



4 Tactics to Ensure the Accuracy, Consistency & Security of Your People Data

Organizations can use people data as a practical tool to better understand their talent and gain competitive business advantages. Our recent High-Impact People Analytics research demonstrates that obtaining accurate and consistent people data—along with keeping it secure and private—remains a top priority for mature analytics functions. The following four strategies can help organizations achieve those goals surrounding people data.

1. Creating a Data Dictionary

A data dictionary is a collection of descriptions and definitions of metrics, data terms, and statistical phrases commonly used within an organization. These resources are created to maintain consistency in the definitions of HR metrics (e.g., head count, attrition, promotion) and establish a single source of truth for people data across a company. To build a data dictionary, you need to work with the stakeholders who use and analyze your people data to reach universal definitions for these metrics. Avoid using technical words and jargon in your definitions to help ensure that these terms are easily understandable to all users. Using graphics along with consistent definitions can also help enhance understanding, especially for similar terms with subtle differences in meaning. Provide online access to the data dictionary so that it is easily accessible to the larger organization. Remember, the goal in creating this resource is to allow all users in your organization to speak in a common language when it comes to people data and metrics.

2. Establishing a People Data Warehouse

A people data warehouse is a single, central repository for all employee-related data, such as employee demographics, talent acquisition, performance management, and engagement. To get started, identify all sources of your people data. Beyond internal sources, these sources could extend to business data (e.g., customer satisfaction ratings, revenue) and publicly available external market data (e.g., social media and professional networking sites, educational databases, government resources). You can then export the captured information into the warehouse. Deriving information from this single source will help improve the consistency and accuracy of your data reports and insights. You can also establish the warehouse on an encrypted cloud-based system for easy access and security.

3. Automating Your Data Dashboard

All interactions between different parties—HR and candidates, employees, and managers—are opportunities to capture people data. Establishing an automated dashboard to record these interactions can enhance a company's people analytics capabilities. For example, an integrated HR dashboard allows hiring managers to post open positions, potential candidates to log in and manage their profiles, HR to conduct video interviews and prehire assessments, and leadership to extend the offer—all through one platform.¹ The automated dashboard will also help compile and integrate your people data, reducing the inaccuracy of analytics while scaling the use and accessibility of data and insights. Make sure that the maintenance and regulation of this dashboard is owned by a select group of individuals (guided by your organization's data council) to protect the accuracy and privacy of your data.

4. Enhancing Your HR Professionals' Data Literacy

It is critical to educate and upskill the entire HR team on how to identify, read, analyze, and use people data. Organizations can begin by raising their HR professionals' awareness about the importance of making data-driven talent decisions. Many organizations will conduct analytics "hackathons" (events that span a few days during which employees across departments come together to solve complex business problems), provide structured analytics trainings, and offer on-the-job learning opportunities to bring both the core analytics and HR staff together to improve data literacy. Upskilling the HR team with basic data literacy (e.g., how to read dashboards, different ways to interpret the data, common data sources and formats), can go a long way to ensure data consistency and accuracy.

Bersin Recommended Reading

- *Seven Top Findings for Driving High-Impact People Analytics* from the High-Impact People Analytics series
- *People Analytics: Scaling Capabilities*
- *Five Basic Principles for Upskilling HR in People Analytics*

¹ *Seven Top Findings for Driving High-Impact People Analytics*, Bersin, Deloitte Consulting LLP / Madhura Chakrabarti, PhD, 2017.

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