Using Digital Analytics to Drive Business Outcomes

Align People, Process, and Technology

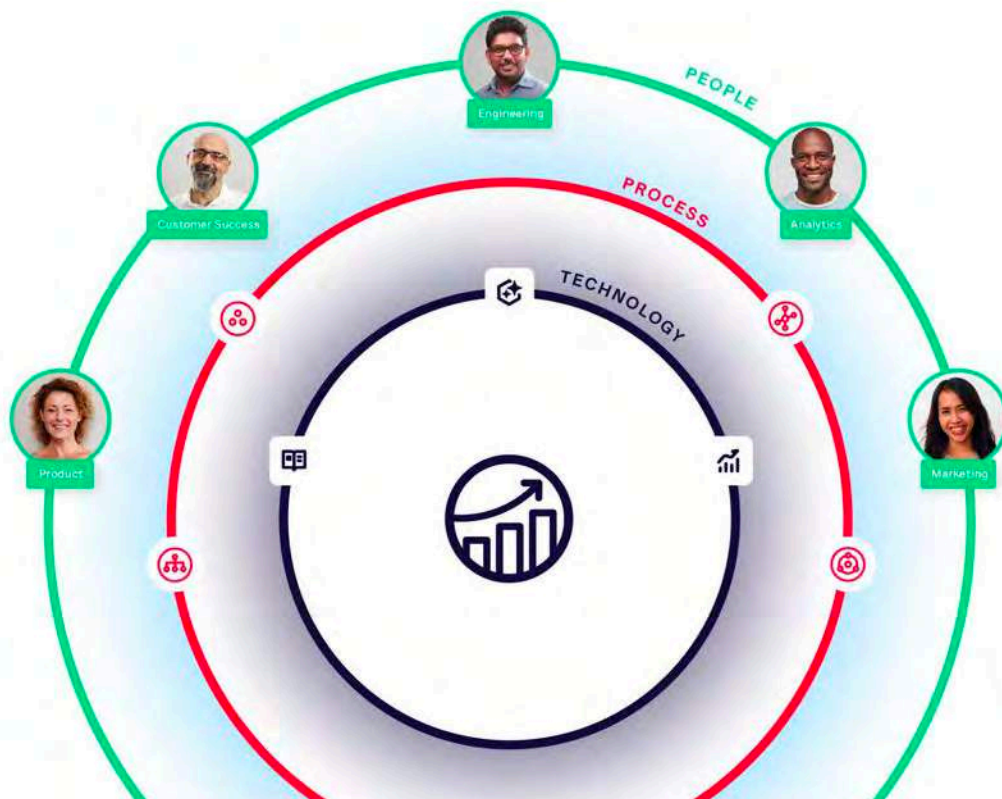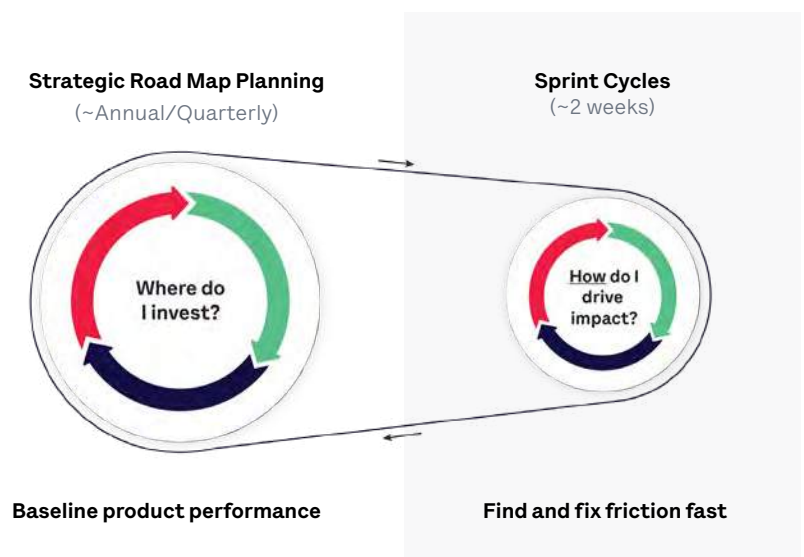# Table of Contents

Digital Analytics for Strategy & Execution

Executives use digital analytics platforms to baseline quarterly performance on core behavioral metrics to strategize, plan, and resource their teams. As an investment planning tool, digital analytics surfaces how user behavior impacts acquisition, engagement, retention, and other drivers of today's business success.

