The informed executive
Improving organizational agility through workforce analytics
The secret is out: Analytics is a must-have capability in human resources

Leveraging analytics to drive business growth is top-of-mind for corporate executive (“C-suite”) leaders. Businesses collect an ever-increasing amount of data every day on their processes, customers, and competitors. The rapid speed and innovative tools we now have to store, manipulate, and analyze this information means that every business unit is measured on how they influence the company bottom line — including human resources (HR). This perspective provides an overview of how the C-suite can better leverage analytics, and practical steps you can take to get started and evolve your capabilities.

HR is playing catch-up

HR has long been behind the curve. In the 1990’s, most companies lacked the budget, the vision, and the talent to transform their HR systems into an analytics platform. In a 2014 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends survey of over 2,500 business and HR leaders, only 14 percent of companies reported any analytics capability in the HR function, compared to 81 percent of companies that utilize analytics in finance, 77 percent in operations, 58 percent in sales, and 56 percent in marketing.

To close the gap, some companies are implementing integrated, cloud-based HR systems to harvest the wealth of workforce-related big data needed to answer critical business questions. Big data is a key component of workforce analytics — the art and science of combining workforce data, business data and information technology (IT) expertise together to make more effective and efficient decisions about people. Companies that successfully leverage workforce analytics are better positioned to outperform their peers in executing their talent strategies.

However, C-suite leaders continue to grapple with how to utilize workforce analytics to align data-driven workforce decisions to company goals and strategies. In a 2015 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends survey of over 3,300 business and HR leaders, 75% of companies reported workforce analytics as “important” to them, but only 8% rated themselves as strong in it. Half of survey respondents rated their organizations “weak” at reporting and scorecarding, a foundational analytics capability.

### Figure 1: Corporate challenges with workforce analytics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utilizing HR and talent operational reporting and scorecards</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting multi-year workforce planning</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlating HR data to business performance</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using HR data to predict workforce performance and improvement</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graphic: Deloitte University Press | DuPress.com
Traditional HR solutions will not solve these challenges
The standard HR organizational model cannot keep pace with changing business needs without a deeper understanding of how technology redefines how we work, manage, and structure our jobs and careers to drive company growth. Only 22 percent of companies believe that HR is adapting to the changing needs of their workforce, and only 20 percent feel that HR can adequately plan for their company’s future talent needs. HR must embrace the new world of fast-paced technology, data analytics, automation and talent mobility, or risk becoming obsolete. Instead of simply managing transactions and delivering compliance programs, HR must focus on becoming a stronger business partner by driving value-added talent solutions. HR must raise its game by aligning its skills and capabilities with the organization’s overall business goals to become trusted advisors that can analyze, consult, and resolve critical business issues.

HR issues are company issues.
Business leaders, themselves, should deal with the growing reality that the economy is recovering, the global population is changing, and critical talent is scarce. Culture, engagement, and retention are no longer just HR problems – they are top market drivers for developing a people-centric culture that supports increased productivity, profitability, and quality for business leaders in global and expanding markets. Consider the following:

- By 2020, over half of major companies will have four generations in the workforce.
- Less than 50 percent of C-suite executives feel they are receiving any development at all.
- Less than 25 percent of companies feel comfortable with today’s digital learning environment.
- Half of today’s workforce would not recommend their employer to peers.
- 81 percent of companies report that they’re not ready to take advantage of the growing social media trend.

One thing is for sure: workforce analytics supports the bottom line
Having greater insight into workforce data is highly valued by global leaders as a key tool in better decision making. Leveraging the predictive capabilities of workforce analytics solutions to understand these trends and to forecast and drive future engagement through the right corporate culture can improve execution, retention, and financial performance. A clear acknowledgement of the value of workforce analytics, coupled with an evolved leadership mind-set, is paramount for organizations to embrace workforce analytics solutions and keep pace with dynamic business needs.
The executive mind-set

Making decisions without workforce analytics insights leaves business outcomes to chance

Organizational value grows when HR leverages data to answer critical workforce questions that affect business outcomes. By enabling companies to have tangible discussions about business issues and how to address them, workforce analytics enables HR to answer these questions. Specifically, these solutions connect workforce trends, business performance, and future market indicators to corporate strategy, with huge potential to leapfrog a company ahead of its peers. As decision maturity increases, the business case improves for major investments in cloud-based technology solutions that provide broad analytics platforms. Workforce analytics drives this advantage for HR and, ultimately, the entire C-suite team.

