

# Impacting Business Value

Leading Companies in  
People Analytics

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# Executive Summary

The business world is challenging chief executive officers (CEOs) like never before, across nearly every industry, sector, and country. As outlined in a recent survey, “With rising inflation, the mounting mental health crisis, and geopolitical instability, coupled with a broadening array of stakeholders with diverse interests, opinions, and expectations, it is not surprising that CEO optimism has declined.”<sup>1</sup>

The numerous challenges over the last few years have also accelerated the need for chief human resources officers (CHROs) to have more insights at their fingertips to advise their C-suite colleagues and board of directors (boards) to make the right decisions about people. With the global pandemic and the current economic uncertainties, businesses all over the world need new insights to navigate these human factors: culture, inclusion, mental well-being, wage inflation, retention, and skill shortages are all prevalent topics in 2022. These are incremental to existing challenges, such as hybrid working and social inequalities, that are already the focus at the “top of the house”.

And yet, despite these events – or maybe, because of them – people analytics has grown in importance and influence. Optimism within the field is at an all-time high, and the human resources (HR) function itself is more data-driven than ever before. It is no surprise, then, that the role of people analytics remains essential, which is precisely what we discovered in our Insight222 People Analytics Trends 2022 research.

This year, the research includes data from over 184 companies that responded to our survey. These companies are headquartered in 23 countries, operating in over 180 markets, and responsible for over 15 million workers worldwide.

We believe it is the largest dedicated quantitative research on the topic with more than 40,000 data points.

Our research focused on a number of key topics. Most importantly, we considered who are the “best of the best” when it comes to people analytics. Who measures the financial benefit of their endeavours, and when they do that, what is it that they do? We call these companies Leading Companies in People Analytics – or just “Leading Companies”. In addition, we looked at specialist people analytics technologies, personalised products, and what ethical needs must be considered given the explosion in people data in the recent past.

The key findings of our research are:

- 1. Leading Companies in People Analytics display seven key characteristics.**
- 2. People analytics as a discipline has grown in importance.**
- 3. People analytics leaders have expanded their range of influence.**

Our research on Leading Companies shows very clearly, quantitatively, that there are very specific characteristics that they display. It starts with the intention and action of the CHRO in building a data-driven culture in HR, and in measuring the financial impact of people analytics.

When looking across the 184 companies that participated in our research, 85% have a CHRO who has made it clear that data is an essential part of the HR strategy. Additionally, 58% of people analytics teams have calculated the financial value of at least one people analytics solution in the last 12 months.

Of course, it's not all about financial value. Value from people analytics also comes in other forms: for example, employee experience, enhanced employee-consumer interactions, improved culture, inclusion and belonging, and better mental well-being. What we find is that the number of complex human topics being tackled are broadening and being taken more seriously by boards. Overall, 88% of the companies surveyed now work on topics requested by the board of directors. What differentiates Leading Companies, though, is that the people analytics leader works periodically with the CEO, the chief financial officer (CFO) and key senior line of business executives, and their staff, as well as the CHRO.

In conclusion, the Insight222 People Analytics Trends 2022 study reveals that people analytics is rising in importance and influence. Additionally, Leading Companies undertake very specific and intentional activities that enable their investment to deliver more value for every dollar invested.

People analytics provides insights that allow the CEO, their executive team, and the board to bring a higher focus on the “social” aspects of ESG (environmental, social and governance) – and therefore help to improve their chosen stakeholders, communities as well as the world overall.

The future for people analytics is looking good – in fact, very good indeed!

**Jonathan Ferrar, Naomi Verghese, Nerea González**  
October 2022

The key findings of our research are:

## **1 Leading Companies in People Analytics display seven key characteristics.**

Leading Companies impact business value to a higher degree than non-Leading Companies. Our research highlights that they have invested in people analytics year-on-year and they measure their impact financially. Most insightfully, they each display seven key characteristics which enables them to deliver more value to their organisations.

## **2 People analytics as a discipline has grown in importance.**

Investment in people analytics teams is higher in 2022 than in 2021. The ratio of people analytics teams to company headcount, for companies who completed our research in the last two or three years, has increased. This shows that the enormous investment in people analytics, as a result of the pandemic, was not just a “flash in the pan” and that CHROs value the specific expert skills that people analytics brings to the table. For people analytics technology, the increase in investment is predicted to be higher in the next 12 months than in the same period in our research in 2021.

## **3 People analytics leaders have expanded their range of influence.**

Our research indicates that people analytics is operating at the top of organisations regularly. The leader of people analytics is “nearer” to the top of the organisation on average when we look across the 184 organisations surveyed. The percentage of people analytics leaders who report directly to the CHRO is 21% in 2022, which is eight points higher than in our research findings in 2021. Many of those, especially in Leading Companies, are now personally interacting on a weekly, monthly or quarterly basis directly with C-suite executives.

# 01

## Leading Companies

If there is one question that is asked by CHROs and other senior HR executives more than any other about people analytics, it is “what are the best doing?” In our research this year we focused on answering this question.

### What are Leading Companies?

Leading Companies are those companies or organisations that deliver, measure and communicate value from, have seven key characteristics in, and publicly share their experiences of people analytics.

### Invest : Measure : Scale Model

We have found that Leading Companies undertake three common practices to build their functions and serve their stakeholders. As shown in Figure 1, they invest in their stakeholders and team, measure the financial impact of people analytics solutions and scale people analytics across the enterprise.

#### ● FIGURE 1

Leading Companies invest, measure and scale people analytics more than other companies



## Seven Characteristics of Leading Companies

When analysing their ability to invest, measure, and scale, the following seven characteristics for Leading Companies emerge:

- 1. The people analytics leader actively influences the C-suite through their close reporting relationship with the CHRO.**
- 2. The people analytics function undertakes advanced analytics on the most important business priorities.**
- 3. The people analytics leader invests in each of three key skills: people analytics consultants, data scientists, and behavioural scientists.**
- 4. The people analytics function measures and delivers financial value from people analytics activities.**
- 5. The people analytics function democratises data to managers and executives across the enterprise.**
- 6. The people analytics function has a strong focus on personalised people analytics products for employees.**
- 7. The CHRO makes it clear that data and analytics are an essential part of the HR strategy and HR business partners are developing their data literacy.**

When analysing these characteristics in our research, Leading Companies display all seven of them compared with other companies (see Figure 2). And when assessing the data in all 184 companies in our research, we find that there are only a handful of companies, eight in total, that undertake each of the seven activities above and are active in the marketplace.

## ● FIGURE 2

The seven characteristics of Leading Companies in People Analytics

	Leading Companies	Non-Leading Companies
1. The people analytics leader actively influences the C-suite through their close reporting relationship with the CHRO.	100%	19%
2. The people analytics function undertakes advanced analytics on the most important business priorities.	100%	47%
3. The people analytics leader invests in each of three key skills: people analytics consultants, data scientists and behavioural scientists.	100%	20%
4. The people analytics function measures and delivers financial value from people analytics activities.	100%	41%
5. The people analytics function democratises data to managers and executives across the enterprise.	100%	56%
6. The people analytics function has a strong focus on personalised people analytics products for employees.	100%	43%
7. The CHRO makes it clear that data and analytics are an essential part of the HR strategy and HR business partners are developing their data literacy.	100%	67%

**Note:** The percentage indicates the number of positive responses from companies that answered questions related to the seven characteristics.

**Base:** Leading Companies: n=8; non-Leading Companies: n=176.

Additionally, to be a true leader in the field, and not a follower, it is important that Leading Companies are active in the industry at large in helping others become successful. This is often done through a variety of methods, including sharing their stories in articles, presenting at conferences, and being a case study in vendor documents or books.

