# ANALYTICS ON, AND OFF-PREMISE: INSIGHT WITHOUT BORDERS

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## Report Highlights

**p2**

Companies taking analytics off-premise are empowering 50% more employees with analytics.

**p3**

Leaders saw more than three times the increase in searchable / discoverable data.

**p5**

61% of top companies share relevant business data across functional areas.

**p6**

Leaders are more than twice as likely to be satisfied with the ease-of-use of their analytical tools.

As the modern workforce has evolved, the nature of the decision process has been forced to evolve as well. Where it was once adequate to keep business intelligence (BI) and other analytical tools locked behind the gates of the internal firewall, companies now recognize the need to empower their remote and mobile employees with the ability to make data-driven decisions. This report explores organizations that use analytics on-premise, but have also extended these capabilities to the cloud and mobile realm.

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**In an effort to satisfy the needs of a variety of different user types, located inside or outside the brick-and-mortar walls of the organization, more companies are extending analytics to the cloud and mobile devices as well.**

## Fast Facts

Based on findings from Aberdeen's 2015 business analytics survey, this report focuses on **59 organizations** that reported having a traditional on-premise deployment of analytics, combined with one or both of the following:

- Cloud or Software-as-a-Service- (SaaS) based analytics
- Analytics delivered to a mobile device (tablet or smartphone)

## Empowering the Modern Workforce

As powerful as analytical technology has become, the most valuable insights are still derived from people combining their experience and domain expertise with timely and relevant data. The keyword above being *people*. Early versions of business intelligence (BI), located almost exclusively on-premise, were effective in the right hands. However, these tools were primarily used by IT professionals and those close to the data. Nowadays, more non-technical decision makers across many functional areas of the business are growing savvier with data and thirstier for insights. To complicate things even further, the typical workforce is now more diverse and geographically dispersed with more remote and mobile employees.

In an effort to satisfy the needs of a variety of different user types, located inside or outside the brick-and-mortar walls of the organization, more companies are extending analytics to the cloud and mobile devices as well. Aberdeen Group's research shows that these organizations are seeing the benefit of broader user access to analytics and a higher degree of collaboration and knowledge sharing across the company (Figure 1).

### Figure 1: Greater Access, Stronger Collaboration
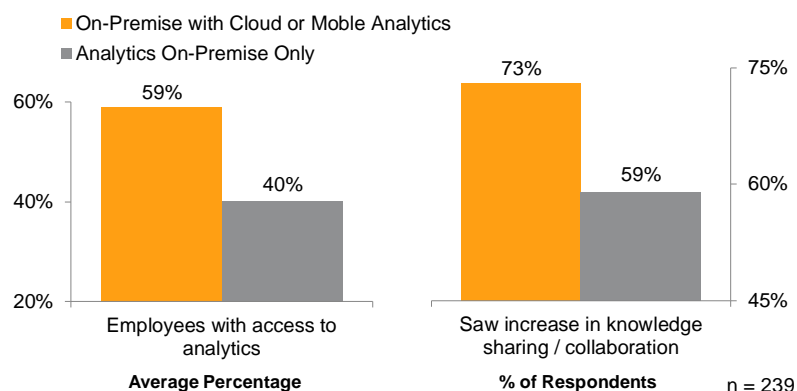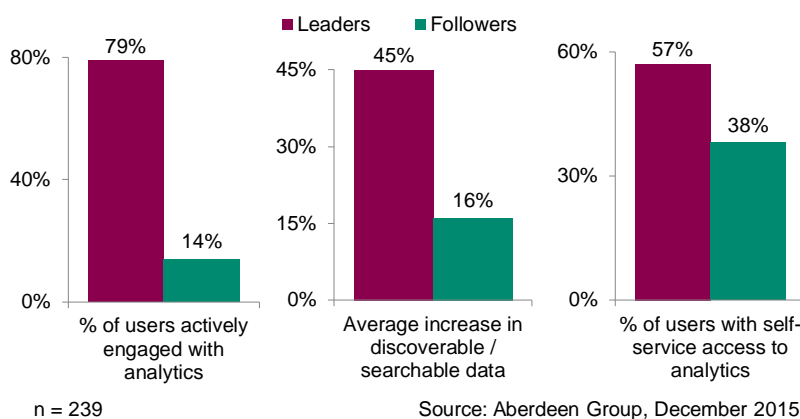


