

Evaluating key data analytics skills

The following pages list a set of essential data analytics skills required for HR professionals. By developing these skills, you can leverage data to drive strategic people and enterprise initiatives for positive impact. These skills can be developed and enhanced through training, practice and hands-on experience. Building a strong foundation in data analytics and data storytelling can greatly enhance an HR professional's ability to influence and persuade key stakeholders. To further develop your analytics capabilities, check out our **HR Analytics Fundamentals** microlearning course, which provides practical insights and training for HR professionals.



Review this list of skills and rate your level of proficiency today. Save this file so you can track your progress over time.

Agility skills

 **Business acumen:** Understanding the business vision, context and key objectives is crucial for HR professionals. Aligning data analysis with organizational goals allows HR professionals to connect data insights to HR strategies and initiatives.

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 **Project management:** HR professionals should possess project management skills to plan, execute and monitor HR analytics projects. Managing timelines, resources and deliverables is essential for successful project implementation.

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 **Change management:** Understanding the impact of data-driven HR initiatives on organizational culture — and vice versa — is important for HR professionals. Navigating and managing change effectively ensures successful deployment of data-driven strategies.

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 **Critical thinking:** Strong analytical and problem-solving skills are essential for HR professionals. HR leaders need to identify patterns, trends and outliers in data, think critically, and make logical connections between data points to make data-driven and nuanced decisions.

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 **Collaboration and influence:** Collaboration among cross-functional teams, including IT, finance and operations, is key for HR professionals. Breaking down silos across HR, the business and HR vendors, to gather data, align analytic efforts and influence stakeholders is important.

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 **Continuous learning:** A focus on continuous learning, being open to feedback and seeking opportunities to enhance data analytics is also crucial for HR professionals. Staying updated with the latest trends, data analysis techniques and visualization tools ensures HR staff remain effective in their roles.

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 **Emotional intelligence:** HR professionals need to consider the human aspect of data analysis. Understanding and empathizing with employees' needs and concerns when analyzing HR data is important for making informed and judicious decisions. At Mercer, we call this approach "balancing empathy with economics."

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Notes:

Data trust skills

 **Data ethics and privacy:** Knowledge of data ethics and privacy regulations is vital for HR professionals. Anyone touching data must ensure compliance and protect sensitive employee information during data transfer, storage, analysis and reporting.

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 **Data governance:** Knowledge of data governance principles and practices is vital for HR professionals. Ensuring data accuracy, integrity and security throughout the data analysis process is essential.

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Data analysis skills

 **Research skills:** HR professionals need to know how to conduct basic research and gather relevant data from various sources to support HR analytic initiatives. Identifying reliable sources and validating data is required.

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 **Data literacy:** Includes knowledge of data types, data collection methods, data quality and understanding the difference between reliable data, valid data and a representative sample. Being able to interpret and analyze data effectively is imperative for making informed HR decisions.

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 **Cleaning and preparing data:** This involves techniques for handling missing data, data transformation and data normalization. Ensuring data accuracy and quality is essential for verifiable analysis.

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 **Data analysis tools:** Familiarity with data analysis tools and software is a must for HR professionals. Excel, R, Python, SQL and SPSS are commonly used tools for manipulating and analyzing data. Being proficient in at least one of these tools allows HR professionals to extract valuable insights from data.

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 **Data mining:** This is the process of discovering patterns and relationships in large datasets. It involves using advanced algorithms and statistical techniques to uncover hidden relationships, clusters, sequences and trends within the data. Data mining can be done by examining one database or multiple datasets and is often a multifunctional team endeavor. By discussing and interpreting the insights together, organizations can extract valuable insights, make informed decisions and drive success.

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 **Statistical analysis:** HR professionals need to have a solid understanding of basic statistical concepts and techniques. This includes descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis and hypothesis testing. These skills enable HR professionals to uncover meaningful insights from data.

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Data communication skills

 **Data interpretation:** HR professionals should be able to derive meaningful insights from data and translate them into actionable recommendations or strategies for HR and line of business decision-making. The ability to analyze data in the context of talent and enterprise objectives is key.

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 **Data visualization:** This is the art of representing data in pictorial formats. It involves taking data out of database cells and aggregating it into tables, charts, infographics and visualization tools and business intelligence dashboards. Proficiency in data visualization tools like Tableau, Power BI or Excel is very valuable.

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 **Storytelling:** HR professionals should possess storytelling and communication skills to effectively convey data insights to stakeholders. Being able to present data in a compelling, understandable and “why it matters” manner is essential for driving action.

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 **Presentation skills:** Proficiency in presenting data insights to diverse audiences is a desirable skill for HR professionals. Adapting the presentation style and level of detail based on the audience ensures effective communication.

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