

Deloitte.



The Insights-to-Action journey

Using data and analytics to make better people decisions and drive business outcomes



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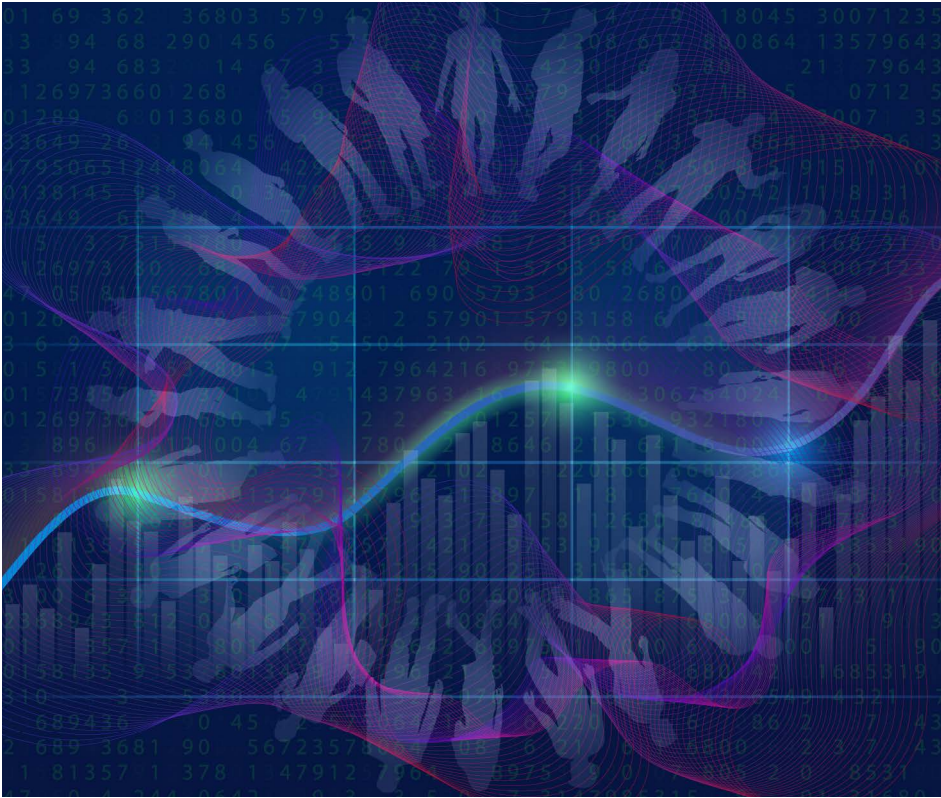
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Analytics promise to help companies make better, more data-driven decisions about work, workplaces, and the workforce. But, so far, this promise is unfulfilled: In our [2021 Global Human Capital Trends](#) survey, a mere 3% of the 6,300+ executive respondents said they have the information needed to make sound people decisions. This is a prescription for frustration—and failure—in today's disruptive environment.

Leaders need analytics, but only to the extent that analytics provide insights that enable their organizations to act successfully in a reliable, adaptable, and human-centric manner. We call this “Insights-to-Action.” Organizations need to be able to use analytics to sense, analyze, and act—the three legs of the Insights-to-Action journey—in response to the myriad of disruptions affecting work, workplaces, and the workforce.

We know this firsthand because Deloitte uses analytics to fuel its own Insights-to-Action journeys. One example, which illustrates how analytics support our workforce efforts, is Deloitte's ongoing quest to bolster diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) throughout the organization.



Insights-to-Action in DEI

Like many established global companies, Deloitte has been striving to improve [diversity, equity, and inclusion](#) within our workforce for decades. It's been 40 years since we first used our intern program to help minority candidates gain access to the business world. In the 1990s, we sharpened our focus on the retention and advancement of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity, and later to other dimensions of diversity such as abilities, LGBTQIA+, veteran status, and nationality. These efforts enabled us to deliver several “firsts” in our

industry—the first female chair in 2003, the first Latino CEO in 2011, and the first female CEO among the Big Four accounting firms in 2015. Then came the tragic events of 2020—including the deaths of Black people at the hands of police and the outsized toll of COVID-19 on Black Americans—which made us realize the time had come for bolder moves aimed at changing outcomes by changing behaviors. We set off a new journey from Insight-to-Action inside our company.

