

RESEARCH REPORT HIGHLIGHT

Caterpillar Tailors Analytics Strategies to Business Unit Needs



Morgan Vawter,
chief analytics director,
Caterpillar

To build a culture of data-driven decision-making and innovation, Caterpillar's analytics group works closely with business unit leaders throughout the \$45 billion company. This helps ensure that analytics supports business needs and wins executive support.

Morgan Vawter, chief analytics director at the company, says her team sits down with the leaders of units to tailor strategies to fit the needs of each. "It's making sure that, because we have a very diverse business, we don't just have an analytics strategy for the company — we have analytics strategies that enable the business unit strategies," Vawter says. "Also, that's useful because it gets that executive buy-in. They become advocates for it, and that cascades down and really creates a level of ownership in the business unit for using analytics to enable business success."

Caterpillar serves industry segments including energy, transportation, construction, and mining, and has a unit for customer and dealer support. Ensuring that each group has its own analytics strategy enables Vawter's organization to tailor analytics projects to maximize value for each unit — and to fit its analytics maturity level.

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“We have to make sure that we're not skipping key parts of the journey,” Vawter explains. “You can't just skip descriptive analytics, building dashboards, understanding data, and jump right to predictive and prescriptive analytics. We want to make sure that we're helping them to understand their data at the foundation and then advance them up the maturity curve.”

With an overarching approach that provides a global view of all the company's efforts, Caterpillar can take successful projects and apply them throughout the company. Previously, analytics excellence may have sprung up in pockets with efforts such as supply chain analytics or marketing analytics, but those tools may not have then been applied through the business unit. “Our analytics road maps have really showed the power of, ‘Hey, if I'm doing analytics here, it impacts this and it impacts the entire value chain.’ And so we've seen a lot of scaled analytics as a result of having those strategies,” Vawter says.

Download the full 2019 custom research report, “Data, Analytics, and AI: How Trust Delivers Value,” at www.sas.com/research

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