Workforce analytics for chief executive officers (CEOs)

Simply put, an organization’s employees are directly linked to its success (or failure). Providing increased insight to CEOs on workforce challenges allows for improved decision making related to investments, productivity, company culture, and overall organizational direction through scenario-planning and real-time modeling. As is the case with modern marketing and customer Experience (CX) solutions, modern workforce analytics can greatly reduce the time needed to assess the success or failure of new initiatives. Furthermore, it can fundamentally change how some work is done (like change management). Best-in-class workforce analytics can also improve executive line of sight through the ability to detect and predict workforce issues before they can complicate business plan execution. It is no mystery why human capital was the top CEO concern in the last two Conference Board Global CEO Challenge Surveys.¹⁶

Workforce Analytics for chief HR officers (CHROs)

From compensation and rewards, to recruiting and staffing, or resource project/geographical allocation, workforce analytics gives the CHRO the tools required to improve all aspects of their HR strategy. Workforce analytics provides insight into organizational value, employee engagement, and diversity and inclusion. The prescriptive and predictive outputs of the solution provide real-time, data-driven recommendations to support all CHRO activities, including succession planning, identifying talent gaps, and providing profiles that identify what makes a great employee. In addition, an empowered workforce analytics capability can provide a detailed mechanism to benchmark organizational metrics to their peers. The best implementations of workforce analytics combine data from HR and other sources, such as operations or finance, to paint a more complete picture of the drivers affecting improved customer or

Using predictive analytics to understand and reduce turnover

- A global pharmaceutical company facing an extremely competitive talent market in China understood it had to reduce workforce turnover to meet growth targets. It embarked on an effort to improve retention, particularly among its sales force.
- Using data from the previous three years, the company developed and implemented a predictive model to provide insights on critical sales roles for the company and pivot points that influenced retention. The model enabled prediction down to the level of the individual employee, identifying which variables were strong predictors of retention and turnover, and informing the development of focused retention strategies. For example, despite an intensely competitive talent market, compensation was not the primary driver of turnover.
- Using this data-driven model to improve the targeting and effectiveness of its retention strategy, the company has been able to use the analysis to take targeted action to improve retention. The company was able to focus its investments on the retention initiatives that offer the highest value and impact.
business outcomes. Best-in-class workforce analytics initiatives aspire to eventually provide insight into every human-powered and automated process in both the business and the evolving workforce.

Workforce analytics for chief financial officers (CFOs)
Being responsible for financial planning, managing assets, and assessing risk tolerance stands to gain a great deal from a well-informed workforce analytics solution. For example, data-driven workforce information can give CFOs insights into employee engagement that can cut the costs of replacing personnel, which can be as high as 213 percent of that person’s salary. Organizations that are equipped with predictive indicators of talent retention rates are more capable of proactively correcting regrettable attrition through higher investments in training, engagement events, or employee benefits. Understanding why people leave, what makes them stay, and how to encourage top performance is how an organization should invest its time and resources. Additionally, since effective workforce planning sits at the intersection of Finance, HR and external labor market data, CFOs have a key role to play in helping to make possible needed combined insights.

Using the cloud to simplify data management
- Seeking to replace redundant manual processes and manage its global workforce more efficiently, a global cosmetics and beauty products leader decided to move its HR technology to the cloud. As the company’s non-US markets were expected to grow faster than US operations and had significantly fewer capabilities to manage their workforce, the company planned a phased deployment to focus first on its non-US markets, followed by a rollout to remaining European and Asian countries and then the U.S.
- The solution included implementing “best practices” in HR processes and creating a single global source for employee data. Workforce analytics and reporting tools were also built into the system. The solution streamlined core talent management functions such as performance, compensation, and employee objectives and goals and allowed HR to easily extract data and upload it to existing payroll systems. Employees could enter and access their personal information easily, while managers enjoyed faster, more consistent data management processes.
- Equally important, since upgrading cloud solutions is significantly less time-consuming than upgrading traditional ERP technology, the solution could evolve to meet the company’s changing needs. This is a critical differentiator for cloud solutions. The resulting ease of use, greater functionality, and sharply heightened analytics capability mean that this company’s cloud-based solution reaches beyond technology and process improvement to serve as a catalyst for broader organizational and cultural change.

Workforce analytics for chief information officers (CIOs)
Primarily concerned with all things IT, CIOs are continually asked to find ways to improve infrastructure and streamline the flow of data across the business. It falls on the CIO to provide the environment for which workforce analytics solution inputs are aggregated and how outputs are shared and generated. Additionally, technology executives are called upon to manage data governance, and develop a technology strategy and architecture that allows for the right amount of organizational agility. Specifically, systems should be readied to support company needs to leverage big data that provide combined business insights and best-in-class workforce analytics.