Line managers use digital analytics to execute on their roadmap and accelerate business growth. Their role with digital analytics data is to understand the full customer journey across the digital surface, and to make tactical tradeoffs, drive experiments, and make long-term bets on where and how to invest. The engineering teams rely on product and marketing for two-week sprint plans that are focused on incremental results. Each sprint investment can represent tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of dollars in engineering time, so managers must be thoughtful about efficient execution and focusing the team on the *right* things.

Strategic Road Map Planning
(~Annual/Quarterly)

Sprint Cycles
(~2 weeks)

Where do I invest?

How do I drive impact?

Baseline product performance

Find and fix friction fast

Align People, Process & Technology

Digital analytics provides enterprise teams with a powerful way to understand and act on customer behavior. What differentiates one digital analytics solution from another is the ability to quickly establish a complete and trusted foundation of behavioral data. Once that data foundation is in place, having predictive insights embedded in the system speeds time-to-insight by automatically surfacing hidden moments of friction and improvement opportunities. After baselining key metrics, teams can use digital analytics to endlessly experiment and innovate, improving the customer experience to accelerate acquisition, conversion, and retention, the levers that accelerate business growth.

Complete data foundation and predictive insights

Complete Dataset
Hybrid Tracking (Autocapture + APIs + Sources)

Data Science Automation
Integrated data science layer surfaces hidden insights
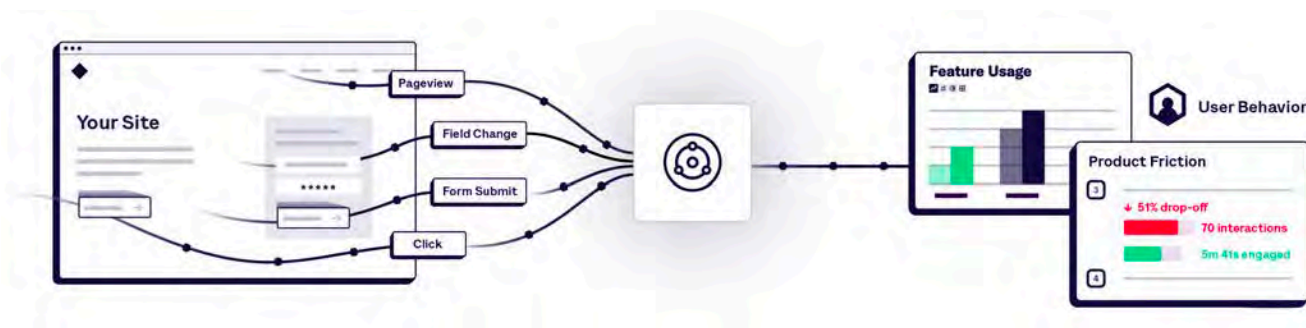
The key to success with digital analytics is to establish a cross-functional team that aligns people, process, and technology. This guide is intended to provide an overview of best practices for doing that, so you can effectively implement, maintain, and optimize digital analytics for your business needs.

People

A broad spectrum of product, marketing, engineering, customer success, and analytics professionals touch your digital analytics platform, since it serves as a central hub for digital insights. Digital analytics is useful for executives doing strategic business planning and front line managers who own development cycles and marketing campaigns.

To enable their work, it's important to understand the roles involved in implementing and supporting digital analytics across the organization. In this ebook, we will outline best practices for aligning your human capitalwith business and technology goals.

