

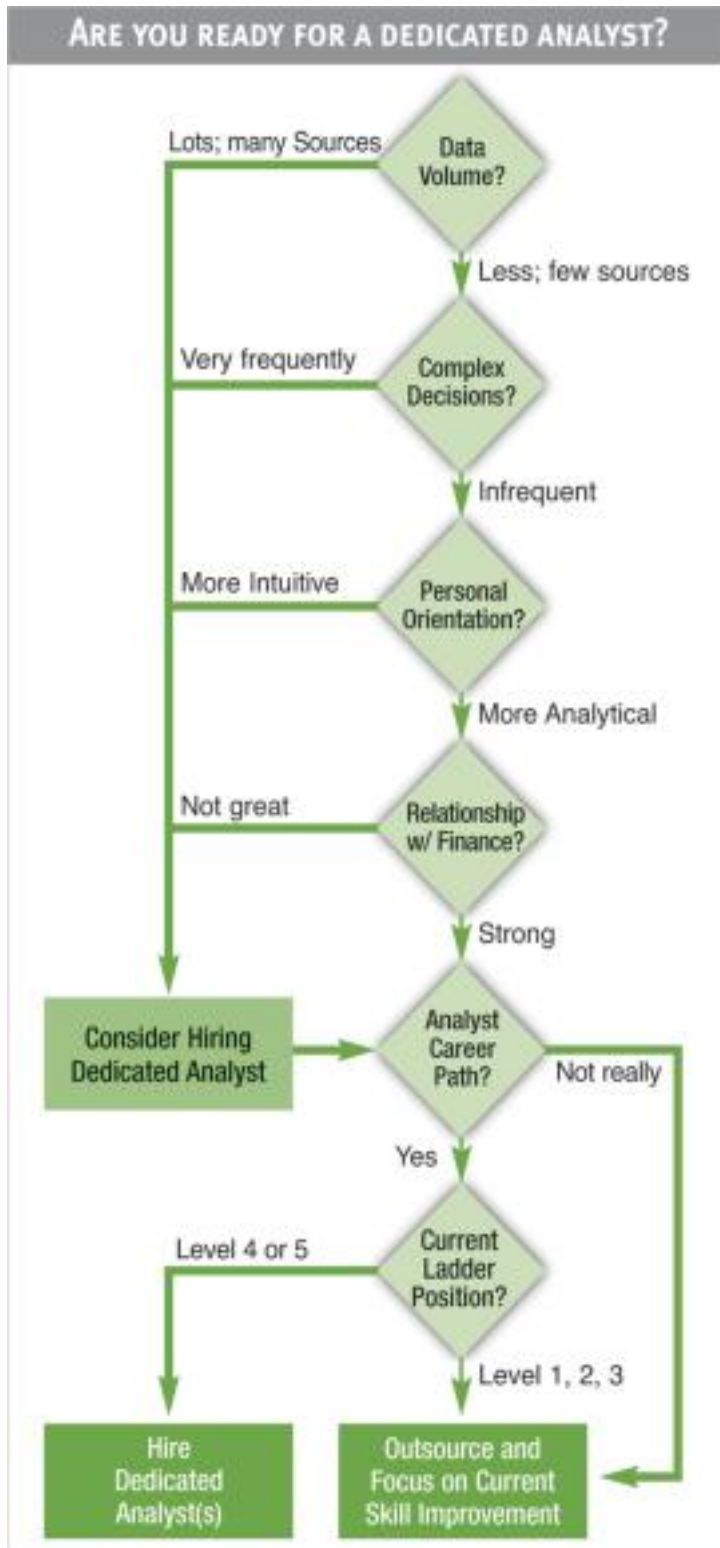
To Quant, or Not to Quant: How to Tell If You Need a Dedicated Marketing Analyst

As measurement fever spreads throughout marketing, this question of organizational structure persists: "Should we hire dedicated marketing analysts with advanced mathematical skills, or improve the skills of our current managers and supplement them with consultants?"

The answer is, "It depends." Sometimes it makes sense to employ dedicated people. Other times, it may prove wisest to invest in training your existing team members. Occasionally, the answer may be to do both.

Some criteria to consider:

1. The number of data sources and the data volume. If you are in an industry where there are dozens of data sources streaming at you with vast quantities of customer-specific transaction detail records, you'll eventually need dedicated analysts to help filter the insight from the garbage and to find patterns in the noise. Consultants can help you start the process, adding outside perspective. You can also outsource massive data crunching, but knowing your data should be a core competency.



2. **Decision complexity.** Do you find yourself facing increasingly complex decisions with greater frequency? A dedicated analyst might ease the burden by identifying and "parameterizing" uncertainties. But if those perplexing questions pop up only once a month or so, you'd probably be better off having a good decision-support vendor on call.

3. **Your personal orientation.** Are you more analytical or intuitive? Have you surrounded yourself with staff that mirrors your skills or challenges them? If you have analytical staff, you might not need a

dedicated analyst, just ongoing skill development for your internal team members. To some degree, it depends on the following point.

4. Your relationship with finance. If it's collaborative, and they have an in-house math Ph.D., perhaps you can occasionally borrow help. If not, you might have to add your own redundant resources.

5. Career path. Can you offer an analyst a career path? If not, access to the best minds might be through carefully selected vendors.

6. Ambitions to climb the [ladder of insight](#). If you're on the ladder's first three rungs, you don't need dedicated analysts to improve. Invest in developing your core team skills, since you want managers thinking about ROI on every project. Even Level 4 can most often be achieved without dedicated analytical staff.

The upside of hiring dedicated analytical staff is in-house access to a more disciplined investigation and decision process. Properly directed, they will expand your options and speed your decisions.

The downside is the analyst can become a bottleneck and/or a crutch. If marketing managers perceive the analyst's role is to "do the number crunching," they may abdicate personal responsibilities for planning and measurement. If your analyst is positioned as the primary arbiter of program financial success/failure, there is significant risk of measurement becoming a police action and a source of universal resentment. If measurement isn't everyone's priority, it's no one's.

If you want some terrific recommendations on exactly how to go about hiring dedicated marketing analysts, see [How to Hire a Marketing Scientist: Getting the Quant You Want](#) by Dan Raz.

