**How to Become a More Efficient Data Scientist**

There are millions of online articles on how to be more productive. We won’t be sharing any of them here, because the concept of productivity is… a thorny one. All too often, it’s hard to distinguish calls for increased productivity from a not-so-subtle pressure to over-extend and exhaust ourselves.

Efficiency, on the other hand, is an idea that comes with built-in flexibility. It encourages us to make the most of a given situation, but with the understanding that circumstances change, chaos is sometimes inevitable, and people are complex beings. When we’re efficient, we keep things simple (or at least not more complex than they need to be), and preserve energy rather than burn it all away.

What does it mean to be an efficient data scientist? This week, we’ve selected several excellent articles that attempt to tackle this question from multiple angles. Whether you’re part of a large team or a solo consultant, a manager of other data professionals or the newest analyst at your company, we think you’ll find some solid, actionable insights here.

* [**Results matter more than the time you spend on a project**](https://towardsdatascience.com/the-most-effective-creatives-maximize-leverage-not-hours-worked-20ed0070fdd7)**.**

[Samuel Flender](https://medium.com/u/ce56d9dcd568?source=post_page-----357df86cda4d--------------------------------)

 unpacks the concept of leverage, and proposes three strategies that can help data practitioners refocus their efforts on making the biggest impact, rather than working the hardest or the longest.

* [**The art of future-proofing your production data pipelines**](https://towardsdatascience.com/how-to-build-a-data-product-that-wont-come-back-to-haunt-you-1a220f4c75fb). “Both the quality of the data product and the support for using and interpreting it degrade over time,” says

[Marian Nodine](https://medium.com/u/929a3612398a?source=post_page-----357df86cda4d--------------------------------)

. To make your (and your colleagues’) life easier, Marian highlights four essential criteria for building sturdy pipelines with a long shelf life.

* [**Learn how to prioritize data requests effectively**](https://towardsdatascience.com/not-all-data-requests-are-urgent-so-start-by-asking-these-5-questions-ad77d1fbe7dd). The constant barrage of time-sensitive queries from business stakeholders has derailed the plans of countless data teams. As

[Marie Lefevre](https://medium.com/u/2a04bf49928f?source=post_page-----357df86cda4d--------------------------------)

 explains, asking five concrete questions and getting the right amount of context can help you triage requests without losing focus (or friends).



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* [**Good record-keeping is crucial**](https://towardsdatascience.com/why-youre-doing-ad-hoc-analytics-wrong-49d177202c7a). Addressing a similar set of challenges around ad-hoc analytics requests,

[Robert Yi](https://medium.com/u/8ac2da8b0742?source=post_page-----357df86cda4d--------------------------------)

 stresses the importance of documenting the work you do in service of other teams within the organization. It not only makes your efforts visible, but can also streamline future projects and allow you to detect patterns over time.

* [**A framework for determining the value of data projects**](https://towardsdatascience.com/how-to-choose-which-data-projects-to-work-on-c6b8310ac04e). If you enjoy structured approaches to complex problems, check out

[Jordan G.](https://medium.com/u/bd72dcfe2a5a?source=post_page-----357df86cda4d--------------------------------)

’s method for determining which project should move to the top of your list. It will push you to quantify the expected time commitment, probability of success, and potential impact, and lead to more informed decisions.

* [**The importance of defining metrics you commit to**](https://towardsdatascience.com/its-time-to-set-sla-slo-sli-for-your-data-team-only-3-steps-ed3c93009aa5). If your data isn’t reliable, you’re unlikely to be an efficient data scientist. That’s why

[Xiaoxu Gao](https://medium.com/u/2adc5a07e772?source=post_page-----357df86cda4d--------------------------------)

 recommends codifying your commitment—as an individual contributor or as part of a team—to delivering high-quality data and insights, and agreeing on clear metrics to measure success.