People Analytics Trends
an Insight222 study

Investing to Deliver Value

A New Model for People Analytics

INSIGHT 222

Contents

Executive Summary

In 2020, the global pandemic happened. The following year, hybrid work became a reality, and in 2022, the "Great Resignation" occurred. During these years, social justice movements and the war in Ukraine rocked the world, causing social disruption and an energy crisis that triggered an economic downturn in many markets. Each of these events created the need for robust chief executive officers (CEOs) to navigate very difficult times.[1]

These events also meant that the focus on the chief human resources officer (CHRO) at each company became more pronounced. They needed to provide data and insights about the people in their companies, like never before. And as a result, people analytics, as a discipline and function, grew during this time.[2]

To us, the question in 2023 became: "Is people analytics still needed? Was it, after all, just a fad?"

However, by mid-2023, hyperinflation, cost-of-living crises, and wage inflation were affecting the business world in multiple economies. Global GDP growth at the end of 2023 is projected to be 2.7%, the lowest annual rate since the global financial crisis in 2008–09, with the exception of the 2020 pandemic period.[3]

In a recent global survey by McKinsey, chief finance officers (CFOs) overwhelmingly reported high volatility in their companies' business performance. There is little expectation that performance will stabilise in the near term, and furthermore, the CFOs surveyed in this research have tended to spend most of their time in the past year on cost and productivity management, as well as performance management, as a result.[4]

Because of all this, or maybe in spite of it, people analytics is still growing.

In fact, during the last 36 months from mid-2020 to mid-2023, people analytics functions have grown on average in size by 43% in the companies we have surveyed. This is despite the global pandemic, the complex geopolitical factors and global economic headwinds over this time. In the same timeframe, world equities have grown between 25% and 33%.[5]

Our research has substantially increased in size over the years, and this year is no exception. Over 270 companies have provided data for this research – a 47% increase on last year and a 400% rise on our first research in 2020. The companies in the 2023 report represent 4,800 people analytics practitioners and 16.3 million employees.

Our study this year focused on expanding and validating our work of 2022. We set out to further investigate the topic of Leading Companies in People Analytics ("Leading Companies") and understand which companies measure the financial value of people analytics.

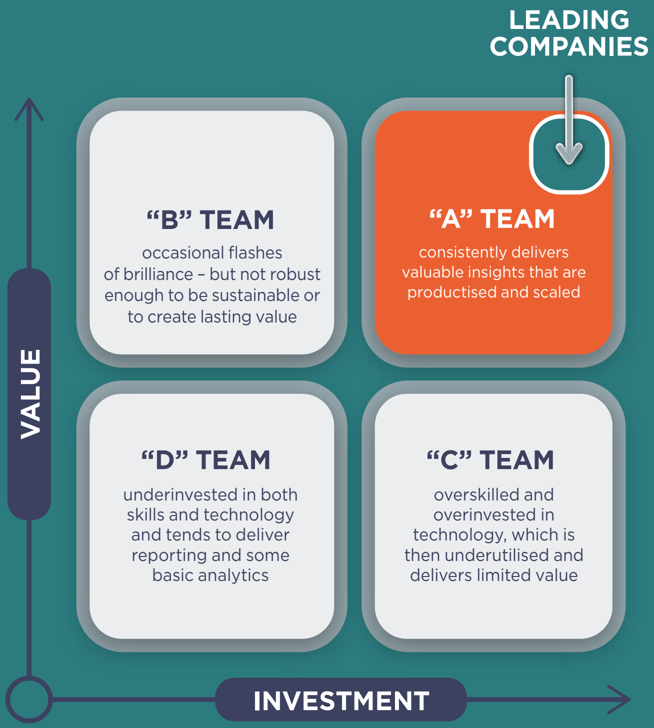
For 2023, our key findings are:

1. **Growth: People analytics continues to grow despite a challenging global economy.**
2. **Value: Measuring and delivering value, from people analytics efforts, is key for the impact of the function.**
3. **Influence: Developing relationships with C-suite and senior stakeholders is essential to deliver on key business priorities.**
4. **Impact: There are eight defined characteristics that Leading Companies display to create impact.**

With this research, we can now provide specific details and guidance on how companies can transition between different "states" of people analytics. We do not see this as a "maturity model", which implies that a function can only mature to the next level if it has been through the immediate prior level. Instead, we identify these states as **ABCD Teams**. Each of these teams has particular characteristics, and each provides the platform to transition to a more impactful level.

This model, the Leading Companies Model (see Figure 1), has eight characteristics across two dimensions.

FIGURE 1
Leading Companies Model



In summary, the dimensions and characteristics are:

A. **Investment** in:

1. influencing key stakeholders;
2. prioritising important business (not just HR) topics for analysis;
3. developing three important skills;
4. creating strong ethical practices for people data.

B. **Value** through:

5. measuring financial outcomes;
6. democratising people data and insights across the enterprise;
7. productising people analytics solutions at scale;
8. building data literacy throughout the HR function.

We are now able to define any company against this model and provide details on which of the eight characteristics can be improved, and to what level, with particular focus. This is supported by a Leading Companies Diagnostic (see page 39), which gives a high-level overview of an organisation's position in the model.

In conclusion, the Insight222 People Analytics Trends 2023 study reveals that people analytics continues to grow, deliver value, and rise in influence, despite tough economic conditions. Additionally, the study outlines eight characteristics of Leading Companies, and how to become more impactful with every dollar invested in the people analytics function.

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October 2023

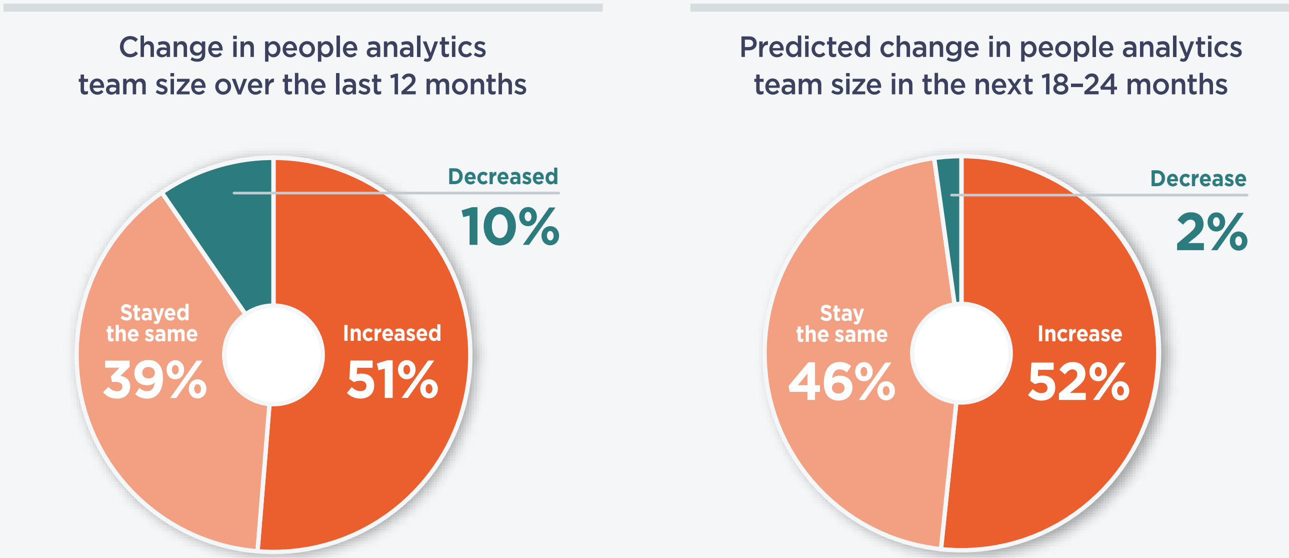
01
Core People Analytics Trends

Inflation and economic volatility pose mounting threats to company growth, forcing organisations to adapt. In a global survey by McKinsey, chief finance officers (CFOs) are raising prices to expand margins, and reducing exposure to fixed costs, as the strategies they most likely adopt to help them manage in a volatile macroeconomic environment.[6]

Our research finds that, despite cost optimisation programmes and the tightening of budgetary controls, companies are continuing to invest in people analytics. Over the last 36 months, from mid-2020 to mid-2023, people analytics functions have grown on average by 43% (see Figure 2). This demonstrates the commitment that global organisations are making to build data-driven cultures in HR and use data to make better-informed people decisions.

