

# CRITICAL THINKING STUDY

## Personal Report

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a collaboration between



&

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CAMBRIDGE

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THINKING WITH A POINT

Critical Thinking is Active. Rigorous. Creative. It Produces  
Solutions and Improves Results.

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# HOW CRITICAL THINKING WORKS

Critical thinking [CT] skills are the habits of mind that prepare individuals for the 21st century workplace by improving performance and boosting emotional resilience. Research by the University of Cambridge shows CT is made up of six distinct elements, which can be split into two groups.

## CRITICAL THINKING: FOUNDATION SKILLS

Foundation skills are used to identify and explore problems. They are widely taught in schools. Because of this, participants in the Macat/Cambridge study score more highly across foundation skills than they do on applied skills.



### TIP:

Weak foundation skills lead to failure to grasp problems and find the best solutions. Teams with high proportions of staff in this band are less productive and make more costly mistakes.

## CRITICAL THINKING: APPLIED SKILLS

Applied skills are used to produce solutions to the problems that foundation skills explore. They are the core components of effective leadership and successful strategic decision-making – making them vital assets in the modern world. But due to a scarcity of formal teaching, they are rarely developed to their full extent.



### TIP:

The applied skills impact most strongly on planning, big projects and big interviews. Weakness here can critically undermine an individual's long-term competitiveness.



### ANALYSIS

Assessing information and breaking it down into its component parts



### EVALUATION

Determining the strengths and weaknesses of a proposal



### INTERPRETATION

Decoding the meaning and significance of evidence



### PROBLEM-SOLVING

Developing a strategy, finding solutions



### CREATIVE THINKING

Finding new and often unexpected solutions to complex problems



### REASONING

Creating strong, persuasive cases and proposals

# YOUR TOPLINE RESULTS

## EVGENY VOLKOV

TOP

10%

**You are among the top 10% of all employees who participated in the critical thinking study.**

- You rank in the 94th percentile
- This means that you outperformed 93% of all participating employees - but that 6% outperformed you.

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**Understanding percentile ranks**

For example, having a result in the 75th percentile means that your score is the same as or higher than 75% of participants. However, it also shows that more than 25% of participants outperformed you.

## YOUR SKILLS SUMMARY

FOUNDATION SKILLS	APPLIED SKILLS
<div style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center; font-size: 2em; margin-bottom: 5px;">A</div> <p><b>ANALYSIS</b></p> <p>You're strong at understanding how proposals and cases are built – and where their weak spots are.</p> <div style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 5px;">STRONG</div>	<div style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center; font-size: 2em; margin-bottom: 5px;">P</div> <p><b>PROBLEM-SOLVING</b></p> <p>You have strong problem-solving skills. You ask the right questions, come up with alternative solutions – and usually make the right decisions.</p> <div style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 5px;">STRONG</div>
<div style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center; font-size: 2em; margin-bottom: 5px;">E</div> <p><b>EVALUATION</b></p> <p>Your grasp of the strengths and relevance of a proposal or presentation is excellent. You generally draw the right conclusions.</p> <div style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 5px;">STRONG</div>	<div style="background-color: #8e9e40; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center; font-size: 2em; margin-bottom: 5px;">C</div> <p><b>CREATIVE THINKING</b></p> <p>You are capable of coming up with creative insights and new interpretations of problems and evidence – but you could do this more consistently.</p> <div style="background-color: #8e9e40; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 5px;">AVERAGE</div>
<div style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center; font-size: 2em; margin-bottom: 5px;">I</div> <p><b>INTERPRETATION</b></p> <p>You're good at understanding what the evidence before you means. You don't take what you're told for granted.</p> <div style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 5px;">STRONG</div>	<div style="background-color: #8e9e40; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center; font-size: 2em; margin-bottom: 5px;">R</div> <p><b>REASONING</b></p> <p>You build broadly well-constructed cases and proposals. They would be more persuasive if they were better argued and better supported.</p> <div style="background-color: #8e9e40; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 5px;">AVERAGE</div>

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR RESULTS

To fully understand the impact and implications of your performance, we recommend that you review all the pages of this report.

# DISTINGUISH BETWEEN STRONG AND WEAK CT



## STRONG CRITICAL THINKERS:

- Think for themselves
- Question themselves
- Consider all possibilities
- See new solutions
- Have original ideas

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### PROMOTING STRONG CRITICAL THINKING MAKES IT EASIER TO:

- Grasp new concepts
- Plan and write effectively
- Improve efficiency
- Spot weak arguments
- Come up with new explanations



## WEAK CRITICAL THINKERS:

- Let managers and experts think for them
- Only question others
- Consider what's convenient
- See only the obvious
- Copy other people's ideas

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### ACCEPTING WEAK CRITICAL THINKING MAKES IT HARDER TO:

- Be adaptable
- Read a question correctly
- Write thorough, balanced answers
- Assess evidence and solve problems

Critical thinking can be the difference between success and failure in the workplace and in life. Where do you stand? Find your results overleaf.

