

# How to **impact** **investment returns** for your firm

Using unstructured data as a  
competitive advantage

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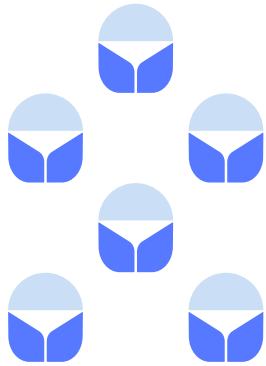
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When it comes to achieving high returns in private markets, having a high-performing operations team is more important than ever. Successful investment strategies are driven by teams who make decisions quickly, often based on proprietary models or specific data. But where does this data come from? And what can your operations team do with it to drive higher returns?

Perhaps surprisingly, many firms who seek to optimize returns using a data-driven approach don't need to obtain more data. Chances are, you're likely underestimating how much data you actually have. The problem is that it's hard to parse out (and hard to use) because it's unstructured — meaning it's in emails, documents, and files that flow into your firm on a daily basis as part of day-to-day operations.

This data isn't easy to process, even if you know where to find it. Consider that an annual report can be hundreds of pages long. The time it takes a human to read through and extract specific data points from hundreds of pages of text, tables, and charts means that even if you're able to find and extract useful data, you're already behind the clock. Even creating simple summaries of such documents can require a monumental amount of time.

If you could somehow wrangle all of this data to make decisions more quickly and accurately, you could use it to drive higher returns. Firms can now use Data Acceleration Platforms (or DAPs) to solve this challenge with the help of artificial intelligence (AI). This guide will explore how your firm can turn unstructured data into actionable information quickly and with minimal human intervention — all with a focus on clear, measurable improvement to returns.

# Better data = better returns

Actionable data drives returns. When your investment team has access to timely and comprehensive information on markets, sectors, or even individual companies, your activities generate higher returns. For instance, having actionable data enables your team to:

- Find reallocation opportunities
- Discover undervalued or overlooked investment opportunities
- Detect market trends more quickly
- Free up resources for deeper research and analysis

Data access and data completeness are competitive dimensions for firms hoping to drive higher returns than their peers. Given this, why doesn't every firm optimize their data processes to achieve optimal returns? Potential obstacles include:

- Quality — incoming data may be inconsistent, incomplete, or incorrectly formatted
- Complexity — data may be in multiple, complex formats and may come from multiple sources
- Siloing — data may live somewhere that's not accessible to other business systems
- Staffing — complex datasets require specific expertise to set up and operate

These challenges can frustrate your team — especially when high-quality, reliable data isn't always available.

Data Acceleration Platforms (DAPs) are built to solve this problem. They use sophisticated artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) technology to extract unstructured data from any kind of document or file. They then apply advanced data science tools to transform, enrich, validate, and reconcile this data so that it's ready for your team to execute on. Taking data from unstructured to actionable — with built-in integrations and minimal human intervention required — is how DAPs help drive higher returns.

# Why is unstructured data a problem?

What makes data “unstructured”?

Unstructured data is data in the wild. If a company issues a quarterly report and your team receives it via email, that report contains tables, charts, and other information that should affect your investment strategy and your firm’s ability to generate returns. However, because it’s buried in the pages of a PDF, this data can’t be imported as is into your other business systems and therefore can’t help you programmatically inform your investment strategy.

Other examples of documents that contain unstructured data include:

- Emails
- Financial statements
- Capital call and distribution notices
- Performance estimates
- Annual, quarterly, monthly reports
- Presentations or slide decks
- K-1s and other tax documents

The data that exists in these documents could drive faster, more accurate decision making. But in the time that it takes analysts to access and read these documents — and then pull out and record the relevant data — the competitive edge to improve returns using this data fades. Additionally, any intermediate steps like reformatting, enriching, or validating the data will add time and effort for your team.



Unstructured data represents a missed opportunity for firms hoping to achieve higher returns.



