



Citation for published version:

Nwaiwu, F & Newnes, L 2025, *People-focused digital success metrics: Manufacturing leading the way for Employee Satisfaction and Diversity*. P-LD Insights, no. 4, Made Smarter: Centre for People-Led Digitalisation. <https://doi.org/10.15125/bathro-361427382>

DOI:

[10.15125/bathro-361427382](https://doi.org/10.15125/bathro-361427382)

Publication date:

2025

Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication](#)

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People-focused digital success metrics: Manufacturing leading the way for Employee Satisfaction and Diversity

Key Points

- Within the Centre for People-Led Digitalisation, our industrial advisory board recognised the need to measure the impact their digitalisation projects are having on their workforce. To achieve this, P-LD identified what metrics were being used to measure success.
- From an academic review of the literature and through industry-focused workshops, 40 unique people-focused digitalisation metrics related to the workforce were identified.
- 443 organisational professionals evaluated the 40 metrics to indicate their priorities and to provide their views into how easily they believed data could be collected to measure performance against these metrics.
- The professionals were categorised across 11 sectors; Agriculture, Food, and Forestry; Defence; Education and Research; Finance; Government; Healthcare; Manufacturing; Maritime and Transport; Retail; Combined (infrastructure, utilities, energy); with Others being an option.
- 91% of respondents listed Digital Skills Gap Analysis and 64% listed Employee Satisfaction Index in their top 10 people metrics.
- The Manufacturing sector prioritised Data Accuracy (4.46), Employee Satisfaction Index (4.43), and Employee Turnover Rate (4.37) as the most useful Workforce metrics. These metrics highlight a strong focus on workforce stability and data integrity within the sector.
- For ease of data collection, Employee Turnover Rate (4.46), Succession Planning (4.37), and Workplace Injury Rate (4.37) were rated highest, indicating that workforce movement and safety metrics are relatively straightforward to track in manufacturing.
- The overlap between usefulness and ease of data collection is limited, with only Employee Turnover Rate appearing in both top 10 lists. This suggests that while some highly useful metrics are easy to measure, others—such as Digital Skills Gap Analysis—are perceived as important but pose challenges in data collection.

1. People Metrics: Why are they important and which are prioritised by industry?

The purpose of this research was to gain industry insights into which of the 40 People-focused (workforce) metrics organisations would prioritise or already use to assess the impact of a digitalisation project/transition on their workforce. As part of the analysis, we also wished to ascertain the ease of collecting data to support the use of the 40 People-focused metrics, as this is a key factor for the metrics to be analysed.

From our initial investigations into metrics of success, we found that often the metrics used tended to focus on return on investment, cost savings and other financial measures. This is evidenced through the traditional technology/monetary metrics that are often used - we identified over [90 technology/financial focused metrics](#). Yet evidence shows the importance of people in achieving successful change ([Hubbart, 2023](#)). So, what metrics should/could/are being used to measure the impact on the workforce during and after digitalisation occurs, and how are organisations evaluating/understanding/measuring the impact on the workforce? Are organisations utilising metrics to assess the impact of change on their workforce?

This insight summarises what we found when we sought to identify metrics which focused on people (the workforce of companies). The aim being to elicit which of these people metrics were valued within sectors and the professionals' view on the ease of collecting data to measure the people-focused metrics.

So, we identified [90 traditional metrics](#) and [40 people focused](#) metrics.

2. Which people-focused digitalisation metrics were found to be prioritised?

The top ten people-focused metrics were identified through an online survey, and analysing the responses from 443 industry professionals, across 11 sectors. The 11 sectors analysed included:

Organisational Sector investigated			
Agriculture, Food & Forestry	Defence	Education and Research	Finance
Government	Healthcare	Manufacturing	Maritime and Transport
Others (self-select by respondents)	Retail	Combined: Infrastructure, Utilities and Energy	

The 443 respondents were split across the sectors as follows, with Manufacturing and Finance, having 8% of the responses each, 11% from Government and 14% from Healthcare. The majority (23%) chose 'other', rather than the listed sectors.

Industry Sector	No of respondents	Percentage of responses (to nearest %)
Agriculture, Food and Forestry	10	2%
Manufacturing	36	8%
Infrastructure construction and related sectors; Energy and mining; Utilities (combined)	32	7%
Education and Research	64	14%
Healthcare	62	14%
Defence	8	2%
Maritime and Transport	3	1%
Finance	36	8%
Retail	41	9%
Government	48	11%
Others	103	23%
	443	99%

The top ten metrics which organisations identified, the percentage of sectors with the metric in their top ten and the ease of use (i.e. can one measure against the metric) were:

