

Do You Actually Need dbt? - Domain Methods

A one-page operator brief for non-engineering leaders evaluating whether dbt is the right next move.

Use this when the organization is deciding whether to formalize transformation logic, testing, and governance.

1. Start with the business decision, not the tool.
2. Check for repeated metric fights, hidden dashboard logic, and rising reconciliation work.
3. Confirm who will own SQL models, tests, docs, and review discipline after launch.
4. Compare dbt against simpler options like narrowing scope or fixing source-of-truth problems first.
5. Start with one business-critical use case if dbt fits.

Key signals that dbt is justified:

- Shared business models used across marketing, finance, RevOps, or product
- Important logic lives in dashboards or one-off SQL
- Testing, documentation, and ownership now matter as much as query speed

Key signals that dbt is premature:

- Stakeholder asks are still fuzzy and success criteria keep shifting
- CRM, billing, or event data is unreliable upstream
- No team has the capacity to maintain model governance

Next step:

Translate the Ask if the problem is still ambiguous. Move into Data Foundation if the need is clearly architectural.