Your Team

It's important to identify the right people in your organization to implement and manage digital analytics. These individuals play a critical role in setting up digital analytics and scaling user behavioral data across your team.
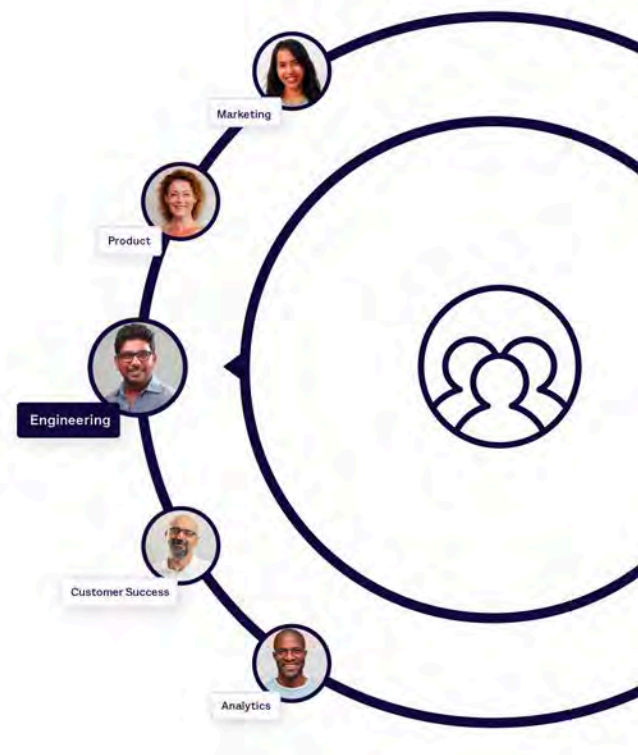
| Digital Analytics Role	How many?	What do they do in Digital Analytics?	Skills they need:	Typical title:
Project Manager	**1**	• Primary point of contact for Heap during implementation and onboarding. • Works cross-functionally within your organization to assist in rallying resources, keeping track of deadlines, and obtaining key information	• Project management • Communication	• Project Manager • Program Manager • Team Lead • Analytics Leader
Digital Analytics Administrator	**1-3**	• Manages permissions, adds new users, and sets up integrations • Responsible for keeping data clean and trustworthy	• Proficiency in HTML/CSS and front-end web development • Should have a close understanding of your digital property to ensure events are tracked and labeled in a way the team will easily grasp	• Front-End Engineer • Front-End Developer • Mobile Developer • Web Developer • Data Analytics Leader • Data Analyst • Product Manager
Digital Analytics Analyst	**Multiple**	• Publishes reports and dashboards for the wider organization to consume	• Must know your product/ application extremely well • Has business context of your implementation • Understands core analytics use cases	• Data Analyst • Product Manager • Marketer
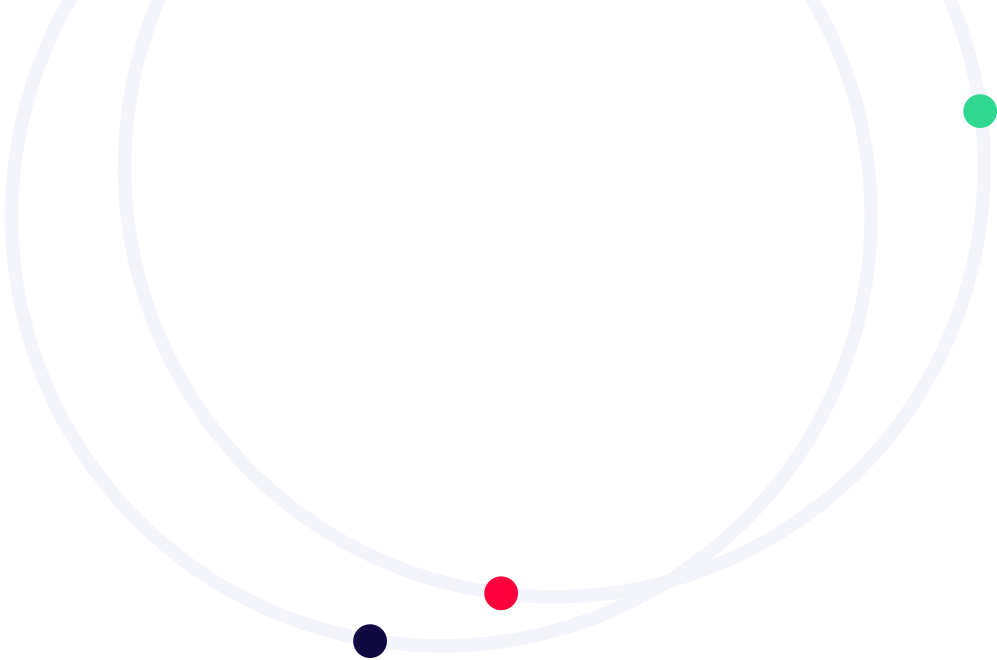
In addition to understanding roles needed to implement and maintain digital analytics, it's important to understand and enable the needs of business and technical staff across your organization. The table below outlines how key roles across product, marketing, engineering, and analytics use digital analytics.