Workforce analytics for chief marketing and sales officers (CM/SoS)
Insights into the workforce can give CM/SoS's information needed to make decisions about where to direct the organization’s perception and brand. In many ways, an organization’s employees represent a competitive advantage, but they are also a source of important strategic information. For instance, when equipped with accurate employee engagement information, a workforce analytics optimized organization is better poised to plan and execute company strategy. Additionally, for many corporations that sell directly to consumers, employment and consumer brand strategy can no longer be managed as fully independent activities. Dissonance between commercial go-to-market messaging and the workforce environment can be problematic, and workforce analytics can help CM/SoS’s to better understand if the teams managing customer experiences have a good grasp of what’s needed to serve and win.
Where to start: Analytics in action

Getting started in analytics is easier than you think

For many companies, the transition from data reporting to data analytics is a leap into the unknown. While 14 percent of companies now have some form of basic or progressing analytics capability, more than 60 percent are still stuck with a disorganized set of HR systems and no clear way to make meaningful data-driven decisions. Replacing legacy systems with highly integrated, cloud-based solutions provides greater availability to people data. However, how do you start using this data to make a real difference in talent decisions? Where do organizations start to build the capability, and what does that mean in terms of IT investments? Here are some potential starting points:

- **Identify the decisions you need to make and then get the data** Talk to your business units, select a well-known business problem – such as turnover or training quality – and work with the people across different functions affected by the problem to identify the data sets needed to analyze and solve the issue. Know the top 10 business questions you need to answer. Do not analyze data in a vacuum – work with business partners to address real business needs.

- **Partner with IT on the technology strategy** Data quality and availability is often one of the biggest problems on the people side of the business. Work with IT to build a program to clean, organize, and monitor data quality and to design the guiding principles for aligning technology with critical and emerging business goals and metrics. Before diving into big investments, spend time testing ideas using tools you already have to see what works in your organization. Additionally, know that not all data are created equal. While structured data from HR and financial systems used to report items like headcount or employee costs need to be clean, big data sources usually do not need to be perfect to generate value. For example, sentiment or text analytics can provide indicative real-time insights from large unstructured data sets, and do not typically require the same level of data transformation or consistency. These approaches can provide quick insights into directionality and still provide value in the absence of certainty.

- **Bring the data geeks into HR** Pair the talent experts with statisticians, econometricians, industrial psychologists, and IT specialists who bring different views to business challenges. Combine the people side with the business and technology side on one team to drive value and enhanced decision making for the organization. Many organizations struggle in building their workforce analytics capability because they are looking for all these characteristic in one person. Instead, organizations should build a team that brings the entire core and complementary skills needed in workforce analytics to provide the broad perspectives and expertise that are critical to success. Think of a team that actively cooperates and interacts with the business to effectively integrate strategy, operations, people, finance, technology, and marketing needs.

---

**Key potential benefits from workforce analytics**

- Prioritization of human capital investments
- Ability to optimize the right workforce mix
- Support with transitioning the workforce into new or modified roles that align with corporate strategy
- Definitions around an equitable recruiting and hiring strategy
- Improved ability to forecast attrition
- Identification of HR program investment returns to justify costs
- Shaping of the future workforce
- Improved workforce diversity and inclusion
- Reduction of costs and identification of cost savings
• **Start small and build on your successes** Focus on critical issues that are important and prototype a solution for a high priority business problem. Choose an area that will be high-impact and data-rich to maximize the potential of the prototype. Share the results as widely as possible to socialize small wins as the foundation for building a capability iteratively.

• **Promote broad adoption of workforce analytics** Get clarity on your audience and the context in which insights from workforce analytics will be leveraged. Some insights are best-suited to be delivered in snippets as part of process decision support, while bigger business questions are usually addressed with more extensive scenario modelling capabilities. Deliver the wrong insight in the wrong way and you can struggle with adoption. Focus on making clear the questions you plan to answer, and make sure you provide the “so what” that connects data to desired business outcomes. Systems should be easy-to-use by managers and employees, so seek feedback and adoption early to ensure workforce analytics solutions will resonate with stakeholders. Don’t underestimate the importance of automation to deliver mission-critical information quickly and easily to decision-makers. Finally, leverage the advantages in speed to value that exist with cloud-based solutions to show early wins and create further demand for more workforce analytics.

**Workforce Analytics goes beyond tools to provide a platform for engagement through HR data.**

**Workforce analytics challenges traditional approaches to decision making for HR and across the organization**

Imagine an organization where business leaders look to HR for advice as they develop business strategies to drive growth, where HR is considered the developer of talent and leadership across the business, and where business leaders respect and admire the HR professionals as co-leaders of the business. Seeing the value in the investment – both quickly and frequently – lays the foundation for an in-house workforce analytics capability across the organization.
Workforce analytics is a journey…not a destination

To establish and sustain workforce analytics solutions that work for your organization, you need a roadmap that outlines the journey that your business units need to take. The reality is that you cannot get there overnight – organizations can take several years to get to their desired level of capability.

