

WHITE PAPER

msier®

# THE LAST MILE PROBLEM

Getting People Managers to Make Better  
Talent Decisions





## Promote employee well-being. Rally geographically-dispersed teams around deadlines. Carry on in the face of a labor shortage.

The world of work is in flux, and the people manager's job is getting harder—all while there are fewer HR business partners around to offer support. "We're already in the throes of this great work experiment of how and where people work, and choices that people have are all up in the air," said Ian Cook, VP of People Analytics at Visier. "Making good, equitable decisions that align people to the work that fits them best requires more than the intuition of a manager."

A 2022 Deloitte survey of 500 business leaders revealed their low confidence in addressing some of the most pervasive, everyday business and people questions.<sup>1</sup>

Managers today need a lens on both the business and the employee—and specifically where they intersect and best align to deliver maximum value for both the organization and the human being. How do they obtain this? By using their organization's goldmine of people data that can address, even solve, critical business issues.

## The future of management is in the people answers

The future of management is augmented with data. Data doesn't replace managers, but in the same way that athletic performance is augmented by training and competition data, so too will people managers and their teams be made better, faster, stronger with access to insights.

Uber, a transportation technology company, put this into practice when it opted for a self-service model that empowers people managers, rather than having their people analytics team doing customized analyses with specialized tools and raw data<sup>2</sup>. Instead of waiting on HR to provide data for a talent decision, Uber managers use Visier themselves to access and interrogate the data to get quick answers on attrition, diversity, workforce structure, labor cost, and more.

"Visier is fantastic!" said a senior leader at Uber. "For a talent decision, I used to have to go to an HR business partner, wait two weeks, and by then, the decision window was gone. Now I can have the current data, interrogate it, then meet with my HR business partner to discuss solutions."



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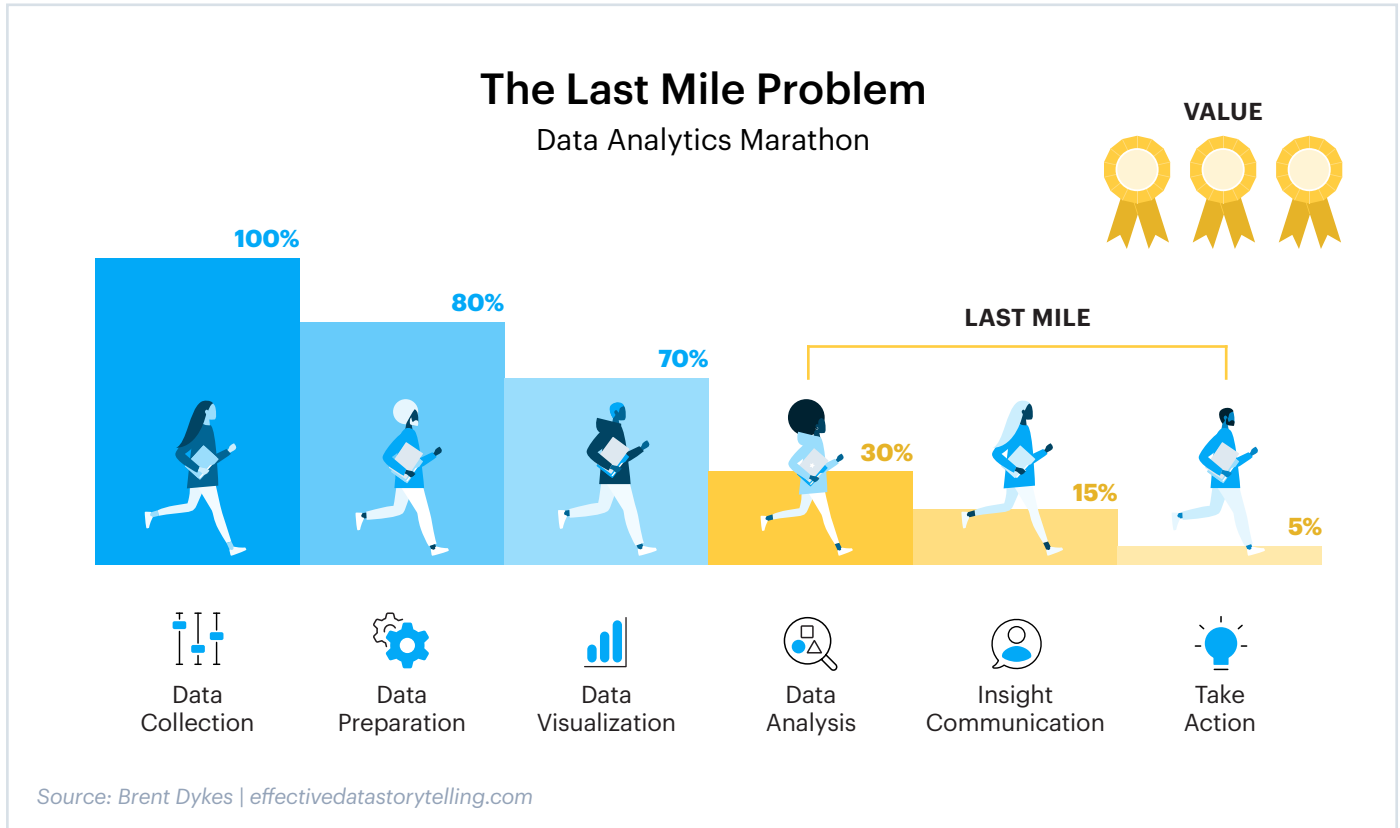
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<sup>1</sup>The Future of People Management: Closing the People Impact Gap for Better Business Outcomes. Visier x Deloitte. <https://hello.visier.com/the-future-of-management-report.html>