FIGURE 2
Growth of people analytics functions

FIGURE 3
Change in the size of people analytics teams



Insight222 surveyed people analytics leaders to understand how their team size changed in the previous 12 months. We found that 90% of companies either increased or maintained the size of their people analytics team. The proportion that increased the size of the people analytics team was just over half at 51%. The outlook is equally optimistic – 98% of people analytics leaders predict their function will increase or stay the same in size over the next 18–24 months (see Figure 3).

People Analytics Technology

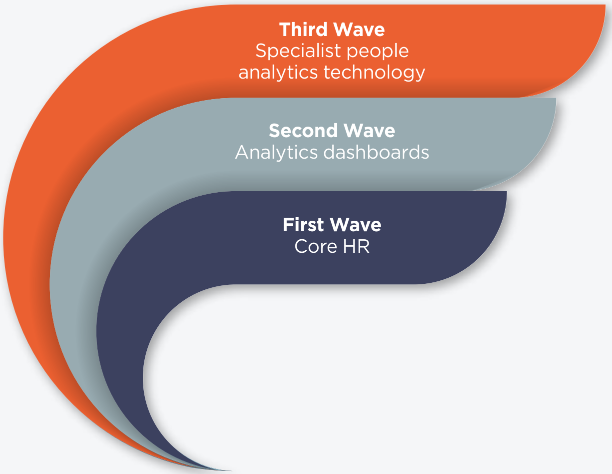
Our research found a similar trend when examining how companies are investing in people analytics technology. Insight222 research since 2020 has detailed trends in people analytics technology. The types of technology considered consist of three waves (see Figure 4).

Of the 271 people analytics leaders who contributed to our research this year, 70% report that their companies increased investment in analytics dashboards and/or specialist people analytics technology over the last 12 months. Investment in third wave technologies continues to be buoyant, with 58% of people analytics leaders predicting their company will increase investment in specialist people analytics technologies in the next 18–24 months.

70%
of companies increased investment in analytics dashboards and/or specialist people analytics technology over the last 12 months

58%
of people analytics leaders predict their company will increase investment in specialist people analytics technologies in the next 18–24 months

FIGURE 4
Three waves of people analytics technology



- **third wave:** specialist people analytics technology – 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
- **second wave:** analytics dashboards – these SaaS-based data democratisation solutions could be procured from a vendor or built in-house
- **first wave:** core HR – principally Oracle, SAP SuccessFactors and Workday

More complete descriptions and a list of many of the vendors offering these technologies can be found in *Excellence in People Analytics.*[7]

Investment in People Analytics Teams

Since 2020, Insight222 has recommended the ratio for people analytics for understanding team size, and changes in team size. This compares the number of people in the people analytics team with the total employee headcount of the company.[8]

The Ratio for People Analytics

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 across the enterprise 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 just for HR.

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

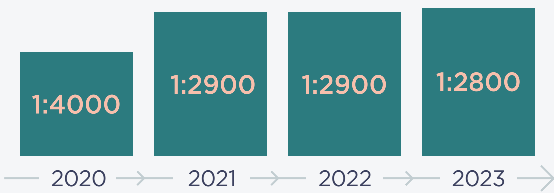
The Ratio for People Analytics in 2023 is

1:2800

For all the companies surveyed in this year's research, the median team size is one people analytics practitioner to every 2800 employees in a company. The ratio for 2023 can be used as a guide for people analytics leaders looking to benchmark the size of their team against other people analytics teams.

When analysing the ratio data since 2020, our research shows that the ratio for people analytics has strengthened from 1:4000 in 2020 to 1:2900 in 2021 and 2022, and now to 1:2800 in 2023 (see Figure 5). This demonstrates that despite the economic challenges facing companies, people analytics teams continue to grow relative to the size of the company overall.

FIGURE 5
People analytics team ratio 2020–23



Base: 2020: n=60; 2021: n=114; 2022: n=184; 2023: n=271.

02
Tenure of People Analytics Teams

The increase in the number of companies participating in the Insight222 People Analytics Trends 2023 research – an increase of 47% since last year – is indicative of a growing field. More companies are undertaking the mission to build a data-driven HR function by having a dedicated people analytics team that delivers value for the business.

Because of the larger number of companies participating in this year's research, we have been able to examine people analytics trends by tenure of teams (this section), and across different sectors (Section 03).

Tenure and Growth

When looking at tenure,[9] our research found that new people analytics teams are more likely to be increasing in size (see Figure 6). Of people analytics leaders with a function that has been in place for a year or less, 71% predict their team size will increase in the next 18–24 months. More established teams forecast that they will more likely stay the same size than increase in size. The people analytics leaders with a function that has been established for 10 years or more predict their team size will increase in only 40% of companies and stay the same in 60% of companies in the next 18–24 months.

FIGURE 6
Predicted change in people analytics team size in the next 18–24 months, by tenure of people analytics teams

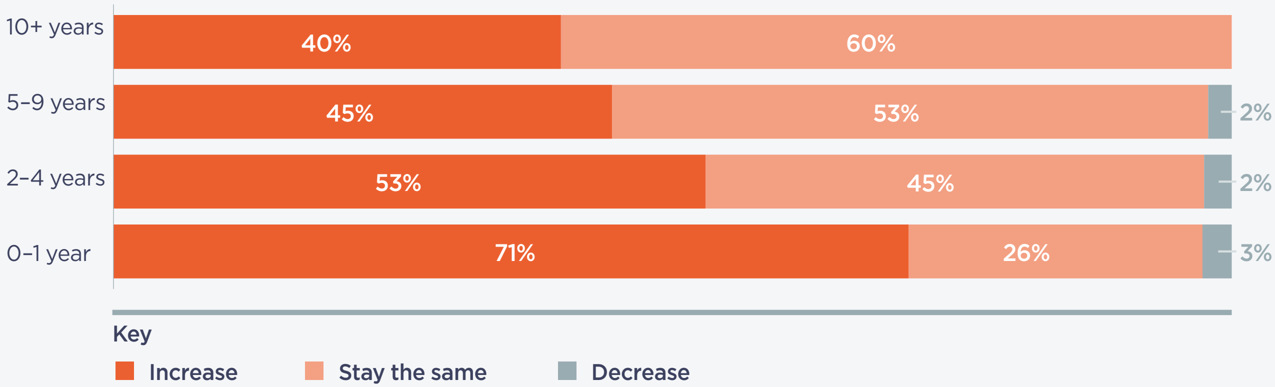
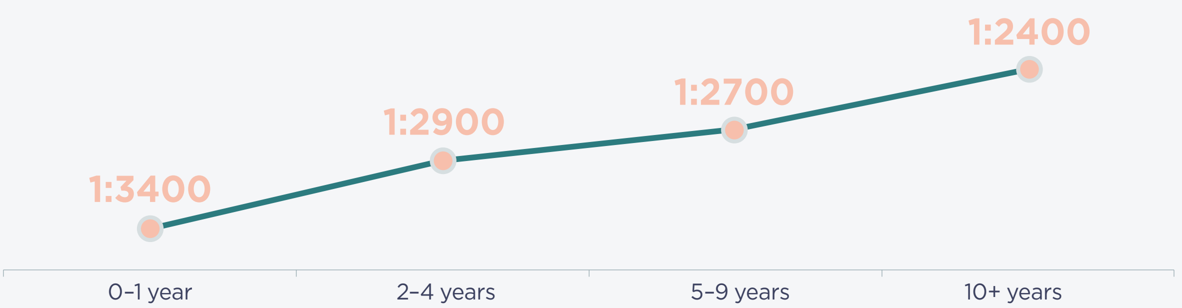


FIGURE 7

The ratio for people analytics, by tenure of people analytics teams



Tenure and Ratios

The ratio for people analytics clarifies the relationship between a team's tenure and its size. Our research found that the longer the people analytics team has been in place, and therefore able to demonstrate value to the organisation, the stronger the ratio for people analytics is.

We found that companies with a people analytics function that has been in place for a year or less have a ratio of 1:3400, compared with 1:2400 for companies with a people analytics team that has been in place for 10 or more years (see Figure 7). Note the median is 1:2800, as outlined earlier in this report in Section 01.

Perspectives on Tenure

The details on tenure and growth are not surprising. It is reasonable to understand that established functions are those that have found ways to practise effectively, scaling technologies, skills, and stakeholder relationships in ways that are more efficient than smaller teams. As such they are more in a "steady state" and are less likely to be investing than teams that are in "start-up" mode.

When considering the ratio for teams at each stage of tenure, alongside the proportion that are increasing in size, this indicates that there is an optimal team size that people analytics teams reach over time (in each company), after which the size of the team will stabilise.

During their first four years, people analytics teams are more likely to increase in size each consecutive year, as organisations commit to building out the function and establishing data and analytics within HR. When the team has been in place five years or more, growth continues, albeit more steadily. People analytics leaders are focused on reorganising the team to harness the right skills and technologies to scale products and deliver value for the business.

