

REPORTING AND ANALYTICS TALENT RECRUITMENT



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Talent Recruitment & Retention Strategies

An Agency Perspective for Reporting and Analytics Roles

Recruiting and retaining talent has become one of the most urgent topics for agencies and marketers alike. In addition to the challenges of attracting and retaining talent are the complexities that come from hiring for Reporting & Analytics roles. Potential candidates often have a broad spectrum of capabilities which can make it difficult to properly determine if they are the right fit.

This paper outlines the steps that agencies can take to maintain a competitive edge through creating, developing, retaining and growing "Reporting & Analytics" talent.



Definitions

Clearly define what these functions mean to the agency and its business

Reporting and Analytics functions and skills are distinct and different, but they are often spoken about interchangeably. One key way to distinguish between them is to discuss the desired output from the resources you would like to bring in, which will help clarify the specific capabilities and skills required for the potential hire to be successful.

- **Reporting:**

- Reporting, inclusive of “data engineering” groups in this definition, is responsible for data capture and governance, and timely observations of campaign performance. Performance data includes things like media spend, sales/registration/other actions, and any other relevant creative or media performance information.

- **Analytics:**

- Analytics, as a field, is often broken into four kinds of analyses: descriptive, diagnostic, predictive, and prescriptive. Usually, the Analytics team at an agency is responsible for the latter two and perhaps part of the second. Analytics focuses on the incrementality of marketing (or other efforts) measured through applied statistics. This almost always makes use of the data collected and processed by the Reporting team. Think of analytics as being experts in pattern detection for finding non-intuitive and useful information. More often these days, this job description is expanding into the analysis of unstructured data such as text, imagery, audio, and video. Sometimes, reporting contributes to measuring marketing incrementality through experiments (A/B, etc.).

#2

Recruitment

Focus on the required capabilities and skills

Experience is a critical consideration if you are launching Analytics as an internal capability for the first time. People with agency or consulting analytics backgrounds are more prepared to prioritize projects appropriately, balance the needs of multiple disciplines, maximize resourcefulness, and identify opportunities to win business. We have seen many cases where analytics resources are brought into an organization only to be asked to create Excel reports for the agency's clients. These individuals usually end up leaving the agency quickly. We also see reporting talent brought in and then asked to predict sales trends or do other forms of statistical analysis. This also ends poorly as that specific talent is generally not trained in statistical analysis.

Following are some specific actions that will help you seek the appropriate skills to specific roles:

- Have a good job description and interview questions. Ask scenario questions that are related to the role to see how the candidate would approach it. For example: while a data analyst job post may generate multiple applications, the agency will also have to sift through a variety of qualifications and experiences.
- Discuss team size, purpose, required specializations, etc., so that the agency leadership and HR teams can align and support bringing the appropriate talent.
- To help HR perform screening and only bring forward the best candidates, consider using some of the language below during the screening and interview process:
 - Reporting: Candidate needs to have background in media, business intelligence, data engineering, computer science; will need skills in SQL, API connectors, data visualization, and automation.
 - Analytics: Candidate needs to have background in economics, math, sciences such as bio, computer science, policy; will need skills in statistics, programming in R or Python (or similar) Both should exhibit the ability to convert data points or statistical output into cohesive narratives for their clients.

#3

Integration

Ensure that Reporting and Analytics teams have a seat at the table

Reporting and Analytics teams are often brought in after media planning and buying strategies and tactics are decided. The collective experience of several members shows that this is a mistake. The Reporting and Analytics teams provide critical insights into campaign strategies, audiences, campaign structures, taxonomies, naming conventions and much more. Incorporating this intelligence and insights into the campaign strategy, planning and buying process will help make the process more effective and efficient. Integrating the Reporting and Analytics team members will also make it a more attractive place for talent.

- The best candidates will want to see that their work will help drive the business forward and would prefer not being a back office function. The best candidates will be comfortable speaking with clients directly. Their recommendations will shape the business, and so it's essential that these are not lost in translation when delivered by teams that are not well versed with the data and insights derived from the data. Such misses can also be lost opportunities for the agency, and a personal reason for top talent to seek opportunities where they can deliver meaningful work.
- Agencies should spend time thinking through how both the Reporting and Analytics functions will integrate within the broader organization. In some cases the Reporting function could fold into the media organization, but in other scenarios it is more closely aligned with analytics. Analytics is, on the other hand, typically aligned with research, insights and planning. Analytics in combination with strategy can help uncover key insights that lead to a more blended knowledge base for a holistic, coherent POV of the clients' business performance.
- Should Reporting and Analytics teams not be part of the same group, the agency should ensure that these teams have regular and planned interactions. One successful approach we have seen work well is to combine Analytics, Planning, and (if it exists in the agency) Research into a single "Strategy and Analytics" discipline, which is focused on differentiating ideas and insights.

To make sure this environment is ready for the best candidates, ask your organization these questions:

- Do we include analysts early in projects? If the answer is no, then you may want to revisit the process.
- Is there a clear process for using findings?
- Will the Reporting and Analytics team have a say in what is communicated to the client? Data and insights now play a key role while communicating business outcomes. Agencies will benefit by showing their insights and operations expertise.
- Does leadership value Reporting and Analytics and is that clearly communicated?
- To what extent does the client value Reporting and Analytics? Do they have a team that is responsible for the same internally that your Reporting and Analytics team members can interface with? Addressing business questions collectively can lead to valuable insights.

#4

Retention & Innovation

Retention and Innovation: Elevate and Incorporate Reporting and Analytics teams

Agencies and Advertisers alike now speak about being data-driven or data-informed. Both of these positions assume that data is the foundation of decision-making and pivotal to client success. This direction means that Reporting and Analytics teams are also becoming more critical to the success of the agency in positioning their offerings as well as driving client growth. These teams in turn need to have clear growth opportunities.

- When recruiting for such roles, sharing information about the career prospects and how Reporting and Analytics teams are strategically incorporated into the agency can draw in prospects.
- Be prepared to speak to career progression during the interview and explain how client success is shared with and attributed to the Reporting and Analytics teams.
- Candidates with analytics backgrounds are often driven to publish and share work that they do and like to be challenged to address questions that are difficult to answer. If some of their time can be allocated to innovation and digging deep into complex problems then share that with them during the interview.
- Offer media training programs or attend one with the 4A's to increase their media knowledge in the event that the candidate comes from another industry.
- Create a culture and a purpose that attracts technical talent.
- Build a portfolio of clients around a category or business type that might attract candidates with similar interests (automotive, retail, energy, etc.).

In Closing

Reporting and Analytics are now front and center for all agency deliverables. When an agency says its data driven, it is essentially saying that Reporting, Analytics and Insights practice is fully integrated with the broader strategy, planning and buying work flows.

Finding the right talent in this space can make or break an agency's ability to innovate, win new business, and retain its best and brightest.

This paper touched upon some of the essential steps that any agency can take to ensure that they are identifying, recruiting, and retaining the right talent for their business.

We hope you find this paper useful. Please feel free to contact us if you would like to speak further on this or other topics related to reporting and analytics. We will continue updating these guidelines as data, measurement, analytics, and insights continue evolving.

The 4A's Media, Data, and Technology Team thanks the 4A's Reporting & Analytics Committee for their contributions to this paper.

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