## ● Case Insight from EPAM Systems, Inc. Working directly with the CEO

Aliaksei (“Alex”) Nekrakha is the Director of Compensation and People Analytics at EPAM Systems, Inc. (“EPAM”) and based in Spain. He has a strong reputation and reports directly into the chief people officer (CPO).

Alex explains: “People analytics at EPAM is growing really fast. One of our differentiators is driving high-quality business decisions about people and the CEO is very involved too.” As such, Alex has a direct relationship with the CEO and meets with him frequently to discuss a variety of topics. “The agenda of each meeting differs based on the current business situation and the priorities of the CEO himself,” Alex mentions. In the week we spoke with him, Alex outlined that he was meeting the CEO about their overall people reporting.

“The CEO would like to be reminded and understand better what new reports we produce, what analytics we have and, what new insights we found. He wants to understand what we have discovered that could help the business more.”

Also, Alex has met the CEO on topics related to the company’s location strategy from a people perspective – for example, which people they are hiring and the skills they need. He has looked closely at people analytics, but also at many other enterprise analytics functions, so that he can understand what new talent and capabilities they can attract to grow the business – and in which locations. Alex continues: “We look at everything – people, taxation, market capacity – everything.”

For Alex he has a great relationship with both the CPO and the CEO. He concludes: “The CPO trusts me and my team. We often work independently and meet with the CEO regularly. If the CPO can’t attend, then we meet with the CEO directly. They trust me to do my job. It’s fantastic to be involved at the top.”

## Leading Companies invest more

Leading Companies in People Analytics invest more than other companies and therefore, on average, have larger teams relative to their organisation (see Figure 3).

The ratio of the people analytics team to total employee headcount for Leading Companies in 2022 is 1:2300 compared with 1:2900 for all companies. Furthermore, Leading Companies invest progressively year on year. The ratio for Leading Companies has strengthened in 2022 from 1:2500 in 2021.

The investment in people analytics teams is discussed in Chapter 02: The Importance of People Analytics, which includes a description of how the ratio of a people analytics team is calculated. Also described is the reason we link the ratio of people analytics team members to the total employee headcount of a company.

Of all the investments made, probably the most telling insight is related to the third of the seven characteristics of Leading Companies presented above (the people analytics leader invests in each of three key skills: people analytics consultants, data scientists, and behavioural scientists). As discussed earlier, Leading Companies invest in each of these three skills 100% of the time. However, non-Leading Companies – that is, the other 176 companies completing our survey – only have all of those three skills 20% of the time.

When dissected further, it is the behavioural scientist that is most often missing. In non-Leading Companies the behavioural scientist role exists in only 30% of companies, while the data scientist role exists in 63% and the people analytics consultant role exists in 82%.

It is likely that for the 70% of companies that don't have a behavioural scientist in the people analytics team, these skills exist elsewhere in HR. This infers a missed opportunity for the HR function overall.

Having behavioural scientists in the people analytics team allows complex topics like DEIB (diversity, equality, inclusion and belonging), culture, talent acquisition, and retention to be managed much more effectively. This is because both mathematical scientists and behavioural scientists can work hand-in-hand to analyse and discuss complex topics without organisational structures creating unnecessary obstacles.

### FIGURE 3

Leading Companies, ratio of people analytics team to total employee headcount

Base: all companies 2022: n=184; Leading Companies 2022: n=8; Leading Companies 2021: n=8.

PEOPLE ANALYTICS TEAM:  
TOTAL EMPLOYEE  
HEADCOUNT

ALL COMPANIES 2022

1:2900

PEOPLE ANALYTICS TEAM:  
TOTAL EMPLOYEE  
HEADCOUNT

LEADING COMPANIES 2022

1:2300

PEOPLE ANALYTICS TEAM:  
TOTAL EMPLOYEE  
HEADCOUNT

LEADING COMPANIES 2021

1:2500

## Investment : Value Matrix

Our research on Leading Companies – and specifically the investments made in, and the financial value derived from, people analytics – enabled us to identify four types of people analytics teams (see Figure 4).

**FIGURE 4**

Investment : Value Matrix based on analysis of investment made and value derived from people analytics



## The Responsibilities of People Analytics in Leading Companies

Another fascinating insight from our research is that people analytics executives in Leading Companies are responsible for more topics, when compared with their non-Leading Company peers.

These Leading Company executives are all responsible, amongst other things, for three specific topics 100% of the time:

1. employee listening/engagement
2. upskilling HR, and
3. people analytics technology.

Compare that with their non-Leading Company peers, who are responsible for the same three topics in 55%, 86% and 82% of the time, respectively (see Figure 5).

### ● FIGURE 5

Areas of responsibility for people analytics teams

These insights show that the responsibility of people analytics executives at Leading Companies is greater.

	Leading Companies	Non-Leading Companies
1. Employee listening/experience	100%	55%
2. Upskilling HR	100%	86%
3. People analytics technology	100%	82%

**Note:** The percentage indicates the number of positive responses from companies that answered questions related to the three areas of responsibility.

**Base:** Leading Companies: n=8; non-Leading Companies: n=176.

## Leading Companies What Industry Are They In?

Our research finds that Leading Companies are represented in three industries (see Figure 6).

## Leading Companies What Does All This Mean?

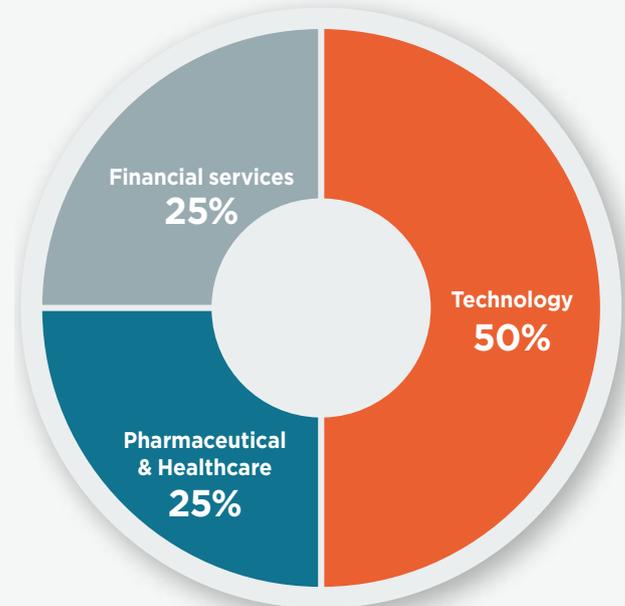
Our research supports that Leading Companies are those companies that practise “best in class” people analytics. They intentionally undertake very particular activities, and as a result demonstrate seven specific characteristics.

They invest in their stakeholders and prioritise the most important business topics as much as they invest in their own teams and function. They inspire their teams to measure the impact of their work on their organisation and its workforce.

Finally, they focus on scaling people analytics. They investigate ways to democratise people data across the enterprise to managers and executives. They scale the products they develop. And they actively enable HR business partners (HRBPs) to be more data-driven.

In short, Leading Companies in People Analytics focus on impacting business value.

**FIGURE 6**  
Industry groups of Leading Companies  
in People Analytics



# 02

## The Importance of People Analytics

People analytics as a discipline has grown in importance. This is evident from the continued investment that global organisations are making in growing their people analytics functions.