03
People Analytics in Different Sectors

While our research finds that people analytics continues to grow, certain sectors are investing more.

Companies across financial services, technology, pharmaceutical and healthcare, and retail and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) accounted for just over two-thirds of all participating companies in our research this year. When analysing the ratio for people analytics between 2020 and 2023 across these four sectors, it shows that financial services and technology companies have bigger teams than in other sectors, as a proportion of the total employees in the companies surveyed (see Figure 8).

Technology

The technology sector is often looked to as the most established sector for people analytics. In the early 2010s, teams were established in companies like Google, Microsoft and IBM. These teams grew fast and focused on complex predictive people analytics projects.[10]

In more recent years, the growth of technology companies has translated into newer people analytics teams being established in smaller companies. Yet despite this growth, much has been published over the last 18 months about downsizing in the technology sector, mostly as a need to improve productivity in a sector that has been disrupted by the global economic slowdown.[11]

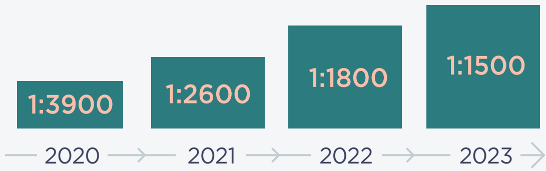
FIGURE 8
The ratio for people analytics by sector, 2020–23

	Financial services	Technology	Pharmaceutical and healthcare	Retail and FMCG
2023	1:1500	1:1500	1:3500	1:6100
2020	1:3800	1:3900	1:7200	1:6200

Our research found that technology companies were most likely to have decreased the size of their people analytics team over the last 12 months (20%) compared with pharmaceutical and healthcare (11%), financial services (10%), and retail and FMCG (4%).

Yet despite this trend, the ratio for people analytics shows that people analytics teams across the technology sector have still been increasing relative to the size of total employee headcount at the organisation. The ratio improved from 1:1800 in 2022 to 1:1500 in 2023 (see Figure 9). While technology companies may not continue to experience the absolute rate of growth in people analytics that they have in prior years, many are looking to deliver more value with the team now in place, relative to the overall size of the enterprise.

FIGURE 9
The ratio for people analytics in the technology sector, 2020–23



Base: 2020: n=6; 2021: n=26; 2022: n=36; 2023: n=56.

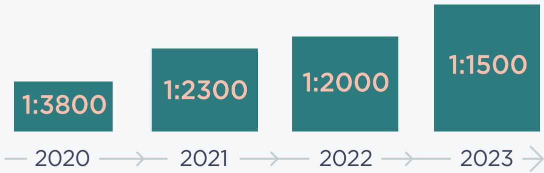
Financial Services

Far less documented has been the accelerated growth in people analytics across financial services organisations.

From the mid-2010s, and often as part of an enterprise-wide data strategy, large financial services organisations began to transform their reporting teams into people analytics teams that democratised data through specialist products and delivered value for the business with advanced analytics. The global pandemic accelerated this growth as people analytics teams became central to supporting companies that needed to implement remote working rapidly.

Insight222's research over the last four years reveals how people analytics teams in the financial services sector have grown faster than in any other sector, and now have some of the largest teams relative to the size of their organisation.

FIGURE 10
The ratio for people analytics in the financial services sector, 2020–23



Base: 2020: n=19; 2021: n=25; 2022: n=40; 2023: n=61.

The ratio for people analytics for financial services in 2023 is 1:1500, having improved from 1:2000 in 2022 (see Figure 10). This represents a growth of 33% during the last year alone. Across some of the most well-known global banks and insurance companies, a people analytics team surpassing 50 people comprising consultants, data scientists, behavioural scientists and product teams is now commonplace, alongside a commitment to upskill the HR function in data literacy.

Case Insight from Lloyds Banking Group
Investing in People Analytics

Lloyds Banking Group has experienced the growth and investment in people analytics that is now becoming commonplace in financial services organisations committed to building a data-driven culture. James Reynolds, Head of People and Places Data, Analytics and Insight, and Jane Puckey, People and Places Insight Partnering Lead, have been instrumental in this journey. They both point to several factors that have driven this growth at the company in recent years.

First, across the group, £3 billion is being invested in technology and data, to enhance resilience and security against cyber threats, simplify the bank's architecture, and put cloud technology at the heart of everything it does. "We want to join all of our analytics and insights capability as a group together onto one strategic platform," James explains. "This will allow us to leverage people data and combine it with customer data, so we can focus on how we deliver value for our customers."

Second, the People and Places team has reset how it is set up for success since Sharon Doherty joined in 2022 as Lloyds Banking Group's Chief People and Places Officer. Jane outlines the impact this has had: "Sharon encourages the people directors to think data first. She starts with a 'show me the data' mindset, then adds external perspectives, and finally suggests solutions that can move the dial, are clearer to identify, test and learn from."

Under James's leadership, the data team has reorganised, with a focus on creating business value and scaling people analytics solutions across the enterprise. Teams that were previously somewhat disparate have been brought together into one central team and aligned along functional expertise. James is clear that this makes it more efficient to gather and prioritise demand, develop the product, and take it to market. Investment has been made in data engineering and data visualisation to ensure that the products that colleagues consume from the team are appealing and easy to transact with. He describes this as the "frictionless experience with people analytics".

As part of Sharon's ambition for a data-driven People and Places function, the team has developed a suite of core metrics and targets to enable the function to determine if they are serving the business in the best way they possibly can, and to put plans in place where needed. With the metrics identified and a product in development to consolidate them into one dashboard, "we are now starting the journey of how we upskill the People and Places team in looking at those metrics," James explains. "So, when they make day-to-day decisions, they've always got those metrics in the back of their mind."

Looking forward, James shares the skills the team will be prioritising next. "Over the next year we will be investing heavily in engineering, so we can build insight at pace, and data partners, making sure that they understand the context of the business and their challenges. They will support HR business partners to talk to stakeholders about data and tell stories with that data. They will help take the products and insights to the business, so managers and executives are referring to data before they make decisions and drive change."

Pharmaceutical and Healthcare

Between 2020 and 2021, pharmaceutical and healthcare companies invested significantly in people analytics as the sector felt the impact of the pandemic directly. The ratio for people analytics shows that people analytics teams grew from 1:7200 in 2020 to 1:3000 in 2021. They have remained at or close to this level ever since (see Figure 11).

In 2020, people analytics teams were thrust to the forefront of supporting their organisations, to navigate the impact of COVID-19 on the workforce and supply chains. At one US-headquartered pharmaceutical distribution company, the people analytics team was able to predict within a few days when one of their distribution warehouses was going to have to close due to high COVID-19 sickness rates, allowing contingency plans to be made to ensure pharmacies and hospitals in the area continued to be supplied.[12]

Since then, people analytics teams have focused on business priorities, such as the impact of hybrid working on innovation and collaboration, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, and employee retention.

FIGURE 11
The ratio for people analytics in the pharmaceutical and healthcare sector, 2020–23

Base: 2020: n=10; 2021: n=13; 2022: n=21; 2023: n=41.

FIGURE 12
The ratio for people analytics in the retail and FMCG sector, 2020–23

Base: 2020: n=9; 2021: n=12; 2022: n=18; 2023: n=24.

Retail and FMCG

People analytics teams in the retail and FMCG sector show a very different profile from the sectors shown above. The ratio for people analytics has fluctuated since 2020, but with the ratio much lower than the median of all companies, and lower than the other three sectors described above. The retail and FMCG ratio is currently 1:6100 (see Figure 11).

There is no particular explanation as to why companies in the retail and FMCG sectors have much smaller people analytics teams compared with their employee headcount. One theory might be that their margins do not allow for investment at the same rate. Another hypothesis might be that some of these firms operate franchise models and so the core people analytics team only serves the central functions and not the franchise outlets.

However, what is known is the impact of COVID-19 on the retail sector. During 2020 and 2021, when stores were forced to close and online sales surged with home delivery services, whole business models were altered and the people impact of this was dramatic. People analytics teams at this time supported their organisations with operational workforce planning and headcount management, as the sector was forced to rapidly change its strategies and business models. However, the data does not suggest that these firms increased their investment in the people analytics teams themselves. The data just indicates that existing teams remained the same size, with increased visibility and relevance.

