

E-BOOK

Become the Analyst of the Future





Contents

Introduction	3
How the role of the analyst has evolved	4
Strategy Drive more strategic business initiatives	5
Empowerment Empower business people to answer their own questions	6
Data Fluency Write synonyms in lexicon the business speaks	8
Workflow Get answers to questions you didn't think to ask	9
Speed Analyze billions of rows in seconds	10
Power Analyze across multiple fact tables at once	11
Motivation Receive praise for business value you create	12
Conclusion	13



Introduction

Analysts play a crucial role in every organization, quite literally guiding businesses to improve processes, products, services, and software through data analysis. In this very dynamic role, they bridge the gap between data and the business to improve efficiency. All too often, however, they have increasingly become pixel pushers and Excel jockeys.

There is a new movement afoot for analysts to scale their impact 10× and become change agents: Analysts of the Future. Instead of simply being constrained as a “report writer,” the Analyst of the Future is enabled by modern technology to drive innovation, uncover hidden insights, and provide additional business value by fostering a data-driven culture that enables true self-service analytics. This guide walks you through the old world of these unsung heroes to a better world of Data and Analytics while exploring three overarching themes:

1. Analysts are poised for career growth
2. Their roles are quickly becoming more strategic
3. Self-service enablement is the future

According to [Gartner](#), the Top 3 roadblocks most critical to success are:

1. Cultural Challenges to Accept Change (46%)
2. Lack of Resources to Support the Programs (37%)
3. Poor Data Literacy (35%)

The 2019 [CEO and Senior Business Executive Survey](#) listed “Talent Management” as the number one organizational competency to be developed or improved. CEOs are focusing on improving data literacy across the enterprise.

How the role of the analyst has evolved

	Analyst Today	The Analyst of the Future
Strategy	Responds to reporting requirements reactively	Drives analytics innovations proactively in support of key business initiatives
Charter	Provides descriptive analytics on subsets of data	Curates modern insight experiences across all data, and evangelizes business user adoption and data fluency
Expertise	Understands data and analytics tech	Understands data and analytics tech, and business strategy
Time	Prepares data, manages report backlog, and responds to dashboard fire drills	Develops sophisticated analytics solutions, builds reusable templates, and ingests untapped data sources
Content	Generates reports and dashboards	Architects a true self-service environment for the creation of interactive data stories; and performs in-depth anomaly, trend, and root cause business analysis
Value	Measures performance by the number of dashboards created, backlog reduced, and time to execute report requests	Measures impact by business benefits achieved, self-service adoption by non-technical business users, and use-case ROI
Growth	Pursues promotions down a narrow technical career path	Pursues promotions into more strategic roles across all parts of the business



Strategy

Drive strategic business initiatives

Analysts have traditionally been responsible for bridging the gap between IT and the business by analyzing business processes, gathering requirements, and working with DBA's to wrangle data, then delivering data-driven recommendations to executives and stakeholders. However, all too often, today's business analysts are reduced to mere "report builders".

Business analysts have a unique opportunity to add significant value and drive strategic business initiatives, such as [equipping frontline workers for success](#). As "Trusted Advisors," analysts learn business processes via day-to-day operations, deliver valuable content to business stakeholders, have the ability to refine business processes, and have unfettered access and visibility into management. One of the most important things an analyst can do is not simply answer "what" happened, but "why".

"With ThoughtSpot, people can ask questions in real time to get the answers they want, evolve their ideas, and speed the whole decision making process."



