



# Creating the Data-Rich Sentinel Species

*Attracting & Retaining  
KEY TALENT*

*While Turning Data into Money*



Tara Kenyon, PhD  
Author | Speaker | Facilitator  
Behavioral Economist

**TK**  
TARA KENYON

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Enough said.



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Toll-free in the US and Canada: +1 833.651.1414

**Compete on analytics,  
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Tara Kenyon, PhD



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# Creating the Data-Rich Sentinel Species

Attracting and Retaining Key Talent with Data-Rich Analytics

Think about this:

**The canaries aren't in coal mines to mine coal.**

On the business side of your organization, your rising stars and key talent typically aren't the ones mining data and performing data analyses. Rather, they are learning your market and your product and service offerings.

With a few extra skills and coaching, they can become a sentinel species for detecting risks to your business and provide advance warning of dangers and better, provide predictive indicators for your business potential.



This brief illustrates how business executives can learn to attract and retain their rising stars without threatening established managers and executives in their succession plans.

# Canary in a Coal Mine

If you haven't heard of the proverbial "canary in a coal mine," know that the expression is not just a proverb. The Smithsonian explains that canaries need immense quantities of oxygen to enable them to fly to heights that would make people altitude sick.

Interestingly, their anatomy allows them to get a dose of oxygen when they inhale and another when they exhale. So, they get a double dose of air—and, unfortunately, of any poisons the air might contain.

Miners would get an earlier warning to put their respirators on when they saw the birds getting sick.

Toxin-detecting tools have long replaced canaries in coal mines, but the sentinel species concept is one that we should take note.

I tell you the canary story not to make you aware of the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning in mines, but to make you aware that you have "canaries" in your business—you just may not recognize them.



Source:

Eschner, Kat. 2016. "The Story of the Real Canary in the Coal Mine."

Smithsonian Magazine, accessed September 20, 2022.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/story-real-canary-coal-mine-180961570/>.

# Data-Rich Analytics and the Sentinel Species

**Diagnostic analytics** is a form of advanced data analytics that focuses on explaining why something has happened.

Like the canary getting ill long before humans, the aim of diagnostic analytics is to understand the underlying issues and determine why something is happening.

“One of the tests of leadership is the ability to recognize a problem before it becomes an emergency.”

~ Arnold H. Glasow (1905-1998)  
American Businessman

When properly trained to do two things, your up-and-coming business leaders will perform diagnostic analytics naturally.

- The first is to be able to articulate what the business side of the house needs from the data side of the house. It's not really a natural thing to do.
- The second is to be able to draw some conclusions from your descriptive and predictive analyses to help move you and your company forward and turn data into money.

And your sentinel employees can recognize those problems and alert you to them well before they become emergencies.

# How Do I?

To retain your key talent (and be attractive to those working for your competitors today):

1. Be clear about your intent in this strategic cycle and let your key talent come up with what your organization needs from your data to carry out that intent.
2. Have them communicate with the data team to get the proper diagnostics.

I am not asking you to send your key talent to get their master's degrees in data analytics nor am I asking you to have them learn how to program in Python or in R.

Remember that, as a sentinel species, these individuals aren't there to mine the data—any more than canaries mine coal...**they are there to diagnose where you are.**

What I *am* asking you to do is give your talent the skills to diagnose the present, describe the past, predict the future, and prescribe actions to get the company to the future you envision. Those are skills that can be learned.

That sounds like a big ask, I know. But this isn't complicated—it just looks like it is. Start putting a little more effort into training and coaching these up-and-comers in DIVA (that's the acronym for Data Insights, Visualization, and Analytics). Look for new opportunities to promote them to head up new lines of business or new strategic initiatives—particularly the initiatives they've found themselves.

This is one of the ways to turn data into money: keep those talented people, and they will pay for themselves and their staff several times over.

# Your Team

“An individual can make a difference,  
but a team can make a miracle.”