Maybe investment in people analytics teams in retail and FMCG companies will change in future years when the economic conditions and macroeconomic environment (hopefully) stabilise to prior historic levels. In 2023, the National Retail Federation issued its annual forecast, anticipating that retail sales will grow between 4% and 6% in 2023, following 7% annual growth in 2022.[13]

Our research suggests this may be the case. In the last 12 months, 63% of people analytics teams in the retail and FMCG sector grew in size slightly, and all of the 24 companies in this sector that contributed to our research expect to stay the same or increase in size in the next 18–24 months.

04
Leading Companies

Our People Analytics Trends 2022 study[14] found that Leading Companies in People Analytics ("Leading Companies") exhibit specific characteristics that enable them to deliver more value with people analytics than non-Leading Companies. As Figure 13 outlines, they invest in their stakeholders and team, measure the financial impact of people analytics solutions, and scale people analytics across the enterprise.

FIGURE 13
Leading Companies invest, measure and scale people analytics more than other companies

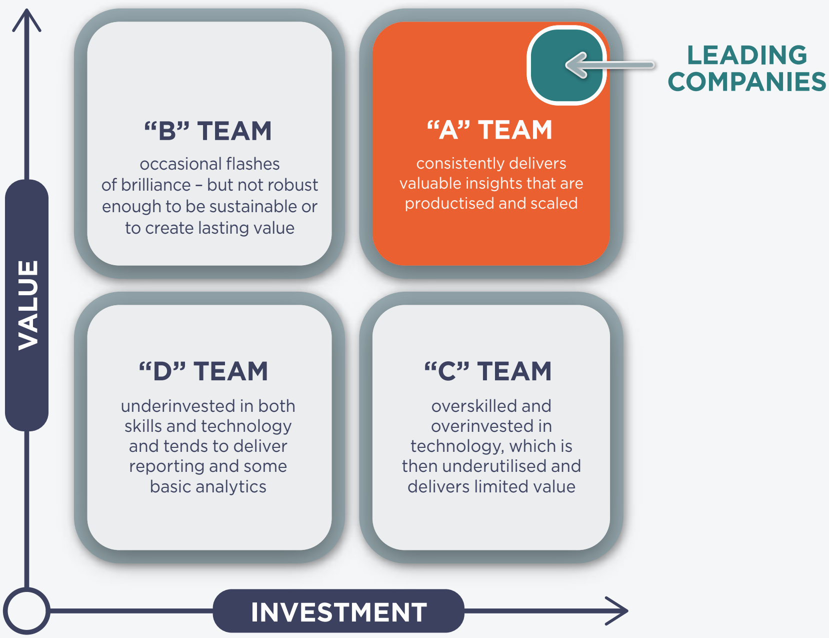
This year we undertook deeper research into what distinguishes Leading Companies from others, defining characteristics along two dimensions:

A.	**Investment**
B.	**Value**

When considered along these two dimensions, and as outlined in our 2022 report,[15] this can reveal four "states" or "teams" of people analytics (see Figure 14). Each has certain characteristics. We describe these in Section 05: ABCD Teams.

FIGURE 14

The Leading Companies Model: ABCD Teams can be plotted along the two dimensions of investment and value



Eight Characteristics of Leading Companies

Leading Companies have eight characteristics (see Figure 15):

1. The people analytics leader regularly and deeply influences the C-suite, including a strong collaboration with the CFO, and infrequent yet important meetings with the CEO. Irrespective of the reporting line, the people analytics leader meets with the CHRO at least monthly, on a formal basis, to ensure alignment and impact. Due to this alignment and the value of insights, the people analytics leader periodically presents analyses to the board of directors and C-suite, usually together with the CHRO.

2. Leading Companies dedicate a significant portion of their people analytics work to prioritised business topics. They collect input from a wide range of business executives across the enterprise, including HR executives, to understand the most important topics and then prioritise them against clear, and agreed, criteria.

3. Leading Companies invest in very particular skills in the people analytics team, specifically behavioural scientists, data scientists, and consultants. It is the specific combination of all three that create the basis for delivering impact.

4. Leading Companies set the bar for adhering to and sharing strong ethical standards. Not only are ethical standards developed in strong partnership with legal/data privacy, but these standards are then shared in open communications directly with employees. This creates a win/win situation between the people analytics function and employees, who are the very people whose data fuels the function.

5. One of the most differentiating characteristics of Leading Companies is that they measure the financial value of people analytics solutions – not all solutions, since some provide value in employee experiences, cultural impact, and societal impact, but certainly in enough situations that the value of people analytics is calculated financially.

6. Leading Companies democratise data across the business. What differentiates Leading Companies is that broad democratisation is coupled with broad enablement. This means that executives and managers – as well as HR professionals – have access to a multitude of people data and insights to improve decision-making.

7. Leading Companies create personalised products for people analytics solutions that deliver value – value to employees to improve the workforce experience, and financial value. The onset of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has increased the need and desire for product personalisation of data-infused employee solutions.

8. Finally, the people analytics team leads the effort to upskill the entire HR function to become more data-literate. It starts with the CHRO clearly setting expectations that using data is an essential part of the HR strategy; it then moves to the HR practitioners themselves learning how to use analytics; and it culminates with a high level of people analytics product adoption.

FIGURE 15
The eight characteristics of Leading Companies

Characteristic	Description
Investment	
1. **Influence**	The people analytics leader actively influences the C-suite through their close reporting relationship with the CHRO.
2. **Business Priorities**	The people analytics function undertakes advanced analytics on the most important business priorities.
3. **Skills**	The people analytics leader invests in each of three key skills: people analytics consultants, data scientists and behavioural scientists.
4. **Ethics**	The people analytics function adheres to strong ethical standards for people analytics activities and communicates these directly with employees.
Value	
5. **Measurement**	The people analytics function measures and delivers financial value from people analytics activities.
6. **Democratisation**	The people analytics function democratises data to managers and executives across the enterprise.
7. **Personalisation**	The people analytics function has a strong focus on personalised people analytics products for employees.
8. **Data-driven Culture**	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.

The Eighth Characteristic: Ethics

Our research in 2022 discovered seven characteristics. Following our research in 2023, we uncovered an eighth characteristic of Leading Companies.

Ethics in Leading Companies is composed of three elements:

1. **building strong ethical principles for the use of people data in collaboration with, amongst others, the data privacy or legal team**
2. **communicating those principles openly with employees about how their data will be used**
3. **having in place a forum – or council – that regularly reviews the use of people data, and the analytics projects in which that data is used, to ensure its appropriate use.**

These factors enable Leading Companies to deliver the highest standards of ethical data use for the people whose very data is being gathered and analysed (i.e., the employees and their data).

In fact, in some companies, the ethical management of people data has become so important that a dedicated person has been assigned within the people analytics team to manage and lead the case for all ethical standards and practice of people data across the enterprise.

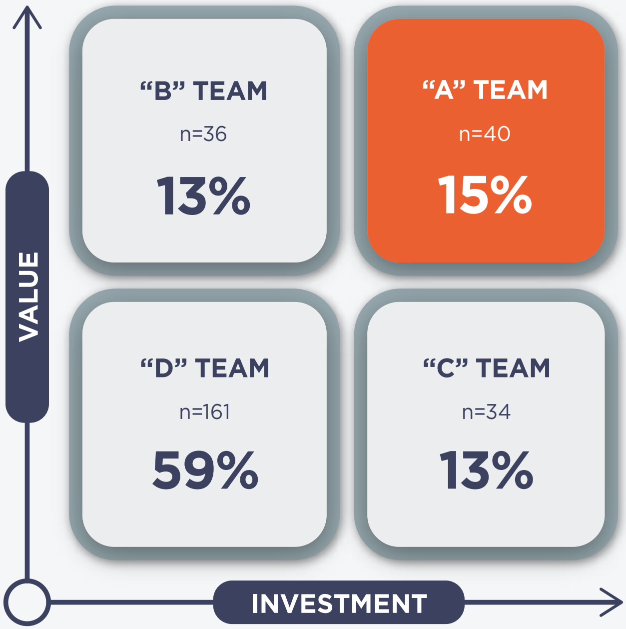
In summary, Leading Companies are those that invest, measure, and scale their work to have the greatest impact across the enterprise. They focus on the most important business priorities, ensuring their investments provide a return, and deliver value at scale.

Finally, an important aspect of Leading Companies is that the people analytics leader, and their team, 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. They recognise that to be a leader they not only have to lead within their organisations, but also externally to allow others outside of their organisation to learn, and therefore help the entire profession of people analytics become more impactful, overall, in business globally.

05
ABCD Teams

Our research across the 271 companies surveyed this year revealed many interesting insights when we plotted them on our Leading Companies Model. First, we see that most organisations are “D” Teams. They are low in investment and low in demonstrating value (see Figure 16).

