

A photograph of two people, a woman with curly hair and a man, looking down at a screen or document. The image is overlaid with a teal and blue gradient. The woman is on the left, wearing a striped shirt, and the man is on the right, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt. They appear to be in a collaborative work environment.

# How the best people analytics unlock more Good Days at Work

Making **sense** of the numbers



POWERED BY

robertsoncooper

## Introduction.

### If you could directly influence any outcome for your organisation, what would you pick?

Would you increase workforce **productivity, engagement or diversity**? Boost employees' **job satisfaction, wellbeing or advocacy**? Or cut staff **turnover or burnout**?

Whatever goal you're pursuing, data about people is increasingly helping businesses achieve their objectives. But while there's now an overwhelming volume of facts and figures available if you want them, harvesting raw data alone isn't enough to create *meaningful* improvements.

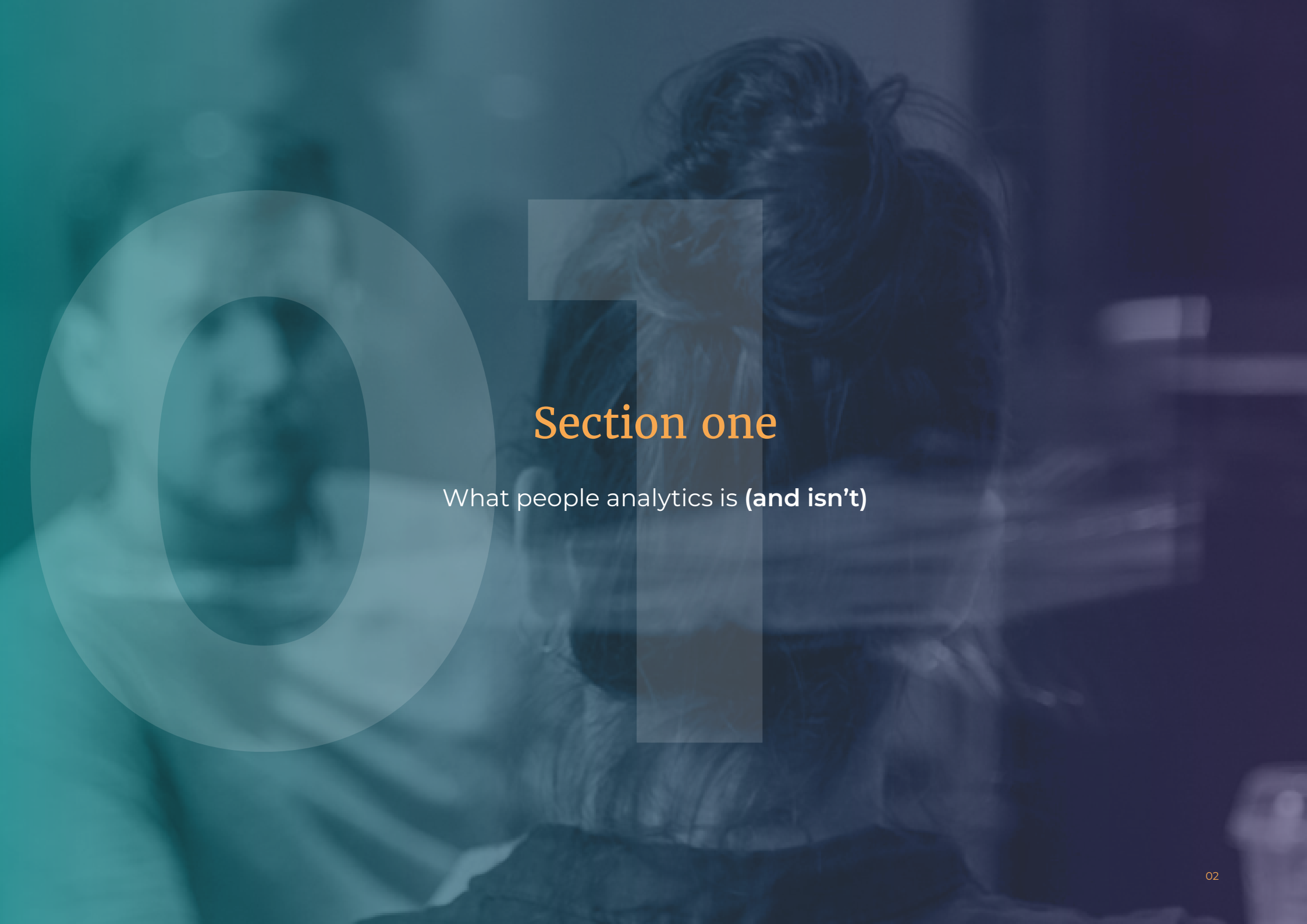
#### ► How do you make sense of the numbers?