# WHAT SORT OF THINKER ARE YOU?

EVGENY VOLKOV

## ARE YOU BEING OUT-THOUGHT?

This radar chart compares the "shape" of your thinking to that of the highest-scoring employee from all organisations participating in the study, across all six CT skills. The further from the centre each point on the graph is, the stronger the performance.

- Your performance
- Performance of the highest-scoring participant employee



## INTERPRETING YOUR CT RESULTS

### STRONG CT

- Strong performance in the three foundation skills (Interpretation, Analysis and Evaluation) suggests that you handle your day-to-day tasks well – producing good work and taking the right decisions most of the time.
- You handle evidence with confidence. You know how to spot flaws in other people’s presentations and proposals – as well as fixing problems with your own.
- Strong performance in the three applied skills (Problem-solving, Reasoning and Creative thinking) shown at the top of the chart shows that you are capable of rising to meet long-term problems and challenges.
- People with strong applied CT skills are good at effective decision-making and usually make strong, effective leaders.

### WEAK CT

- Weak performance in the three foundation skills (Interpretation, Analysis and Evaluation) suggests you are likely to make costly mistakes by handling evidence carelessly or over-confidently.
- Weak performance in the three applied skills (Problem-solving, Reasoning and Creative thinking) suggests that you may struggle when faced with unexpected questions and challenges.
- Your ideas and solutions aren’t always firmly grounded in reality, and that means they are prone to failing.
- You tend to get things wrong when faced with real-life challenges. Your leadership skills could be improved by thinking better and harder about these problems.

# ANALYSIS

## FOUNDATION SKILL

### DEFINING ANALYSIS

Analysis is the skill of assessing information and breaking it down into its components.

Top 5%
ANALYSIS

You ranked in the top 5% of managers and employees with regard to analysis skills.

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You ranked in the: **100th percentile**

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Understanding percentiles: see page 3

### HOW ANALYSIS SKILLS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Any problem can be better understood by deploying this skill. People with strong analytical skills can clarify the sequence and features of reports, presentations and recommendations more effectively.

Poor analytical thinkers tend to misunderstand what is being proposed and fail to identify assumptions correctly.

### Comparing your analysis skills

Check your performance against different participant groups.



### INTERPRETING YOUR RESULTS

- Scores that rank above the 50th percentile put you ahead of most of your peers.
- Scores that rank above the 85th percentile are exceptional, and suggest you are likely to spot assumptions and flaws in complex arguments that most people would miss.
- Scores that rank below the 25th percentile are weak and suggest that you struggle to understand what is being argued for.

# EVALUATION FOUNDATION SKILL

## DEFINING EVALUATION

Evaluation is the skill of exploring the strengths and weaknesses of a point of view.

**Top 10%** EVALUATION

You ranked in the top 10% of managers and employees with regard to evaluation skills.

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You ranked in the:  
**92nd percentile**

i Understanding percentiles: see page 3

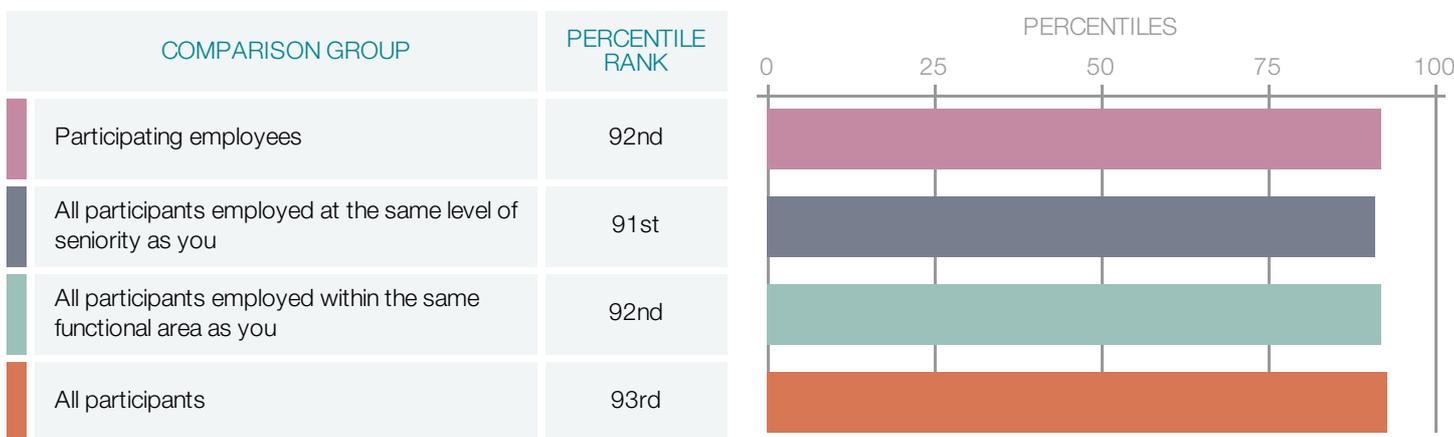
## HOW EVALUATION SKILLS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Strong evaluation is critical to understanding and acting on complex material. Without it, you can't accurately judge the acceptability, relevance and adequacy of evidence. Good evaluation skills can significantly improve your decision-making.