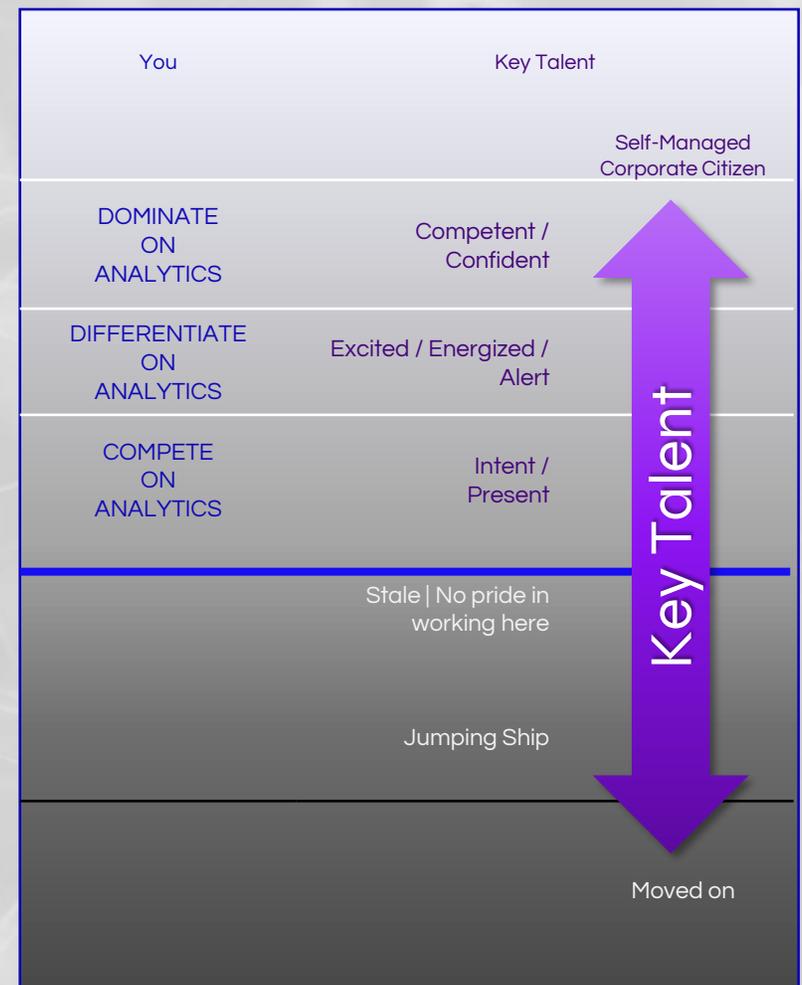
~ Doug Pederson, NFL Coach

## ATTRACT AND RETAIN KEY TALENT.

More often than not, we see that as a strategic goal. It's costly to find the right people and even more costly when you can't keep them.

We can help you not only keep that awesome talent you recruited, but we can also help turn them into competent, confident corporate citizens.

Imagine the business side of the house able to readily communicate with the data side of the house—and vice-versa.



Sources:

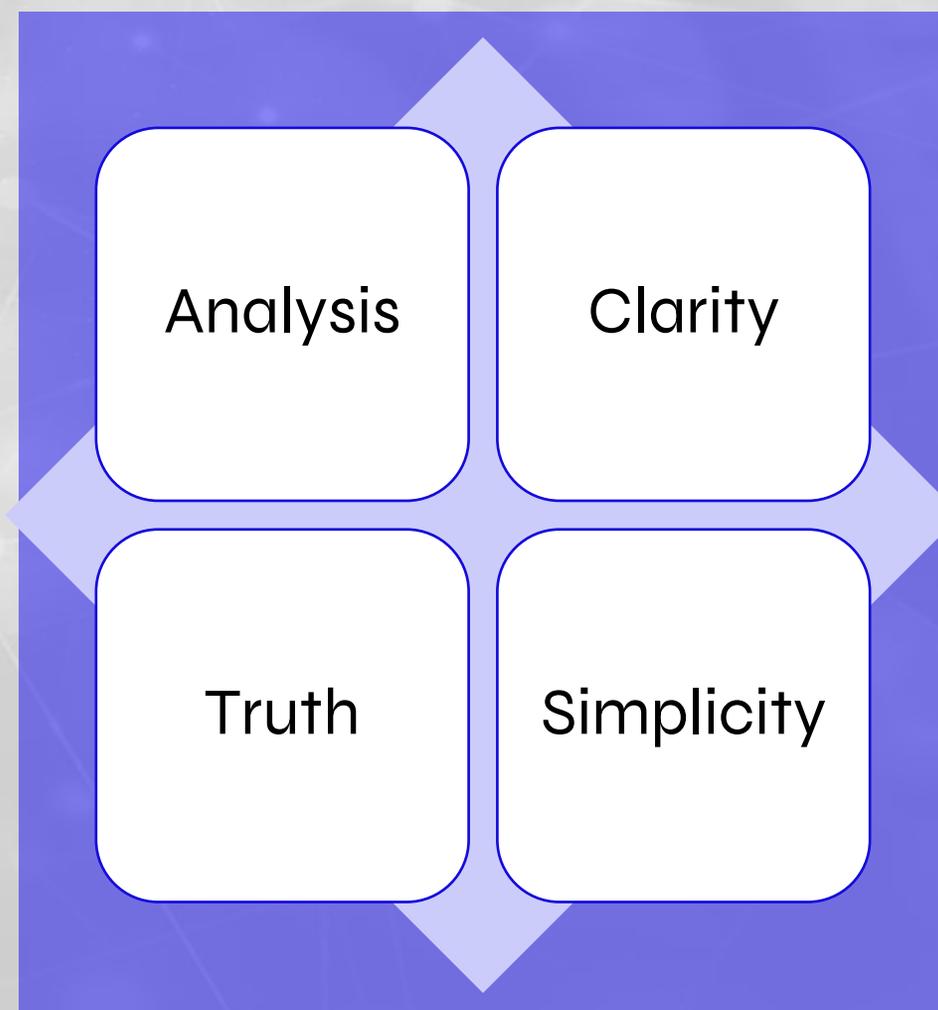
Crawford, F. A., & Mathews, R. (2001). *The Myth of Excellence : Why Great Companies Never Try to Be the Best at Everything* (1st ed.). New York: Crown Business.