It might sound obvious, but the answer starts with being clear about what it is, *exactly*, that you want to know and improve before you start trying to make changes.

#### **The answer can't be 'everything'!**

Once you've established what you want to track, there are many ways in which to gain insights about your workforce. You may even find that you're already collecting data that could help you understand what's driving the specific outcomes you want to address.

**But does your existing data give you the full picture?** Is it definitive - and meaningful - enough to help you confidently make decisions and define actions that will shift the dial towards your desired outcome? Is your data organised and connected via a framework that enables good decision-making or is it siloed and fragmented? In short, are you embracing the full potential of people analytics?



# 01

## Section one

What people analytics is **(and isn't)**



“gathering and  
analysing data about  
people in a workforce.”

-CIPD

## Section one: What people analytics is (and isn't)

---

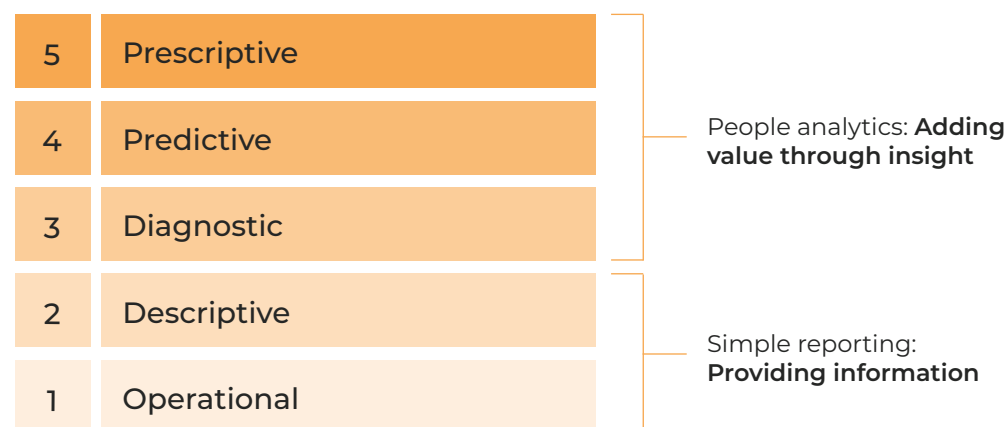
The [CIPD defines people analytics](#) as, “gathering and analysing data about people in a workforce.” But at Robertson Cooper we'd extend that definition a bit further. **For us, people analytics is data with a purpose.** The aim is not just to collect information for reference or corporate slide decks, but to drive progression towards desired business and personal outcomes. It's about producing genuine value, whether that's for the organisation, individual employees, teams, Finance Directors or investors.

And that's what differentiates *people analytics* from simple *reporting*. Organisations have been reporting on their people data for decades. It's usually process-driven and purely descriptive, limited to providing a snapshot of the workforce at one (immediately historic) moment in time. Reporting is incredibly useful for revealing past trends, but it seldom offers any significant commentary on the future. Whereas analytics, done well, can provide leaders with a wealth of meaningful insights - and predictions - upon which to act.

The division between reporting and analytics isn't necessarily binary though. Most organisations sit somewhere on a continuum stretching from one approach to the other, with five different categories of data usage. Take a look at the graphic overleaf. **Where do you think your organisation sits right now? Where would you like it to be?**

Where are you  
right now?