Poor evaluative skills can contribute to the creation of weak strategy. Common errors include uncritical acceptance of weak proposals, being unduly impressed by flawed statistics, and rejecting solutions without explanation.

### Comparing your evaluation skills

Check your performance against different participant groups.



## INTERPRETING YOUR RESULTS

- Scores that rank above the 50th percentile put you ahead of most of your peers.
- Scores that rank above the 85th percentile are exceptional, and suggest you are likely to be a better judge of evidence and proposals than the great majority of your peers.
- Scores that rank below the 25th percentile are weak and suggest that you may not be asking the right questions when presented with evidence.

# INTERPRETATION

## FOUNDATION SKILL

### DEFINING INTERPRETATION

Interpretation is the skill of decoding the meaning and significance of claims.

**Top 20%** INTERPRETATION

You ranked in the top 20% of managers and employees with regard to interpretation skills.

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You ranked in the: **87th percentile**

i Understanding percentiles: see page 3

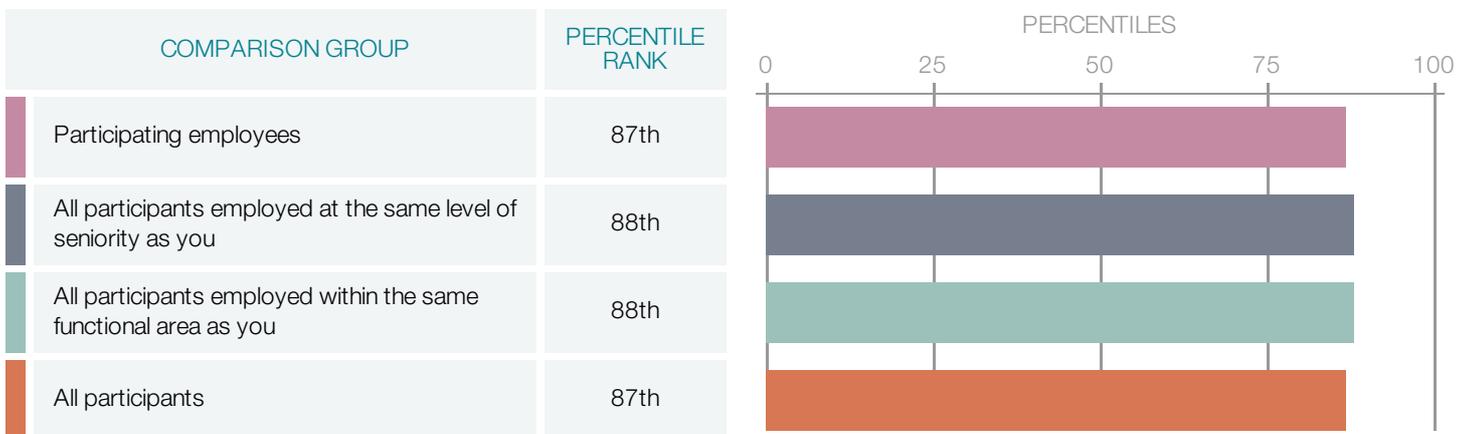
### HOW INTERPRETATION SKILLS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Good interpretation is crucial in order to successfully translate ambiguous terms into accurate, concise and clear definitions.

Failure to use the skill of interpretation can result in you drawing wrong conclusions, or acting on information that has not been properly understood. Poor interpretive thinkers tend to fail to query ambiguous terms and accept existing interpretations without question.

### Comparing your interpretation skills

Check your performance against different participant groups.



