

## Metadata-First: Disruptively and Proactively Improving Data Quality

Larry Shiller, Shiller & Company, Inc

Most organizations still treat data quality as a downstream cleanup problem: profile the data, find defects, open tickets, and repair issues after they have already affected reporting, operations, or AI. Metadata-First changes that model: It makes metadata the active control layer that prevents quality failures, detects risk earlier, and continuously improves the reliability of data as it moves through the enterprise.

I'll describe how a Metadata-First operating model disrupts traditional data quality programs by embedding business meaning, ownership, rules, lineage, policies, observability, and accountability directly into the data lifecycle. Instead of relying on reactive cleansing, Metadata-First lets organizations proactively enforce standards, automate controls, identify root causes, and make quality measurable across data products, governance workflows, analytics, and AI.

The result is a shift from "fixing bad data" to designing an enterprise in which trusted data becomes the default.