Workforce analytics solutions range from fundamentals like data management and reporting to more sophisticated applications such as predictive modelling, data mining, and optimization. Understanding where you stand today – and acknowledging the path of maturity for the how and what of workforce analytics capabilities – supports an organization in developing the roadmap and is a critical step in enabling leadership to make data-driven decisions about the workforce. Foundational capabilities focus on the structure and usage of workforce analytics (i.e., the “how”). Dimensional capabilities focus on the capabilities and delivery of workforce analytics (i.e., the “what”). Organizational decision making maturity increases as foundations are strengthened and dimensions are expanded.

Consider five key foundations to evolve the “how” of workforce analytics

- **Organizational Alignment and Governance**: Align the workforce analytics capability and the governance structure to manage the associated processes, tools, and organization.
- **Staffing and Engagement**: Create a staffing plan for the workforce analytics team. Create a learning and communications plan to engage leadership and the workforce in understanding and leveraging the capability.
- **Business Adoption and Usability**: Encourage buy-in by aligning workforce analytics to business strategy, assessing the ability of internal customers to use outputs and drive decisions, and facilitate ease-of-use across the organization.
- **Operations**: Stand up the day-to-day management, processes, and service levels of workforce analytics within an organization.
- **Technology**: Establish a framework for the selection, implementation, and use of various technology packages to provide workforce analytics data, dashboards, reporting, and modelling.

**Figure 2: Foundations of workforce analytics**

![Diagram of workforce analytics foundations](Graphic: Deloitte Development LLC)
Consider five key dimensions to evolve the “what” of workforce analytics

- **Data**: Establish techniques and technologies to expand capabilities for the maturity of data collection, information management, data quality, data strategy, and the data analytics platform.
- **Reporting and Automation**: Institute rapid and repeatable processes to report, automate, and visualize data and to develop point solutions to bridge ad-hoc business needs that communicate results and insights.
- **Analytics**: Develop and advance analysis and statistical capabilities to identify trends and apply forecasting, predictive, and optimization techniques to enhance decision making.
- **Measurement and Evaluation**: Assess and apply techniques to survey employee sentiment, track metrics and performance indicators, and evaluate the effectiveness of programs to meet desired outcomes.
- **Big Data**: Identify and analyze new and non-traditional data sources from social media and other external sources to ‘datify’ talent trends and practices and discover new challenges and opportunities.

Define your success factors for workforce analytics capabilities

To strengthen and expand workforce analytics, analyze where you are and determine what you need to set the strategy and define the roadmap for your business needs. By leveraging initial capabilities to prototype solutions and highlight value to increase demand, an organization can build capabilities iteratively as results are delivered to the business.

An organization can use the workforce analytics **foundations** to assess the current state of the organization – requirements, skills, tools, technologies, and readiness for change – and map out the desired elements of a future state organization. By understanding where there are gaps in missing foundational elements, you can generate options to prioritize capabilities and set short-term execution plans in motion to solve pressing C-suite business challenges. An organization can use the workforce analytics **dimensions** to assess the priority and delivery needs in the future state to map out the resources and the abilities needed to develop and increase analytics capabilities. Knowing the decisions that the business wants, and needs, to make guides the sequence and timing to mature the capability. The result is a strategic way ahead for your organization for rollout, prioritization, and mobilization for implementing workforce analytics.

Know your capabilities, and invest in them to yield results.
Erica Volini
National Service Line Leader, HR Transformation
Deloitte Consulting LLP
evolini@deloitte.com

As the US HR Transformation practice leader, Erica Volini works with organizations to determine how best to deliver HR services that enable global growth and drive enhanced profitability. Ms. Volini has led global HR Transformation projects, serves on Deloitte’s board advisory council and is the leader for the Service Delivery Transformation practice, which focuses on transformation across HR, finance, IT and procurement.

Bertrand Dussert
Vice President, Human Capital Transformation and Thought Leadership
Oracle Corporation
bertrand.dussert@oracle.com

Bertrand Dussert serves as human capital transformation and strategy advisor to Oracle’s executive clients, and over the last two years has consulted with HR leadership from over one third of the Fortune 100. In his most recent role prior to joining Oracle, Mr. Dussert served as the global leader for HR Shared Services, Recruitment Operations, Workforce Planning and HRIS at American Express.

Endnotes

iii According to Gartner, Inc. Big Data is defined as high volume, high velocity, and/or high variety information assets that require new forms of processing to enable enhanced decision making, insight discovery and process optimization (2012).
vi Ibid.
ix Ibid.

xi Todd Tauber and Dani Johnson,” The next evolution of learning content”, Bersin by Deloitte, Fall 2014, http://www.bersin.com/library
xii Bersin by Deloitte proprietary research conducted with Glassdoor, November 2014.