<sup>2</sup>Uber Enables People Leaders with People Analytics. Visier. <https://www.visier.com/customer-stories/uber/>



It's now critical to close the gap between raw data contained in HR and business systems and insights that managers can act on. This is the Last Mile problem for people analytics—and this paper is your guide to solving it.



*The Last Mile Problem is where people data gets turned into actions that lead to business value.*

Whether you are an advanced organization with a strong culture of data-driven decision making or you are just getting started, you need to follow this approach. In this paper, you will discover:

- Why solving the Last Mile problem improves both employee experience and business value
- Why the right technology and talent matters in democratizing people data
- How to bring people insights into a people manager's workflow

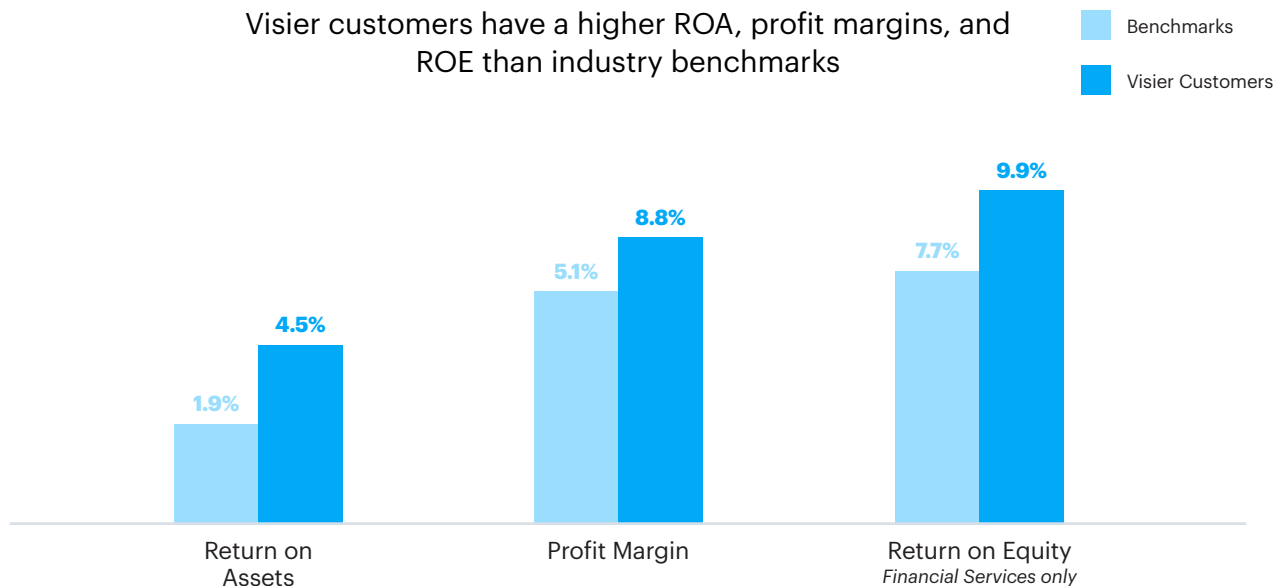


## What it takes to conquer the Last Mile

Visier research has shown that organizations outperform financially when they have more mature people analytics capabilities—and putting insights into the hands of more users is one of the key characteristics of people analytics maturity<sup>3</sup>. For organizations that have adopted Visier people analytics, in particular, they saw 73% higher profit margins and 137% higher return on assets.

### Adopting People Analytics = Higher Financial Performance

Visier customers have a higher ROA, profit margins, and ROE than industry benchmarks



Source: *The Age of People Analytics 2021*. Visier.

To put it another way, the full business value of your people—and people analytics—is realized when every leader at your organization has the ability to decide and act informed by relevant data. Imagine, at a 5,000-person organization, 500 people managers must make daily decisions about their direct reports. They have complicated questions to answer like:

- Should I be more proactive about retaining certain people?
- What capabilities does my team lack that will help us hit our goals?
- Who deserves a promotion and will they continue to succeed?