LUKE WELCH

GLOBAL HEAD OF BI, CMC MARKETS

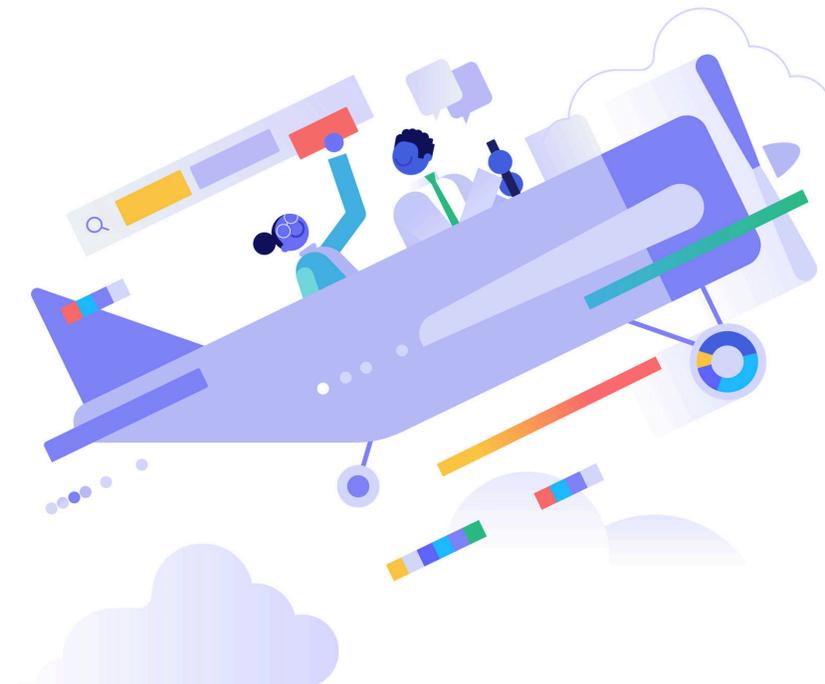
▶ [SEE TESTIMONIAL](#)



Empowerment

Empower business people to answer their own questions

More requests equals more reports. Even “simple” requests may require hunting, loading, modeling, validating, and presenting data. One-off, ad-hoc requests are often the most time consuming because, even if the majority of enterprise data exists in an EDW, it is not readily available in current schemas or powering existing dashboards. These one-off, time consuming requests often replace the critical questions like how the information is going to be used, or what decisions are going to be made as a result. Perhaps worst still, the data is likely available in current dashboards, but business users are unable or unwilling to navigate slicing/dicing/drilling to find the exact answer they need in a timely manner.



As business intelligence experts, analysts have esoteric knowledge not commonly shared with everyday business users. For users without this expert knowledge, current BI tools can be difficult to use and the steep learning curve is not worth the investment for self-service.

Modern businesses have recognized the importance of democratizing data by putting it directly in the hands of business users and decision-makers. Self-service is no longer defined as simply slicing, dicing, and drilling into a pre-built report or dashboard. Instead, modern analytics solutions empower users to simply ask and answer their own questions. This requires the analyst of the future to combine data from multiple sources and create all-encompassing and complex data models that truly support ad-hoc analysis.

“As traditional BI tools began to struggle with the weight and complexity of data, ThoughtSpot stood out for us when we sought new, innovative solutions that would reduce the need for extensive data manipulation or time-consuming report generation.

Thoughtspot enables us to explore our large data sets easily, quickly and flexibly, allowing us not only to uncover the insights that were hidden in our data, but also to spend more time on value-creating analytics.”



DAVID HEPPENSTALL
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER, DE BEERS

▶ [SEE TESTIMONIAL](#)



Data Fluency

Write synonyms in lexicon the business speaks

Not only must analysts understand complex problems, but they are also required to collect, organize, and present data that meets business requirements. Significant time and effort is also spent explaining data elements and training business users on how or when to use them. There has always been a massive gap between the language of the business and the way data is stored in databases. Column names can be (and often are) stored differently, leaving the door open to confusion.

Analysts roles are unique in that they are fluent in the language of both the business and the data. Modern analytics tools enable analysts to translate the data into the language of the business by not only changing column headers and field names, but also by adding synonyms so multiple users can ask questions in a flexible format with less room for error.