FIGURE 16
The proportion of people analytics functions, from our surveyed companies, that meet the criteria for each of the ABCD Teams in our Leading Companies Model



When we consider the different states of teams and their people analytics team ratio, we see that the distribution of ABCD Teams follows the definition of the teams shown in Figure 17.

“A” Teams

“A” Teams have the strongest ratio of people analytics professionals to employees. This indicates that these companies believe in the value of people analytics, have invested in the function and are seeing value and impact from the activities.

“B” Teams

“B” Teams are underinvested generally, so have higher ratios than average. The complexity for “B” Teams is that their “flashes of brilliance” cannot be replicated. They simply do not have enough people to create impact by scaling solutions, managing the democratisation of people data, and building personalised products infused with analytical models, at scale.

“C” Teams

“C” Teams, conversely, have weaker ratios. This indicates their teams are larger than the median. They are not delivering as much value as their investment suggests, or that their stakeholders expect them to deliver.

“D” Teams

The opposite of “A” Teams is true for “D” Teams. When combined with the early tenure of most “D” Teams, it is unsurprising that their ratio is lower than average, since they have had the least time to build capability, invest in skills and create the necessary processes and data infrastructure to create impact and deliver value.

FIGURE 17

People analytics team ratio across ABCD Teams

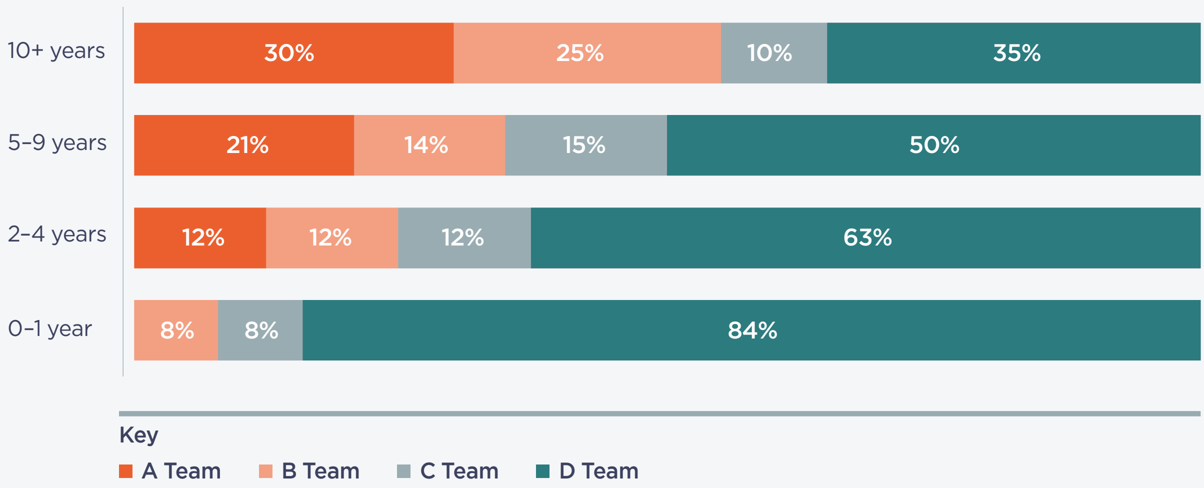
A TEAMS	B TEAMS	C TEAMS	D TEAMS
1:1100	1:5000	1:1500	1:4000

Tenure and ABCD Teams

When looking at the tenure of people analytics teams, and then mapping that to ABCD Teams, we can see clearly that those teams that have been established the longest are more likely to have higher investment and are delivering greater value (see Figure 18).

The insight here is that people analytics teams should not try and "fast track" to impact. The teams that are well established have purposefully set about investing in stakeholders, advanced analytics, skills and ethics to deliver the required value that an "A" Team can deliver consistently over time.

FIGURE 18
Tenure of people analytics teams, by ABCD Teams



Case Insight from S&P Global
An “A” Team That Keeps Things Simple

S&P Global’s broad product suite is widely sought after by many of the world’s leading organisations to provide credit ratings, benchmarks, analytics and workflow solutions in the global capital, commodity and automotive markets. Its insights and analytics enable governments, businesses and individuals to make decisions with conviction using the right data, expertise and connected technologies. It is not surprising, then, that Alan Susi, Global Head of Organizational Analytics and People Insights, has internal stakeholders that are ready to welcome him with open arms.

However, it’s not all plain sailing. In fact, some would argue this is a much harder task. S&P Global has had to deliver on the promise of a transformative merger[16] with important commercial targets being scrutinised by investors. Additionally, executives within the company have an expectation for insights that show immediate impact and drive action to the bottom line. Alan has had to deliver within this environment, and at pace, to support these ambitious merger goals. As Alan says, “Simply put, we have to practise what we preach.”

So where does the function of organisational analytics and people insights fit into this picture?

Alan has a team of 15 people, representing a healthy ratio of people analytics to employees. His team is also firmly an “A” Team, and he wants to maintain that position.

During the last three years, Alan has focused on delivering in a few key areas that will have the biggest impact for the organisation. One of those is what he calls “minimum viable workforce planning”. He is less interested in complex analytical models, and more interested in delivering interactive – and simple – workforce models that can be quickly turned into people actions. This approach has allowed him to simplify workforce planning into specific tasks that executives can quickly action within their teams: to hire the right people; to know when a resignation will have broader business impacts; to know when to invest in development for any one individual; to understand how to get to the right size of organisation; and to know which roles are strategically essential.

Alan describes it in straightforward terms: “When I work with senior stakeholders, I go in with a simple focus. I use basic maths. I explain recommendations in simple terms to allow them to make easy decisions. There are no tricks. No complex algorithms. I provide a plan of action, not a complex plan.”

But Alan does have a few tricks. One is building relationships with his finance colleagues. They are teammates, co-workers and friends. Alan explains: “We bring people data to finance to help them achieve their goals. We all ultimately have the same goals. During the merger, we all had to achieve the same collective goals for the organisation, including from a people perspective.”

That’s a simple approach and one that works. Alan concludes, “In the end, we delivered financial value through people insights. It was a team effort together with finance and the business teams.”

06
Value

Value can be measured in many ways. For people analytics, four types of value are described:[17]

1. **Improving workforce experiences – for example, employee engagement, well-being, etc.**
2. **Driving an analytics culture across the organisation – for example, democratising people data to managers, improving data literacy in HR, etc.**
3. **Improving business performance – for example, improving productivity, increasing sales, delivering improved profits.**
4. **Creating broader societal benefits – for example, creating more inclusive teams and communities, driving for sustainable people practices, etc.**

During our research, we used these four definitions of value and asked which of the elements had been measured in the prior 12 months. As shown in Figure 19, 70% and 71% of companies surveyed measure value for the first and second elements. However, only 39% and 34% of companies surveyed are measuring improved business performance or creating broader societal benefits from people analytics activities.

FIGURE 19
Four value outcomes of people analytics – the percentage of companies that have created measurable impact within each category within the last 12 months

Measuring Commercial Value of People Analytics

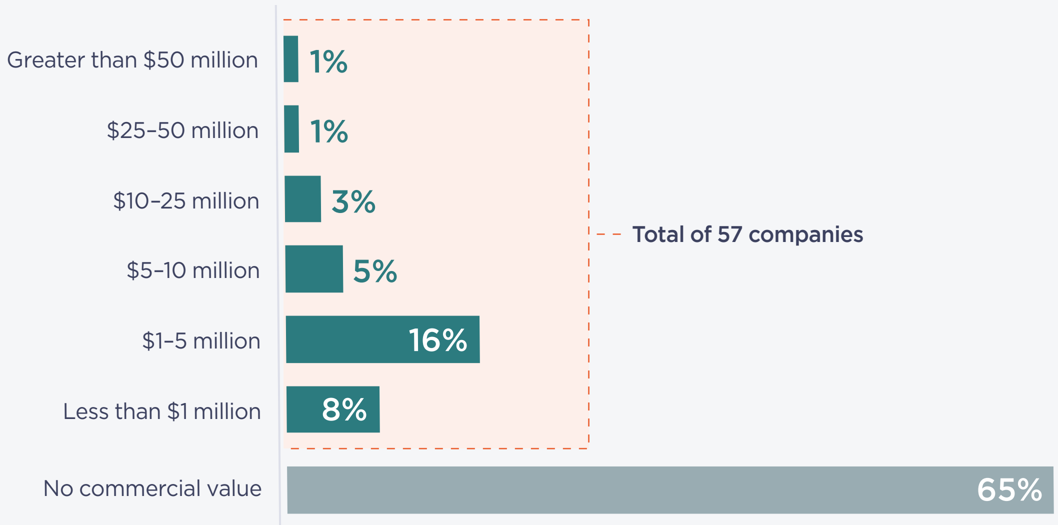
Our research looked more closely at the third element: improving business performance. The results are stark.