## Five levels of data usage and analytics



Source: [www.workforcedimensions.co.uk](http://www.workforcedimensions.co.uk)

**Operational:** raw, unstructured data, typically presented in the form of a list

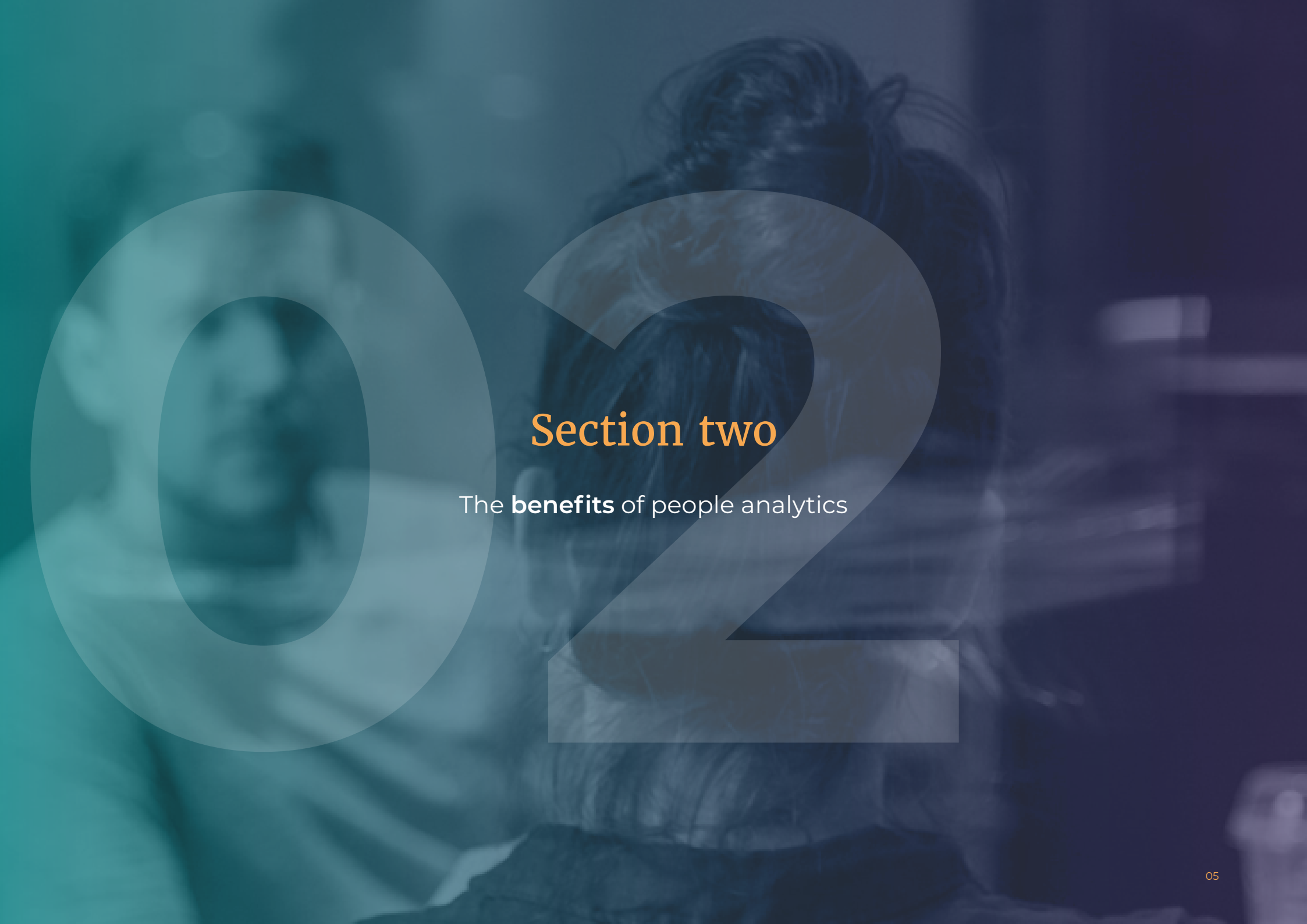
**Descriptive:** typically presented in tabular or graphical form, it may provide a snapshot of the workforce's composition or track a critical metric over time (*'What happened?'*)