COLUMN NAME	DESCRIPTION	DATA TYPE	COLUMN TYPE	ADDITIVE	AGGREGATION	HIDDEN	SYNONYMS	SPOTIQ PREFEREN
Item Cost	Click to edit	DOUBLE	MEASURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click to edit	DEFAULT
Transaction ID	POS ID	INT64	ATTRIBUTE	<input type="checkbox"/>	NONE	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click to edit	EXCLUDE
Frequency	Click to edit	DOUBLE	MEASURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click to edit	DEFAULT
Frequency Regular	Click to edit	INT64	MEASURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click to edit	DEFAULT
Age Group	Click to edit	VARCHAR	ATTRIBUTE	<input type="checkbox"/>	NONE	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click to edit	DEFAULT
Basket Contents	Click to edit	DOUBLE	MEASURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click to edit	DEFAULT
Gross Profit (%)	Click to edit	DOUBLE	MEASURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AVERAGE	<input type="checkbox"/>	Profit (%), Margin (%), Gross M...	DEFAULT
Gross Profit (\$)	Revenue minus Cost of Goods Sold	DOUBLE	MEASURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	Profit (\$), Margin (\$)	DEFAULT
Average Ticket Size	Click to edit	DOUBLE	MEASURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AVERAGE	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click to edit	DEFAULT
Average Frequency	Click to edit	DOUBLE	MEASURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AVERAGE	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click to edit	DEFAULT
Average Basket Size	Click to edit	DOUBLE	MEASURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AVERAGE	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADV	DEFAULT
Customer ID	Click to edit	INT64	ATTRIBUTE	<input type="checkbox"/>	NONE	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click to edit	DEFAULT
Number of Transacti...	Click to edit	INT64	MEASURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	How Many Transactions	DEFAULT
Number of Custom...	Click to edit	INT64	MEASURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	How Many Customers	DEFAULT
Number of Departm...	Click to edit	INT64	MEASURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	How Many Departments	DEFAULT
Number of Products	Click to edit	INT64	MEASURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	How Many Products	DEFAULT
Household ID	Click to edit	INT32	MEASURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click to edit	DEFAULT

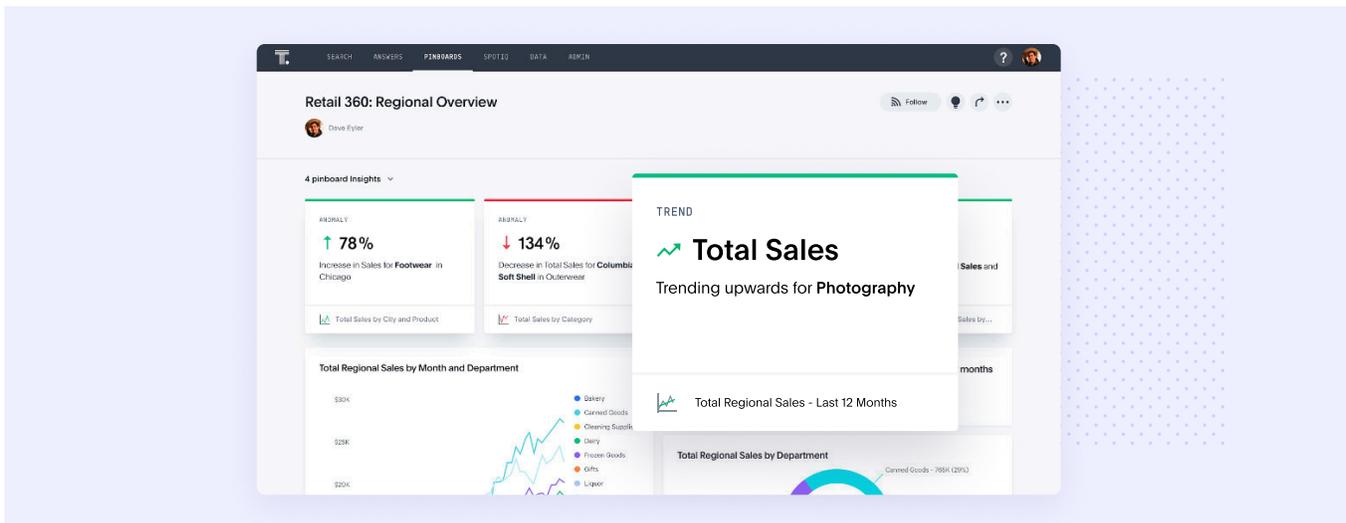
Workflow

Get answers to questions you didn't think to ask

When analysts are asked to find the key drivers behind certain trends and anomalies, they spend their time digging for answers. This often requires hunting for data, testing and validating relationships, slicing and dicing all attributes, and drilling into subsets of the data to find outliers and anomalies. The law of averages often hides outliers and trends can easily be overlooked if they are several layers down or only exist in one region.