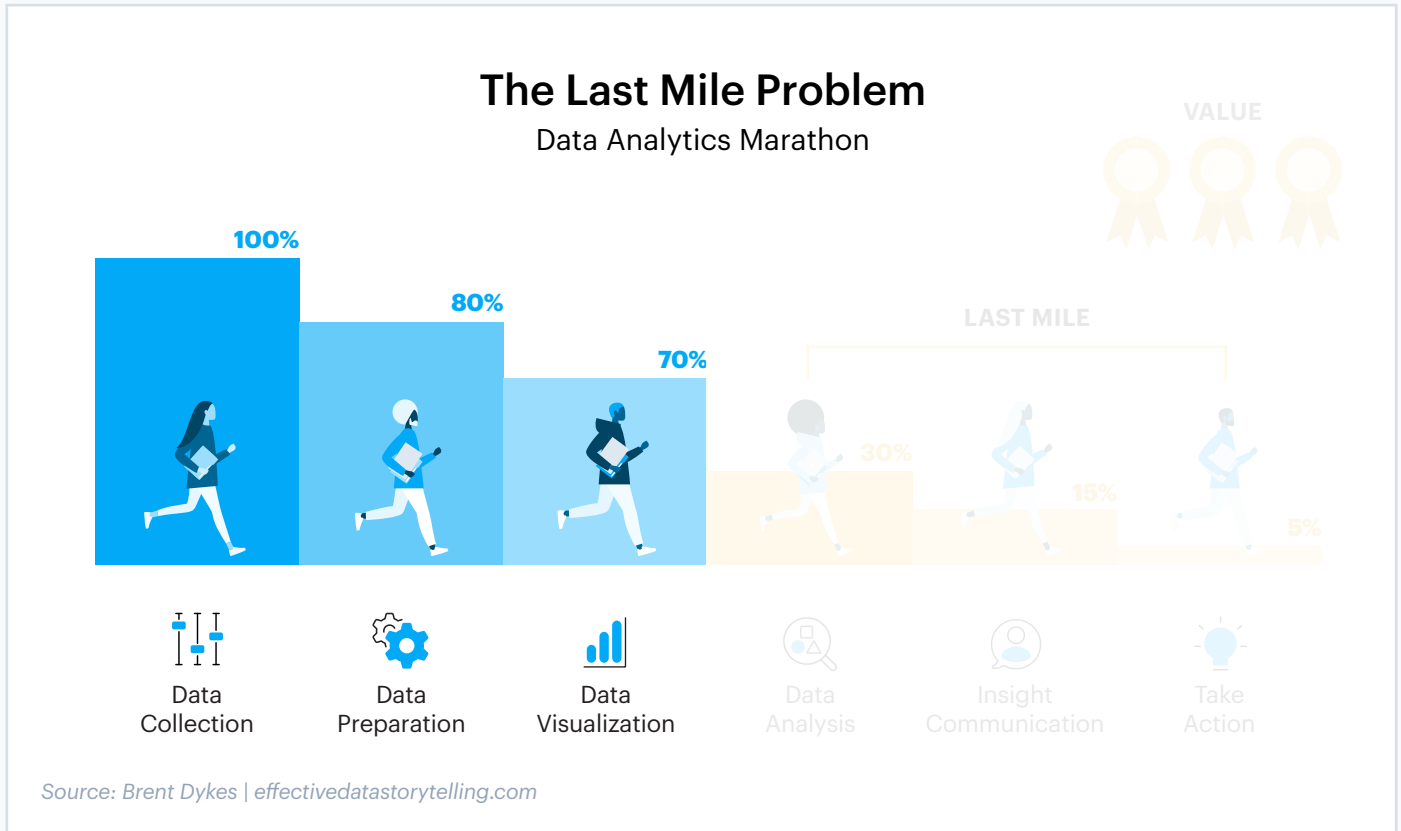
People data serves as a powerful resource when answering these types of questions, but not when this information is only in the hands of a single team or a data scientist. 500 managers taking one smarter action, for their people, everyday delivers exponentially better business outcomes than if only, say, the C-Suite or an HRBP knows the full picture.

Instead, an investment in people analytics should be an investment in a platform that allows you to create an organization-wide culture around making better workforce decisions.

<sup>3</sup>The Age of People Analytics 2021: Practices leading to value from people analytics maturity. Visier. <https://hello.visier.com/people-analytics-maturity-value-report>



## The right people analytics puts you on the right path



The Last Mile Problem is where people data gets turned into actions that lead to business value.

Sound people decisions take a number of factors into account. For example, to determine whether to counter offer when an employee announces that they have received a better paying job elsewhere, the decision should be based on:

- Labor market comparisons
- Internal compensation structures
- The employee’s current and potential performance levels
- The organization’s strategic plan

Getting information for all of the above areas is key, and only one component lives inside your HRIS. A people analytics platform takes data sitting in multiple systems, transforms it, and puts the insights directly into the hands of managers.



It’s really challenging if a business executive comes to a people analytics team and says, ‘I’ve got an urgent business problem,’ and the team must spend time trying to determine where to wrangle all the data from, and how to organize it in a way that would produce important insight to deliver back to the business.”



**Marc Solow**, leader of Deloitte’s Human Capital Analytics and Insights Solutions



## What to look for in a people analytics solution

Real value comes from turning data into insights and action, but many organizations get stuck in the data collection and preparation phases of an analytics project.

The seed of the problem begins when traditional BI tools are used as the only means to create people insights, an approach that is often mandated by IT leaders who have committed to a particular BI vendor or stack. **Using this technology, to serve tailored answers to every manager, generates so much maintenance work that the program collapses under its own weight.**

### So how can data teams deliver compelling, flexible people insights to every people manager? By leveraging:

#### A single source of data truth:

When approached correctly, a people analytics platform takes data sitting in multiple systems, prepares it for use, and puts only the relevant insights and associated context in the hands of non-technical users. This helps managers act confidently, based on clear answers to the complex questions that crop up daily.

