



# Staffing Your Marketing Measurement Team: Why You Need Data Storytellers

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Want to see real results from your marketing measurement investment? It's not only about employing analytics tools, but finding the right people and skillsets. With input from marketing and analytics leads at Google, Comcast, and Carat USA, we reveal what—and who—it takes to be successful.

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In today's data-driven environment, marketing doesn't have to be a guessing game. Measurement tools help marketers with [analytics](#), [attribution](#), and more. They empower marketers to make fact-based decisions, reduce costs, optimize budgets, and drive business results—all while spending dramatically less time on analysis.

But measurement tools don't always tell the full story. It's the people behind the metrics that play a significant role in [accurate measurement](#). Organizations on the cutting edge of digital marketing understand this. They get that it's important to build the right measurement and analytics team to gain the most insight, actionability, and value. But who should be on that team? What skillsets do they need? Who can decipher the numbers and say in plain English what they really mean and what actions should be taken?

In order to shed some light, we interviewed marketing and analytics leads at Comcast and Carat USA as well as here at Google. We talked about staffing, skills, and organizational structures to better understand how teams are optimizing their analytics investments. While the information gathered varied greatly from business to business, common themes emerged: Focus on people first, search for the right skillsets, and support your team as your program evolves.

Here we'll walk through what we learned and reveal what—and who—it takes to run a successful marketing measurement program.

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## Analytics is about the interpretation of data

Data-based tools help reveal useful information about consumers in the intent-rich [micro-moments](#) they experience each day. It's exciting stuff, but it means dealing with an array of data sets and tools ranging from proprietary to third-party customer data.

"Senior leadership across many organizations has a particular perception of technology—that it's automated and it should eliminate the need for humans, but that's not true," says Stella Voutsina, vice president of media operations for Carat USA. "This is an obstacle we need to overcome."

Even with access to the latest technologies and tools, marketing teams need people who can use them effectively. Adopting [data-driven measurement](#) often requires resources (both human and nonhuman) to work together within and across departments.

In the scramble to derive value from data, it's easy to focus more on science and statistics than strategy, thinking that a data specialist will have all the answers. When that happens, the importance of recruiting statisticians, data scientists, and data engineers is overemphasized, and you end up with numbers instead of insights. Hearing "sales are down 7.4% this week" is that much more impactful when accompanied by the story, the reasons, and the recommended actions. Instead, for example, you get: "Sales are down 7.4% this week due to the Fourth of July holiday. We'll want to offer post-holiday discounts on the fifth and sixth in order to make our monthly numbers."

“Foster a data-inquisitive culture—one where team members ask questions and provide strategic recommendations.”

## Find and hire data storytellers

The true value of data emerges when marketers are able to [use it to tell a meaningful story](#). Enter the data storyteller, or marketing measurement analyst. This is the person who can push the tools, translate insights across the business, and motivate stakeholders to participate.

Data storytellers have a variety of backgrounds. There may already be some hiding in plain sight in various departments across your organization. “Regardless of [data or math] background, our best hires share a deep sense of curiosity, outstanding attention to detail, and incredible adaptability,” adds Kara Osborne, director of insight and intelligence for Carat USA.

Data storytellers have particular skillsets. They’re the perfect combination of data analyst and business strategist with a head for numbers, a keen mind for business strategy, and ace communication skills.

“Our need for a specialized statistician is an outlier,” says Melissa Shusterman, senior director for B2B e-commerce demand generation at Comcast. “What we need are people who understand business and what’s important.”

Despite marketing’s long trend toward specialization, people with this uniquely broad combination of talents are adept at digging for, interpreting, and communicating strategic marketing insights.

