



Fueling Innovation with Data-Driven Decisions

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The insurance landscape is evolving rapidly, fueled by the constant emergence of new technologies, tools and market demands. To remain competitive in this dynamic environment, organizations must do more than adapt—they must cultivate a data-driven culture rooted in agility, innovation and continuous learning.

Recent findings from the [Shin Research Program](#) share that data scientists are the fastest-growing segment within insurance. The [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) expects this segment to increase by 34% over the next decade – outpacing anticipated overall average growth for all occupations. While data science represents a smaller portion of the insurance workforce, it's a notable nod to an industrywide shift toward technology and analytics-driven decision-making.

Additionally, The Jacobson Group and Aon's [Q3 2025 Insurance Labor Market Study](#) found technology roles are expected to see the greatest growth within insurance, while actuarial and analytics positions consistently rank among the hardest to fill. As insurers increase their investments in data and technology, they must also focus on transforming their corporate cultures to embrace change, while prioritizing the right skills and behaviors across their current and future workforces.

Creating a Culture of Innovation and Adaptability

Capturing, analyzing and leveraging data serves as a catalyst for innovation. However, to effectively act on these insights, it's necessary to have an agile workforce that values forward motion and embraces change. This transformation must begin at the highest levels of your organization. Ensure your executive team models adaptability and growth, while encouraging and championing data literacy. Encourage all levels of the organization to maintain a sense of curiosity, question how things could be done better and find answers grounded in data.

Consistently emphasize the value of data science, including the stories it can reveal and the insights that drive smarter decisions. During team meetings and company-wide calls, ensure leaders are sharing data-informed learnings and explaining how they guide even small shifts. When possible, communicate through a data-driven lens and demonstrate how to translate technical language into more common and digestible terms. Clearly articulating the “why” behind this mentality helps promote buy-in at all levels.

All culture shifts take time and inevitably face challenges and pushback – especially if your organization is unaccustomed to change. Educate your teams on how the company is leveraging data to make informed business decisions and guide priorities. Commit to ongoing communication and clearly explain why this investment matters, as well as how it impacts your ability to compete now and in the future. Consistency will have a compounding effect on moving the needle, even if progress initially feels slow.

Along with highlighting the benefits of data-driven decisions, encourage employees at all levels to share ideas and contribute to innovation efforts. This could include collaborative methods such as world cafés or more structured discussion formats. Start with prompts such as, “wouldn’t it be great if...” to provoke conversations. Invite everyone in the organization to set time aside to brainstorm and problem solve. Whether or not a specific idea moves forward, acknowledge and reward these behaviors throughout the organization.

At the same time, view any failures as opportunities to learn. Especially in insurance, risk aversion is often the default. However, shifting how the organization views failure enables individuals to push themselves outside their comfort zones and take calculated risks (backed in data) that may eventually lead to valuable breakthroughs.

Fostering Upskilling and Development

While corporate culture provides the foundation for day-to-day behaviors and expectations, tangible skills are also necessary for sustaining innovation and agility. In the World Economic Forum’s [2025 Future of Jobs Report](#), 63% of employers shared they feel skill gaps are the biggest barrier to business transformation. Additionally, the report predicts an average of 39% of workers’ existing skills will be transformed or become outdated in the next five years. Ongoing upskilling and development are essential across all organizational functions and levels.

A common struggle insurers face when it comes to building these skills within their teams is the lack of in-house technologists who can support training and development. It’s even more unlikely insurers have an AI expert at this stage in the game. It may be advantageous to bring in outside consultants to create and administer initial trainings related to specific programs and data sets.

In addition to offering training modules directly focused on data science and technology tools, prioritize building future-proof skillsets that are transferable across several areas. The World Economic Forum considers these essential competencies as resiliency, flexibility, resource management, quality control and technological literacy. Equally important is the ability to translate complex ideas into digestible and actionable insights.

Professionals in all areas of insurance, including underwriting, claims, risk and more will benefit from growing their aptitude in these areas. Claims, pricing, loss prevention, customer experience and many other areas of the business are based on numbers and enhanced by analytics. Some roles may require deep expertise in these areas, while others only need a more surface-level understanding.

Recruiting for Desired Skills

As you bring in external talent, consider extending your search beyond your organization's traditional talent pools. Identify the general skills and attributes desired to move your company forward, such as a growth mindset and commitment to continual learning. This should apply to all roles – not just data scientists and actuaries. While upskilling existing employees is valuable, bringing in new talent that already possesses these skills and understands the value of data can make an immediate impact. Additionally, these individuals can help guide and assist others within your organization as they hone their own skills.

Even for roles without a direct data science focus, start incorporating references to data analysis within your job descriptions to help attract the right candidates. Explore their experiences and attitudes around data and innovation throughout the interview process. For instance, you may ask underwriting candidates about their history working with analytics teams, leveraging reporting or partnering with data scientists. Hiring individuals that align with your company's priorities can help strengthen your culture, while bringing in fresh perspectives and the ability to complement less data-savvy team members.

Hiring for Tech and Data-Focused Roles

Being able to build systems, create reports and tell a story through data is essential. Bain & Company reports just [5-10% of insurance carriers](#) consistently see value from their investments in data and technology, making the right people and process even more crucial for overcoming this hurdle in the technology-driven age.

These capabilities are also often industry agnostic and it may be necessary to look outside of the insurance space when recruiting for specialized technology and data science roles. The most important piece is a candidate's ability to work with data – the insurance knowledge can be incorporated later and learned on the job. However, expanding outside the industry will inevitably involve competing with tech companies, which may have deeper pockets and initially seem more lucrative to candidates. Compensation and flexibility will be key differentiators when it comes to making an offer.

Providing remote work arrangements and flexible hours will not only help you compete with other industries, it will also open up your candidate pool to qualified individuals outside of your immediate geography. In the United States, the median salary for data scientists across all industries last year was about [\\$112,000](#) according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. However, this is more likely closer to at least \$120,000, and also dependent on level and location.

Along with a compelling offer, it's also important to demonstrate your organization's investment in technology when talking with candidates. If your company has outdated or more basic systems and a candidate is choosing between you and a company with much more advanced capabilities, they will often choose the latter – even over higher compensation. Insurance faces a reputation of having more outdated technologies – with a large percentage of IT budgets going to maintaining legacy systems. Prepare to advocate for your open role.

Be vocal in any plans to upgrade your systems and prioritize technology investment, highlighting the unique value and leadership opportunities this may grant candidates. How will they be involved in this project? What responsibilities would they take on that they may not have access

to elsewhere? Be as specific and transparent as possible. Share your roadmap as well as expectations for all stakeholders; then follow through.

When it comes to dedicated technologists, smaller companies or those with more limited budgets may not be able to commit to a full-time hire. Yet interim experts can help provide valuable short-term support for areas like system implementation, design and team upskilling. This could be on a project basis or for a set amount of time depending on your needs and budget.

Creating an environment that promotes innovation, adaptability and data-driven-decision making will only become more important as the industry evolves. Focus on your company culture, invest in upskilling, and be open-minded and intentional when it comes to hiring for tech and data-focused roles. The industry will continue to transform, with change occurring at an accelerated pace. Those who harness the value of data and leverage it to guide smarter and faster business decisions will be positioned for greater success.