**Diagnostic:** typically the output from a piece of root-cause analysis, the purpose of which was to determine why something has happened (*'Why did it happen?'*)

**Predictive:** typically taking the output from diagnostic analysis, integrating other environmental factors, and projecting the future direction of critical metrics or KPIs (*'What will happen?'*)

**Prescriptive:** working with stakeholders to determine intervention strategies that will minimise risk or maximise opportunity; and measuring the success of these plans (*'How can we make it happen?'*)

Source: [www.cipd.co.uk](http://www.cipd.co.uk)



## Section two

The **benefits** of people analytics

## Section two: The benefits of people analytics

---

The boom in big data has affected practically every aspect of our society, from marketing to healthcare and banking to professional sport. HR functions aren't missing out on the opportunity either, with an ever-growing number of specialist data analyst roles being created in corporate People teams.

As we noted earlier, whatever objective you're looking to pursue, establishing a data-driven culture can help you achieve it: in fact, according to a [survey by Deloitte](#), the organisations most geared towards harnessing data insights for their decision-making are **twice as likely** to significantly exceed their business goals. Those goals can be many and varied but almost always result in positive financial outcomes.

When it works best, an employer draws on an organising framework to help them plan, collect and make sense of their data. For example, Robertson Cooper's **Good Day at Work framework** is a way to encompass many people related performance benefits; create more Good Days at Work and you will get better performance at several different levels.

The research that underpins our framework has demonstrated that **one extra** Good Day at Work delivers:



A 9% increase in  
**productivity**



A 10% increase in  
**advocacy** for your  
organisation



An 11% increase in  
**job satisfaction**



A 12% reduction in the  
**intention to leave**



Six fewer days of  
**presenteeism** per year



Five fewer days of  
**sickness absence** per  
year

What is an actionable insight?

When data enables conclusions that can be turned directly into an action or a response, you have an 'actionable insight'

The research shows that the **benefits of creating Good Days at Work** for your workforce amount to far more than just a nice-to-have for individual employees. As a result, employers trust the framework, such that they are happy to use it to help them process and interpret *all* of their health and wellbeing data.

People analytics organised around a framework of this kind helps you **connect your people to your business outcomes** which, in turn, lets your leaders make informed decisions about where to direct efforts to make the biggest difference, both in terms of HR strategy and broader business objectives. It doesn't have to be this one, but some sort of framework is invariably required to get the most out of people analytics.