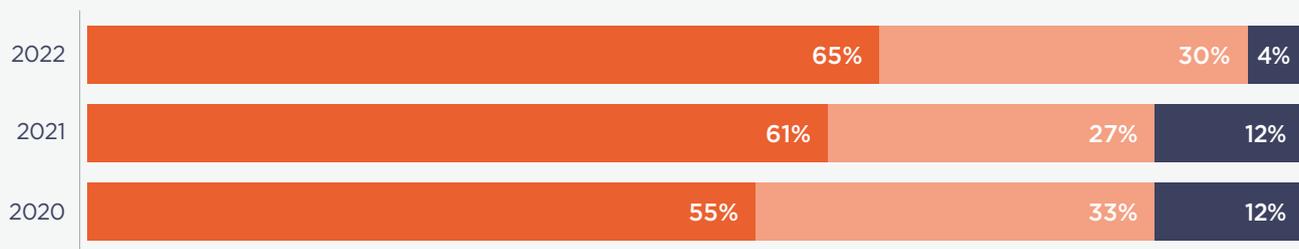
Each year over the last three years, Insight222 has surveyed people analytics leaders to understand how their team size changed in the previous 12 months. Our research shows that the percentage of companies experiencing an increase in the size of

their people analytics teams has increased each year since 2020, with 65% having increased their team size in 2022 (see Figure 7).

In addition, this trend of increased investment in people analytics is expected to continue. Of the 184 companies surveyed this year, 68% predict that their team size will grow in the next 18-24 months, even given the current macro-economic factors impacting the business world.

### ● FIGURE 7

People analytics teams have been growing in size over the period 2020-2022



Key

■ Increased   ■ Stayed the same   ■ Decreased

## People Analytics was not a “Flash in the Pan”

A question that people analytics leaders frequently ask is, “what size should my team be?” In 2020, a new method for understanding the optimal people analytics team size was introduced.<sup>2</sup> This is the ratio for people analytics, which compares the number of people in the people analytics team with the total employee headcount of the company.

Across all companies, the change in the ratio for people analytics over the last three years shows that the growth of people analytics teams from 2020 to 2021 has been maintained in 2022. In 2021 the ratio strengthened to 1:2900 from 1:4000 in 2020 – and it remains at 1:2900 for 2022 (see Figure 8). This means that in a company of 100,000 employees, the people analytics team size is, on average, 34 in 2022 and 2021, compared with 25 in 2020.

### The Ratio for People Analytics Explained

Our approach to understanding the optimum people analytics team size compares the people analytics team with total employee headcount. This is more appropriate than a comparison of the size of the people analytics team with the size of the HR function, which is often assumed to be the most logical approach. This is because it prioritises the guiding purpose of the people analytics function: delivering business value (not just HR value).

Successful people analytics teams remain focused on the needs of the business. In other words, when prioritising people analytics projects, the team concentrates on work that will drive significant business value instead of carrying out work for the benefit of the HR function alone. People analytics teams must think “business first”, adopting an outside-in view and working for the business, not for HR.

**Therefore, the size of the people analytics function should be considered against the total employee headcount of the entire business.**

**FIGURE 8**

People analytics team  
ratio 2022-2020  
Base: 2022, n=184; 2021, n=114;  
2020, n=60.

PEOPLE ANALYTICS TEAM:  
TOTAL EMPLOYEE  
HEADCOUNT  
2022

**1:2900**

PEOPLE ANALYTICS TEAM:  
TOTAL EMPLOYEE  
HEADCOUNT  
2021

**1:2900**

PEOPLE ANALYTICS TEAM:  
TOTAL EMPLOYEE  
HEADCOUNT  
2020

**1:4000**

## Many Companies Continue to Invest Progressively Year on Year

The ratio data was further analysed by comparing those companies who responded to our survey in both 2021 and 2022. For these 67 companies, the ratio strengthened from 1:2900 in 2021 to 1:2700 in 2022.

Given the challenges that organisations face, we believe this is a clear indication that these companies have ambitious missions to deliver increased business value through people analytics in parallel with developing a data-driven culture for HR.

## After the First Year, Investment Increases

Our research also allowed the examination of the ratio alongside the tenure of the people analytics function – in other words, “how old is the people analytics function itself?”

We found that companies with a people analytics function that has been in place for less than a year have a ratio of 1:4800, compared with 1:2700 for companies with a people analytics team that has been established for two or more years (see Figure 9). This demonstrates that after the first year, a company’s investment in people analytics skills increases markedly.

## What Do These Ratios Mean?

Our research highlights that those organisations with larger teams relative to their total employee headcount have a better ability to deliver sustainable value, as shown earlier in Chapter 01: Leading Companies. It is no surprise, then, that the ratio for Leading Companies in 2022 is 1:2300, much better than the average ratio for all companies of 1:2900 shown above.

Leading Companies are considered the “best of the best” in people analytics. They consistently invest in their people analytics functions, including ensuring that they have a suitable balance of people analytics consultants, data scientists, and behavioural scientists.

Leading Companies also employ people that can provide expertise in employee listening/experience, upskilling HR, and people analytics technology. These topic areas are the responsibility of Leading Companies.

Our conclusion is that the size of the people analytics team relative to the total employee headcount is important. And the better the ratio is, the more opportunity there is for creating business impact from people analytics.

FIGURE 9

People analytics team ratio, by age of the team itself

PEOPLE ANALYTICS TEAM:  
TOTAL EMPLOYEE HEADCOUNT  
2022 (0-1-YEAR-OLD TEAM)

1:4800

PEOPLE ANALYTICS TEAM:  
TOTAL EMPLOYEE HEADCOUNT  
2022 (2-YEAR-OLD+ TEAM)

1:2700

## ● Case Insight from MetLife, Inc. Influencing and delivering value progressively

Laura Shubert is the Vice President of People Analytics & Insights at MetLife, Inc. She has held this role since 2014 and has evolved the function to be incrementally important and influential over that time.

The ratio of people analytics to total employee headcount mirrors that of our research. At MetLife the ratio has grown from 1:3200 in 2020 to 1:2800 in 2021, and then stabilised at the same 1:2800 ratio for 2022.

The influence of people analytics at MetLife has grown significantly, and the topics that Laura and her team focus on have also risen in importance over the last three years. She now reports to the CHRO directly, as Laura exclaims: “That happened last fall, so just about a year ago. I used to be part of HR shared service. Now I have bigger influence. But bigger accountability too!”

MetLife’s people analytics journey is one that many can learn from.

“Ten years ago, we were essentially a reporting shop,” Laura explains. “But we had the vision, and we began working towards moving our transactional reporting work to an in-house offshoring scenario. Then we started implementing self-service and some automation of reporting, and every time we moved something out, we took responsibility for another topic. First it was consistent dashboarding. Then advanced analytics. Now we have democratised our data through a third-party application.”

The progression has helped MetLife tremendously. Rather than coming to her team for basic data such as “what’s my attrition rate?” or “can you give me a list of all my high potentials?”, Laura now is able to put that sort of data at the fingertips of managers, executives, and HR business partners across the entire enterprise.

As such Laura is now able to focus on much bigger topics – topics that will help turn the needle, such as advancing the organisation’s strategic workforce planning agenda. And with that, her visibility and accountability have increased. Laura reflects that over the last eight years as she has been leading people analytics, the importance level has definitely changed: “I’ll say that 10 years ago I wouldn’t have been talking to the CEO, but interact with him at least quarterly today. It’s very reflective of what we’ve done at MetLife and how we’ve created impact.”

# 03

## The Influence of People Analytics

Influence is defined as “the power to make other people agree with your opinions or do what you want”.<sup>3</sup>

With this definition in mind, and focusing on the discipline of people analytics, the impact of people analytics can be advanced through the following factors. Each is discussed in more details below.

- 1. Influence and the reporting line:** the number of people analytics leaders reporting into the CHRO or the HR leadership team (HRLT) is increasing, thus giving a higher level of accountability and influence for people analytics.
- 2. Influence and how established the people analytics function is:** as the tenure of the people analytics function itself increases, the likelihood of reporting into the CHRO or HRLT itself increases.
- 3. Influence and the frequency of meetings with the CHRO:** people analytics has more influence when more time is spent with the CHRO on data-driven topics, to the point that the people analytics executive ultimately can represent the CHRO in discussions with other C-suite colleagues without the CHRO even being present.
- 4. Influence and relationships with senior stakeholders:** people analytics teams have more influence and are able to assist more directly on complex and more business-critical topics, more quickly, if they are in direct conversation with a variety of senior stakeholders.