#### The power of automation:

People analytics should automate the data preparation stage, normalizing different sources, standardizing metrics, filters, and hierarchies so everyone in the organization is on the same page. Additionally, all changes are made once, centrally, so that all of the answers being consumed automatically inherit the same updates.

#### Centralizing security:

The right people analytics solution has the security model in place so that literally thousands of managers who activate the people strategy can actually get to the answers (or have it served to them in the moment)—without compromising data privacy and safety.

**Above all, remember that whether you are an advanced organization with an established culture of data-driven decision making or you are just getting started on this, you can proceed with enabling your managers with people insights.**

Since implementing Visier in 2016, Merck KGaA has grown its user base to a network of 3,500 users, which includes the entire management population of business and people leaders, plus the HR function. Line managers make up 3,000 of these users<sup>4</sup>.



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<sup>4</sup>Merck KGaA fuelled advanced analytics to retain M&A talent. Visier. <https://www.visier.com/customer-stories/merck-kgaa/>



## Why “good enough” is not always enough

Some businesses believe they can make responsible people decisions with “good enough” HR reporting or DIY people analytics, but few realize the high cost of going this route:

- If you’re relying on transactional reports, you’re missing the opportunity to connect the dots, surface patterns, and forecast trends.
- If you’re waiting to get clean data, not only will you never make it clean on your own, you won’t know which data is of value. You don’t need clean data for analytics—you need pre-built analytics to get your data clean and determine what data is missing.

### Maybe your HRIS is enough?

A new HRIS project not only puts years between you and people analytics, but you may end up focusing your efforts on automating processes that are no longer working for you.

### What about building our own solution?

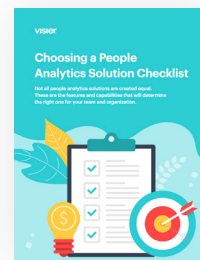
Organizations that are more proactive about extracting and analyzing people data tend to take a DIY approach to building analytics features, but, in the end, they still aren’t achieving real value. Even if a data warehouse exists, HR analysts, data scientists, and IT staff must still find ways to help business executives and people leaders extract meaningful information from the warehouse. In fact, many HR analytics teams are so consumed with just getting the data out that they do not have time to interpret the results or keep it up to date.

### Pre-built is better:

Contrast the above scenarios to a pre-built solution that requires only data onboarding and security configuration. These people analytics solutions are designed to easily plug into your existing data and analytics fabric. When that is complete, your organization is ready to take advantage of the ready-to-use questions and analytics to improve decisions related to talent acquisition, diversity, employee mobility and retention, compensation and more.

### Bottom line:

The sooner you start working with your data, the sooner leaders can start asking better questions and making better people decisions—whether it’s related to a new business strategy, improving customer satisfaction, or contributing to a healthier bottom line.



To learn more about choosing the right people analytics solution, check out the **Choosing a People Analytics Solution Checklist**<sup>5</sup>.

**“Combining distinct data sources, once within Visier, is extremely easy to do. The amount of time saved by getting clean data into the Visier environment to allow for ad hoc reporting is a game-changer on its own.”**