Top 10	Metric Description	Number of sectors, from the 11 sectors, who listed the metric in their top 10	Percentage of organisational sectors who listed metric in the top 10	Range of ease-of-use Min-Max across sectors (1-not easy to use, 5-very easy to use)
1	<i>Digital Skills Gap Analysis</i>	10	91%	2.61 – 4.12
2	<i>Employee Satisfaction with compensation and benefits</i>	9	82%	2.84 – 4.00
3	<i>Data Accuracy</i>	8	73%	3.34 – 4.00
4	<i>Human Resource Data Accuracy</i>	8	73%	3.02 – 3.76
5	<i>Self-service utilisation rate</i>	8	73%	2.88 – 3.73
6	<i>Human Resource data completeness</i>	8	73%	2.80 – 3.66
7	<i>Employee satisfaction index</i>	7	64%	3.17 – 4.33
8	<i>Human Resource data usage</i>	5	45%	3.74 – 3.94
9	<i>Total compensation cost</i>	5	45%	3.88 – 4.25
10	<i>Employee satisfaction with training</i>	5	45%	3.17 – 4.00

3. Manufacturing Sector and People-Focused Metrics

Top 10 People-Focused Metrics for **Usefulness**: The table below presents the top 10 Workforce metrics for the manufacturing sector based on their perceived usefulness:

S/N	Metric	Usefulness (mean)
1	Data accuracy	4.46
2	Employee satisfaction index	4.43
3	Employee turnover rate	4.37
4	HR data accuracy	4.34
5	HR data completeness	4.31
6	Benefits participation rate	4.26
7	Digital skills gap analysis	4.26
8	Cost savings through automation	4.26
9	Stress reduction	4.23
10	Employee satisfaction with compensation and benefits	4.2

Top 10 People-Focused Metrics for **Ease of Data Collection**: The table below presents the top 10 Workforce metrics for the manufacturing sector based on the ease of collecting data:

S/N	metric	Ease of data collection (mean)
1	Employee turnover rate	4.46
2	Succession planning	4.37
3	Workplace injury rate	4.37
4	Total compensation cost	4.29
5	Leadership diversity ratio	4.26
6	Recruitment metrics	4.14
7	System integration rate	4.14
8	Benefits participation rate	4.09
9	Benefits cost as a percentage of payroll	4.03
10	Work-life balance	4

4. Insights for the Manufacturing Sector

A key finding is that only two of the useful metrics appear to be easy to collect data for, they are: Employee turnover rate and Benefits participation rate:

- Employee Turnover Rate: With a mean usefulness score of 4.37 and ease of data collection score of 4.46, this metric is critical for understanding workforce stability. High turnover can indicate dissatisfaction, which could be used before and after digitalisation to assess the impact on the workforce.
- Benefits Participation Rate: Scoring 4.26 for usefulness and 4.09 for ease of data collection, this metric reflects how well employees engage with company benefits, a key aspect of satisfaction and retention.
- Data Quality Metrics (Data accuracy, HR data accuracy, HR data completeness): These are highly useful (mean scores 4.46, 4.34, 4.31 respectively) but not in the ease of data collection top 10, indicating a need for identifying how data could be collected.

5. Analysis of Workforce Metrics for Manufacturing Sector based on "Usefulness" and "Ease of data collection"

Usefulness:

- Data Accuracy and Employee Satisfaction Index retain top positions, aligning with the sector's historical emphasis on operational precision and workforce morale.

- HR Data Accuracy/Completeness underscores Manufacturing's reliance on robust HR systems to track workforce changes.

Ease of data collection:

- Employee Turnover Rate (Rank 1) and Workplace Injury Rate (Rank 3) are traditionally tracked in Manufacturing due to regulatory and operational requirements, explaining their high ease scores. This reinforces the prioritisation of these metrics in the manufacturing sector.
- Leadership Diversity Ratio (Rank 5) confirms the sector's awareness about diversity and data about ED&I.

Cross-Analysis: Usefulness vs. Ease of Collection

High Usefulness + High Ease:

- Employee Satisfaction Index (Usefulness: 4.43; Ease: 4.33 appears to be a cornerstone metric, valued for its impact and simplicity. Data Accuracy (Usefulness: 4.46) is critical and easily measurable through existing ERP/HR systems.

High Usefulness + Lower Ease:

- Digital Skills Gap Analysis (Usefulness: 4.26) ranks highly but is absent from the ease top 10, suggesting challenges in data collection despite its perceived value.

Diversity Metrics:

- While Leadership Diversity Ratio (Ease: 4.26) is prioritised, Employee Diversity Ratio is absent from both lists, indicating a focus on leadership over broader workforce diversity tracking.

6. Next steps: Further detail for the Manufacturing Sector

Within this survey 8% (36 respondents) classified themselves as Manufacturing. We know that often people might be working in a manufacturing company but might not classify themselves as being in manufacturing due to the diverse roles from office, design, supply chain etc. To ensure we have a wider representation of the sector, the survey is being re-run for any employees who work within a Manufacturing business. In our next insight we will compare these findings with the initial insights presented here. This will be completed by end April 2025.

How to cite this work: Nwaiwu, F. and Newnes, L.B., (2025, April). P-LD Insights: People-focused digital success metrics: Manufacturing leading the way for Employee Satisfaction and Diversity, Made Smarter: Centre for People-Led Digitalisation.