

Building the data academy: Getting started worksheet

Your organization needs a data-informed workforce, but how do you build one? Hire highly-credentialled data scientists, and they may balk at the spreadsheet-based data pipelines currently in place. Hire less-experienced tech talent, and they may similarly show themselves the door after building their data skills.

The best path forward is by up-skilling the talent you already have with a data academy. This is an institutionalized effort to build data capacities, making use of several training methods.

This worksheet will help you outline a data academy rollout at your organization.

Selling the academy

An initiative as grandiose-sounding as a “data academy” is sure to put executives on their guard, but your organization will fall behind without a wholesale strategy for data up-skilling.

Answer the below to help formulate your “pitch” for the necessity of a data academy:

1. How does management currently describe their organization’s use of data and analytics?



2. How do your current data professionals manage, process and use data? What do they see as the strengths and weaknesses of your organization?

3. How have previous initiatives to build or grow a data team gone? If it's not been tried, has it been discussed? Are there issues in the talent pipeline for data professionals?

Designing the academy

With your current data strategy and talent pipeline scoped out, the need may become clear for a data academy. Answer the below questions to scope high-level details of what this academy should look like.

The below questions may vary widely depending on the size and environment of your organization. If you're not sure how to answer some questions, ask your current data professionals for help.

1. What are the high-level learning objectives of the data academy? What should attendees be able to perform as a result of attending?



2. What vendors, tools or technologies are used in your organization that should be addressed in the data academy?

3. How will you select and engage participants for the data academy?

Implementing the academy

Now, it's time to move from strategy to execution. Answer the following questions for a tactical guide to data academy rollout.

1. What training methods will you use to build the academy? Are there any current resources (such as learning subscriptions or company-wide events) that you could leverage to implement the academy?



2. Are there particular problems or datasets you would like to use? Does this data reside internally or externally? If internally, which departments oversee the data?

Measuring the academy's success

If you've made it this far in the planning process, you'll see that building a data academy is a lot of work! Answer the following questions so you are ready to evaluate the fruits of your labor.

1. How will you elicit feedback from your participants? What retention or satisfaction metrics can you track the progress of? What other workforce KPIs may be affected by the academy?



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2. What current data processes currently exist now for which you could measure a performance improvement? How do these improvements help productivity or other metrics?

Getting ready to build

Congratulations on taking the first steps toward building a data academy.

For further assistance or strategies, contact George Mount at george@stringfestanalytics.com or schedule a [free half-hour consultation](#).

You can also [subscribe to George's newsletter](#) for exclusive access to a growing data education resource library, which contains learning guides, white papers and more.