Role	What They Do in Digital Analytics
Data Analytics Leader	**Digital Analytics Administrator** • Owns data enablement across the organization • May have a centralized, decentralized, or hybrid team • Owns the data systems of record for the organization, and advises on data solution and vendor selection • Is responsible for the overall resourcing and staffing for data infrastructure and analytics systems • Appoints the digital analytics admin in charge of taxonomy and event tracking (collaborates with product managers and marketers)
Data Analyst	**Digital Analytics Analyst/Administrator** • Performs strategic analyses for the executive team and line managers and can be part of a central analytics team or work in a decentralized hub/spoke model • Creates reports and dashboards in the digital analytics platform
Chief Product Officer **EVP Product** **Product Directors** **Chief Marketing Officer** **Marketing Directors**	**Digital Analytics Consumer (Executive)** • Uses digital analytics for strategic planning • Tracks quarterly and monthly business growth KPIs • Creates strategic roadmap • Develops matching resource plan
Product Managers **Digital Experience Mgrs** **CX Analysts** **e-Comm Merchandisers**	**Digital Analytics Consumer (Product or Digital Experience Team)** • Uses digital analytics to understand customer behavior at a granular level • Answers ad-hoc questions • Based on user behavioral insights, makes roadmap tradeoffs and prioritizations • Measures baseline performance of product features • Drives development cycles to improve and innovate • May leverage digital analytics data from a CDP, Data Warehouse, or BI tool, or through digital analytics integrations to customer engagement systems like Marketo and Iterable
Digital Marketers **Field Marketers** **Integrated Marketers** **Growth Marketers** **Campaign Managers** **Customer Success**	**Digital Analytics Consumer (Sales, Marketing, Success Teams)** • Uses digital analytics to identify customer cohorts based on what they do or don't do in the experience • Drives customized messaging and targeted offers based on user behavior • May leverage digital analytics data from a CDP, Data Warehouse, or BI tool, or through digital analytics integrations to customer engagement systems like Marketo and Iterable
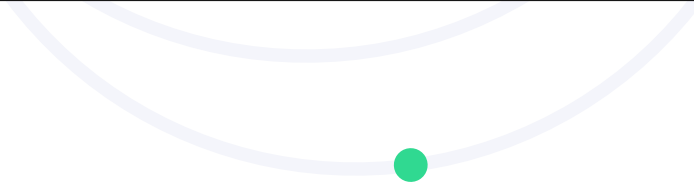
Your Organization

The structure of analytics teams that can support digital analytics may vary across organizations. Roles and responsibilities depend on whether you have a central or distributed analytics team. Three common org structures are presented below.

One of the most important decisions you can make when building your digital analytics practice are who you assign to the administrator role and what permissions you enable across the organization. Making sure the correct teams have access to the right projects, events, reports, etc., is both a practical organizational decision and an important security requirement that helps protect sensitive data.

Centralized Analytics Team and "Hub & Spoke"

Decentralized

1 **Centralized**
Centralized team owns data analytics for the company

2 **"Hub & Spoke"**
Central team and distributed data analysts share ownership

3 **Decentralized**
Creates data silos and can result in inefficiencies, but each team moves fast on their own analytics needs
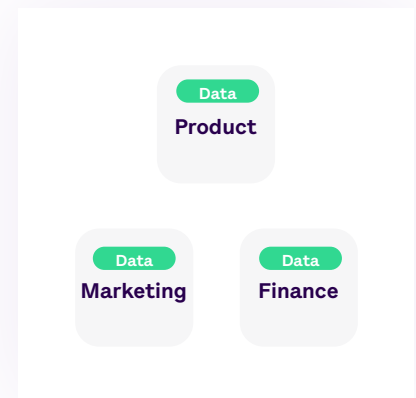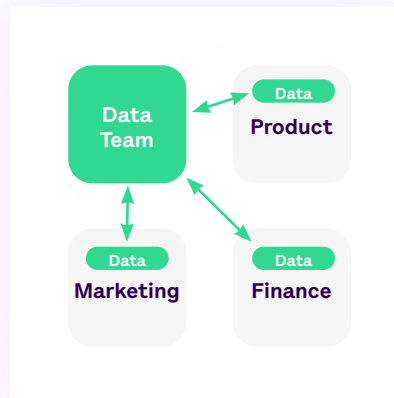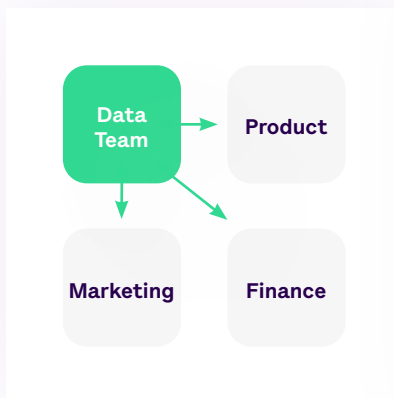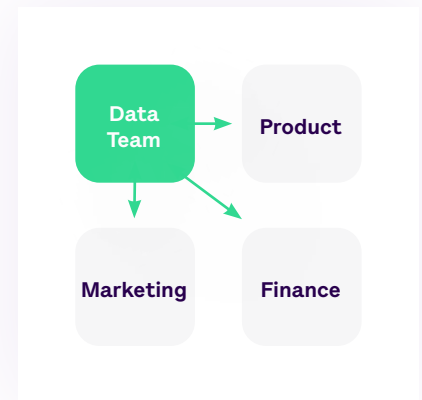
Centralized

Enterprise and larger mid-market companies generally tend to adopt a centralized approach to meet the data analytics needs of the organization. The central team owns the analytics technical stack, including all analytics applications and data warehouses. They collaborate with data engineers from either IT or a dedicated data infrastructure team who assist with data integrations.