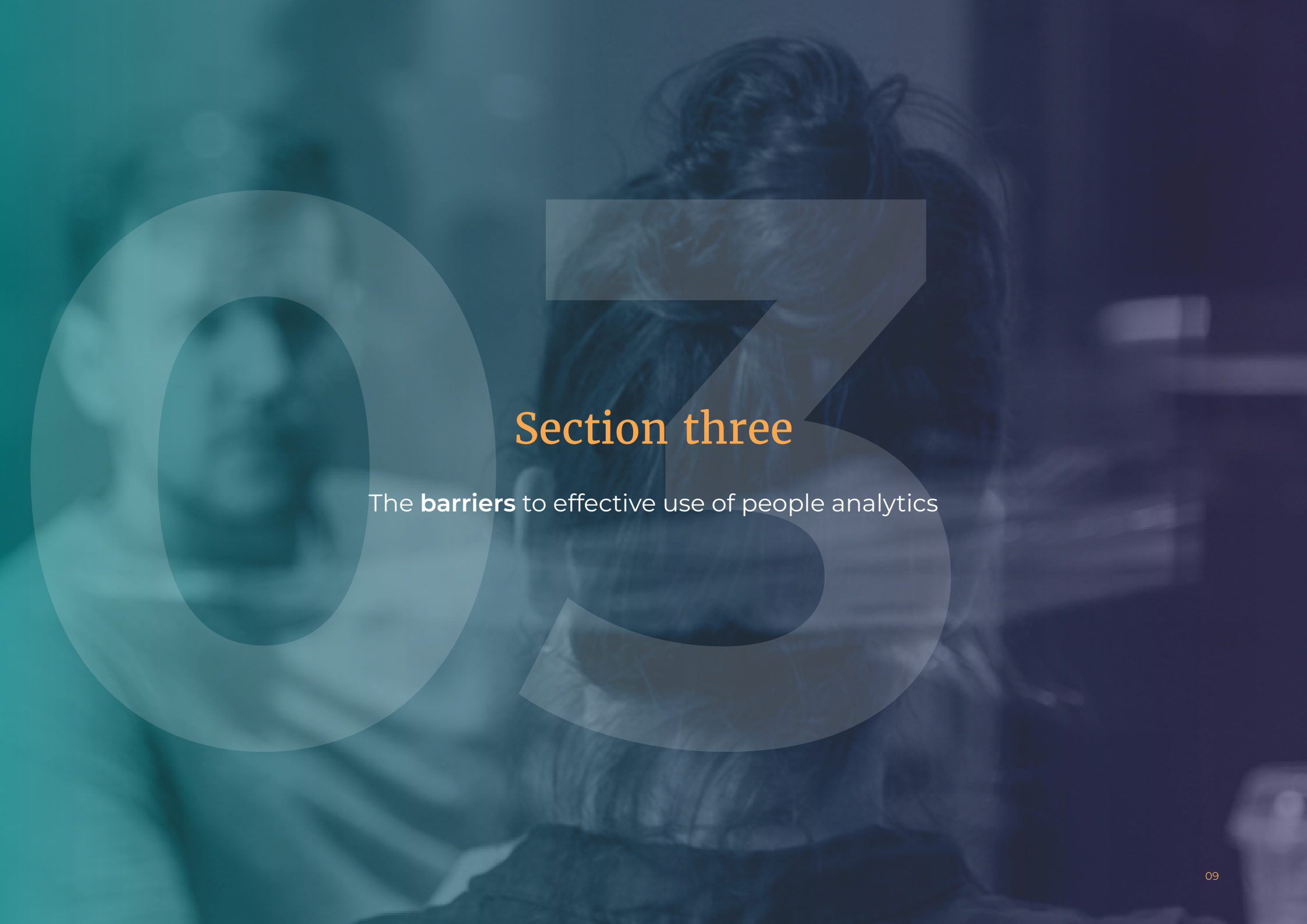
By creating a culture of evidence-based decision-making grounded in a vast library of easily accessible data that you can filter and slice depending on your needs, you're also empowering people throughout the organisation to make less emotive decisions. This leads to decisions and actions that are objectively the right thing to do.

► **Ultimately, this is about creating actionable insights.**

Often, as part of a survey we are presented with a score, for example, an Engagement score which measures the degree to which employees feel valued by your company. This score may give you an understanding and feel of the culture, but it doesn't tell you anything about what to do *next*.

Why the score 'is what it is' remains veiled, and therefore it is not obvious what to do next or which levers to pull to make change happen. *This* is why, not all surveys offer actionable insights.

Conversely, when your data is part of a proven framework which traces scores back to 'the why', you are able to understand exactly what actions you can take to shift the status quo. **To determine whether your data offers truly actionable insight, ask yourself whether it is obvious what to do next.**



## Section three

The **barriers** to effective use of people analytics

## Section three: The barriers to effective use of people analytics

---

Of course, there's always a caveat. Despite the sizeable, tangible benefits on offer, organisations often find it difficult to implement a high quality people analytics approach. Indeed, while the number of corporate data analysts has increased substantially over the last decade or so, only a minority of companies today consider themselves truly insight driven.

Deloitte notes that even with the evident advantages that people analytics brings to decision-making, action and improvement, **63% of companies are aware of the concept but are still working in silos of dispersed data.** This means they are not fully embracing the potential of an integrated people data approach.

In general, that inability to establish an 'analytics culture' isn't due to a lack of willingness on the part of leadership teams. Instead, it more often reflects limited skills and confidence when it comes to embedding the discipline. This failure to capitalise on the available benefits can manifest itself in several different ways.