### Influence and the Reporting Line

The reporting line has been researched in the Insight222 People Analytics Trends research for three years: but we have not had sufficient data previously to highlight the trends. However, this year, it is clear that the level at which people analytics, as a function, reports has risen in the human resources organisation.

This year, 21% of the 184 companies who participated in our research have a people analytics leader that reports directly into the CHRO, compared with 13% of the 114 companies who participated in 2021.

Additionally, and on a comparative basis, for the 67 companies who participated in our research in both 2021 and 2022, there are also more people analytics leaders who now report directly into the CHRO: 22%, compared with 19% in 2021.

Overall, we have found that 90% of people analytics leaders now report either into the CHRO directly, or one level beneath that person. This has increased since 2020 (see Figure 10). And for Leading Companies, this is 100%.

This is also evidenced by the people analytics leaders themselves. One such leader, Laura Stevens, Vice President of Global Strategy, Analytics and Experience at DSM, recalls during a recent podcast<sup>4</sup> how she was interviewed by the chief digital officer and the CEO as part of being recruited into the company. She states how it demonstrated the significance of the role: “[It] shows the importance that DSM is attaching to evolving in this space. It was a very decent and robust recruitment process in which I got to meet many of the senior stakeholders.”

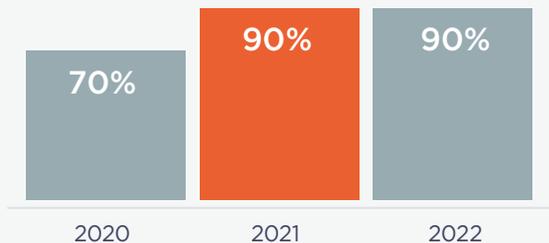
It’s quite clear that organisations are seeing the importance of people analytics, and this also requires a higher level of influence in the selection of people analytics executives themselves.

### Influence and How Established the People Analytics Function Is

Our research finds that, as the people analytics function evolves with age, the reporting line gets closer to the CHRO. This is shown in Figure 11.

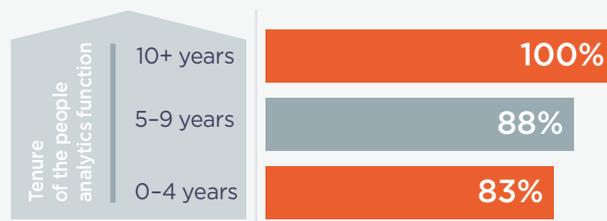
● **FIGURE 10**

The percentage of people analytics leaders reporting to the CHRO or CHRO-1, 2020-2022  
Base: n=30.



● **FIGURE 11**

The percentage of people analytics leaders reporting into the CHRO or CHRO-1, by tenure of people analytics functions, in 2022  
Base: n=184.



As the CHRO understands the opportunity and value presented by having an analytics team, they want that person closer to them, to provide more insights directly. Or it could just be that as time progresses, the people analytics leader grows in executive impact, and the CHRO is more likely to develop them into a more senior executive role.

In many ways, it doesn't matter why. The real impact is in the fact that it is happening.

### Influence and the Frequency of Meetings with the CHRO

One interesting insight gained from our research is that as the reporting level of the people analytics leader moves closer to the CHRO, the regularity of meetings with the CHRO increases. This is one of those “Well, obviously!” insights. Of course, if the person reports closer to someone, the likelihood is that they will meet more frequently. Yes - it is obvious - and it is good to have data that confirms this (see Figure 12).

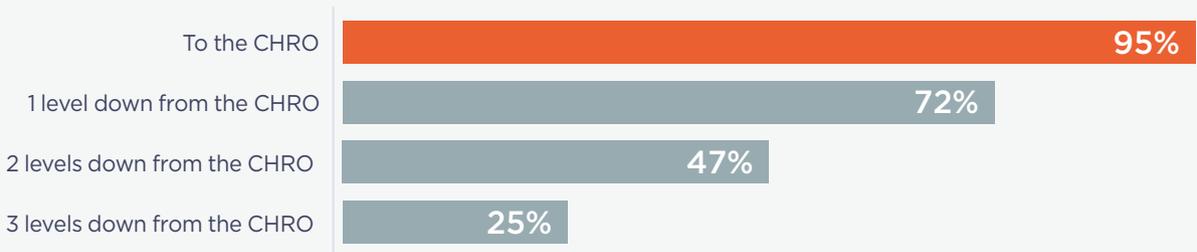
What is more interesting to discuss is what happens because of this fact. In our qualitative findings as part of this research, it became clear that the regularity of meetings between the CHRO and the people analytics leader was important in creating two opportunities:

- opening doors for access to other C-suite executives and general managers - which, in turn, provides a higher likelihood of focusing people analytics on the most pressing and important business topics, and
- allowing the people analytics leader to represent the CHRO in important meetings, especially ones that require analytical insights, such that the people analytics leader themselves is influencing personally on a one-to-one basis.

These findings provide ample evidence that the reporting line is important in helping people analytics improve its influence as a function.

● **FIGURE 12**

Regularity of meetings with the CHRO increases as the reporting line to the CHRO narrows



**Note:** the data shows the percentage of people analytics leaders who meet with the CHRO weekly or monthly, by their reporting relationship to the CHRO.

88%

OF PEOPLE ANALYTICS TEAMS  
HAVE BEEN ASKED TO DO SPECIFIC  
WORK FOR THE BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

### Influence and Relationships With Senior Stakeholders

Of increasing importance to the work of the people analytics function is the board of directors. Ever since the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) made human capital reporting a requirement<sup>5</sup> and other reporting requirements legislation came into effect in various countries, such as gender pay gap reporting in the UK,<sup>6</sup> the work of people analytics has been elevated to investors and, therefore, the board in new ways.

It is natural then to expect many people analytics teams to be working on topics requested by the board. Our research confirms this, with 88% of companies who responded to our survey confirming that in the last 12 months their people analytics team has been asked to do specific work for the board.

Our research further confirms that working with other C-suite executives and general managers is also happening. Working with senior stakeholders is widespread, and in Leading Companies it is an integral part of the activities of the people analytics leader. Working with these senior stakeholders will influence the speed and adoption of people analytics products and solutions into the workplace.

There are four groups of senior executives (or individuals) that are especially important to connect with, with different levels of frequency, depending on the person:

1. **The CHRO:** should meet with at least monthly, but often more frequently.
2. **The CEO:** aim to meet with quarterly, and at least annually, on a one-to-one basis, or together with the CHRO.
3. **The CFO and other senior finance executives:** meet with at least quarterly, but often more frequently.
4. **General managers of significant lines of business:** meet frequently as the business dictates; however, meeting significant executives at least monthly is important to gain perspectives, understand the business goals and discuss priorities.

These relationships and conversations are important for value to be derived. Gaining insights from senior executives is an important part of ensuring the success of the people analytics function and in creating business impact.

As David Swanagon, Global Head of People Insights, Technology and Business Excellence at PPG, comments: “If people analytics leaders frame the conversation around only people, there will never be the right level of impact. If those leaders frame the conversation around growth, sales and market opportunity, it creates a totally different situation. For me, it was this reframing that made the difference to our level of influence with business leaders.”

## ● Case Insight from Boehringer Ingelheim Working with the chief of staff

Getting access to senior leaders can be a daunting prospect – it's critical to find appropriate access points. At Boehringer Ingelheim, Christopher Cerasoli, Senior Associate Director, People Analytics, finds a simple and savvy way to gain traction, a way that seems so obvious and easy, that it presents possibilities for every people analytics executive. He outlines it as follows.