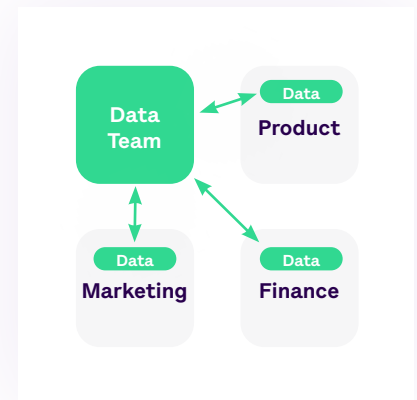## For organizations with a centralized analytics model, we recommend:

1. Appoint at least one digital analytics administrator in the central analytics team. They will provide oversight across digital analytics, other analytics applications, and all data infrastructure (including integrations) to ensure alignment.

2. The digital analytics administrator is accountable for the overall security and integrity of the digital analytics system, and will own permissions and access control.

3. The administrator is responsible for establishing a complete data foundation, including data collection, enrichment and data governance. A best practice is to ensure collaborate with front line digital owners to understand the design intent of the digital experience and what key questions must be addressed.

4. Appoint data analysts who are trained on your specific digital analytics platform and can take questions from digital experience owners. Data analysts will create reports and dashboards for consumption by the wider organization. Importantly, product managers and marketers, as well as designers and customer success managers should also be trained to do their own self-serve analysis.

5. Appoint Data Analysts who are trained on Heap and can take questions from digital owners. Data Analysts will create reports and dashboards for consumption by the wider organization.

Note: While the centralized approach for analytics provides the benefit of alignment across the organization, it also means that central data analysts typically answer many basic one-off questions, impeding more strategic work and slowing business velocity. Ideally, you should choose a digital analytics platform that pushes insights to the front line digital experience owner who is most involved with building and iterating the customer journey to give them the power of selfserve analytics. This improves business velocity and is good for the central analytics team because it frees them to focus on strategic analyses. It is good for digital owners because they can act quickly. We recommend organizations consider a version of the "Hub and Spoke" model presented below.

"Hub and Spoke"

Many organizations adopt a "Hub and Spoke" model to meet the analytics needs of their internal stakeholders. This allows for central oversight across the organization in data infrastructure and data analytics investments, while also empowering individual business functions like product management, marketing, finance, and more to move fast with their own data analysts. This model provides the benefits of both moving fast and ensuring that people, process, and technology are in alignment across the organization. The goal is to put the analytics next to the decision maker to accelerate growth, but this arrangement also requires the digital analytics administrator to be proactive and ensure a clean and trusted dataset with good governance practices.

In a "Hub and Spoke" model, the centralized "hub" provides oversight and alignment across the various analytics applications in the organization while the front line digital owners in the "spokes" who are closest to the design intent are empowered with self-serve analytics.

We recommend:

1. Appoint at least one digital analytics administrator in the centralized "hub". These individuals should provide oversight across digital analytics, other analytics applications, and data infrastructure (including integrations). The appointed admin should align their oversight to the event tracking practices owned by the "spokes" and serve as backup to the admins in the "spokes". The hub makes sure event tracking follows the same structure in each spoke.

2. The hub team is accountable for ensuring the security and integrity of the digital analytics platform, and should grant final approval on permissions and access control.

