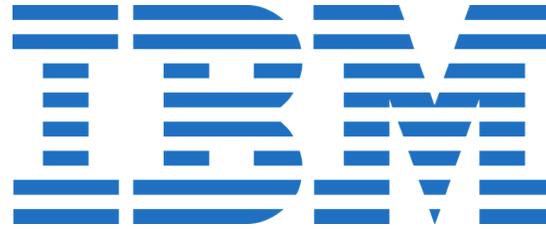


# Bringing it to Life: Trend Forecaster & Technology Integrator



**Industry:** Technology & Consulting  
**Ownership:** NYSE: IBM  
**Annual Revenue:** \$80 Billion+  
**# of Employees:** 350,000+  
**Description:** IBM is an American multinational technology and consulting corporation that manufactures and markets computer hardware, middleware and software, and offers infrastructure, hosting and consulting services in areas ranging from mainframe computers to nanotechnology.

*“Creating business value from analytics requires HR professionals who understand business problems, have strong consulting skills and obviously good data analysis skills.”*

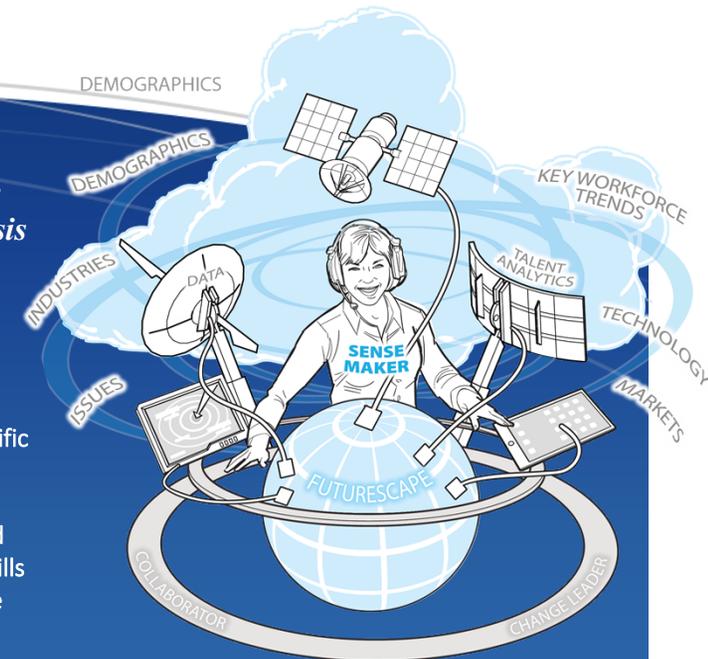
*- Jonathan Ferrar, Vice President, Smarter Workforce*

## Summary

IBM’s workforce analytics team marries demographic data, financial data, and performance metrics to solve specific business problems such as identifying—early on—who’s most likely to leave and understanding—in real-time—what’s inhibiting people from performing at their best. The team is made up of a wide range of individuals with strengths spanning HR knowledge, business acumen, consulting, storytelling, change management, statistics, and visualization. The key, Jonathan Ferrar said, for any workforce analytics team is to bring these multidisciplinary skills together to solve specific business problems. Each individual expects to utilize their unique strengths to maximize the intelligence of the whole group.

In an example outside of IBM, Ferrar mentions how in one company the workforce analytics leader hired an artist—a rare skillset that was required because the importance of storytelling and visualization are often overlooked. Most organizations spend their time running analyses and perfecting the data—yet true impact comes when there’s a healthy balance of analysis and strategic communication. Ferrar explained that you only have about 30 seconds of an executive’s time—what do you need to say to get their attention? One way to practice this skill: grab someone outside of HR, take them to lunch, and pitch them your workforce analytics story. Dig deep to understand what resonated and what didn’t.

So, what’s next for workforce analytics teams? Ferrar said it’s three things: cognitive technologies will help humans spend more time finding insights rather than analyzing data; marketing, finance, procurement, and other departments will come together with HR to look at a more complete dataset to solve business problems; and more datasets will become available as wearables and other technologies become more widespread.



## Links

[Interview with Jonathan Ferrar](#)

[Insights from IBM](#)

[Analytics Driving Action](#)

[Who’s The New HR Talent?](#)