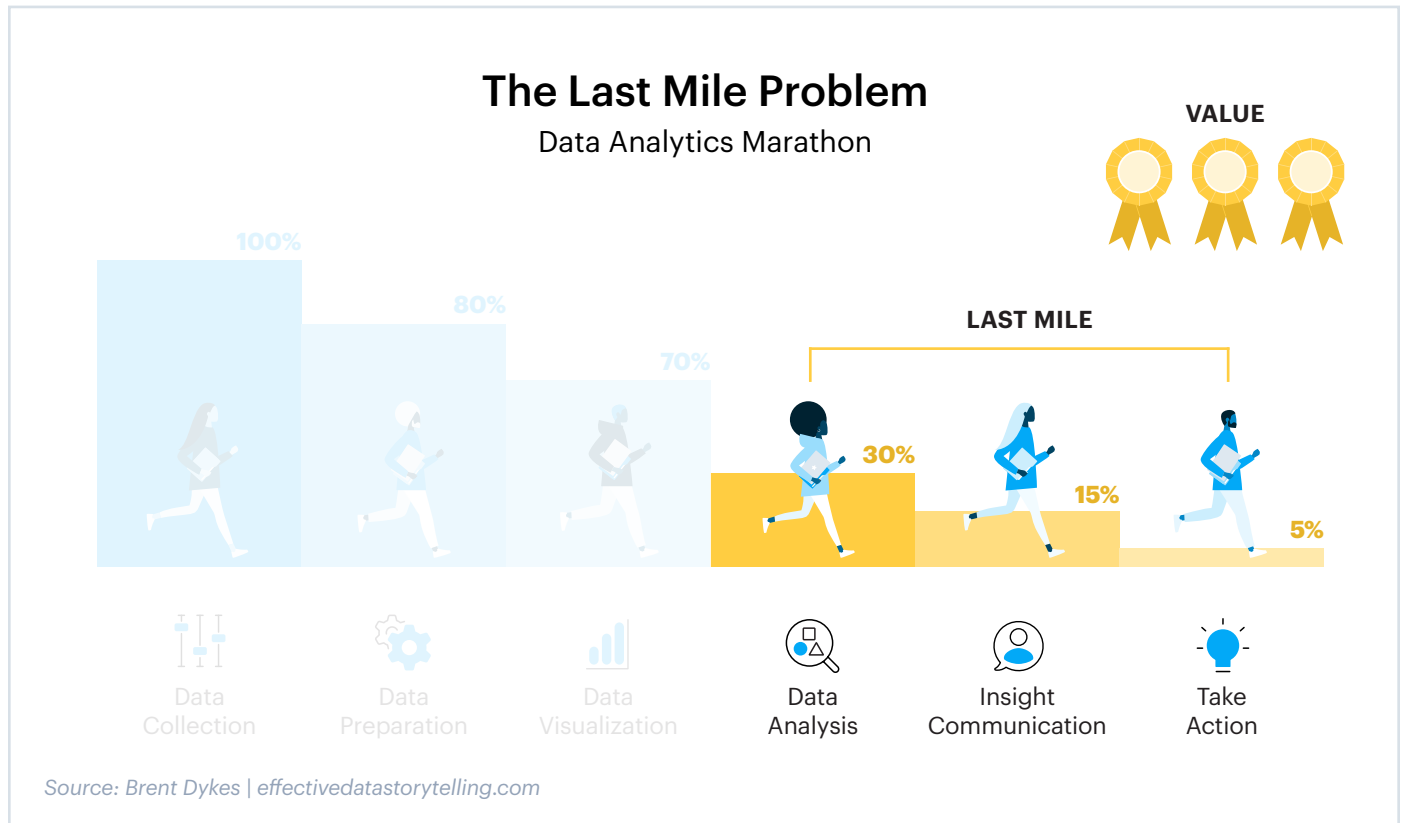
HR Data Analytics Lead, NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory

<sup>5</sup> Choosing a People Analytics Solution Checklist. Visier. <https://hello.visier.com/people-analytics-checklist>



## Finish the Last Mile strong

As the previous section showed, the Last Mile problem isn't the problem of getting the data—it's the actual problem of interpreting the data and communicating what it means to a manager so they can act on it.



*The Last Mile Problem is where people data gets turned into actions that lead to business value.*

When the people team at Block decided to roll out a more enhanced version of Visier people analytics to its managers, the idea was to get managers up to speed with little training. To promote a learn-as-you-go approach, they provided managers with hyperlink-rich guidebooks.