Making sense of disruption

Usually, sensing starts with the identification of potential disruptive events; people analytics pinpoint the ripples of change that can grow into waves of disruption. In 2020, however, there was no missing the tsunami of activism that was unleashed. So, our journey started by trying to fully understand its impact on Deloitte's people.

That step in the sensing leg of our journey began with our leaders having open, honest conversations with our people and listening to their personal stories. These conversations gave us a human-centric lens for developing an empathic understanding (an essential element in design thinking) of the impact of 2020's events on our people. It also made clear their expectations regarding DEI transparency and their desire for an expansion of our efforts.

The combination of awareness of external events and an empathic understanding of those most affected lies at the heart of the sensing leg in the Insights-to-Action journey. It guides the data-gathering and analysis that follows.

Analyzing the current state and the opportunities ahead

Once we knew that our focus must be on equity, we needed to ascertain the current state of our efforts and decide how they should be expanded. Data and analytics fueled this second leg of our DEI Insights-to-Action journey.

We dug into our data to better understand where we stood against our DEI goals, and we sought to identify a desired future state, given our elevated understanding of the importance of equity to Deloitte and its people. Among the many results of this work, we decided a new, expanded organization headed by a chief DEI officer was needed. Under its auspices, new goals were set, including increasing:

- Black and Hispanic/Latino professionals in our US workforce by 50% by 2025;

- Overall racial and ethnic diversity of our US workforce to 48% and the representation of racially and ethnically diverse US partners, principals, and managing directors (PPMDs) to 25% by 2025; and
- Female representation in our US workforce to 45% and the number of female US PPMDs by 25% by 2025.

The analysis leg of the Insights-to-Action journey requires the ability to conduct a comprehensive analysis of your current state, using both quantitative and qualitative data. Additionally, it requires being able to use data and analytics to identify your biggest opportunity areas and help chart a measurable path forward. Having a data-driven culture, multiple sources of data, and analytics that are capable of surfacing insights are key enablers of these pursuits.

Acting for maximum impact

We concluded the analysis leg in this specific DEI journey and turned to its final leg by pledging to act on our decisions, being transparent about our goals, progressing toward them, and holding ourselves accountable to our values. That's a work in progress, but the [2021 Deloitte Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) Transparency Report](#) publicly lays out our commitments to our people.

Now, we have a broad set of DEI goals, including mandated actions in recruitment, advancement, retention, leadership and education, community-building, mental health, and aspirational well-being. Moreover, each goal comes with measurable outcomes, and accountability has been assigned for achieving them. There is a lot of work to do and challenges to meet, but we are committed to creating a better future for our people and communities.

The action leg of all Insights-to-Action journeys is where the seeds of opportunity hidden in disruptive events begin to grow. This work requires a cultural bias toward action—a willingness to fail fast and fail forward. And, its ultimate success is rooted in the ability to unite the efforts of people and successfully execute plans.



The people analytics practices of high-performing organizations

Deloitte's experience applying the Insights-to-Action model is bolstered by nearly a decade of primary research into people analytics, including multiple evidence-based, "high-impact" studies. This research identified the people analytics strategies and practices that distinguish high-performing organizations from their low-performing counterparts. The following findings from our 2021 High-Impact People Analytics study are fundamental to the Insights-to-Action journey and can help your organization transform disruption into opportunity.

ACCELERATE USING TECHNOLOGY:

Rapidly evolving analytics technologies offer a tantalizing wealth of capabilities, ranging from data auditing to passive data collection to dashboard visualizations with automated suggestions. So, it comes as no surprise that more than 70% of responding organizations told us they had invested in people analytics tools within the past 12 months, and more than 50% planned to invest in them in the next 12 months.