Source: Aberdeen Group, December 2015

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Without the burden of having to work behind the firewall or tunnel into the internal environment with a VPN, mobile and cloud-based solutions allow access for more employees with a need or desire for analytics. The same concept applies to knowledge sharing and collaboration. Rarely does a critical decision rest in the hands of a single person. With the ability to deliver reports and views of the data (and sometimes more in-depth analytical capabilities) via a cloud or mobile infrastructure, more key stakeholders can weigh in on decisions and apply the right data or expertise toward a quality and timely decision.

## What Good Looks Like

For those that have enabled their analytical capabilities to venture outside the walls of the organization, the research shows a right way and a wrong way to go about this endeavor. Below are the three criteria used to determine leading organizations in their use of this more diverse analytical infrastructure (Figure 2).

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### Figure 2: Off-Premise Analytics - Leaders Defined



■ Leaders ■ Followers

- % of users actively engaged with analytics — Leaders 79%, Followers 14%
- Average increase in discoverable / searchable data — Leaders 45%, Followers 16%
- % of users with self-service access to analytics — Leaders 57%, Followers 38%

n = 239

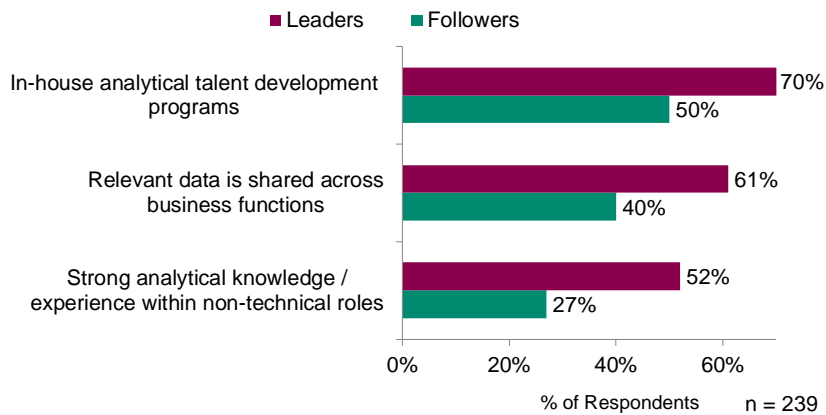Source: Aberdeen Group, December 2015

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In principle, these companies should be able to equip more users with access to the tools they need as discussed previously, but they should also be able to build a higher level of activity and engagement with these tools. With more users empowered and a greater degree of cross-functional collaboration, these companies should also be able to increase the amount of data in their organization that is searchable or discoverable for analytical purposes. Finally, expanding to cloud or mobile analytics should theoretically reduce reliance on IT when it comes to consuming insight, as those tools would usually be available via a traditional browser-based interface or an intuitive mobile application. As defined above, Leaders drove a greater degree of analytical engagement, increased the amount of searchable data available, and facilitated self-service analytics for more users.

## Characteristics of a Leader

In theory, any company that has made the effort to extend analytics outside the firewall should have the opportunity to deliver results against the metrics listed above. So why aren't they all performing at a high level? Or more pointedly, what are Leaders doing differently? A big part of the answer to that question lies in their organizational maturity and use of a variety of different internal capabilities (Figure 3).

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**Figure 3: Connecting with the User Base**



Source: Aberdeen Group, December 2015

> It's not enough just to open the door for more users to access analytical capabilities. Companies need to pay close attention to their user needs and do what they can to deliver against them.

The research demonstrates that Leaders really make a concerted effort when it comes to nurturing analytical talent as well as cultivating a broad foundation of relevant data. Leaders are 40% more likely to have formal programs in place to train and develop data-driven analytical talent. That puts them in a position to set a higher organizational bar for analytical talent and allows for more of these skill sets to permeate into job roles not historically associated with analytical activity. Moreover, these top companies are more likely to remove unnecessary barriers to data exchange and share information across business functions.