**“Each guidebook has a lot of help text that really explains...what are these metrics? Why are they important? What’s a healthy range, or what do we typically see at the company level? And when should you reach out to your HRBP for support?” explained Dr. Anna Meritt, head of people analytics at Block, a digital payments services company<sup>6</sup>.**

It’s critical to avoid adoption barriers: Managers are busy people. When faced with a pile of deadlines and competing priorities, it’s tempting to ignore the data, particularly if it takes a lot of effort to consume. Providing managers with personalized insights that integrate into their day-to-day workflow is one way to make data actionable—and get them used to leveraging it.

<sup>6</sup> Visier Outsmart 2022. Democratizing Data to Empower Businesses to Make Better Decisions. <https://events.visier.com/outsmart/agenda/session/839771>





## 4 tips for making data actionable for managers

### 1. Start with the essentials

It's important not to over-educate or place unreasonably high expectations on your managers. Start with a few basic analyses for specific questions so you don't have to overwhelm them with training.

### 2. Give them news they can use

Encouraging managers to pay attention to data-generated insights means answering the "so what?" question. For example, an email alert can signal whether resignation rates are going up faster than the industry average and will impact the team's ability to deliver on an upcoming project. This way, the manager can immediately see that there is a problem to fix now before it's too late.

Employee specific insight based on a recent resignation event

Who is at high risk of resignation because they are similar to this employee?

This visualization shows the employees at high risk of resignation due to their similarity to Alan Hayden Washington and other recently departed employees. This visualization also shows the attributes that most distinguish them from other active employees on your team. It is possible that these attributes contribute to their high risk of resignation. Review these individuals and their attributes and determine if any action can be taken to reduce their risk of resignation.

Employees with High Resignation Risk	
Mar 2022	
<p><b>Melvin Rodrigo Spencer</b></p> <p>Job Level Entry Level 1</p> <p>Employee Burnout Zone Medium</p> <p>Employee Burnout Index 9</p> <p>Employee Burnout Date Jan 3, 2022</p>	<p><b>Riley Jacinta Villamor</b></p> <p>Job Level Entry Level 1</p> <p>Employee Burnout Zone Medium</p> <p>Employee Burnout Index 22</p> <p>Employee Burnout Date Sep 1, 2021</p>

Comparison to similar active employees based on matching rules

Example of email notifications that Visier delivers to people managers, letting them know important trends about their team right from their inbox

### 3. Provide options

Dashboards rarely meet the needs of a busy, non-technical audience. Managers often fail to use them as finding the answer they need requires too much work. Simple charts along with a few options for action—such as a pay range based on the organization's compensation structure—provide a good entry point for a general audience.

### 4. Build momentum

Develop a communications plan to demonstrate the value of people data and keep it updated periodically. Tailor your messages to the unique needs of your people managers. Recruit manager champions to regularly share (while respecting employee privacy) anonymous people data during meetings as a way of normalizing the practice.



## Conclusion

# Step onto the winner's podium of data-driven decisions

The continuing resignation and hiring waves, a shrinking global workforce, and the impacts of the pandemic and hybrid work environments have put extraordinary pressure on companies to better understand their workforce—and managers are at the heart of the action. Moving forward, the world of work will become even more fluid and distributed, creating an even bigger demand for people insights.

Start on the path to tackling the Last Mile at your organization today. By changing the foundational approach of how people analytics is delivered, Visier is making this possible for thousands of organizations, helping their people leaders make hundreds of better decisions every day—without ever breaking a sweat.



# About Visier

Visier's purpose is to reveal the human truth about your workforce and contribute to a better future.

Visier was founded to focus on what matters to business people: answering the right questions, even the ones a person might not know to ask. Questions that shape business strategy, provide the impetus for taking action, and drive better business results.

Visier delivers fast, clear people insight by using all the available people data—regardless of source. With best-practice expertise built-in, decisionmakers can confidently take action. Thanks to our amazing customers, Visier is the market leader in Workforce Analytics with more than 15,000 customers in 75 countries around the world.

For more information, visit **[visier.com](https://visier.com)**



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