“We have some occasions where there is a flurry of activity with our senior leaders to meet the needs of the business. These usually bring periods of intense interaction, but once our key deliverables have been provided, there are often other priorities in the natural course of business that compete for leaders' attention. So, for people analytics, there's a possibility of losing traction if we don't create strong relationships.”

Chris confirms that getting continuous traction can be challenging. So, he focused on the staff that work with the top executives as a route to maintaining the relationship.

“I will say that what I've found as a fantastic entry point is the chief of staff. That's something that we have discovered is a great sweet spot for us. We set up an ongoing relationship with that person following the first activity with any senior executive.

“I find that the chief of staff is data-driven and very knowledgeable about their business. They are problem-solvers and anticipate future organisational needs. And naturally, they have tremendous access to the executive – the decision-maker themselves.”

Chris explains that these chiefs of staff are open to business cases in a way that is refreshing. He finds that it is a great way of learning about the business, scoping and refining a business problem, and then getting feedback with them on initial insights. This allows Chris and his team to iterate and refine their analyses before talking to the senior executive themselves. And, naturally, if the chief of staff is included in the scoping and discussions, it is easier for the people analytics team to meet with the senior executive again. The chiefs of staff are invested in the topic and can “sell in” the idea to open the door for a follow-up conversation.

As Chris reflects, “They are looking for ways to improve the business. And there isn't a personal agenda. We have found it is a fantastic way to add value.”

## 04

## Key Business Challenges

Over the last three years, strategic business topics have become defined by global people events. The twin crises of the global COVID-19 pandemic and racial inequality have permanently changed employee expectations of work. Differentiators in attracting and retaining talent now include flexible working, employer commitments to well-being and employees' experience of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) in the workplace.<sup>7</sup>

A tentative economic recovery in 2021 has been followed by “gloomy” developments in 2022. Several shocks have hit a world economy already weakened by the pandemic, including higher-than-expected inflation and negative spill overs from the war in Ukraine.<sup>8</sup>

More than 80% of CEOs expect inflation to influence or disrupt their business strategy within the next year, while concerns over the availability of key skills and disruption to supply chains prevail.<sup>9</sup>

Our research supports the focus on these global societal and economic challenges. In 2022, as in 2021, people analytics leaders cite “diversity and inclusion” and “employee experience/listening” as the top two areas where people analytics adds the most value in their company. This is followed by “retention”, “workforce planning”, and “talent acquisition” (see Figure 13).

FIGURE 13

The top five areas where people analytics adds the most business value



## 1. Diversity and Inclusion

People analytics has become a critical partner to the C-suite, the CHRO, business leaders and DEIB leaders to provide the data and insights needed to effect change. As stated earlier in Chapter 01: Leading Companies, our research found that all Leading Companies have a behavioural scientist as part of their people analytics teams. These individuals use scientific approaches to understand employee sentiment and test suitable interventions that the organisation can make to improve employee experience in areas such as psychological safety, belonging, and fairness. This is important to reveal the insights to inspire action in DEIB.

## 2. Employee Experience/Listening

Business leaders rely on insights from employee listening data to give them a better “feel” of the organisation. They want to make key decisions more frequently on many topics that pure demographic data will not provide.

A recent study by Insight222 found that in the 69% of organisations where people analytics is responsible for employee listening, the company has a clearly defined employee listening strategy. In comparison, only 43% have a clearly defined employee listening strategy in organisations where people analytics is not responsible for employee listening.<sup>10</sup>

As stated earlier in Chapter 01: Leading Companies, our research found that in every Leading Company, the people analytics team has primary responsibility for employee experience/listening.

## 3. Retention

The pandemic changed what employees want from work, with record numbers of workers leaving and moving jobs. This trend shows no sign of slowing, with one in five employees likely to switch to a new employer.<sup>11</sup>

CEOs look to people analytics leaders to answer questions about the labour market, what key competitors are doing with regards to talent, model scenarios on the retention of key people, identify risk factors with predictive models, and evaluate the efficacy of interventions.

## 4. Workforce Planning

Workforce planning, when done well, delivers millions of dollars to the enterprise through predicting where skills and workforce costs will be in the future and how to plan for them in the right locations, while managing existing costs.

At its core, workforce planning is an analytical exercise that, to be successful, requires joint ownership between HR and other business and functional experts. Our research, however, suggests that companies have a long way to go when it comes to effective workforce planning.

Of the 184 organisations who responded to our survey, 53% of them have people analytics leaders who have primary responsibility for workforce planning. However, only 10% of the organisations – 19 companies in our research – say that they have a skills-based workforce planning process in place. This is dramatically low, given the focus on retention of existing skills, attraction of new skilled people and workforce planning.

## 5. Talent Acquisition

Given the critical focus on skills and retention discussed above, talent acquisition is another key area where people analytics has an instrumental influence.

For example, people analytics teams can support their organisations to improve the “hiring funnel”. They would do this by using data, analytics, and behavioural science to evaluate fairness in assessment and selection and balance that with hiring at the right pace to absorb people in the right (hybrid) locations for the market demands of the business.

## Prioritising Business Demand

As the business topics for people analytics become more complex, ongoing investment in skills and governance are required to meet this demand.

It is perhaps not surprising that 100% of Leading Companies now have the people analytics consultant role in their team. This role was outlined as part of the Insight222 Operating Model for People Analytics<sup>12</sup> and subsequently by numerous other leaders, including Guru Sethopathy (then Managing Vice President, Head of People Strategy & Analytics at Capital One) and Ramesh Karpagavinayagam (then Head of People Analytics & Data Governance at Royal Caribbean Cruises).<sup>13</sup> The role is key to allowing people analytics teams to focus on the most important business topics.

It is also the role that people analytics leaders expect to invest in most over the next 18-24 months. Of the 184 companies that responded to our survey, 45% expect their headcount in this role to increase in the next 12 months.

As people analytics increases in importance, people analytics leaders recognise that implementing, developing, and growing a team of business-facing consultants is essential to understand stakeholder requirements and prioritise effectively.

## ● Case Insight from JLL

### Investing in people analytics consultants to drive strategic partnerships

Luke Barnard, Head of HR Innovation & Strategy at JLL, reports to the CHRO and has led the people analytics function for five years. Starting from a low-level of maturity the team scaled quickly, growing from a handful of scattered personnel to a strong team of several dozen with a global footprint. Key internal relationships with technology and financial partners enabled the team to build customer-focused reports, dashboards, and analytical solutions. These leveraged investments in core HR systems, a data lake, and visualization tools.

However, proper engagement with senior leaders across HR and the business continued to be a bottleneck. Sourcing and staffing “unicorns” who could both speak to the business and build complex analytical models was challenging and costly. The approach prevented proactive discussions and strategic solutions, and sometimes resulted in disconnects between what the team focused on and what was business critical.

The team transformed in late 2021, with Luke taking additional ownership of global HR strategy, projects/programmes, the HR chief of staff office, budget ownership, HR communications, and new capability within workforce planning and organisational design.

As Luke outlines, “Strategic planning processes and what we should prioritise as a function sits within our group. Our intent is to make sure that anything we

work on is scoped, has quantified outcomes for the business, and is evidenced with data and analytics.” He is clear that this approach allows for a cohesive team with a focus on linking analytical insights, tools, and projects to the HR strategy. “It makes sense that these go together.”

At the same time – and to help drive the entire HR portfolio – Luke tackled the “unicorn” challenge and put in place a team of people analytics consultants with deep expertise in stakeholder management who manage the relationship with the business and senior HR leaders. While these individuals do have some analytical capability, they serve as activators and connectors of the model’s subcomponents, guiding work and prioritisation rather than serving as full-stack consultants and data scientists.