### INTERPRETING YOUR RESULTS

- Scores that rank above the 50th percentile put you ahead of most of your peers.
- Scores that rank above the 85th percentile are exceptional, and suggest you are likely to be better at understanding technical terms and grasping nuanced concepts.
- Scores that rank below the 25th percentile are weak and suggest that you are failing to spot ambiguities in evidence.

# CREATIVE THINKING

## APPLIED SKILL

### DEFINING CREATIVE THINKING

Creative thinking is the skill of coming up with new connections and fresh solutions.

**Top 40%** CREATIVE THINKING

You ranked in the top 40% of managers and employees with regard to creative thinking skills.

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You ranked in the: **69th percentile**

*i* Understanding percentiles: see page 3

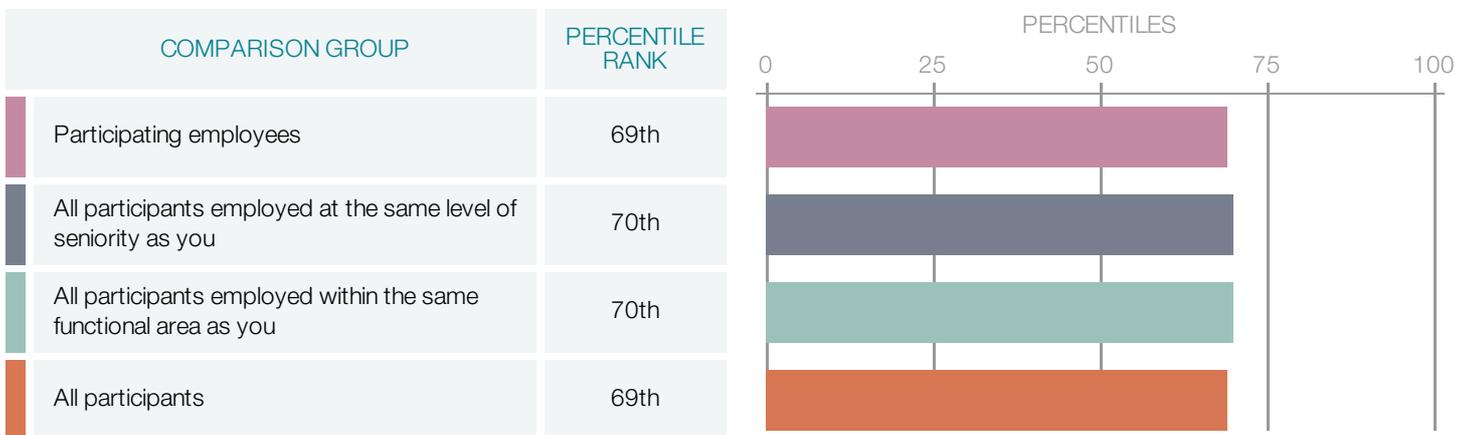
### HOW CREATIVE THINKING SKILLS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Good creative thinking makes it possible to see solutions by thinking beyond the obvious. It can result in asking new and valuable questions that lead to innovation. Great managers and leaders tend to be excellent creative thinkers, too.

A lack of creative thinking can lead to failure to spot solutions to life and work problems, and missing opportunities to create new products or revenue streams.

### Comparing your creative thinking skills

Check your performance against different participant groups.



### INTERPRETING YOUR RESULTS

- Scores that rank above the 50th percentile put you ahead of most of your peers.
- Scores that rank above the 85th percentile are exceptional, and suggest you are likely to be more innovative and better at judging which risks are worth taking than many of your peers.
- Scores that rank below the 25th percentile are weak. You may be failing to approach problems in new ways and not considering alternative possibilities.

# PROBLEM-SOLVING

## APPLIED SKILL

### DEFINING PROBLEM-SOLVING

Problem-solving is the skill of producing strong, effective solutions. It is the product of asking the right questions and considering alternative possibilities.

Top 5%
PROBLEM-SOLVING

You ranked in the top 5% of managers and employees with regard to problem-solving skills.

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You ranked in the:  
**97th percentile**

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Understanding percentiles: see page 3

