

Making a Dash: Careers in Analytics


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LOGAN'S CAREER PATH

 Data Entry/
 Paperwork

 Project
 Manager in
 Marketing

 Customer
 Journey
 Analyst

 Distribution
 Analyst

 Sales
 Enablement
 Manager

“ Being able to explain why will really make a difference for your company, helps drive revenue dollars, and it just opens doors. ”

“ If you serve up analytics in a way that people can't understand, it doesn't matter if it's any good or not. It has to be clear. ”

How did your career path lead you to analytics?

I guess I have always been a bit of an analytical person by nature. I got into university and actually went to school originally for pre-med. After two years I switched over to business. I joined Invesco and eventually I became the first customer journey strategist or analyst, if you will. My job was really driving the right content at the right time to our users based on data that we actually had received. We started a new department, a North American analytics group, and I was one of the first hires. From there I've been promoted from distribution analyst to sales enablement manager. That's where I am today. I pretty much touched on analytics throughout my entire life.

Describe an aha moment you had working with data.

It's always kind of been there for me. Everything's always been: How can we measure that so that we'd know that it was successful, or how can we learn and adjust to better serve our clients? Before I was in university, I had a summer internship where we worked on amusement park-sized paintball fields. The owner actually was a consultant who would do large-scale design and multimedia and so he would do all these great graphics and stuff like that. But we would say, "Okay, that's great but how many people are using it? How do we know if they're coming back?"

I was even setting up loyalty programs, and Call of Duty [video game] was really big for a lot of the local kids at the time. We were tracking it with paper. I would count up paper at night and start to tally up the numbers and think, "This guy came back. He's going to get a free paintball grenade next time," basically instituting that loyalty program.

What's an example of how analytics helped you to inform business strategy?

The Canadian marketing group where I worked for a while wanted to become more data driven and really drive the right content to clients at the right time, which is a great line but no easy task. We started with email and Marketing Cloud. Every single time anything went out via email I would review and say, "This is what you got. This is the industry average. This is against our company's average. You're a little bit lower than average. Here's what others have done. Maybe try this next time." Then we incorporated A/B testing and we just kept learning from there and took steps to really become more of a data-driven culture.

“ Continued education is super important. The Trailhead program is always great. ”

“ Just get your foot in the door and look for opportunities. ”

Tell us about a challenge you encountered working with analytics.

That's a tough one. But there have been some frustrations in the past. I think if I go back to when I was in Canadian marketing before I had Einstein Analytics, I actually had an alternative analytics system. I crashed that system a thousand times in a single day and at the end of the day I thought, "I don't even have it done yet." Not having the right analytical system can be extremely frustrating and then you're really just losing time. That kind of thing can happen occasionally but I had a whole week of that. That was probably one of my worst experiences with an analytical system because it wasn't as capable as we needed it to be.

Can you give us an example of an unexpected or surprising result from your work in analytics?

I was doing a proof of concept with Salesforce Einstein Analytics. Originally we were attempting to do kind of an industry look at our financial advisors – our clients and we wanted to just see what the technology was capable of. Our work escalated really quickly and people were impressed with how well they could understand our clients and potential clients. We had a few sales users who were in there just to kind of give feedback. I was still building and I would say, "The data's not quite valid yet. We're still stringing stuff together. What does this look like?" And the sales user would phone me up and tell me, "I just made a sale over here in California. I just made a sale. This data is better than anything we've ever gotten!" And then within two weeks I was on a plane to meet the CEO.

What advice would you offer to someone at the beginning of a career in analytics?

To start, I would say just get your foot in the door and look for opportunities. Just take a look around and ask yourself, "Hey, what can I do here and where can I practice?" Find ways to experiment with a sandbox and then people will start to say, "Oh, you're looking at that in an interesting way," or "I find that valuable." You start to get feedback and then that really allows you to walk the talk and take it toward putting yourself into an analytics role. You can then say, "I did this in a committee. I do this for the department." As opposed to just saying, "Hey, I want to do something for analytics, but I haven't actually done anything yet."

Do you have a comment or follow up question for @Logan? Ask in the comments section.

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