Analysts have more important tasks than sifting through large amounts of data, hoping to find interesting nuggets of information. ThoughtSpot's AI-driven insights use machine learning algorithms to uncover hidden insights automatically, surfacing answers to questions you didn't even think to ask.

Traditional desktop tools add yet another layer of complication to discovering answers because, once prototyped on the desktop, answers must still be published for others to consume. ThoughtSpot bypasses this lengthy process, offering a single browser-based UI to connect, model, search, and share content with other users in record time.



Speed

Analyze billions of rows in seconds

Data volumes are growing at an exponential rate, yet most modern analytics tools struggle with the scale of today's data. To retain performance on large datasets, aggregations are often required, which hides granular level details. These constraints often require creativity by producing multiple departmental data sets for individual users or groups, resulting in the unwanted proliferation of data models and a data governance nightmare.

But what if your modern analytics platform was built for speed at scale, answering complex questions in seconds, off billions of rows of data at its most granular level?



"Speed and scale matter. ThoughtSpot is designed for search from the bottom-up, rather than a BI solution with search bolted on top."



PAUL FRENCH
DIRECTOR OF BI, NATIONWIDE
BUILDING SOCIETY

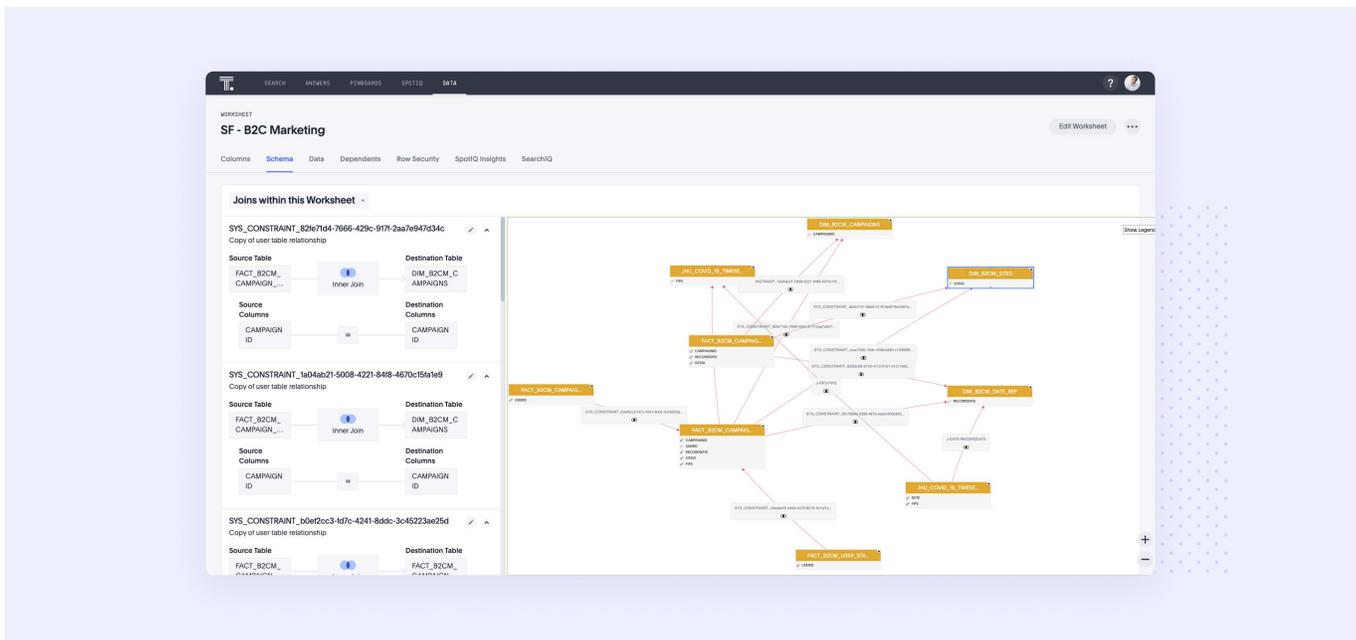
▶ [SEE TESTIMONIAL](#)