It's not enough just to open the door for more users to access analytical capabilities. Companies need to pay close attention to their user needs and do what they can to deliver against them. These capabilities depicted above are a key component in connecting analytics to the workforce and are instrumental in driving user satisfaction in several important areas (Figure 4).
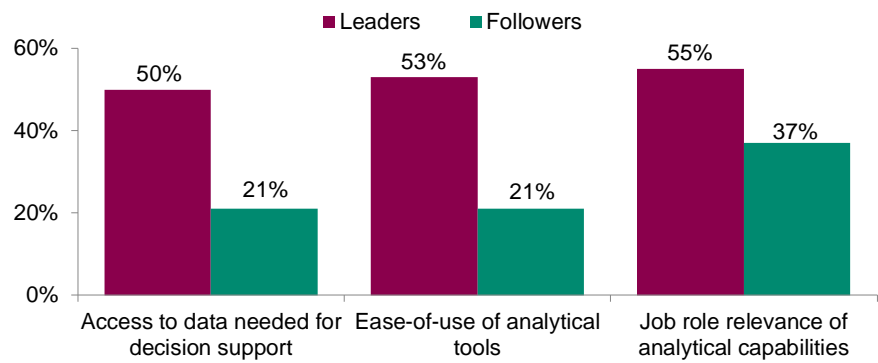
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### Figure 4: Happy Users, Healthy Decisions



% of Respondents "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with above    n = 239

Source: Aberdeen Group, December 2015

Aberdeen's October 2015 report, Relevant Analytics: The Value of Fit over Function, demonstrated that quality decision support is just as much about how well the solutions work with the user base as it is about sophisticated analytical firepower. Leading companies are able to produce a higher level of user satisfaction when it comes to data accessibility and ease-of-use, but perhaps more importantly, with the relevance of their analytical capabilities. Marketing professionals can analyze customer behavior, sales managers can get better visibility into the quality of their pipeline, and financial leaders can do more effective spend analysis and budget more accurately. User satisfaction is a critical lynchpin for success with analytics, and leading companies are able to deliver against what their workforces need.

### Key Takeaways

Mobile and cloud-based delivery of analytical capabilities are not new concepts by any means, but too many companies are still stuck in an "on-premise-only" mentality. Sometimes this reticence to venture outside the firewall is born out of legitimate

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security concerns, but often it's a simple failure of imagination. The following takeaways summarize the most important research findings as they relate to analytics both on- and off-premise:

➔ **The evolving workforce demands better analytics.** Love it or hate it, the technologies available to us today enable us to do our jobs in more settings than ever before. When we're in the office, working from home, riding the train, holed up in a hotel room, or anywhere we're expected to be productive, many of us also need decision support. Bringing the right analytical tools off-premise and onto mobile devices or cloud-based applications is a powerful way to bring decision intelligence to this ever-evolving workforce.

➔ **Leaders focus on more data, and more users.** When it comes to exploiting these deployment options, leading companies have a two-pronged focus on making data more available and fostering more analytically inclined users. With policies in place for open (and secure) exchange of information across functional areas, Leaders are able to enrich their decisions with a variety of information. Additionally, these companies are keen on developing analytical talent in-house and bringing that talent to more non-technical areas of the company.

➔ **User satisfaction is a critical factor.** At the end of the day, decisions are made by people. Despite the features and functions available within a suite of analytical technology, poorly aligned tools that don't resonate with

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the workforce are virtually useless. Leaders are able to clearly communicate their user needs when it comes to decision support and deliver against those needs. These efforts are rewarded with higher user satisfaction in key areas like data accessibility, ease-of-use, and analytical relevance.

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| Related Research |
|---|
| *Introducing the Analytical Mind Map: The BI Personality Test*; June 2014     *The Analytical Executive: Getting Their Hands Dirty with Data*; October 2015 |
| *Analytical Detectives: Solving Data Mysteries*; June 2014     *Relevant Analytics: The Value of Fit over Function*; October 2015 |
| *Analytical Gunslingers: The Quick and the Dead*; June 2014     *The User's Guide to Embedded Analytics*; September 2015 |
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