It is early days, but cohesion across the team and initial returns are strong. As Luke explains: “The people analytics consultants have dedicated business lines or functions and attend leadership meetings for those groups so they can hear first-hand about their challenges and needs. They attend not only for the data and analytics side of the conversation, but for strategy and prioritisation as well.”

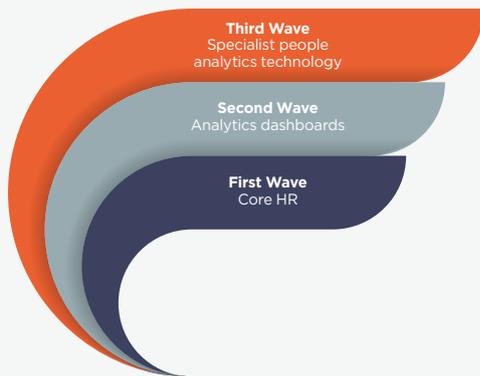
# 05

## People Analytics Technology

Insight222 research in 2020<sup>14</sup> and 2021<sup>15</sup> detailed trends in people analytics technology. The types of technology discussed consist of three waves: First Wave: core HR; Second Wave: analytics dashboards; and Third Wave: specialist people analytics technology<sup>16</sup> (see Figure 14).

● **FIGURE 14**

Three waves of people analytics technology



# 81%

PREDICT AN INCREASE IN INVESTMENT IN ANALYTICS DASHBOARDS AND/OR SPECIALIST PEOPLE ANALYTICS TECHNOLOGY - THE SAME AS THE 2021 PREDICTION AND AN INCREASE IN THE 2020 PREDICTION.

Of the people analytics leaders who contributed to our research this year, 81% predict that their companies will invest in second wave and/or third wave technologies in the next 18-24 months. This is the same as in 2021 (81%), and a sustained increase from 2020 when 53% of survey respondents reported a predicted increase in investment in these technologies.

Our conclusion is that increased investment in people analytics technology remains high. And that demonstrates, similar to the investment in skills, that technology investment was not a “flash in the pan” either.

## Second Wave: Analytics Dashboards

According to our analysis of Leading Companies, scaling people analytics and enabling the HR function with data-driven skills starts by delivering insights at scale for managers and HR professionals. This requires investment in second wave people analytics technology that could be built in-house or procured from a SaaS-based data democratisation system vendor (for example, Visier,<sup>17</sup> Crunchr,<sup>18</sup> and One Model<sup>19</sup>). A more complete description of these technologies and vendors is outlined in *Excellence in People Analytics*.<sup>20</sup>

While some people analytics teams start by democratising data for HR professionals, our research found that 58% of people analytics teams now share data interactively with managers and executives across the enterprise. For Leading Companies this is 100%.

## Third Wave: Specialist People Analytics Technology

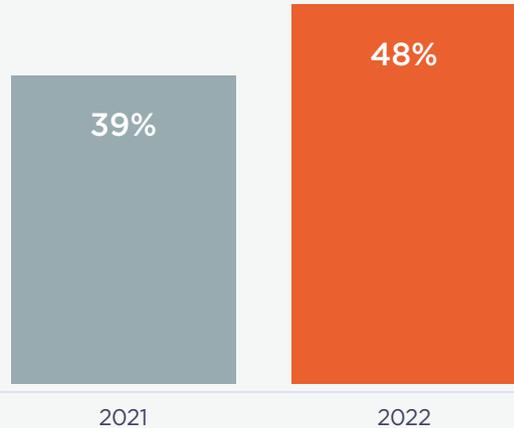
Specialist people analytics technologies provide solutions in categories such as assessment analytics, employee engagement and listening, employee text analysis, labour and talent market intelligence, relationship analytics and organisational network analysis (ONA), talent management and skills inference, and workforce planning and organisational design. A list of many of the organisations offering these technologies can be found in *Excellence in People Analytics*.<sup>21</sup>

The specialist people analytics technology market has grown at an unprecedented rate, with a 53% growth rate between 2020 and 2021 according to Red Thread Research.<sup>22</sup>

Our research shows more details of how these technologies are being used. ONA and collaboration analytics are used by people analytics teams to understand “real” organisational networks and how employees influence each other, and are increasingly used as part of their employee listening ecosystem.<sup>23</sup> Of the companies surveyed about their technology adoption, 48% are using collaboration analytics and ONA technologies – an increase from the 39% doing this in 2021 (see Figure 15). An additional 35% of survey respondents are considering investing in at least one of these tools.

● **FIGURE 15**

The percentage adoption of collaboration analytics and ONA technologies in 2021 and 2022



One area of keen focus for companies is filling critical skill gaps, as discussed above in Chapter 04: Key Business Challenges. Business leaders are increasingly looking for data on the internal and external supply and demand of skills.

Of the companies who contributed to our research this year, 80% are using labour and talent market intelligence technologies. As organisations bring skills, learning and careers together to create better career mobility for employees and bridge talent supply and demand, 52% of companies surveyed are using talent marketplace and skills inference technologies. These findings are quite similar to our findings from 2021,<sup>24</sup> when 77% of companies reported investing in labour and talent market intelligence technology, and 52% reported investing in talent market and skills inference technology.

Unfortunately, while the technology seems to have been invested in, the adoption and use of it is not translating as much. Our findings, outlined earlier in Chapter 04: Key Business Challenges, show that only 10% of companies surveyed have begun skill-based workforce planning. It feels that, in this particular technology, investment is not yet translating to business value.

Investing and (more importantly) utilising specialist people analytics technology to help executives make better decisions about their people and to provide employees with better opportunities is no longer optional. It is a “must have” for companies to attract, develop, and retain the talent needed to compete in their chosen markets. The good news is that the investment and desire for these types of technologies is increasing.

# 06

## Personalised Products and Ethics

An emerging trend in people analytics is the focus on personalised people analytics products for employees. These products play an important role in improving opportunities for employees in areas such as career-pathing, internal mobility, and learning.

Creating personalised products also requires an obsession with having high ethical standards for collecting, analysing, and using data about people.

### Delivering Personalised Products

Our research found that a third of companies who responded to our survey have delivered personalised people analytics products to employees in the last 12 months. And the proportion focused on this in the next 18-24 months is more than double that (see Figure 16).

As people analytics teams increasingly turn their focus to delivering personalised people analytics products for employees, data scientists are required to build the machine learning algorithms and techniques required to make personalised recommendations to employees. It follows that the role in the people analytics team with the second highest predicted growth is the role of data scientist – of the companies surveyed, 41% expect the number of data scientists in their team to increase in the next 18-24 months.

**Personalised products are those analytics products that leverage applications, data, machine learning algorithms, and UX technologies to offer targeted, personalised experiences to employees by highlighting opportunities that are most likely to appeal to them based on their attributes and patterns of behaviour.**

- **FIGURE 16**  
Percentage of companies that deliver, or intend to deliver, personalised products to employees, using analytics

**32%**

have delivered personalised people analytics products for employees in the last 12 months

**68%**

intend to deliver personalised people analytics products for employees in the next 18-24 months

- **Case insight from ABN AMRO Bank N.V.<sup>25</sup>**  
Creating personalised products from analytics

ABN AMRO Bank N.V. (“ABN AMRO”) is a Leading Company in People Analytics based on our analysis. Patrick Coolen, Global Head of Workforce Management, Analytics, HR Intelligence and Organisational Design, has led the team since 2013. He speaks frequently at conferences and publishes regularly to help other people analytics teams and HR functions learn from his experiences.