Power

Analyze across multiple fact tables at once

As data volume grows from multiple, disparate sources, so does the complexity of data governance. Data from multiple sources is not a new concept, but one that can be frustrating when modeling data to answer complex business questions. In order to maintain acceptable performance, some of the most popular and widely used analytics tools are constrained to only one fact table or a single star schema. This requires analysts to build multiple data sets, each with their own dashboards, furthering proliferation of report, dashboard, and data mart sprawl. These limitations not only cause headaches and increase maintenance, but they further confuse end users on where to go for what and when.

ThoughtSpot was built for complex data models at scale, without being hindered by performance. Multiple fact tables and many-to-many joins that typically cripple other analytics tools are handled with ease.

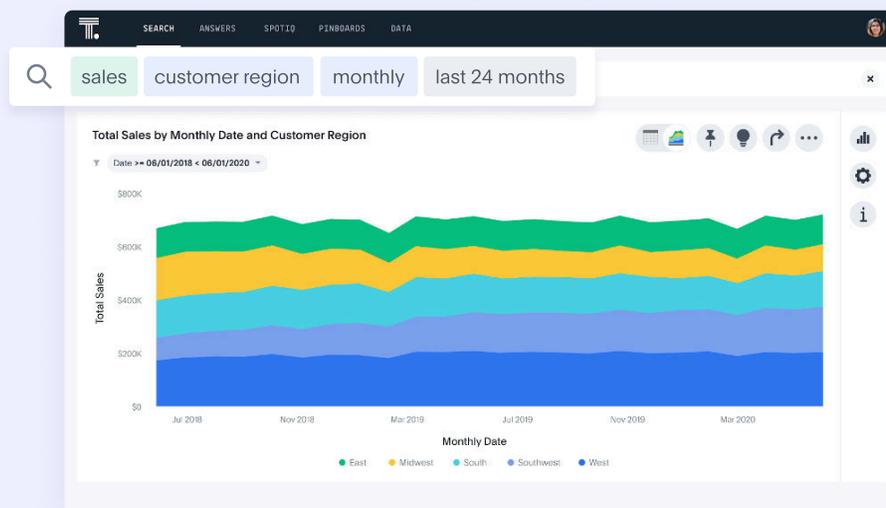


Motivation

Receive praise for business value you create

Reporting backlogs can be soul-crushing. Dozens of dashboards and hundreds (sometimes thousands) of reports can go unused (or worse, unseen), and still a massive backlog of requests continues to grow. A recent TDWI survey asked “What percent of reports that your team creates provide value to the organization?” and found the vast majority claimed only 50-79%.

Imagine a world where end users can simply ask and answer their own questions. With your new found freedom, you are empowered to provide more business value using less time and effort than ever before. Imagine spending less time writing reports and more time refining business processes, improving operations, reducing financial risks, increasing adoption and data fluency, educating the business to become more data-driven, and adding more value than ever before.



Conclusion

As a result of COVID-19 and today's work-from-home culture, Digital Transformation has been massively accelerated. Modern businesses have no choice but to focus on improving data literacy across the enterprise. This poses a unique opportunity for analysts to be more strategic with their time (and efforts) by embracing modern self-service analytics to help them scale.

The Analyst of the Future empowers non-technical business users to ask and answer their own questions, which will reduce the number of ad-hoc reporting requests and free up time for more strategic initiatives that produce positive business outcomes.

Through this transformation, the Analyst of the Future will:

- Spend more time innovating and less time iterating
- Design impactful insight experiences that drive decisions
- Become the change-maker your company can't live without

About ThoughtSpot

At ThoughtSpot, we believe the world will be a better place when it's more fact-driven. That's why we're building the most innovative analytics platform in history. With search and AI-driven analytics, everyone can ask questions, get insights, and make better decisions.

Learn more at thoughtspot.com/analyst