3. Appoint at least one admin to each spoke team. These individuals will own data governance and event tracking in the digital analytics platform. They collaborate with the centralized hub to ensure that all events are tracked and integrations configured

Decentralized

A completely decentralized data analytics team allows individual business functions to move quickly on their analytics needs, so they can answer their own questions quickly and apply those insights to accelerate growth, but the downside is the risk of data silos, and conflicting datasets that lead to a lack of data trust in the organization. This is a model not typically seen in large enterprises or bigger mid-market companies, but is more typical of a bottomsup approach in startups and small businesses that need to take action quickly. At some point, decentralized analytics creates enough friction as an organization gets to scale that a centralized or hub and spoke model is chosen.
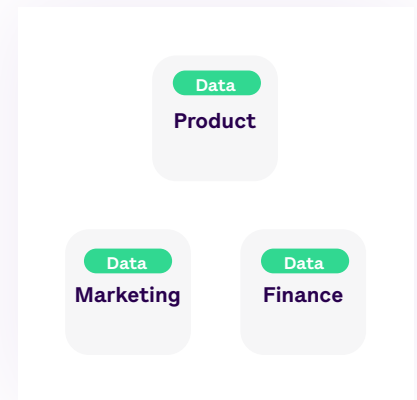
We recommend:

1. The digital analytics administrator should own the security and access control to the digital analytics system and will also own data governance and event tracking.

2. Train multiple product managers and marketers as data analysts so they can serve themselves with the insights they need toiterate and improve the digital experience.
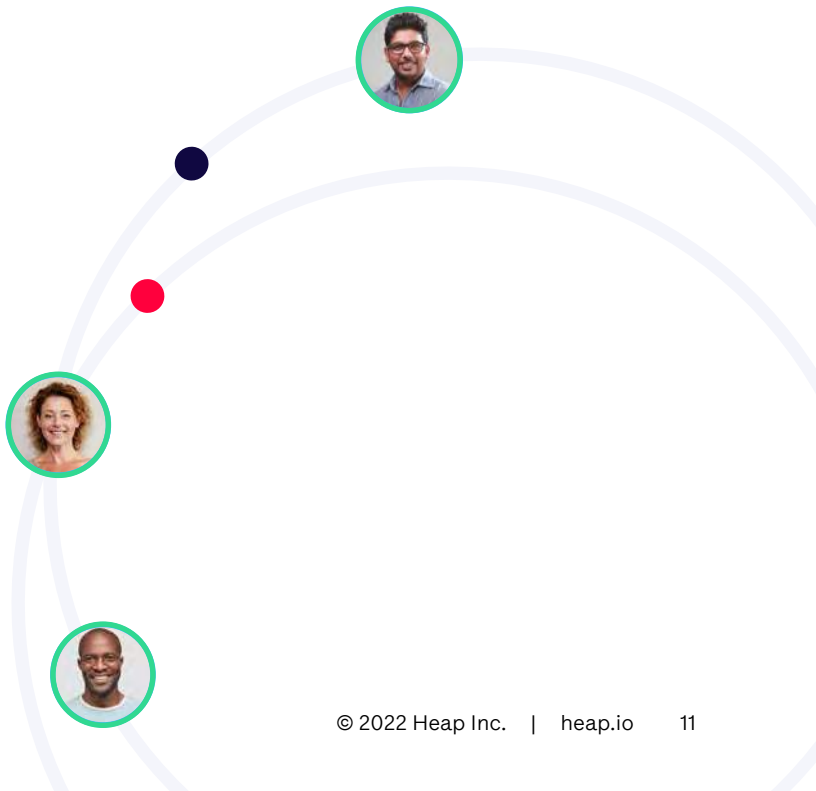
Process & Technology

Build a Complete Data Foundation

The initial setup of your digital analytics platform is crucial for ensuring long term success. An "event" captures a user's interaction with a digital property at the most granular level possible. An event might be viewing a page, clicking a button, filling out a form, or more. Making sure you collect all the event data you need in your digital analytics platform is essential to unlocking deep insights from your customers' behavior, and will allow your team to extract value from your investment right away.

To build a complete data foundation for trusted analytics, you should leverage:

- Automated event tracking for 80 to 90% of events
- Manual tracking for the remainder, such as client-side/server-side events, user properties, and account properties
- Your vendor's SDK for Mobile events (e.g. iOS, Android, React Native)
- Integrations for dataset enrichment that add business context (e.g. from Salesforce, Marketo, Shopify, and more)

Build a Complete Data Foundation for Insights You Can Trust

Most large organizations have designated administrators, often selected at implementation kickoff. We recommend you choose people that have close familiarity with the product experience who have the ability to manage the initial technical implementation, and manage ongoing data governance to keep your data foundation clean and trustworthy. Being close to how the product and customer experience was designed and intended to land with the target audience helps admins ensure that your event naming schema reflects the intention of product managers, designers, and engineers who build the experience. Someone in the administrator role can expect to spend about 15% to 20% of their time on managing the digital analytics platform, and in large enterprise organizations a dedicated FTE may be required. Oftentimes, these individuals serve a dual purpose as an analyst in addition to administrator.