Patrick has shared publicly that *analytics for personalisation* is a focus area for HR, and within the people analytics team they are developing a “vacancy recommendation” product. The team have been assessing what data they can use about their employees, of course being mindful of GDPR requirements, to create a skills profile based on machine learning.

The intention is that the skills profile will be used to match against vacancies and provide the employee recommendations with a matching percentage. These matches will include internal vacancies, re-skilling vacancies, and, in time, matches of external vacancies for employees at risk.

As Patrick explains, via our personal devices “we get a lot of nudges daily trying to help us have a more effective life. What we are trying to do with the same sort of techniques is to make sure that our employees have the best possible career they can by nudging on those topics that are relevant for them.”

While the project is looking very promising, Patrick and his team have standards in place when it comes to the ethical use of people data, and partner closely with their compliance and legal colleagues throughout the process before an analytics solution goes into production.

Patrick is clear that “we have one key principle as we undertake personalisation: it must be beneficial for the employee. That is the golden rule!”

## Ethical Standards are Higher

Ethics and privacy regulations have always been important for people analytics. However, as people analytics focuses on creating personalised products, the ethical standards to ensure employee trust become more demanding.

At ABN AMRO, people analytics practitioners ensure high ethical validity of the models for personalised products to ensure there is no bias. As Jaap Veldkamp, People Analytics Lead at ABN AMRO, explains, “moving into personalised products means we must add new questions to our ethics framework. We must closely examine the work of our data scientists and the models they are developing.” The entire people analytics team at ABN AMRO has a strong focus on ethics across the work they do in people analytics and think about ethics and privacy as a fully embedded part of the process, rather than seeing it as separate. People analytics experts should also be ethical and privacy experts.

### Fair Exchange of Value

**If employees understand how their data will be used and see the benefit, it is likely that they will contribute data. By contributing data to the analytics team, the quality of analyses improves. It's a win-win for all. It's a “fair exchange of value”.**

“People analytics experts should also be ethical and privacy experts.”

Transparency and fairness are key in all aspects of people analytics. The “fair exchange of value” therefore becomes a key mantra for people analytics leaders. If employees understand how their data will be used and see the benefit, it is likely that they will contribute data.<sup>26</sup>

While nearly all people analytics leaders agree with this notion, communicating the ethical use of employees' data needs more focus in most companies. As our research illustrates (see Figure 17), only 40% of people analytics leaders say that they transparently communicate to their employees about their people analytics projects.

● **FIGURE 17**

Despite people analytics leaders' intent, less than half communicate to employees about people analytics projects



Dawn Klinghoffer, Head of People Analytics at Microsoft, has spoken extensively about ethical standards for managing people data. A focus on ethics and transparent communication underpins the work of the people analytics team.

Dawn explains: "Being able to communicate with your employees on how you are using their data is so important. You can do it through confidentiality statements, or through an internal social media platform, which is a great way to share how you are using data for people analytics. It's about getting in front of the communication as opposed to being reactive. I encourage people to be proactive."

Our research highlights that in all Leading Companies, the people analytics team has a strong working knowledge of ethics related to the use of people data. People analytics executives at Leading Companies recognise that people analytics and ethics go hand in hand. As people analytics increases in importance, the importance of establishing a strong foundation to manage the ethical use of people data becomes even more critical.

# 07

## Recommendations

The research in this report confirms and provides evidence of the rise in the importance and influence of people analytics. It also outlines the shared characteristics of what Leading Companies undertake to continuously create business impact with people analytics.

However, during the course of this research – and the work of Insight222 in general – senior HR executives and business leaders often ask the following questions:

1. How do I know how good my people analytics team is, at the moment? And what should I expect from them?
2. What should I do first, to deliver more value?

This chapter outlines some questions that can be used for a quick self-diagnosis to help answer the first question, and provides some recommendations for the second.

### Self-diagnosis

While many professional services companies can help with the assessment of the current state of the investment in and value gained from people analytics – including Insight222 – there are some pertinent questions that can be used to provide a quick self-diagnosis. The answers to these questions will help the chief human resources officer and people analytics leader to set mid-term goals and longer-term ambitions together for people analytics in their organisation.

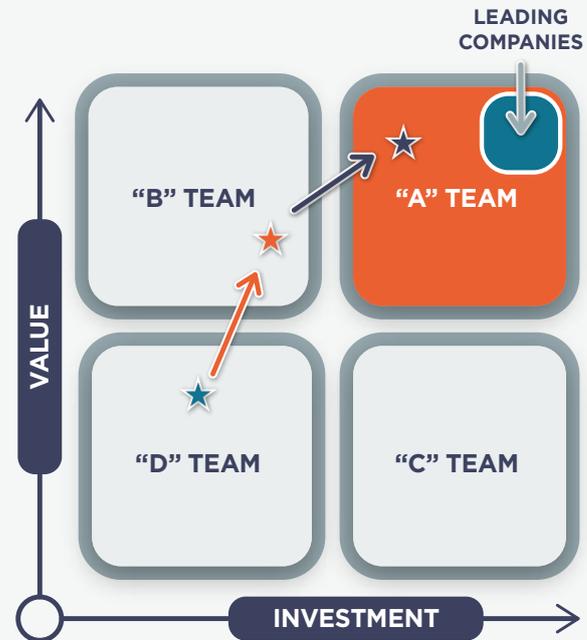
These questions include:

- What is the ratio of your people analytics team to total employee headcount?
- Have you invested in specialist people analytics technologies in the last 12 months?
- Have you calculated the financial value of people analytics solutions and products in the last year?
- Do you intend to measure financial value of people analytics products in the next 12 months?
- Have you scaled people analytics products to employees across the enterprise in the last 12 months?
- What value do you want to derive from people analytics in the next one to three years, and in the longer term (five-plus years)?
- How much investment, relative to the rest of the HR function, are you willing to make in people analytics in the next one to three years, and in the longer term (five-plus years)?

Your answers to these questions, together with the insights on Leading Companies throughout this report, can be used as a key contributor to self-diagnosis (see Figure 18 for an example).

● **FIGURE 18**

An example of how a self-diagnosis of the current state, mid-term goal and longer-term ambition for people analytics could be visualised



**Key**

- ★ Self-diagnosis
- ★ Mid-term goal
- ★ Long-term ambition
- ➔ Phase 1: Set a realistic period of time (1-3 years) for the mid-term goal of people analytics
- ➔ Phase 2: Set a goal for the longer-term ambition (5+ years) of people analytics

## Invest : Measure : Scale

The type of investment, measurement, and scaling that is required of people analytics varies. In Figure 19, some recommendations for action are highlighted depending on whether the people analytics team is an “A”, “B”, “C”, or “D” team (see Chapter 01: Leading Companies for a definition of these teams).

