

Common Design is Critical to Maximizing the Value of OneStream's Unified Platform

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We say all the time that OneStream is a platform. Well, what does that mean? A software platform integrates into your ecosystem, supports a wide variety of use cases, and helps your business evolve by integrating across functions and systems. OneStream supports the integration of many diverse data sources, and it brings together all the functions one thinks of with Corporate Performance Management (CPM). This affects how you should be thinking of a design for your implementation. You do not want to focus on just one solution. With a tool that only does one thing, like budgeting you only need to consider design aspects for one function. With OneStream you will need the team to think about the bigger picture.

A Unified Platform Calls for Common Design

I find this big picture approach can be accomplished with something I call the "Common Design". The common design, of course, should include the specifics of one or more functions (like [Planning](#), [Consolidation](#), and [Reporting](#)). But the discussion should also include more to create a solution that supports growth and evolution. You need to think about the long-term plan and how each part will come together. You can accomplish a lot with OneStream, why not take the time to plan what you can up front? There is not much you can do that will shut the door, but there are a few things you can do to make things easier for you later.

While the first project with OneStream takes about as long as it does with other CPM products, over and over we find the second, third and fourth projects go much faster. Why is that? Because in the first project, you build meta data, [data integrations](#), security, workflows, and reports. If you take the time to consider where else they can be used and extended, you will save time and effort for every project after. The Common Design approach gives you a foundation that supports multiple project phases.



Think of the Common Design as a tool to develop the roadmap. When you are seeing the demo, you likely see everything OneStream can do, and think, "Yes! We want all that!" But, trying to do everything all in a single phase, while possible, might be difficult. Actual and Budget cycles rarely line up for one go live. Extra time for project management resources will likely be required to keep track of everything. And of course, you might not have the resources internally to do everything at once. So, stepping back and planning everything out can not only get you everything you want, but reduce risk and give you more control of the project. It's easier to manage when you are focused on one objective initially. Also, you can prioritize a solution that will give you a big win early and get support

from your community of users.



A good roadmap will be flexible. Not only can your business change, but solutions on a platform like OneStream are adapting, too. When I started at OneStream (years ago) we did not support tax provisioning or account reconciliations. Now, thanks to our [OneStream MarketPlace™](#) solutions, they are much more common. When I look at the roadmap, solutions like [Machine Learning](#), Advanced Analytics, and Revenue Management are exciting new advances. [Lease Accounting](#) was not the hot button issue in 2013, but the last couple years we have seen a lot of interest because of a focus on new GAAP and IFRS requirements in this area.

The Steps Required for Success

The steps of the Common Design start by defining the Project Goals. These should be simple and clear. I always think of the elevator discussion. Imagine you are in the elevator with the CEO. He turns to you and says, 'So, what are working on?' You don't have much time, so you should be able to give him your project's name and goal and explain the benefit clearly. The Project Goal should include a simple statement that explains the why of what you are doing. For example, *The OneStream project is - to streamline and improve reporting and analytics globally.* Do not make the mistake of confusing output with the outcome.

Next you will want to define what are your Success Criteria. How do you measure your improvement? Then you will want to establish your Guiding Principles. This is important. Guiding Principles are the project's value statements that help project teams make decisions. These are especially valuable when the team is faced with a confusing and difficult choice or when disagreements arise. Projects I have been part of with clear guiding principles help the team make a quick and focused decision and move on.



The next series of steps should be facilitated by Workshops. This is the bulk of discussions in a Common Design. Each should focus on the holistic solution and not focus on one function specifically. They are as follows:

1. Timeline - What are you implementing and when?
2. Dimensionality - Define dimensions, their relationships by scenario and function.
3. System Inventory - Where is your data coming from? - Remember you cannot create detail.
4. Data flows - Mappings and frequency of data loading should be defined.
5. Relational Blending and beyond - OneStream is much more than a couple of cubes - use

the right tool for the right job.

6. Reporting Inventory – Discuss all the reports you will need, then organize, refine and prioritize them.
7. Rules Inventory – Is each rule common across the organization? Do you have the detail needed for each one? They should be tracked and written once.
8. Change Control – How will we manage the updates during the project and beyond?

After the design workshops, you should be able to document the what the new process will be or what we call the Future State. This is an important step, not only because it will help you confirm everyone is on the same page, but it will help create the foundation for the training plan. How can you define training without knowing what everyone will be doing? You define the workflow swim lanes of the future state process, and then define the required knowledge for each.

Learn More

Obviously, this is only a high-level discussion of the Common Design approach. Each step requires a full in-depth discussion with the project team. But this overview should give you a good sense of the major differences to consider when implementing a platform like OneStream instead of a point solution or fragmented products that are part of a suite.

To learn more, get a copy of the [OneStream Foundation Handbook](#), which is now available from OneStream Press.



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