Hybrid Events Capture Strategy

1. Autocapture
- Automatically capture all client-side event data with just a simple code snippet
- Track every **Click, Pageview, Tap, Form Submit, Field Change**

2. Manual Events Tracking
- Server Side Events
- Custom Events

3. Integrations
- Enrich your user profile with event data from applications across your tech stack
- Build a full picture of your user behavior with our APIs
- Add custom events as your business changes and tie backend data to the frontend experience
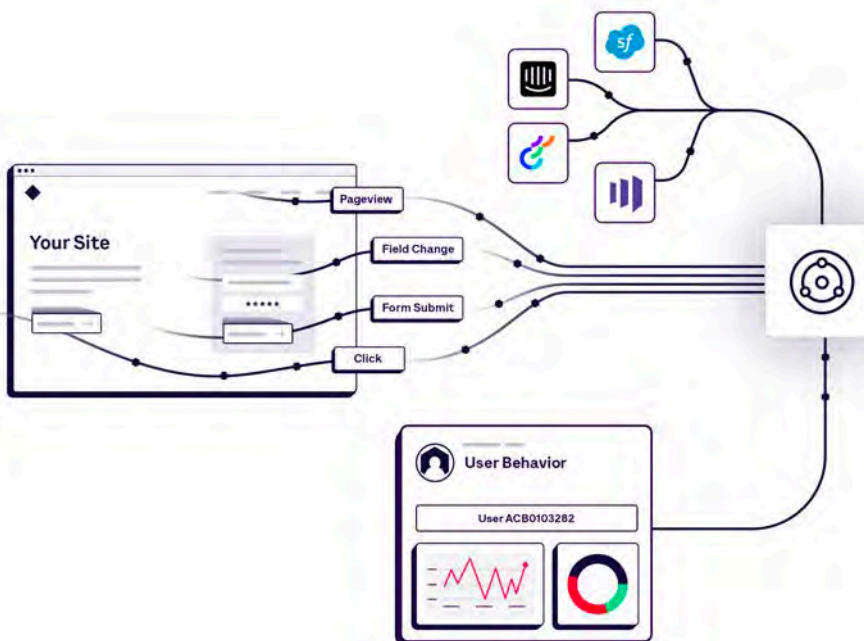
Governance: Provide a Clean and Trusted Dataset