“Get the right people along with the tools,” says Sandy Scott, Google’s product marketing manager and SMB marketing analytics lead. “If I *only* had storytellers, it would be a recipe for failure. Nothing meaningful will

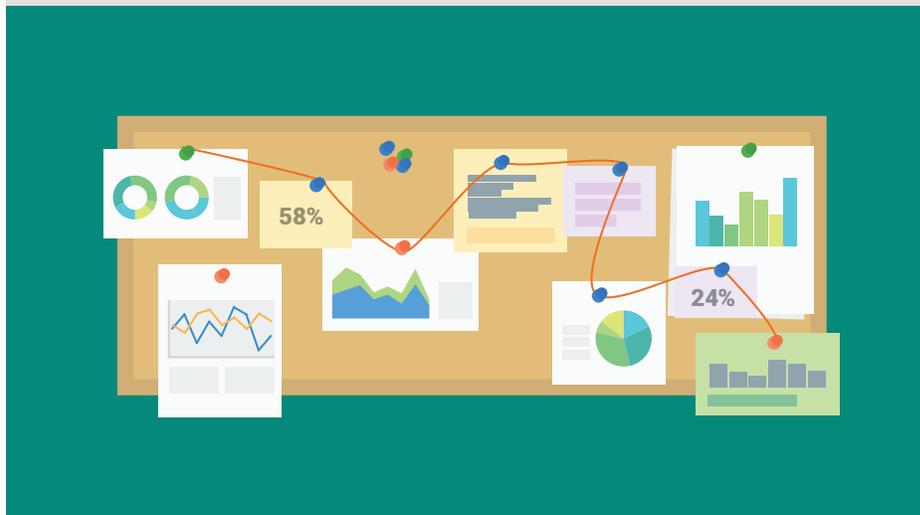
come from that data if you don't have the people to analyze and interpret it, as well as those who can then communicate an action plan."

The "right" people may be full-time employees or external consultants who specialize in the tools, helping bridge this gap. For example, many enterprise-level offerings can be supplemented by consulting services to help customers implement and interpret analytics toolsets.

## Build the team, then support it

Managing people can be just as challenging as managing technologies. Once the right organizational skillsets are in place (see the download below for a suggested org chart), provide your team with the tools, processes, and additional resources it needs to operate a successful measurement program.

Click through for The Analytics Org Chart



Consider adapting organizational structures that are more highly aligned to support business decision-makers. Scott's team, for example, provides analytical support to Google's SMB marketing team. He recalls

an instance when a round-robin approach wasn't serving clients well; analysis requests from internal Google customers were answered by those who were available or had the bandwidth. "We moved to align our analysts with our business heads," he says. "Now the business heads know who to ask, and each analyst has a deeper understanding of the needs and opportunities within their area of the business, so they can provide more meaningful analysis."

Invest in the success of the team by providing the support it needs and deserves, from great tools to partnerships with consultants who can bring a specific expertise and a fresh perspective. While owning your own analytics internally is great, augment it with a third-party view from industry experts; they're the ones who are likely to be keeping up with the latest trends. Comcast, for example, gains a competitive edge and keeps up with the changing trends through its partnerships with MaassMedia and Google Analytics, according to Shusterman.

"Partnerships expose us to experts who are immersed in the field, who are seeing best practices emerge and adopting them. This helps us foster new ideas," she adds.

## **Be adaptable to changing needs and expectations**

The work isn't done once that great staff is in place. Providing support for those hired resources—beyond the tools and knowledge—is also important. This may mean helping ensure clear communication across the organization. It may also mean managing expectations. Above all, the team and tools should be able to adapt to changing needs.

Bearing this in mind, be prepared to watch over and integrate workflows across the critical stages of the [measurement program lifecycle](#).

As you prepare to put a new marketing measurement program in place, think about the best way to build a team. Start by looking for data storytellers (in-house and out-of-house) that can help you identify,

translate, and communicate actionable insights. Then foster a data-inquisitive culture—one in which team members ask questions and provide strategic recommendations. Arm your team with the resources it needs, and be prepared to update those resources as needed. By setting stakeholder expectations, defining workflows, and creating accountability, you'll increase your chances for measurement success.



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