To be specific:

**01**  
Low internal awareness and acceptance of people analytics

**02**  
Lack of clear ownership of people analytics as a discipline

**03**  
Lack of capability / capacity in people analytics

**04**  
An overreliance on technology solutions, such as AI and apps, rather than gaining genuine insight from expert knowledge

**05**  
Difficulty in establishing appropriate metrics to articulate the ROI of insight-driven responses to key business challenges

**06**  
The lack of a validated framework to test theories that could influence productivity, behaviour, people and organisations - or increase the number of Good Days at Work

► **Overcoming these barriers is vital if you're to get full value from people analytics.** Understanding how to work through them begins with assessing where your organisation is and what you want data insights to help you achieve.



## Section four

Good Day at Work – a true people analytics approach

## Section four: Good Day at Work – a true people analytics approach

---

Think about the question we asked you at the end of Section One. **Where did you conclude your organisation currently sits on the reporting and analytics continuum, and where would you like it to be?**

If you don't know how to answer, a good place to start is by taking stock of your existing data collection. What information and records do you currently hold about your people? Do you undertake any regular workforce reporting that delivers real value, and if so, does it offer the potential to minimise risks or maximise opportunities? What data do you collect that is less valuable? Is that because it inherently lacks value or perhaps because of what the organisation does with the information?

**Data is also vital for tracking your progress** – if you're not measuring anything, it's almost impossible to understand what's getting better or worse or which interventions make a genuine difference.

The focus on creating more Good Days at Work in a people analytics context was borne out of this dilemma. Clients wrestling with the problem we have outlined above have found that this way of framing the problem invariably helps get the most out of people analytics and drive the outcomes they want. **The Good Day at Work concept is the product of decades of research** by some of the most pioneering academic minds in the field, including our Founding Directors **Professors Ivan Robertson and Sir Cary Cooper** – so we know it works. It's grounded in innovative data manipulation and expert, human analysis.



To help you understand the elements of a proven framework, **we outline our approach below:**

### Diagnostic

Help to understand the root cause of multiple business level performance metrics such as attrition, productivity and advocacy for your organisation

### Predictive

Insights that offer predictions of future performance, giving you the opportunity to be proactive and take the right actions

### Prescriptive

Clear outputs enable you to intervene strategically to make the most of opportunities, reduce possible risks and measure your progress

### Personalised

To empower change at both the organisational and employee level

► A joined up, integrated approach like this cuts through the noise, combining a valuable new suite of people data based on metrics you already have – such as those for **engagement, attrition, absence, equality, diversity and inclusion** – plus new **health and wellbeing data** we can help you to collect. When you have a wealth of data and expertise at your disposal, you can work towards effective and practical **insight-driven action for individuals, teams, managers and leaders.**



# 5

## Section five

People analytics in **action**

## Section five: People analytics in action

As we've discussed, having an organising framework that makes sense of your data and enables actions is key to getting the full potential out of people analytics. The Good Day at Work model is a good example of such a framework and has become a proven driver of people strategies that has helped numerous businesses answer big questions. **It has been key to getting health, wellbeing and productivity right in large employer organisations over the past two decades.**

The **client story** overleaf is presented to show how a framework of this kind can enable the full potential of people analytics to be released to create real, tangible benefits for the organisation and its employees.

The client, a large multi-national construction business, could see signs of poor mental health in the employee population through their attrition and absence rates and wanted to **understand what they could do differently to ensure that, as an employer, they were minimising risk while supporting good wellbeing and performance in the work environment.** At the same time, attracting new talent was a significant challenge affecting the wider industry and therefore of strategic importance to the client. **The client goal was to set the culture for high levels of employee wellbeing that would help enhance their Employer Brand.**

## Client story

Here is how using the Good Day at Work approach to frame their People Analytics efforts supported a new strategic direction...

### Level 1: Descriptive What was happening?

—

- **Attrition** levels were high, especially for people in the first 1-6 months of their job
- **Absence** due to mental health / stress was on the rise
- **Talent attraction** was a major challenge

### Level 2: Diagnostic Why was it happening?

—

Armed with data from their first **Good Day at Work Wellbeing Survey**, the client was able to understand *why* the levels of health and wellbeing were as they were. At the same time, they could also start to uncover **what was driving both employee wellbeing and business level outcome measures such as intention to leave, absence and also safety outcomes.**

Their first survey identified a number of drivers of both health and wellbeing and the key business level outcomes of attrition and advocacy.