### ● FIGURE 19

Recommendations for creating business impact in each category of the Invest : Measure : Scale Model, by type of team in the Investment : Value Matrix

	Invest	Measure	Scale
“A” TEAM	Buy specialist technologies to create deeper insights into important and complex topics, such as culture, inclusion or belonging	Set financial targets for the people analytics function to scale products for organisational success	Build an agenda for deepening personalisation of people analytics to employees and managers across the enterprise
“B” TEAM	Invest in specialists such as data scientists, behavioural scientists and people analytics consultants	Build relationships with finance executives to calculate what the value is of scaling people analytics insights and recommendations	Invest in a product engine of UX designers, software engineers, product managers and change managers
“C” TEAM	Define which skills and which technologies in the people analytics team are adding value and then reorganise and refocus the function	Work with experts in the finance function to define and measure people analytics projects and solutions	Restructure the people analytics function, reorganising skills to refocus some experts in the team on productisation
“D” TEAM	Undertake a skills and technology audit and set a goal for transforming the function	Measure the financial value of one key people analytics insight to demonstrate the opportunity that exists within the function	Set a goal to implement one people analytics insight into a product for managers or employees in one business unit

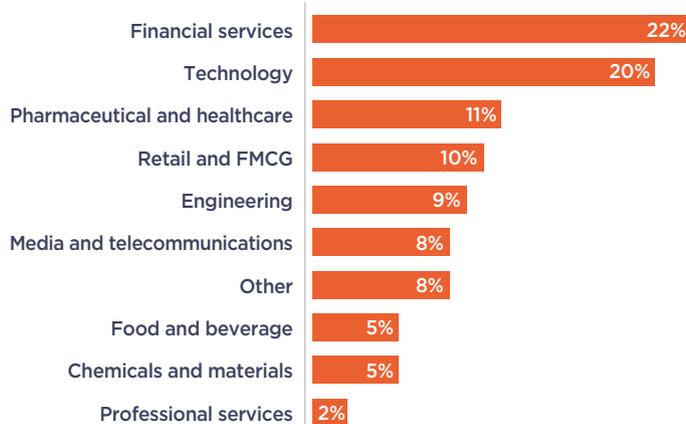
Whatever the starting point of the people analytics team, there are always opportunities to create more business impact and deliver more value as the company evolves.

# Methodology and Demographics

The report is based on a survey of 184 global companies conducted by Insight222 in June and July 2022. The extensive survey was sent directly to and completed by the people analytics leader in that company with accountability for the function. The organisations are responsible for over 15 million workers and operate in more than 180 countries.

## INDUSTRY

Companies surveyed in each industry group



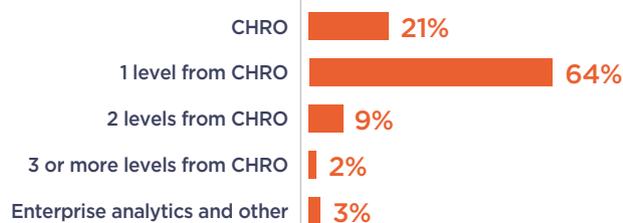
## COMPANY SIZE

Number of employees

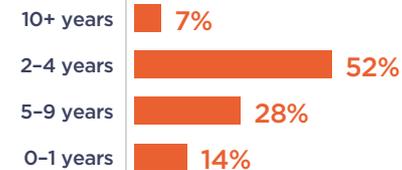


## PEOPLE ANALYTICS LEADER REPORTING

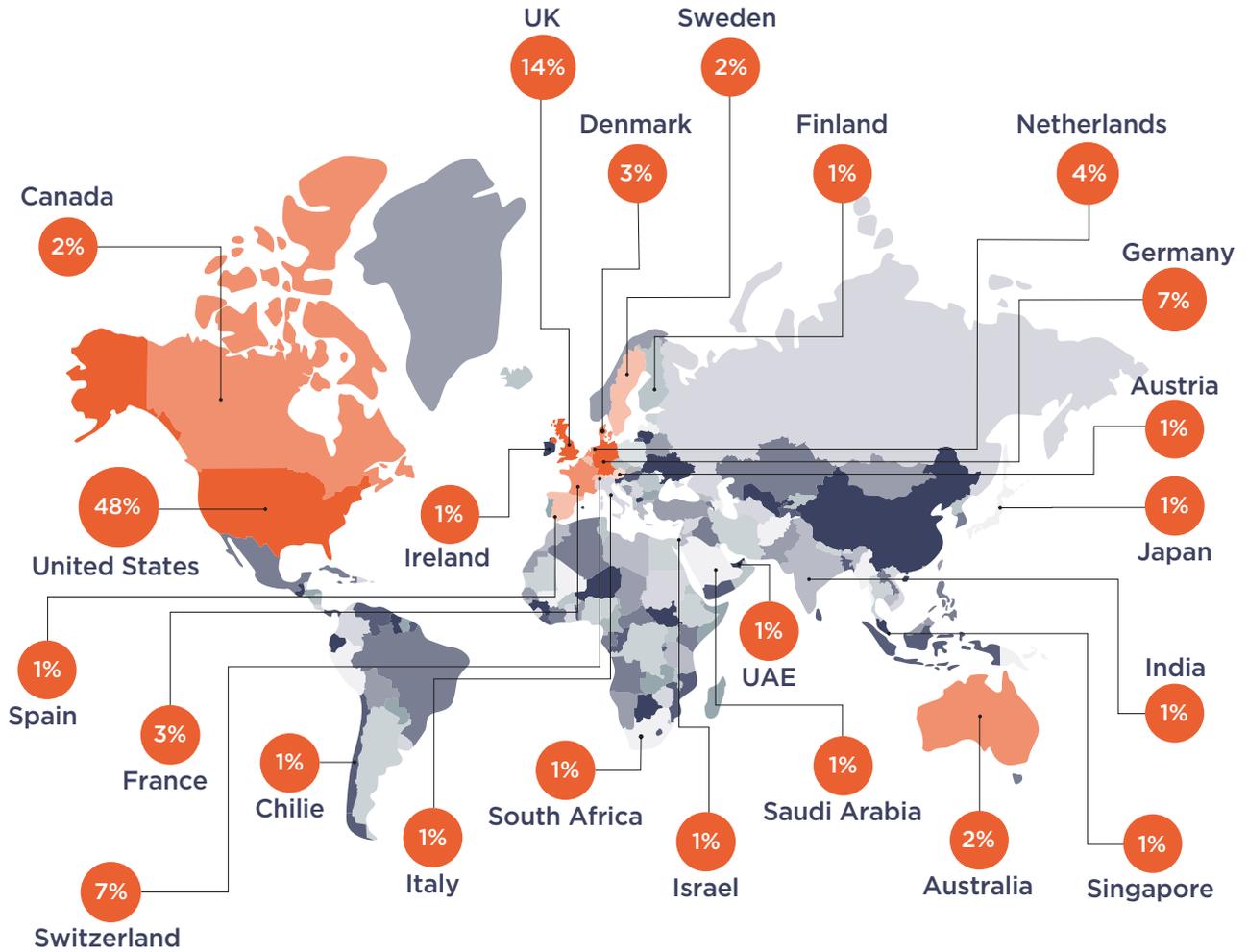
Increase in leaders reporting to the CHRO



## TENURE



● COUNTRY LOCATION OF PEOPLE ANALYTICS LEADER



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# Authors

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Jonathan is a globally recognised business advisor, speaker, and author in HR strategy and people analytics. Jonathan has worked in corporate business with extensive executive leadership and board advisory experience for almost 20 years with companies like Andersen Consulting (now Accenture) and IBM. He is co-author of *Excellence in People Analytics* (Kogan Page, July 2021) and *The Power of People* (Pearson, May 2017). He is the vice-chair of the board of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. Jonathan has worked with clients all over the world and lived in both London and New York for substantial periods of his career.

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Naomi is an experienced business professional with over 15 years' experience, mainly in the financial services industry. She has undertaken roles as an HR business partner, HR chief of staff, and as a commercial banker during her time at Barclays Bank. In the last six years Naomi has dedicated her career to people analytics, with particular expertise in consulting with business executives, HR leaders and other stakeholders. Naomi took a career break in the mid-2010s to travel around South America to learn Spanish and immerse herself in the Latin American culture.

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Insight222 Research provides business executives and HR leaders with insights and recommendations to advance the HR profession to become more digital and evidence based. Through partnerships with leading practitioners, academics, and thought leaders, we share ideas, pragmatic frameworks, and structured guidance.

Insight222 is a global services and solutions company that enables organisations to deliver business value through people analytics and digital HR. The team at Insight222 provide consulting, learning, and networking services to chief human resources officers and their key staff in analytics, strategy, planning, employee experience, and digital HR. Insight222 clients and partners – typically large, multinational organisations – include some of the world's leading brands.

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