

An Insight Manager Survey – The results

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During the past few years, weâ€™ve seen an increasing number of research and marketing professionals carry the job title of â€˜Insight Managerâ€™. Â

To find out more about this fast-emerging category, Analytica decided to carry out its first Insight Manager Survey, focusing on respondents in the UK but in the future, we will expand the demographic to include other countries.Â

We asked the insight managers who they are, what they do, what challenges they face and what trends in online research or insight they are seeing.

While a lot of the results confirmed things we already suspected, some of the results were more surprising.Â However, one message comes out loud and clear: the insight manager is adding real value to the rest of the organisation.

Defining insight managers

So letâ€™s start by looking more closely at exactly who are responsible for insight.Â Although 85% carry the title of insight manager, other job titles include â€˜research managerâ€™, â€˜head of insightâ€™ and â€˜strategy analystâ€™.Â In terms of education, 35% are from a business background and almost as many studied humanities. Â

While hiring of insight managers appears to have grown despite economic stagnation, we suspect that some of this due to the â€˜re-labellingâ€™ of research managers to encompass this new term.Â Indeed, perhaps not surprisingly, those individuals holding the title of â€˜research managerâ€™ have the highest level of experience. Â

Not surprisingly, larger organisations â€˜ those with in excess of 200 employees â€˜ are most likely to have someone responsible for insight management, with manufacturing and the financial services sector having the highest representation in our survey.

Most interestingly, insight managers typically hold senior level positions (either line managers or departmental heads) and are largely from research backgrounds. Â

We also asked respondents what attributes they believe are required to be a good insight manager.Â The need for strong analytical skills was ranked highest priority, but more surprisingly perhaps was that the second most important attribute is considered to be communication skills, followed by the ability to influence senior management. Â

This latter requirement makes sense when considering that 65% of respondents cite getting management buy-in and support for subsequent actions to be a big challenge.

How insight managers relate to the rest of the organisation

More than two thirds of respondents sit within a marketing function, but over 50 per cent of their output is for other departments, indicating their contribution to the rest of the business. Â

More than 50 % of respondents are supplying insight to four or more departments (eg sales, customer management, product development, HR, IT, finance and operations). Public relations departments are the biggest users of insight, followed by advertising. Â

How they spend their time

Evaluating and reporting on insight takes up the most time, followed by dissemination to colleagues or internal customers, up to 75% in some cases: an alarming statistic considering that lack of resources was cited as a big hurdle by most respondents. Â

Presentations are by far and away the dominant form for sharing insight, followed by paper reports, then online dashboards and data files (such as spreadsheets).Â This would indicate that any tools that can help insight managers handle the reporting and sharing process more efficiently would release more time to focus on other tasks. Â

The challenge of finding insight

Despite around 70% of respondents saying that their organisations are driven by analytics, one of the biggest challenges that emerges from the survey is access to truly useful insight, particularly material that is forward-looking. Â

While there is a consensus that technology can help, some respondents expressed concern that it was making their job harder: a case of information overload?Â Again, this underlines the need for tools and systems that simplify the gathering of insight, rather than adding another layer of complexity.

Consumer behaviour is the highest application for insight (compared to, for instance, insight into market competition). Almost 80% of respondents expect that increasing demand for the insight they can provide to their organisations in the next year.

The rise of social media

The survey also showed how insight managers expect to use social media to gain business intelligence in the future. Use of social media to monitor user complaints and learn about customer satisfaction was high, with the majority agreeing that use of social media in their organisations will grow significantly in the next few years.

81% also agree that their organisations have a significant learning curve to overcome before they can utilise social media, with over half saying that until social media's impact can be measured, it will not be taken seriously internally.

Conclusion & further information

This rising interest in social media alongside the other results of the survey - underline the fact that the insight manager's role is challenging and moreover, evolving fast. For a full copy of the first survey, or to participate in the next one, please email talktous@analytica.com

About the author:

Flemming Madsen is founder and Executive Chairman of Analytica. Flemming established the company in 2004 with an initial focus on Social Network Analysis before shifting his attentions to the analysis of the online debate following an assignment with the UK Government's COI. Prior to starting Analytica, Flemming worked for a systems integrator in the defence industry and for the Danish Minister of Economics and Taxation.

About Analytica

London-based Analytica provides companies with real-time insight using online conversations about their brands, products, services and related topics, surfacing the business intelligence needed to respond faster to market changes. Analytica's Insight Manager survey is targeted at Global 2000 companies. Founded in 2004, Analytica's management team includes highly experienced management team who bring experience from organisations such as Dow Jones, Gartner and Accenture.

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