**The specifics underpinning these findings included:**

- People weren't talking about wellbeing, **but** the data showed those that did were at significantly reduced risk of burning out
- The sedentary nature of many roles, combined with high levels of fatigue within the business, was driving lower levels of mental and physical health
- The relationships people had at work and their sense of job security were the two most important drivers of attrition

With these insights in hand, Robertson Cooper supported the client to set up the next stage of the people analytics journey.



## Level 3: Predictive What will happen?

---

We were able to profile the workforce and understand the extent of the issues, and what was likely to happen next, if no action was taken. It was immediately clear that there were hotspot areas in the business, meaning that it was not a consistent story across the board.

It also became evident that there was a strong relationship between the number of Good Days at Work experienced and intention to leave. The chance of an employee leaving was **four times higher** if he/she was in the bottom 20% for wellbeing compared to the top 20% when it came to Good Days. **Bottom line: the attrition they were experiencing was predictable!**

At the same time, the data told us that the hotspot areas were twice as likely to have attrition levels in the worst 25% compared to non-hotspot areas - naturally those hotspot areas became the focus.

These were the areas where people were going to leave, and, working with the client, we had identified the key drivers for the attrition. These were the relationships that people had in the workplace and

the way in which change was managed. It was this level of detailed insights that enabled truly actionable insights for the client; in the identified hotspot areas: it was clear that unless action was taken on work relationships and the connections that people have, and also how change was managed, that attrition would not improve but actually worsen.



## Level 4: Prescriptive What needs to happen?

—

Armed with the actionable insights of what was driving the attrition in high risk areas and the extent of the issue, it was clear that taking action to improve the work environment was vital to decrease the number of people in the 'vulnerable to leaving' groups.

**As a direct result of the data collected and how it was presented back to them**, the organisation took strategic action on the wellbeing drivers that were directly affecting attrition, and the number of Good Days at Work employees were experiencing:

- **The organisation set out a new strategic direction, commitment and intention around workplace wellbeing to underpin and reinforce the actions to be implemented in the hotspot areas.** This included prioritising wellbeing in their overall 5-Year Business Strategy with specific KPI's around creating more Good Days at Work and senior leader sponsors for the refreshed wellbeing approach.
- The Senior Leadership team committed to a **new communications policy around change**, ensuring information was cascaded effectively, in a timely fashion and with integrity.
- An initiative backed by a behavioural framework for teams and individual employees with an emphasis on improving work relationships was introduced.
- KPI's for managers were set to drive **making wellbeing conversations the norm** for all employees across the whole global organisation.
- They continued to measure health and wellbeing annually – putting **personal reports** in each employee's hands each year to provide personal feedback on their health, wellbeing and resilience. This was backed up by support and ensured the continuing collection of big data. **That is, big data made personal.**



## Where did this take the business?

—

With this purposeful and data-led action, the organisation monitored their progress over the period of three years and saw the following improvements:

01  
Increase in the number  
of **Good Days at Work**  
by 21%

02  
Increase in the number of  
people having **wellbeing**  
**conversations with their**  
**managers** by 7%

03  
Clear **reduction in the**  
**number of hotspot areas**  
and the total number of  
people in a hotspot area

04  
The teams who engaged  
with the team initiative  
saw a **+16 point rise in**  
**their scores on positive**  
**work relationships** and  
**+14 point rise in their**  
**scores on psychological**  
**health**

A photograph of two women smiling and looking at each other in an office environment. The woman on the left has dark hair tied in a bun and is wearing a plaid shirt. The woman on the right has curly hair and is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt over a dark turtleneck. The image is overlaid with a teal-to-purple gradient.

## Let's talk

Ready to reap the **commercial rewards** of using people analytics to unlock more Good Days at Work? Not sure where to start? **Get in touch** with our team of experienced Business Psychologists and Analysts for friendly advice about how to benefit from a data-driven culture: [hi@robertsoncooper.com](mailto:hi@robertsoncooper.com)



POWERED BY

robertsoncooper