Keboola

Keboola vs internal IT

> The marketing team has plenty of data use cases they want to work with. For every use case, they need to liaise with the IT department but they often have a full backlog. Every new use case takes weeks or months to go into production.
>
> The marketing department has some basic SQL knowledge and wants to be autonomous with self service. Marketing complains about the speed of development but they are happy with their Azure stack which they built in-house thanks to solutions such as the Azure Data factory. This, unfortunately, does not allow Marketing people to be self-service.

In this case, we need to explain to the IT department that we are not going to replace their stack. They will be still maintaining core systems.

Identify

Sometimes it might be hard to identify whether you are facing a situation where the IT department is the competitor. The following should help you to identify this kind of situation.

Typical signs inside the company

The IT/BI department has a full backlog

– unfortunately, it sometimes makes them happy because it's a sign they are needed in the company and sometimes they don't tend to fix this problem.

The built-in solution does not allow business users to be self-service

– the IT department does not mind this because they think "BI work" requires very tailored knowledge and cannot be done by anybody else. A change of mindset needs to be achieved here.

Small data democracy level in companies

– business users are provided with BI visualization tools and told they can do whatever they want, but any advanced data manipulation must be done within the IT department. Source data (or at least L1) is not provided to business users.

Reasons why IT doesn't want to remove the in-house solution

As **tech-savvy people, they want to play with technology** and they are proud of their own solution.

Everything is already **integrated into their tech environment** so a new tool means new integration and adoption. This consumes valuable time from an already overflowing backlog.

Fear of losing importance. With the built-in solution, IT are sure they will be needed to maintain the existing stack and won't be replaced.

The IT department feels reassured by the status quo and is reluctant to learn anything new.

The ideal state for non-IT departments

A promising outlook for non-IT departments might include the following:

Every department contains 1-2 BI/data people who are able to deliver department use cases within days.

Business departments do not take care of:

a. Spinning new databases/ notebooks for testing/ workspace purposes.
b. Creating access to internal databases every time (this is being done via L0 projects in Keboola).

Productionalization of data pipelines – it could potentially be easy to convert the "working version" to a "reliable data pipeline".

Keboola does not replace your current stack

IT might think that Keboola will be a replacement for the existing data stack. But that is not true unless the existing data stack is considered unmaintainable and IT itself is looking for a replacement.

Arguments

- **Keboola will serve as an additional layer on the existing data stack**.
  a. Keboola will consume existing data sources produced by the IT department. Sentences like: "**Keboola will heavily rely on existing IT data infrastructure and will not work without it**" might be handy for discussions. And it's true because Keboola won't have data.
- **Keboola can consume L2 layer data only** (already cleaned->joined->calculated from source data). Keboola does not intend to own the whole process of data acquisition (L0->L2 can be still done at internal IT systems). Sentences like: "**Everything you are doing will stay untouched and Keboola will only consume your outputs**" are useful.

Keboola helps IT to focus on core stuff

As the IT department backlog is overflowing and IT still needs to deliver business tasks there's very little time to maintenance. Most IT departments overwhelmed with business requirements will at one point prioritize business requirements instead of maintenance. As far as self-service will help them handover business requirements to business departments IT will have more time to polish their stack.

Arguments

- **The ratio of business VS maintenance work should be around 80(business):20(maintenance).** Do you have time to spend 1 day every week tunning your current stack to improve its performance or cost?
- **The Core BI team should be focusing on providing data to other business teams** and not doing exact dashboards in BI tools.
  a. This resonates in IT because this allows them to dig deeper into tech stuff.

Keboola is a controlled environment

Data governance is the magic word that everybody wants to hear in medium and large organizations. Smaller businesses often do not take care of this topic but they will as they grow. Keboola provides tons of logs, events, and integration to 3rd party systems.

Activity center is very good tools **for business users** which help them to identify where different costs are generated. On the other hand, **raw telemetry data resonates across IT** because they can import data to their systems.

Thanks to **SAML authorization** access to Keboola can be managed by 3rd party identity management tools. If someone mentioned terms like **Active Directory, Okta, or LDAP** - they are looking for SAML authorization.

Arguments

- **Everything that is being done in Keboola has its footprint in logs.** Everything that changes/interact with projects, users, and data is logged. All management API events are located here, **Telemetry Data | Keboola Connection User Documentation**
- **Access to Keboola can be managed from the central system.** Companies tend to have tens/hundreds of different systems and they want to have one place where to "fire employees". Sentences like: "**Keboola can be managed by any identity provider which supports SAML protocol**" IT/Security know we will fit their environment.

Picture describes:

1. Keboola can consume only L2 data and existing stack will be untouched
2. All use-case built by IT will be still handled by internal IT
3. Keboola will provide logs back to IT. SAML (AD) Authorization can driven from existing infra
4. Keboola can connect to external resources (not covered in this article)