Of the 271 companies that we surveyed, 61% were comfortable disclosing the commercial value of their people analytics work. This represents 164 companies. Of these, only 35% stated that they had measured and calculated the commercial value of at least one people analytics solution.

As the results in Figure 20 show, of the 57 companies that disclosed a positive financial value from their people analytics solutions in the last 12 months, there are a very small number of companies that have delivered sizeable outcomes for their organisations.

These results demonstrate that there is “a long way to go” for people analytics in delivering measurable financial value. While we know that not all value is measured in financial terms, it is certainly important to have a plan to measure this.

FIGURE 20
The amount of financial value created by people analytics solutions in the last 12 months, as disclosed by 164 companies



When we studied the 57 companies who measured and declared their financial value more closely, we noticed that there are particular actions that these companies are more likely to take, compared with companies that didn't measure any commercial value. These actions are shown in Figure 21.

We find that those companies meet with key executives in the C-suite more than in those companies that do not measure commercial value. In particular, the people analytics leader in these 57 companies meets the CEO in 61% of cases, compared with 41% of cases where companies do not measure value. And they meet with the CFO twice as much (47% versus 24%) as in those companies that do not measure the commercial value of people analytics.

We see that in the companies that measure commercial value, they focus more on both people and HR strategy, and business strategy and C-suite challenges (84% versus 57%). This means that they listen to, talk with, and then prioritise topics that are of value both to their business executive leaders and their HR executive colleagues.

We note that those companies that measure commercial value also build teams (23% versus 14%) that are more likely to have all three of the key people analytics skills: people analytics consultants, data scientists and behavioural scientists.

Finally, and most notably, in this analysis we discover that in companies that measure the commercial value of people analytics, the people analytics teams have built relationships with finance executives at a level that is almost four times that in companies that did not measure commercial value (47% versus 12%).

Delivering commercial value of people analytics is not the only way to demonstrate the value of the activities and solutions of the people analytics function, as explained earlier in this section.

However, when focusing on improving business performance, what we have discovered is that in the two-thirds of companies that are willing to disclose details of commercial value, only 35% of those have measured the financial value of people analytics solutions.

When they do that, they are more likely to have built relationships with finance executives to calculate that value. They also have invested in senior executive relationships, key skills in the team, and focusing on business priorities as well as people and HR priorities.

FIGURE 21
Activities of people analytics teams that disclosed and measured commercial value of people analytics solutions

Leading Company Characteristic		Activity	Companies that answered questions in our survey about measuring financial value of people analytics solutions: Measured commercial value (n=57)	Did not measure commercial value (n=107)
#1	Influence	Meet with CEO at least annually	61%	41%
		Meet with CFO at least quarterly	47%	24%
#2	Business Priorities	People analytics projects in my company focus on people and HR strategy AND business strategy and C-suite challenges	84%	57%
#3	Skills	We have all three key skills in the people analytics team: people analytics consultants, data scientists, behavioural scientists	23%	14%
#5	Measurement	We have built relationships with finance executives to calculate the value of scaling people analytics insights and recommendations	47%	12%

The Importance of Partnering with Finance

Our research found that, overall, in less than a quarter (24%) of the 271 companies surveyed, the people analytics team has built relationships with finance executives to calculate the value of scaling people analytics insights and recommendations. For those that have not, this represents a missed opportunity for people analytics to deliver and measure value.

Of the 65 companies who confirmed that the people analytics team has built relationships with finance, 99% report that the people analytics team has delivered measurable outcomes over the last 12 months. Furthermore, over half of these (54%) have delivered outcomes with people analytics work that has improved business performance.

Tactics for partnering with finance:

1. **Involve finance colleagues early in key analytical projects.**
2. **Share details of statistical models, so that work can be enhanced and supported.**
3. **Adopt the language of finance.**

One leader who has a strong relationship with colleagues from the finance function is Laura Shubert. She has led the People Planning & Insights team at MetLife for over 10 years. “We bring our finance partners in, because we need to ensure that any solutions we develop, or approaches, are affordable,” Laura explains.

An important aspect of this partnership is to be transparent about the models that people analytics uses so that finance can contribute their expertise to help the people analytics team maximise the value of its work.

Laura has experienced this first-hand through partnering with her finance colleagues: “We open up our assumptions and we let them test it and push on it and probe, so that we’re not having a debate about the numbers with finance, because they’ve already gotten themselves comfortable with it, they’re already on board.”[18]

Of the 65 people analytics teams surveyed which have built relationships with finance:

99%

have delivered measurable outcomes from people analytics work over the last 12 months

54%

have delivered outcomes with people analytics work that has improved business performance

Case Insight from LG Electronics
People Analytics and Sales

LG Electronics is part of the LG Group, headquartered in Seoul, South Korea, and has approximately 74,000 employees.[19] Jaesun HA, serving in the Business Solution L&D team of LG Electronics, leads the people analytics practitioners in LG Electronics, which has been expanding and delivering impact for the last five years.

There is something very endearing and motivating about Jaesun's approach to people analytics. While his analyses and science are very complex and advanced, his focus on the business goals is incredible. Any aspiring people analytics leader – and many of the world's current people analytics leaders too – could learn a lot from Jaesun's approach to working with senior executives, both within the corporate HR team and across the wider finance, sales, and business teams.

During the last three years, his focus has been on the B2B sales relationship process. His goal was to find the people characteristics that are proven to improve sales performance within LG Electronics. While many people analytics teams have looked at this, few have succeeded. Jaesun, though, has taken this to a depth of analysis that has allowed him to isolate new factors that predict higher sales performance. He has secured the sponsorship of senior business executives, over a multi-year period. At the same time, the CEO has expressed a strong commitment to data and analytics, because he thinks that they should be a competency of every employee.

Jaesun explains, "We focused deeply on analyses that would lead to improved sales. I got hold of all sales data for all deals in our pipeline – hundreds of thousands of rows of data – and looked at it alongside our people data."

The approach has led to identifying skillsets and competencies at detailed levels to allow for better recruitment and development activities in the sales teams.

During a career of more than 30 years in LG Group, Jaesun has managed to reinvent himself many times. Studying for a PhD in data science in his third decade of work, and then using that to elevate himself to the people analytics role, is impressive. What is more impressive, though, is using these skills to leverage people data to deliver to the top line. The impact on the organisation's sales performance is impressive – financially.

Jaesun epitomises what the CEO, William Cho, has stated in his 2023 message: "We need to courageously go through the trials and difficulties that we inevitably encounter in our individual challenges with an optimistic attitude and positive mindset that we can definitely succeed, as we have done so far."

07
Influence

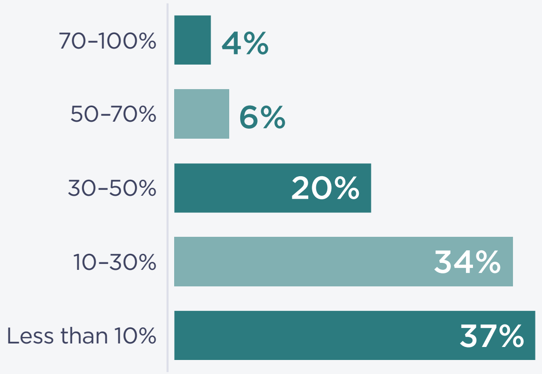
Influence is defined as “the power to make other people agree with your opinions, or do what you want”.[20] When looking at influence in people analytics, we consider the topics that are the focus of the team and the people with whom the people analytics leader is working and “influencing”.

Focus on Strategic Priorities

In our research, we also studied what topics the people analytics teams focus on. While this is, to a certain extent, a self-declared assessment of the value of the work being undertaken, the results are interesting.

When asked the question, “What percentage of the people analytics team’s total work over the past 12 months was advanced analytics for the company’s most important strategic business priorities?”, only a very small percentage (10%) indicate that more than half of the people analytics team’s total work is focused on “the most important strategic business priorities” (see Figure 22).

FIGURE 22
The percentage of people analytics teams whose total work is focused on the most important strategic business priorities



Note: percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding

Focus on Working with Senior Teams

At the headline level, the data in Figure 22 looks concerning. However, beneath the surface, there is much to be encouraged about, as can be seen in Figure 23.

These results indicate that in many cases, people analytics teams are, indeed, working on topics of significant importance, at the highest levels of the organisation. The fact that 21% of people analytics leaders (that is, 57 executives across the companies surveyed) are invited to present to the board of directors at least once a year shows that – for at least these 57 people – there is the opportunity to influence on significant people topics and have the attention of the most important governance body in their organisation.