Compared with low-performing organizations, high-performing organizations are:

2x more likely to use specialized people analytics tools and software

However, they use these tools to enhance—not replace—a comprehensive strategy that addresses key factors for people analytics success.

ACTIVATE A DATA-DRIVEN CULTURE:

While an organization's overall cultural identity usually goes beyond its approach to analytics, a culture that understands the power of data-driven insights and values evidence-based decision-making is the most powerful driver of performance in our study by far.

Compared with low-performing organizations, high-performing organizations are:

2.6x more likely to treat data and analytics as core assets that create a competitive advantage

2.1x more likely to communicate the importance of data-driven decisions

BUILD TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY:

The effective governance of data (e.g., accuracy, transparency, security, legal, and regulatory compliance) is foundational to people analytics success. But high-performing organizations take data governance a step further to focus on ethics and what they *should* do, not just what they *can* do.

Compared with low-performing organizations, high-performing organizations are:

1.6x more likely to communicate to workers about the collection and use of their personal data

3.5x more likely to communicate the insights and value obtained from using their data

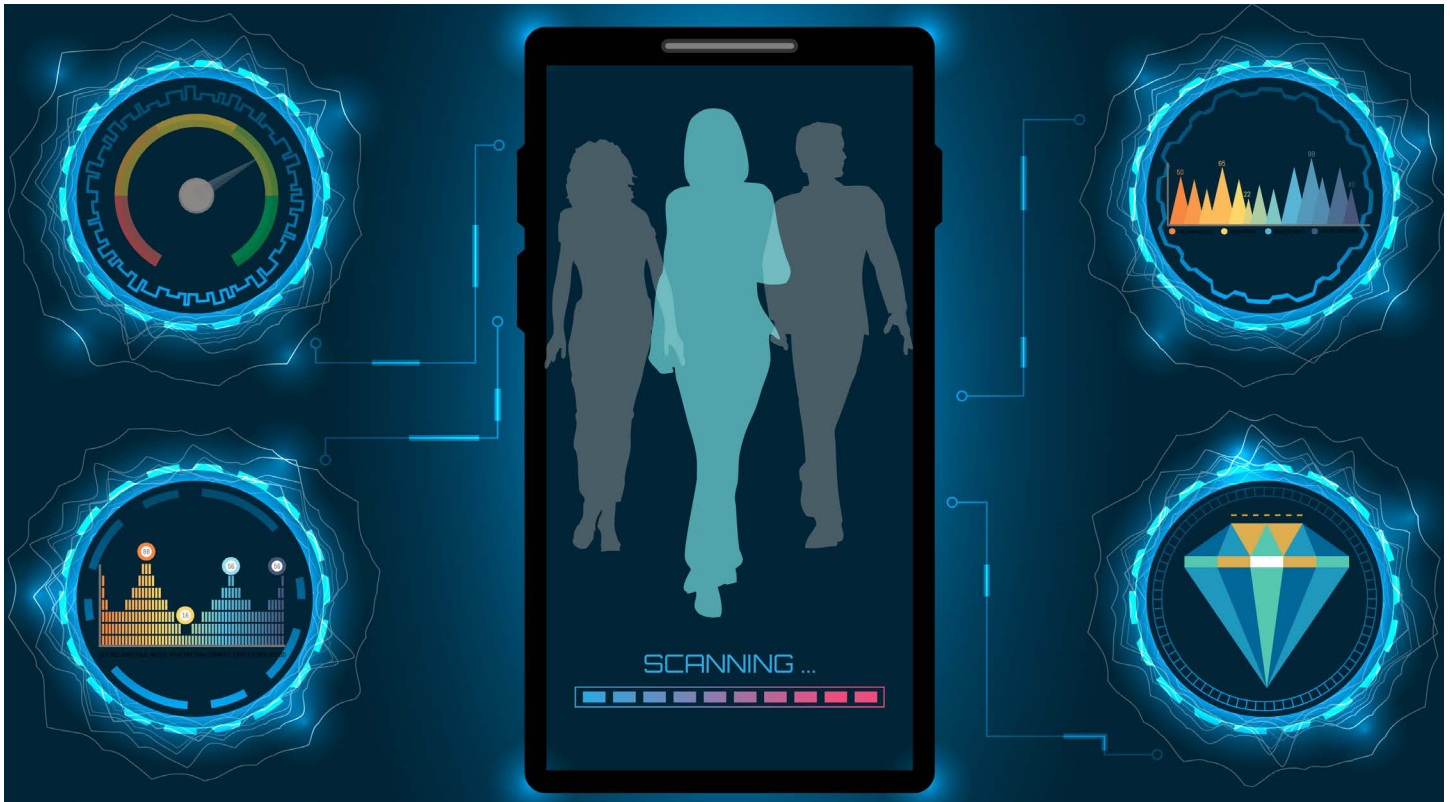
FOCUS ON THE FUTURE:

When it comes to transforming insight into action, what *could* happen is as important as what *has* happened. That's why future-focused practices and tools, such as scenario planning, are such powerful enablers of organization preparedness and resilience, as well as drivers of action and outcomes.

Compared with low-performing organizations, high-performing organizations are:

6.6x more likely to conduct data-driven scenario modeling

3.0x more likely to view workforce planning as a continuous exercise



Driving insights and business value through people analytics

The DEI example shared above is only one workforce-focused area in which taking action based on analytics-derived insights can help companies achieve better business outcomes and meaningful change. Additional areas include talent acquisition, workforce planning, learning, leadership, succession, engagement, experience, performance, rewards, timekeeping, and payroll. Asking the right questions about these areas, analyzing the appropriate data, then taking decisive action can lead to positive workforce outcomes.

But don't analyze and address the workforce in isolation. Our research confirms that high-performing organizations intentionally synchronize and integrate the workforce with the workplace and work itself to drive down cost and enhance meaning and value in the business.¹ This requires robust analytics practices and platforms, along with a willingness to work across boundaries to generate more holistic insights.

AI-enabled project management tools, for example, include powerful analytics that can help project managers anticipate delays and drops in productivity. Collaboration technologies generate data that can help identify optimal patterns of teamwork, innovation, and productivity. Workplace analytics can help identify the best mix of on-site, remote, and hybrid workers. The proliferation of biometric apps and sentiment analysis promises to offer even more diverse and richer sources of data and better integration of analytics, insights, and action for work, the workforce, and the workplace.

Taking the next step on the Insight-to-Action journey

To start to assess your organization's current analytics strategy and practices and its likelihood of success in using analytics to drive business value, we invite you complete an abbreviated version of our research-based high-impact people analytics scorecard. These questions are designed to allow you to quickly assess the people analytics maturity of your organization. The scoring is based on a four-point scale.

High-impact people analytics scorecard

Category	Strongly agree 4	Agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly disagree 1
<p>Data culture</p> <p>My senior leadership demonstrates the importance of data-driven decisions through their communications and actions.</p>				
<p>Governance and ethics</p> <p>My organization acts with transparency when collecting and acting on people-related data (e.g., communicating to workers about the collection of their personal data and the insights obtained from using their data).</p>				
<p>Data skills</p> <p>My HR team possesses the basic data literacy (e.g., understanding of data sources, data applications, and descriptive statistics) necessary for useful people analytics.</p>				
<p>Tools and technology</p> <p>My organization has the tools and technologies needed to effectively generate and visualize workforce insights.</p>				
<p>Partnering and delivery</p> <p>My organization's people analytics team spends a large proportion of its time interacting with stakeholders to understand their needs and support insight-driven action planning.</p>				

How did you do?

As a baseline for comparison, high-performing organizations with mature people analytics capabilities typically score 3 or 4 in most of the categories.

To take the full scorecard assessment (as an individual or group), or to learn more about getting started on your Insights-to-Action journey, please contact us.

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Endnotes

1 High-Impact Workforce Top Findings, 2020.



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