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Expert Data Handlers Gain Perspective; Refine Info

By Sonja Carberry, FOR INVESTOR'S BUSINESS DAILY

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Context, clarity, clues. Those are what executives gain by sifting through burgeoning data piles. How they zero in:

- **Gain expert appeal.** Curation is associated with museums, where pieces are collected, grouped and displayed in an aesthetically pleasing way. Leading firms take the same artful approach to gathering and disseminating industry-specific information, according to [Curata](#) CEO Pawan Deshpande.

Companies want to be perceived as thought leaders. To do so, many publish relevant articles, data and commentary — broadly termed content — on their websites or social media platforms.

"They're focusing on a very specific topic and building a brand around it," Deshpande told IBD.

- **Discriminate.** For content-hungry clients, Curata does the information-gathering legwork, whisking through abundant and sometimes irrelevant missives to cherry-pick the choicest material.

"We procure it, process it and really tee it up for them," he said. "You can very quickly judge if this is relevant to your audience."

- **Build cerebral muscle.** Deshpande's advice to firms: Designate one person or department as responsible for content curation.

Formalizing the function helps a company become knowledge rich.

"It's a long-term benefit, like going to the gym," he said. "That's when you build up a lot of value."

- **Go deep.** Large companies are accustomed to storing and managing reports and invoices. Where they struggle is the area of internal emails, instant messages and social media content. That's the stuff Kon Leong, CEO of [ZL Technologies](#), calls corporate e-memory. His firm helps clients manage and analyze that wealth of information.

"This issue is as strategic as it gets," he said. "We're just beginning to plumb into the potential."

- **Mine the minutiae.** Take talent management. Firms can lag in tracking what expertise their employees exhibit. "That kind of fell on its face because it was just too much updating," Leong said.

ZL Technologies' tools can drill into a company's data to identify the best person for any project.

"All the footprints are in the sand," Leong said. "With scalability, you can peer into every grain of sand on the beach. That's what we've been doing for 15 years."

- **Link the silos.** The approach helps firms make logical connections — identifying and bringing together far-flung workers with similar interests. "Here it's a simple matter to coordinate worldwide, and say: Can we get them in one room to talk?" Leong said.

- **Increase your reach.** Co-patenting — two or more parties collaborating on an advance — has boomed the past 20 years, according to Rob Lowe, CEO of [Wellspring Worldwide](#).

Such cooperation presents a challenge. "It exponentially increases the amount of information you have to manage," he said. The answer is a knowledge supply chain — or technology that tracks all the intellectual activity occurring among partners. The approach helps clients spot emerging opportunities and streamline progress on projects. "You can also share information across the organization on which partnerships are the most successful."

- **Grease the wheels.** Managing all that intellectual activity could up efficiency in the same way supply chain management streamlined manufacturing in the 1980s.

Too often, research efforts are duplicated because an organization's left hand doesn't know what the right hand has already accomplished.

"We see this as a global opportunity that's just going to continue," Lowe said.

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