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Let your workforce data do the talking

It's no secret that an organization's people are critical to its success – and insight into people-data is a vital input into achieving strategic and operational success.

WHY THEN, DO ORGANIZATIONS – both public and private – have such difficulty in gaining fact-based insight about their workforce, a resource pool that, in some organizations, represents up to 70 percent or more of operating expenses?

Even though it's a universal and cross-industry issue, private sector organizations are starting to realize the benefits of workforce analytics and the positive impact this can have on driving overall organizational results, changing the very nature of setting expectations, managing performance and achieving strategic goals.

Public sector organizations are sitting on vast reserves of workforce-related data, ready to be unleashed for better decision-making, ready to assist program executives in delivering better outcomes and value for citizens, and ready to help departmental human resources personnel actually become "business partners."

As an executive running a government business unit, you should be able to leverage your people and workforce-related data – in the same way that you leverage your financial data – to make better business decisions.

But here's one of the many challenges: this data tends to be locked away in disparate systems and sources with varying degrees of cleanliness, accuracy and sophistication. This can result in a monumental task to address its root cause that might mean integrating systems and consolidating data, with the risk of becoming a large-scale IMIT project requiring multiple stakeholders and

corporate investment. In government (and in other industries), these big data initiatives can struggle to get off the ground – and run the risk of becoming misaligned from the original business intent, namely using your data to make better people and business decisions. Dare we say it, they can become big, ugly IMIT projects.

Looking ahead, this conundrum is going to get worse for those who ignore it as the digital tidal wave continues to grow.

The National Gallery of Canada is an example of a progressive organization using workforce analytics to their advantage. In this federal crown corporation, workforce analytics as a service has enabled both the HR group and the new HR director, Sylvie Sarault, to gain rapid understanding and insight into the people-side of the organization. Within days (not months or years), the National Gallery moved from under-utilized and locked-away workforce data to real-time insight and visualizations into demographics, headcount and turnover patterns and costs.

Some private sector organizations, like the Edmonton Oilers and other sports franchises who have some of the tightest links between recruiting, developing individual talent and the corporate bottom lines (as depicted in the blockbuster movie *Moneyball*), take this so seriously they have created open-data competitions for recruiting their own workforce analytics experts. The Oilers Hackathon 2.0 challenges experts to come up with the best algorithm or predictive model for player performance. The reward is the next-best thing to a hockey-lover's dream job – working for the Oilers Analytics Team.

Some organizations are already rapidly adopting lean and inexpensive approaches to workforce analytics where big data doesn't require a big budget or a big IMIT project. With appropriate guidance, governance and support from their
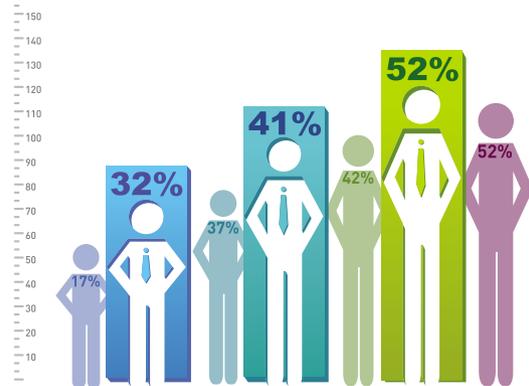
CIOs, security and privacy officers, these progressive organizations are leveraging highly secure and 100 percent Canadian cloud-based innovations from workforce analytics solutions characterized by best-practice metrics and benchmarks, to predictive models, speed-of-thought data analysis and visualization toolsets. In sum, workforce experts working hand-in-hand with data scientists to provide insight-as-a-service as opposed to simply software-as-a-service.

And that's where analytics through "traditional" software-as-a-service can only go so far. The data and facts don't manifest themselves into a business decision or a change in business direction that requires interpretation, consultation, and sometimes further investigation or research, be it quantitative or qualitative. Essentially, that requires people to make sense of it all and take action, public servants and expert service providers to turn the data, facts and information into insight to drive decisions for your organization, to achieve better organizational outcomes.

Wouldn't it be amazing to understand the talent profile of the people within your department who are consistently making great strategic decisions, who build deeply engaged teams, who do the right things for your clients and are ambassadors for your brand? And armed with this insight, would you recruit or develop talent in a different way? Innovative and leading-edge workforce analytics can help you find a better way.

It's your workforce data. You should use it. **GE**