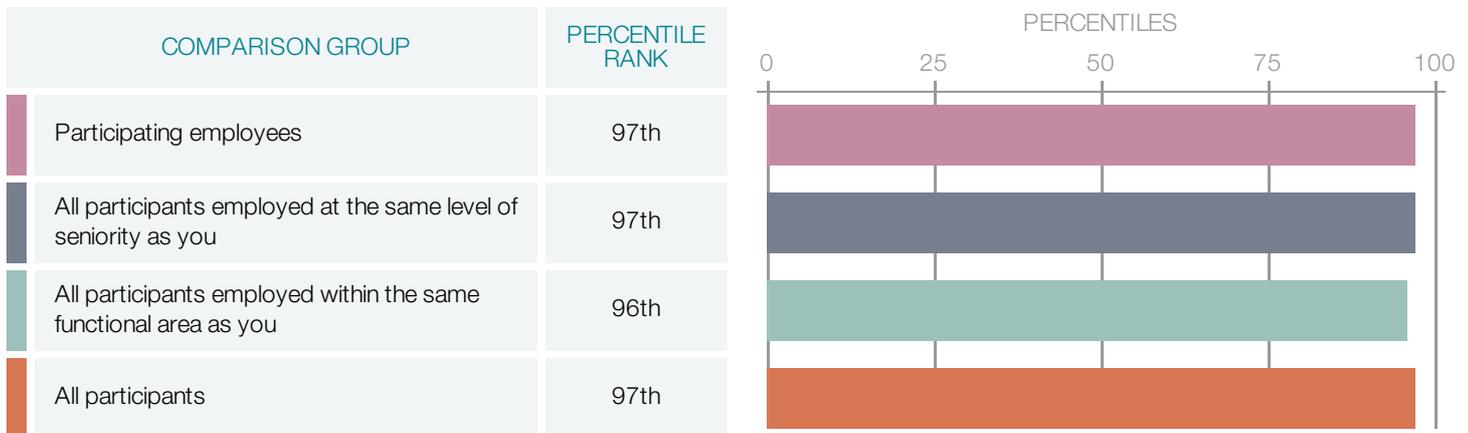
### HOW PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Good problem-solving is essential in dealing with difficult decisions – particularly valuable to those responsible for bigger budgets and larger teams. Strong problem-solvers are able to clarify the nature of a problem and generate a multitude of solutions.

Weakness in problem-solving can prevent the development of effective solutions – or lead you to focus on solving the wrong problem altogether.

### Comparing your problem-solving skills

Check your performance against different participant groups.



### INTERPRETING YOUR RESULTS

- Scores that rank above the 50th percentile put you ahead of most of your peers.
- Scores that rank above the 85th percentile are exceptional, and suggest you are likely to be better at resolving difficulties and taking effective decisions than almost all of your peers.
- Scores that rank below the 25th percentile are weak, and suggest that you are failing to understand the problems you need to solve.

# REASONING

## APPLIED SKILL

### DEFINING REASONING

Reasoning is the skill of creating strong, effective cases and proposals.

**Top 50%** REASONING

You ranked in the top 50% of managers and employees with regard to reasoning skills.

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You ranked in the: **49th percentile**

i Understanding percentiles: see page 3

### HOW REASONING SKILLS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Strong reasoning makes for well-structured proposals and recommendations. Logic is easier to follow, boosting the persuasiveness of reports, proposals and presentations. Reasoning is also useful in seeing the positives and negatives of your own strategy, allowing you to re-evaluate accordingly.

Poor reasoning produces disorganised projects that can lead to incorrect, irrelevant or unsafe conclusions being drawn and acted on.

### Comparing your reasoning skills

Check your performance against different participant groups.



### INTERPRETING YOUR RESULTS

- Scores that rank above the 50th percentile put you ahead of most of your peers.
- Scores that rank above the 85th percentile are exceptional, and suggest you are likely to be better at creating persuasive proposals and presentations than almost all of your peers.
- Scores that rank below the 25th percentile are weak. You may struggle to form a case that is persuasive and coherent.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

1

### Fix the fundamental problems first

- Your **foundation skill scores** are key indicators of the quality of the work that you are doing on a day-to-day basis.
- CT can be learned and improved, so you should aim to build on your current skill levels using books and other resources. If possible, test and measure your progress on a regular basis.

2

### Now review the ways in which you are preparing for the future

- The **applied CT skills** of creative thinking and problem-solving combine to offer you a significant edge at work.
- These skills can make the difference between good and bad performance, and between stagnating in a lower-level role, or winning that promotion.

3

### Are you a top performer?

- Critical thinking is in increasingly high demand. Top companies are increasingly looking to hire staff with exceptional CT skills, and critical thinking tests are more and more commonly used as an important stage in screening applicants for jobs and for assessing performance at work.

#### What does this mean?

Make sure you're taking the task of building a strong critical thinking skill-set seriously. Take advantage of opportunities for training and consider using online resources and books to start improving your foundation skills yourself – then stretching your abilities by building on the applied skills.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Find out more about critical thinking by visiting

**[www.macat.com/ct-report/participant](http://www.macat.com/ct-report/participant)**

Discover an expansive collection of the world's most important books and influential ideas, explained in a way that helps you think smarter and make better business decisions.

