishing processes that ensure data is reliable and fit for purpose.

Turning Data into Decision?

How data-driven strategy is sharping the future of business:

I have worked on a variety of data initiatives focused on helping organizations make better decisions through improved access to trusted and actionable data. While the technical requirements varied, these projects often involved integrating data from multiple sources, building scalable data pipelines, and developing automated reporting and analytics solutions. The objective was never just to move or process data, but to ensure that decision-makers had timely, accurate, and relevant information at their fingertips.

One of the key lessons I have learned is that data only creates value when it informs action. By improving data accessibility, reducing manual reporting efforts, and increasing confidence in the information being used, these initiatives enabled teams to make faster, more informed decisions across both operational and strategic areas of the business. This process is more than technology. It is about creating the right foundation—through reliable data, efficient processes, and clear insights—so that organizations can move from information to action and from action to measurable business impact.

Industry Trends Shaping Data Strategy?

The Reality of Data-Driven Organizations:

One of the biggest misconceptions organizations have is that becoming data-driven is primarily a technology challenge. In reality, the most significant barriers are often related to data quality, consistency, and alignment between business and technical teams. Across the industries I have worked in, I have observed organizations invest heavily in dashboards, analytics platforms, and modern data tools, expecting them to automatically create a data-driven culture. However, technology alone is rarely the solution. Without trusted data, clear definitions, and shared standards, even the most advanced tools struggle to deliver meaningful value.

A truly data-driven organization is built on a strong foundation of reliable data, effective governance, and collaboration across teams. It requires not only the right technology, but also the right processes, mindset, and commitment to using data consistently in decision-making.

As data strategies continue to evolve, the organizations that will gain the greatest advantage are those that focus on building trust in their data, aligning business and technical objectives, and creating a culture where data informs action at every level. Ultimately, being data-driven is less about the tools an organization adopts and more about how effectively it turns data into decisions.

AI and the Evolving Workforce?

Adapting to the AI-Powered Data Landscape:

As AI continues to reshape the workforce, I believe data professionals will need to adapt by focusing less on repetitive tasks and more on delivering strategic value. The roles likely to experience the greatest transformation are data analyst and reporting-focused positions.

From my experience building automated reporting systems and integrated data solutions, many traditional reporting activities are already being streamlined through automation, self-service analytics, and AI-powered tools. As these capabilities continue to mature, the focus of data professionals will increasingly shift from generating reports to interpreting insights, understanding business context, and supporting decision-making.

At the same time, data engineering roles will continue to evolve. As organizations adopt AI at scale, there will be a growing need for robust data platforms, reliable pipelines, and well-governed systems that can support AI-driven workloads. The emphasis will move away from repetitive engineering tasks and toward designing resilient, scalable, and trustworthy data ecosystems.

The future belongs to professionals who can adapt alongside technology. While AI will automate many routine activities, skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, business understanding, and effective communication will become even more valuable. Success in the AI era will not be defined by competing with technology, but by learning how to leverage it to create better outcomes for organizations and the people they serve.

Simplicity Over Complexity

Challenging Conventional Wisdom:

One of the most common assumptions in data engineering is that systems need to be highly sophisticated from the outset. Having worked across organizations with different levels of data maturity, I have often observed a tendency to adopt complex architectures, multiple tools, and large-scale designs before there is a clear understanding of the actual business problem. While scalability and flexibility are important, complexity does not always translate into value. In many cases, over-engineering introduces unnecessary challenges, slows delivery, and makes systems more difficult to maintain over time.

My experience has shown that the most effective approach is often the simplest one. By focusing first on solving the immediate problem, delivering value quickly, and allowing systems to evolve as requirements become clearer, organizations can build solutions that are both practical and sustainable.

As the data landscape continues to evolve, I believe one of the most valuable principles we can embrace is simplicity. Challenging the assumption that bigger and more complex is always better allows teams to remain agile, deliver results faster, and ensure that technology serves the business—not the other way around.

How have business understanding, networking, and community involvement shaped your career?

While technical skills are essential, business understanding, networking, and community involvement have been equally important in my growth. Business knowledge ensures that data solutions solve real problems, while professional networks and communities provide opportunities for learning, collaboration, and career development.

Community involvement, in particular, has had a significant impact on my journey. Through the Data Engineering Community (DEC), I have connected with talented professionals, gained exposure to real-world projects, and broadened my perspective on solving data challenges. It has reinforced the value of continuous learning and knowledge sharing.

Shoutout to DEC for the role it has played in my growth.

What role has mentorship played in your journey, and what impact would you like to leave on the next generation of data professionals?

Although I have not had a formal mentor, I have benefited greatly from leaders whose guidance has shaped my approach to both data and career development. I have also had the opportunity to mentor others, and seeing them grow has been incredibly rewarding.

As for my legacy, I hope to continue sharing knowledge, supporting aspiring professionals, and contributing to communities that help people grow in the field. If I can inspire others to learn, build strong foundations, and create meaningful impact through data, I would consider that a lasting contribution.

DataGist Quickfire Round

- One tool you couldn't work without?
  SQL (it's the foundation of almost everything I do)
- One skill every data professional should develop?
  Problem-solving.
- One mistake young professionals should avoid?
  Skipping the fundamentals.