Additionally, 58% of the people analytics leaders in the companies surveyed have presented to the executive committee (C-suite or ExCo). That means that in 157 companies, the people analytics leader and their team have the ability to influence the senior executive team.

People Analytics leaders presenting to:

1. The board:

21%

2. The C-suite:

58%

When looking at the topic of influence in people analytics, we can conclude that it is *really* important to have the right person leading this function. In our research overall, and as shown in Figure 23, we see that they are needed to contribute to C-suite and board topics in over 80% of companies, and in many situations, present directly to them. When these opportunities exist, it is important to have a people analytics leader who can listen to top executives and inform their decision-making effectively.

In conclusion, it is becoming more important for the CHRO to hire, develop and retain more influential and more expert executives in the people analytics leader role. As people data and insights become more important in the business environment, this will become a differentiator in how the CHRO will be able to influence the C-suite and the board.

FIGURE 23
The percentage of people analytics teams working with senior executive teams and boards of directors

In the last 12 months...

83%	of people analytics teams have been asked to do specific work for the board of directors
79%	of people analytics teams prepared analyses included in regular updates to the board of directors
58%	of people analytics leaders (or one of their team) presented to the executive committee (CEO and their team)
21%	of people analytics leaders (or one of their team) presented to the board of directors

Case Insight from Ericsson
From Data Geek to Influencer

Eden Britt is the VP and Global Head of People Analytics and Digital Solutions at Ericsson. He has worked in the people analytics field in three different companies, progressing to his current role reporting directly to the CHRO. Ericsson is a global technology enterprise, founded in 1876 and headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, with offices and clients in over 110 countries in the world, and over 103,000 employees.[21]

Eden is typical of a new style of executive in HR – one who carries, like many in senior HR roles, a deep appreciation of how HR can deliver value to businesses. Alongside that, he brings contemporary skills with a deep understanding of how data and analytics can deliver insights that will make better-informed decisions. He also understands how digital and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies can speed up routes to value.

When discussing how he moved from a leader of people analytics to an executive influencer, Eden described what changed: "A few years ago, I had a manager, who themselves had strong relationships. They gave me opportunities to present to more senior people, the confidence to have an opinion, and to build relationships. So, as my career has evolved, I have been more comfortable in challenging the status quo, and pointing out the real areas to debate.

He summarises two types of situation when he gets in front of the C-suite or board: "There are the 'CEO topics'. These are ones that my team will research and then I get to present together with the CHRO. Then there are 'my own topics'." He explains, "There are things we discover and uncover in our analyses. I want to share these because I feel they will help move the company forward."

He explains that to do the latter, he needs to be "in the room". He must understand the context of the situation to be able to help his team. It's when he's with senior management and listening directly to top executives that he can find ways to influence on all HR topics.

As Eden summarises, "My role is to keep nudging and holding people to account. And being in the room is critical to enabling that to happen."

When asked how he keeps thinking at this senior level, Eden jokes, "I have to keep out of Excel." In fact, it's not really a joke. He's learned that being curious about the data doesn't mean he needs to be "in the data" himself.

08 Recommendations

The people analytics leaders interviewed for this research, and featured as case studies throughout, all have this in common: they understand their organisation's most pressing business priorities and have identified people analytics activities that will support them. This is enabling their function to deliver business value and the people analytics leader to influence decision-making at the highest levels of the organisation.

We also learned through these interviews that there are practical actions that all people analytics teams can take. These are summarised in Figure 24. This is regardless of which of the ABCD Teams they are diagnosed as belonging to in the Leading Companies Model.

FIGURE 24

Recommendations for action

1 GROWTH

Continue to grow the impact of the function by leveraging what the people analytics team has to offer.

Determine which service the people analytics team can offer to help other teams gain traction.

For example, offering to the chief technology officer for the people analytics team to pilot new enterprise technologies helps build the relationship and means the team is on the front foot for future changes.

2 VALUE

Deliver value from people analytics efforts by understanding the most pressing business priorities.

Listen to what stakeholders really want and ensure that the people analytics team is supporting the business priorities, not just the priorities of the HR function.

People analytics teams that focus on both business priorities and HR priorities are more likely to have measurable impact.

3 INFLUENCE

Inform C-suite decision-making by keeping analytics simple to understand and take action.

When identifying how the people analytics team can help the company to be successful, tell stories that inspire action.

No matter which "state" a people analytics team is currently at, influencing stakeholders is key to delivering value.

4 IMPACT

Establish the steps that can be taken to move the function to a more impactful level.

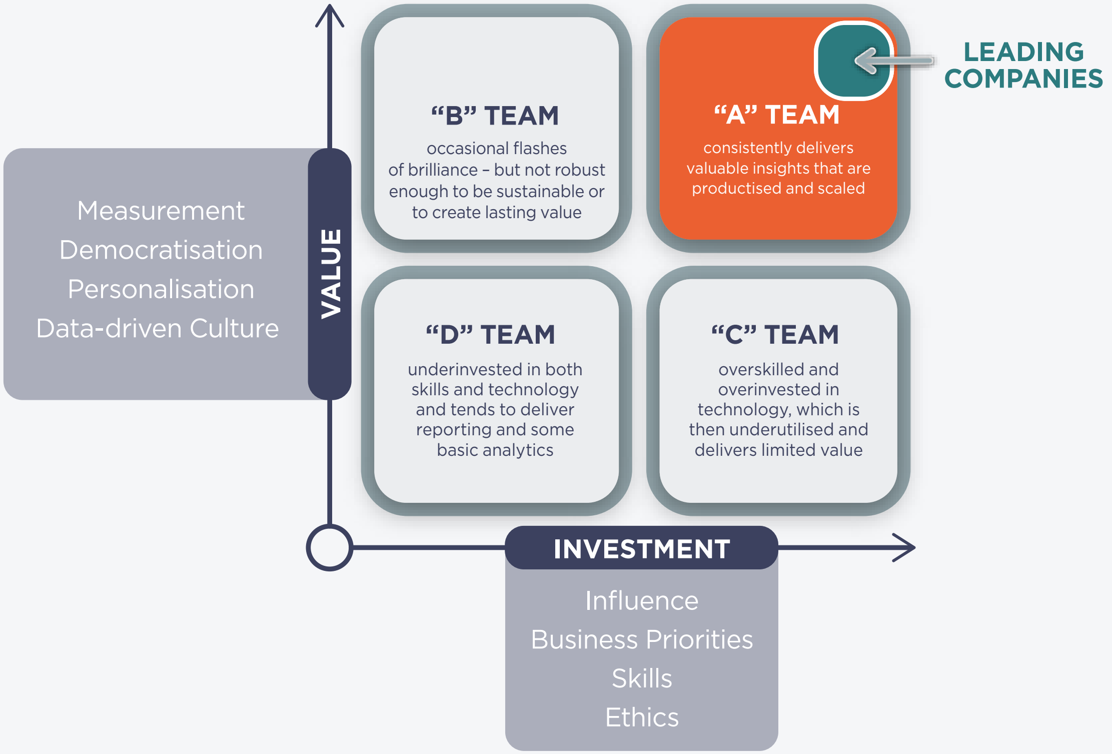
Take the Leading Companies Diagnostic to establish where your team is currently at, and what specific actions can be taken to both invest in the team and deliver greater value.

Overall, our research finds that measuring and delivering value from people analytics efforts is key for the impact of the function.

During economically challenging times, it is perhaps even more important that people analytics teams are supporting the company with business priorities, not just HR priorities, and are able to evidence the value they have delivered through measurable outcomes.

As has been described throughout this report, there are eight characteristics that Leading Companies display (see Figure 25). Every people analytics function, in any organisation, globally, can diagnose themselves against these eight characteristics. Using our diagnostic, it is possible to understand what characteristics are the most important to develop to create more impact.

FIGURE 25
Leading Companies Model



The Leading Companies Diagnostic

After studying this model, the question remains for people analytics leaders: “How do I know which ‘state’ my team is in currently, and which actions do I take to deliver more value?”

By undertaking the Insight222 Leading Companies Diagnostic, people analytics leaders and CHROs can determine which of the ABCD Teams their people analytics function is currently at, and the steps to take to improve impact.

For an assessment of where your team aligns in the Leading Companies Model, click the link below or scan the QR code to access the Leading Companies Diagnostic.