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# Dominate on Analytics

**BUSINESS LEADERS USE CUSTOMER DATA AND ANALYTICS TO DOMINATE THEIR MARKETS.** Our focus is NOT on data systems and data analysts. **It's on you,** the business leader. You are not interested in learning the ins and outs of Python and R programming. But you do need to know how to get a return on your data investment—and that's where I can help you. It's about proper communication *and* expanding opportunities for Key Talent attraction and retention.

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Visualization, and Analytics (DIVA)  
to Turn Data into Money

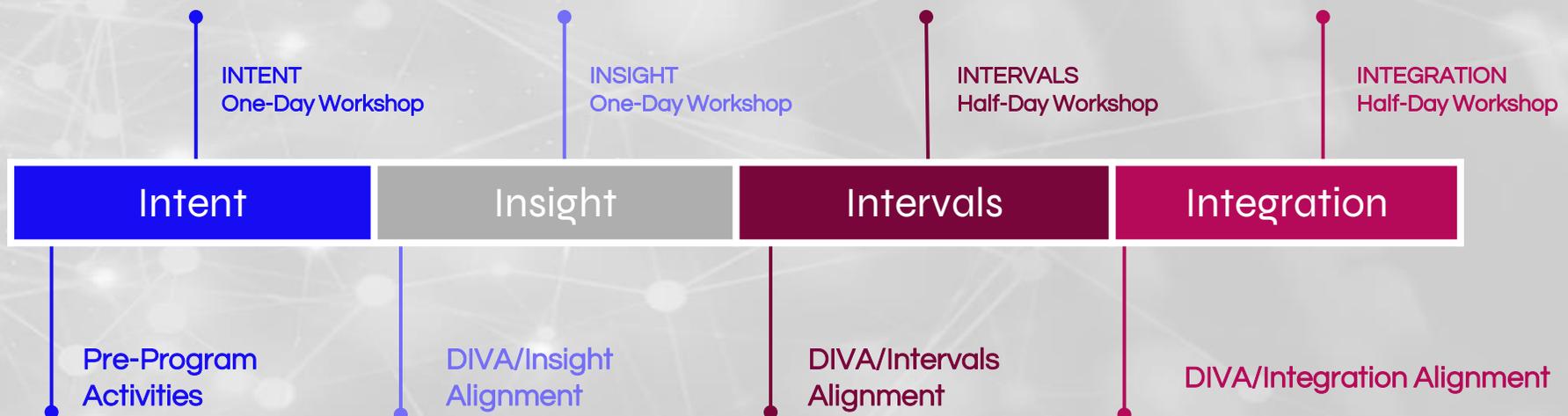
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