When done by a Data Acceleration Platform, unstructured data is extracted using a combination of AI technology like computer vision (CV), optical character recognition (OCR), and natural language processing (NLP) to replicate the human process of reading and understanding text. They also use large language models (LLMs) to interact with humans in an organic way — for instance, by responding to questions posed in plain language about a document or dataset or summarizing large documents:

### Making the most of large language models



Ask questions like: “What are the revenue figures for last year?”  
“How much of their investment portfolio is invested in mutual funds?”  
“What macroeconomic trends are affecting the company?”  
“What is the analyst rating?”



Add in news or points of interest related to the document for added context



Enrich documents or datasets with supplemental data or information



Summarize research reports or account statements

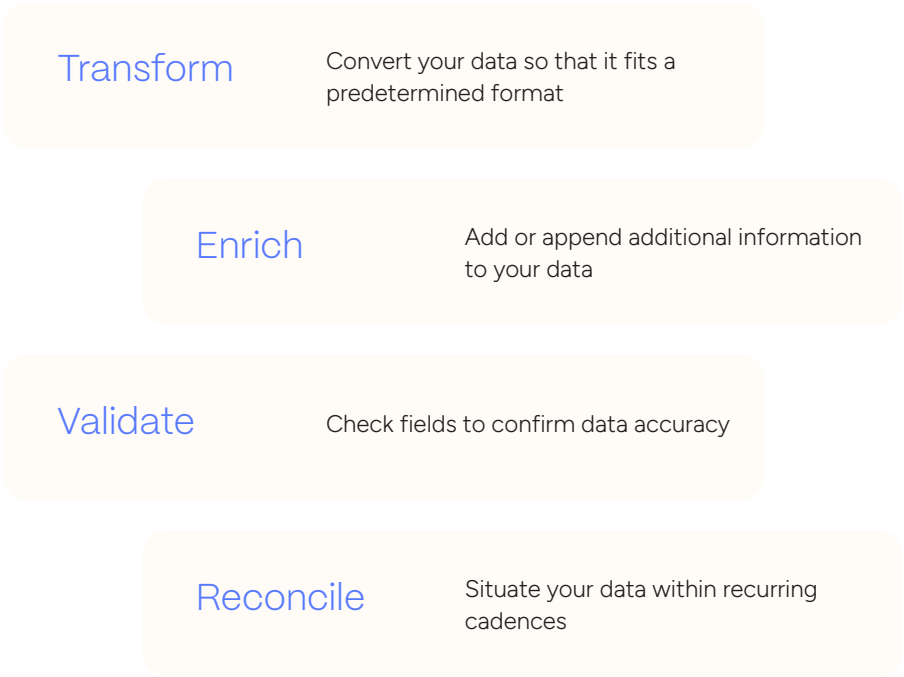


Analyze data across documents to identify gaps

While data extraction is an important first step, the most significant advantage of a DAP is its ability to make your data actionable. Next, we’ll discuss what “actionable” means in this context and what makes it an important distinction for firms seeking to optimize returns.

# From unstructured to actionable

Once your raw, unstructured data is available to you, you will need to transform the data so that every data point is formatted correctly. Next, you may want to enrich this data with third party data, i.e. to give additional context, identify anomalies or biases, or demonstrate trends. Then, you need to validate the data by checking each field to make sure it contains what it's supposed to (for instance, the "date" field only contains dates and no first names, or the values in a table add up correctly to the total). Finally, you may need to reconcile the data within an existing cadence to ensure nothing is missing or was entered in error.



Only after going through the necessary steps to prepare your data for use by your team and business systems can you call your data "actionable." This means that it's in the correct format, it's been enriched with any necessary information, and it's been validated and reconciled with any other relevant datasets.

The next step is to deliver your actionable data to the business, either into a database, via API integration, or as a separate file.

## Compiling into your databases

A DAP can generate accurately-formatted entries and use them to automatically update your databases and systems. This means that the data which powers your other systems will always be up-to-date, and any decisions based on this dataset will be made with all available knowledge.