Take our Leading Companies Diagnostic

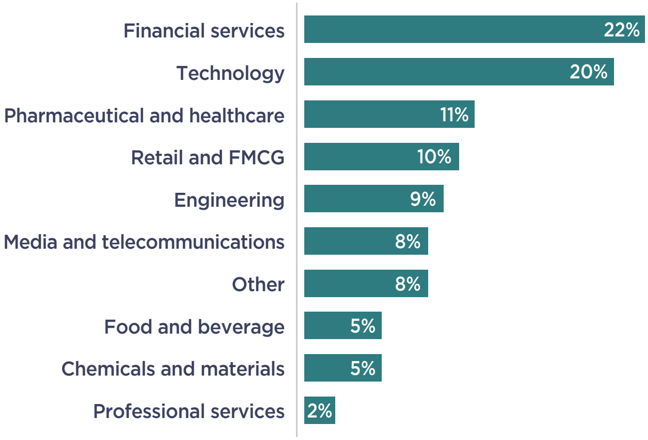
Scan to access the diagnostic

Methodology and Demographics

The report is based on a survey of 271 global companies conducted by Insight222 in June and July 2023. The survey was sent directly to and completed by the people analytics leader in that company with accountability for the function. These organisations are collectively responsible for over 16 million workers and operate in more than 180 countries.

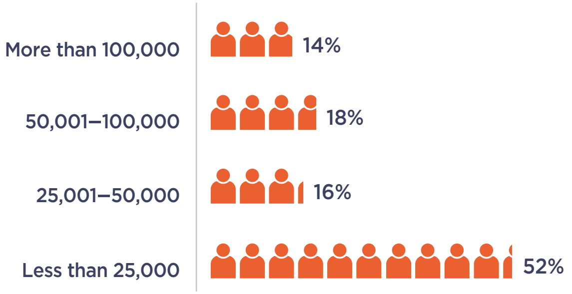
INDUSTRY

Companies surveyed in each industry group

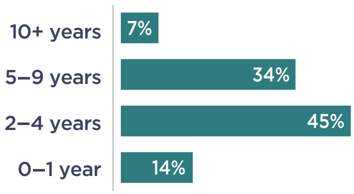


COMPANY SIZE

Number of employees

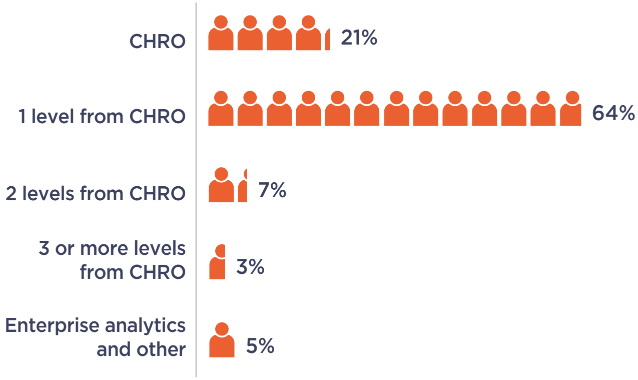


TENURE

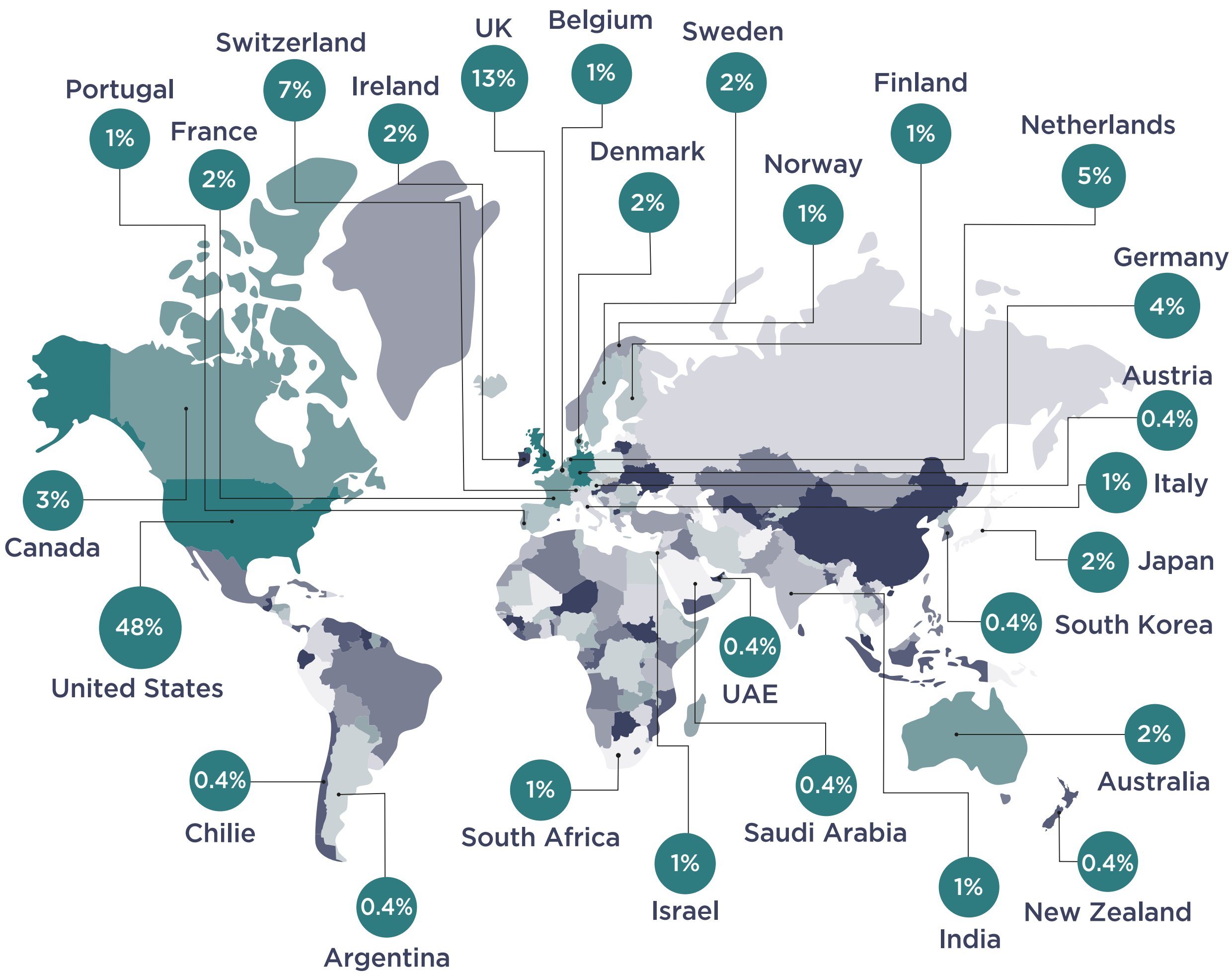


PEOPLE ANALYTICS LEADER REPORTING LINE

Leaders reporting to:



● 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 15 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 more than 17 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 seven 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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About Insight222

Insight222 research provides business executives and HR leaders with insights and recommendations to advance the HR profession to become more 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 solutions to chief human resources officers and their key staff in analytics, strategy, and planning. Insight222 clients and partners – typically large, multinational organisations – include some of the world's leading brands.

Find out more at **www.insight222.com**

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to make a special mention of the following individuals, who contributed to this research through a series of interviews. We thank them for their enthusiasm for our research and the profession of people analytics. They have been quoted within this report.

Alan Susi, Global Head of Organizational Analytics and People Insights at S&P Global

Eden Britt, Vice President, Global Head of People Analytics and Digital Solutions at Ericsson

James Reynolds, Head of Group Property Systems, Insight and Investment at Lloyds Banking Group

Jane Puckey, Group People Insight Partnering Lead at Lloyds Banking Group

Jaesun HA, Professional, BS HRD Team, Business Solutions Company at LG Electronics Inc.

Laura Shubert, Vice President, People Planning & Insights at MetLife

The authors are also grateful to the people analytics leaders from the 271 companies who contributed to this research during June and July 2023.

The authors would also like to extend thanks to the following individuals at Insight222 for their contribution to this report:

David Green, Senior Vice President and Managing Partner, for his guidance and for helping source a substantial number of participants for the survey.

Jay Dorio, Senior Vice President and Managing Director, Products and Services, for his work on the survey design and creation of the Leading Companies Diagnostic that supports the Leading Companies Model.

Manpreet Randhawa, Chief Marketing Officer, for her expertise in delivering the marketing programme for this research.

Nerea González, for her support in producing the People Analytics Trends 2023 Benchmark Report for the companies who participated in the survey for this research.

Stefan Kesic, Senior Digital Marketing Manager, for his assistance in making sure the research would reach as many HR professionals and people analytics practitioners as possible, with his expert digital marketing skills.

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