Profiles of data professionals

You have been learning about data professionals and how valuable their work is to the companies that employ them. You also learned about technical and strategic roles for data analytics professionals. Data analysts in technical roles transform raw data into something useful for decision-making. Strategic data analytics professionals focus on maximizing information to guide the businesses they are working for. In this reading, you will learn more about the data professional career space, and see examples of some general categories of data professional roles.

The classifications of data professional roles presented here are a very general introduction to the careers available within the data career space. When you begin to look for a job, you may encounter entry-level, mid and senior positions within each of these general categories.

Data scientist and data analyst

Data scientist and data analyst are roles that work directly with data. These professionals gather, clean, analyze, and share insights from data with stakeholders. An increasing number of industries turn to data analysis to create insights that inform various tasks like guide decision-making, identify user preferences, or determine how to use resources more effectively. With more industries looking for data professionals, there is a great chance that you will find one that matches your interests.

Key attributes

- What they do: Uncover trends, patterns, and insights from data
- How they do it: Employ advanced modeling and statistical analytics techniques
- Entry-level data scientist or analyst positions may not require considerable data analysis experience and be less restrictive about requiring those hired to hold a traditional degree.

Sample job titles:

- Data scientist
- Marketing analyst
- Data analyst
- AI analyst
- Business analyst

Data management and infrastructure

Data professionals that work in data management and infrastructural roles are primarily responsible for the systems that distribute data and maintain its integrity. They work alongside data analytics professionals and help support their work. Their main responsibility is to ensure the functionality of data systems and the compliance with local, state, and federal regulations involving data security and ethics.

Key attributes

- What they do: Manage data sources and the overall data infrastructure
- How they do it: Work with the tools and databases used to manage data within a business

Sample job titles:

- Data engineer
- Technology engineer
- Data manager
- Data steward
- IT architect

Business intelligence

Data analytics and business intelligence share a lot of commonalities. Both fields have professionals that use data to create insights that inform decision-making. A major difference is that business intelligence is more focused on creating processes and information channels that transform relevant data. Business intelligence professionals create tables, reports, and dashboards that empower stakeholders, giving them access to the data they need to inform the entire decision-making process on a continual basis. These roles often serve as a complement to core data analytics/data science professionals.

Key attributes

- What they do: Perform predictive analysis that enables organizations to determine likely future trends
- How they do it: Create tables, reports and dashboards that empower their organization

Sample job titles:

- BI architect
- BI analyst
- BI solution developer
- BI software engineer
- Data viz & BI analyst

Additional roles for data professionals

Product development teams

The professionals in these roles manage a portfolio of customer and stakeholder analytic projects and initiatives. They often manage the analytical strategy for the organization. In these roles, experience is most likely required, and responsibilities are larger and more global.

Key attributes

- What they do: Manage analytical strategy within a project team
- How they do it: They are less hands-on with data analysis, serving as the person a data scientist or analysts would report to

Sample job titles:

- Product manager
- Product developer
- Product lead

- Digital product manager
- Customer product manager

C-suite

This classification of roles covers high-ranking executives within an organization. The 'C' in c-suite stands for chief. In general, there's a trend for the c-suite to build data-driven decision making into their processes. Individuals filling these roles within organizational leadership teams are expected to be familiar with data and analytics.

Key attributes

- What they do: Responsible for data and data professionals across an entire organization
- How they do it: They are decision makers found at the top end of a company's hierarchy

Examples of job titles:

- Chief marketing officer
- Chief data officer
- Chief analytics officer
- Chief information officer
- Chief data scientist

Key takeaways

There are a wide variety of roles and responsibilities in the data professional career space. Later, you will learn how these roles work together and collaborate with groups of professionals with diverse expertise on data analysis projects. Having a general understanding of the roles and responsibilities of data professionals can help inform your job search. This information can serve as a reference that can help you understand the needs and expectations of companies as you navigate through job postings. Take inventory of any transferable skills you may already possess from educational or professional experience.