## Generating file exports

Your team may require reports, spreadsheets, or memos — for client engagements or for leadership review, for example. DAPs can extract up-to-date actionable data from unstructured sources and export it into software that can generate these reports.

## Integrating with other software

Firms who want to optimize returns do so with the help of a suite of software (for example, portfolio management, accounting, or customer relationship management software). These programs are often where decisions that will drive your firm's returns are actually carried out. Having a DAP that integrates with these tools directly can cut down on the time it takes to put actionable insights at the team's fingertips.

The purpose of obtaining actionable data is to put it to use. So in addition to data extraction and improvement, the "last mile" of actually delivering the data to your team can be a blocker for firms who want to use data to optimize returns.



# The impact on returns

Actionable data improves returns by empowering your team to make better decisions faster. In practice, this can take a number of forms. For example:

A private equity firm uses a DAP to review and validate incoming Capital Account Statements and Capital Notices before sending them to their systems to increase accuracy and eliminate time spent on manual data entry by their analysts.



An asset manager uses a DAP to onboard new customers by capturing document data and populating it into customer forms, enabling them to instantly and accurately capture information from a wide range of formats and approve new customers faster.

A fintech software platform uses a DAP to help their clients automatically onboard transaction notice data, empowering them to meet their clients' needs and giving them an advantage against competitors.



A portfolio manager uses a DAP to summarize industry reports to understand the environmental conditions of their investments, helping them to make quicker and more informed investment decisions.

These use cases illustrate the flexibility of DAPs, but they also reveal the direct relationship between better data and better returns. In each case, having access to more data at the right time and in the right place has a direct impact on investment performance.

Obviously, every firm wants to achieve high returns. Data acceleration makes this possible by bringing actionable data to your investment team, but it also offers benefits related to high returns and competition:

- Transparency — it's clear what's driving returns
- Repeatability — DAP can be continually applied to improve returns
- Adaptability — DAP can drive returns despite changes to strategy or inputs
- Operational efficiency — DAPs can scale with relatively low increase to operating expenses

Relying on a DAP to process your unstructured data unlocks additional opportunities which you can use to drive even more return:

- Large language model-based tools that allow you to interact with the dataset or document using natural language, including LLM-powered automation available through some DAPs that can instantly summarize a document or answer user-inputted questions about the data
- Integrations that allow your data to trigger certain actions in your business systems
- Improved career pathing and morale for employees who can now spend less time on manual data entry

To compete successfully, firms need to develop robust systems to supplement and deploy data across their organization. For this reason, a DAP that takes in unstructured data and produces actionable data is more than the sum of its parts.



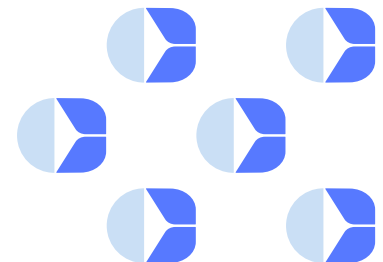
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# Should you use a DAP to optimize returns?

In an AI-enabled world, firms will live and die by their data. Your firm's performance will depend on the reliability and speed of the data that informs your investments.

With a Data Acceleration Platform, you can extract useful data from documents, files, or emails and deliver it to the people who can use it to drive higher returns for your firm — automatically. With a full view of the relevant data, you'll move more quickly and with greater confidence than the competition, resulting in higher returns and better overall performance.



## About Alkymi

Alkymi, the leading data acceleration platform, is the action layer between all of the data that flows into your business and the systems that support it. We help teams unlock data in any form, process and route it with tools built specifically for business users.

Valuable data flows into your business in all forms — email, PDFs, images, etc. These sources of information are not always easy to access and can slow down operations, leading to delays in your critical business functions. Liberating this data in real time, transforming it and sending it directly into your business systems accelerates your ability to make decisions.

Alkymi has built an intuitive solution that enables any business user to create end-to-end automated workflows without needing any technical expertise. We are delivering the first self-service, no-code automation tool that helps you accelerate decision-making and maintain agility.

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