In the new era of streaming data pipelines and massive behavioral datasets, establishing a complete data foundation to understand the customer journey is fundamental. Many digital analytics solutions, however, were built for an earlier time and offer only a manual event tracking approach that can be hard to govern. Today's analysts need a hybrid approach that marries automated tracking with the flexibility of precision (manual) tracking to get all the data, not a partial dataset. In today's digital world the behavioral dataset is generally many times larger than what was needed in previous times. There is a lot of value in that data that could lead to breakthrough improvements. Governing that much data at scale, however, is critical and we recommend a solution that automates the data governance process. Manual tracking alone leads to data gaps and missed opportunities.
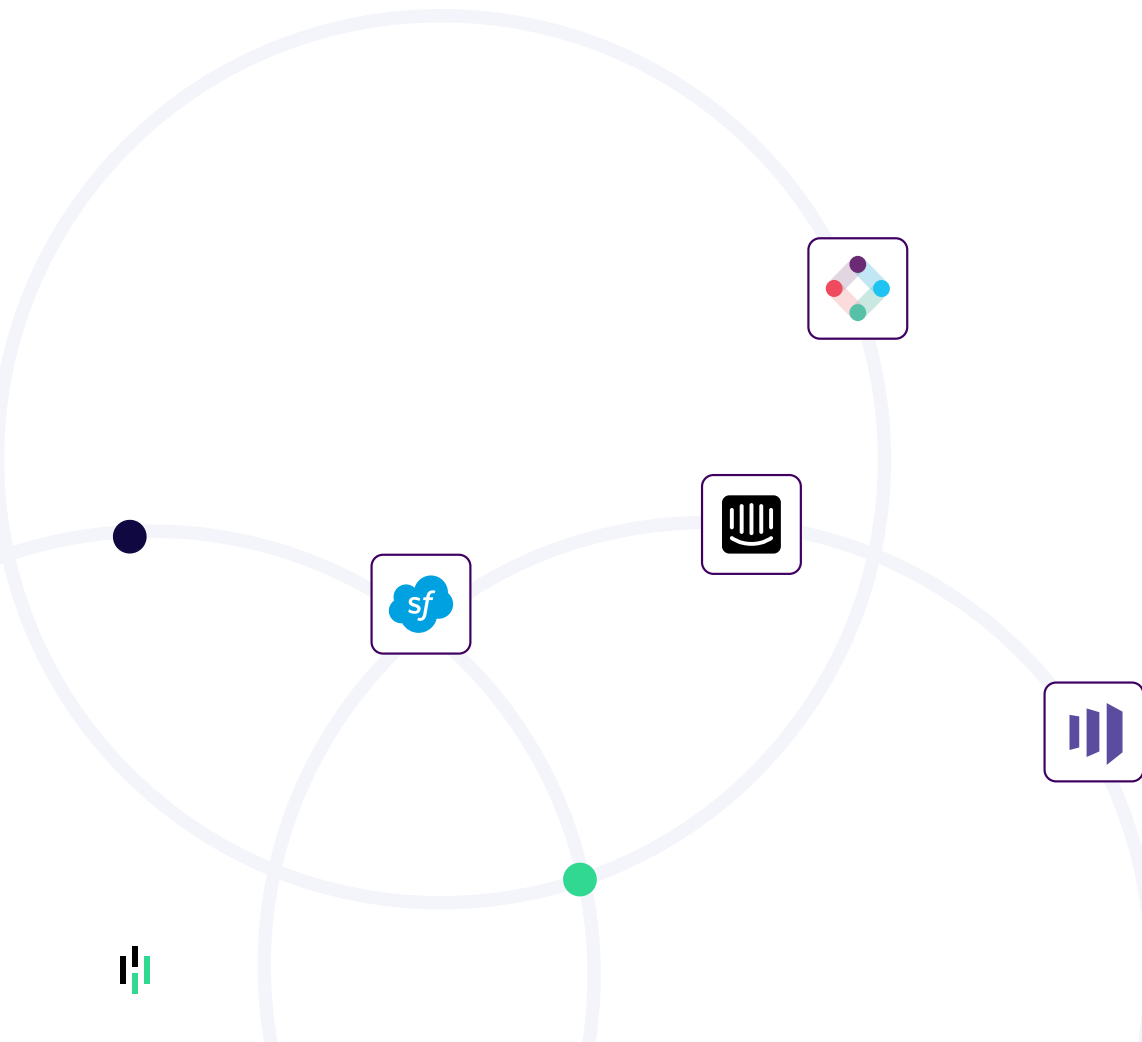
Conclusion & Best Practices

Digital Analytics is essential for businesses that want to leverage user behavioral data to really understand the customera journey. Ideally, the platform you choose offers a full and complete data foundation with predictive insights to get you to customer understanding faster. Digital Analytics can be used to align digital owners across several teams towards the goal of building the best experience for the customer. Across roles, from engineering, product, and design to marketing and customer success, Digital Analytics insights tell you where to invest and how to reduce friction on the digital surface, which is the new battleground for companies of the 21st century. As the digital revolution continues to transform life as we know it, having a Digital Analytics Center of Excellence in your organization ensures you are prepared to act on digital insights.

Best Practice Summary

Best Practice #1:

Appoint Digital Analytics Administrators and Architects

☐ Understand your current state and fit digital analytics into the org model for your organization (centralized, hub-and-spoke, or decentralized). Appoint a digital analytics administrator who has familiarity with your product experience and who will own data governance to ensure a complete and trustworthy dataset that meets cross-functional needs. Highly recommend individuals with HTML/CSS skills.

Best Practice #2:

Hybrid Tracking Strategy

☐ Define which digital properties you will need to set up event tracking on. Your digital analytics solution should support most modern web and mobile frameworks (iOS, Android, React Native).

Best Practice #3:

Set Your Integration Strategy

☐ Take a look at the integrations offered by your digital analytics platform and align on which application data you will need to integrate for greater business context.

Best Practice #4:

Data Enrichment

☐ We recommend building your dataset enrichment plan around the User Model, Client-Side Events, and Server Side Events to ensure full data completeness. Ask questions like which user data do we need to track? Do we need to add any custom events? Which server-side events do we want to monitor with our solution? Internally review the properties you want to attach to your users and events and create a tracking execution plan to ensure all your data gets correctly attributed in the digital analytics data model.

Best Practice #5:

Data Governance Planning & Maintenance

☐ Establish a planning session with your team to identify the most important elements you wish to track and review these items independently once a quarter.

Best Practice #6:

Executive Dashboards

☐ Develop executive dashboards in digital analytics that make it easy for everyone to align on top KPIs

☐ Identify the top 5 behavioral metrics that accelerate revenue growth or contribute to retention of users, accounts, or customers

☐ Share your digital analytics dashboards during planning cycles.