

# DATA LEADERS WHO'S WHO

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DRIVING INNOVATION WITH DATA

## Featured in this week's interview

Christelle Young of L'Oréal ANZ shares on adding value through analytics and leveraging data for a sustainable future.

TECHNOLOGY

# Editors note

*"We are excited to bring you the Data Leaders Who's Who, 2021. This publication is a collection of stories from the frontline - thought leadership from data chiefs who are driving change and making an impact with data. We extend our sincere thanks to the leaders featured for contributing to this initiative and sharing their insights with our audiences in support of lifting the data capability of the community."*

James Lecoutre, Partner, Talent Insights | Felipe Flores, Founder, Data Futurology

# DATA FOR SUSTAINABILITY



## Christelle Young

Chief Strategy & Analytics Officer

L'Oréal ANZ

In the hyper-competitive and fast-moving beauty industry, having a compelling data and analytics platform is key to agility across the organisation. L'Oréal ANZ Chief Strategy & Analytics Officer, Christelle Young, shares her story about hitting the ground running and driving analytics across the entire organisation. She also shares on the work L'Oréal are doing to leverage data for a sustainable future.

### L'Oréal is the largest beauty company in the world. What does that mean for your focus as the Chief Strategy Officer in the local market?

What L'Oréal is doing on a wider scale in terms of research and development, and AI, is really quite sophisticated. When we talk about AI and analytics, we're really talking about how to make better decisions for our day-to-day business, and that's my remit. I came from a background in management consulting prior to this, and prior to that my role was in analytics, so I understand the dynamics between the two. I come from a world of IT faculties, and creating tools and analytics embedded within organisations to help the business.

### What has your journey through L'Oréal been like so far?

It's only been just over six months – I haven't been here long! But the CEO and I set up a conversation, and he said "look, we have all this data, which is not utilised to its full potential. And we don't really know where to start this analytics journey. We know there's more potential, but we just don't know how to harness it just yet."

My first task after coming in was therefore to take a look at where are we today.

There are four different stages of maturity in the analytics impact index, and L'Oréal Australia was really at the very beginning of the journey. So, we started by asking ourselves what were the core business strategic problems that we're trying to solve? Where does analytics play a role? How much value do we think analytics brings to each of those different projects too? For example, pricing; how can we use analytics for to help us do pricing better? And does that add value at the end of the day?

Our goal was to add value first and get the culture moving along, and so we actually created a brand within the organisation to represent this. It's called AVA L'Oréal, with "AVA" standing for "adding value through analytics".

There is the AVA community, the AVA hub, and the AVA academy, too. These involve things like a Microsoft Teams platform that anyone can opt into, and we also have monthly meetups, where people in the organisation can have straight conversations about analytics. Through this we've made sure that we have a support network available for anyone

that's having challenges with the data.

### Was this education process applied at all levels of the organisation?

Yes, and I think that has been key in our success. The whole executive leadership team did a data for decision makers course of Melbourne Business School. That course only involved a couple of days but helped the entire C-suite understand how to take their business problem and turn it into an analytics-driven solution. The point of this was to facilitate understanding on how to merge those two worlds and assist the executives in talking to the analytics people.

We also brought in some new talent around data science, but that wouldn't have mattered if the ability to translate what they were saying wasn't there across the entire organisation. Without that focus on education, even if I brought in a big team of data scientists, it would have been like giving you a fancy car before you knew how to drive it. Also to that end, with the people that we did bring into the organisation, we tried to lean heavily on data specialists that could act as "translators."

They had to be really good communicators, and they had to have business savviness, and only then could we start thinking about the next phase.

**Can you elaborate on the questions that you've aimed to answer within the organisation, and how receptive L'Oréal has been to asking those difficult questions?**

The key to the success that we've had at L'Oréal Australia is that we have a really open-minded entrepreneurial mindset within the culture, and that was already there before I joined. Without it being driven from the top, there's no way we would be operating with the momentum we have now.

So, the ultimate question is either "what's the problem that you're trying to solve?", or, "how do you make money as a company and what are the key things that drive revenue in your company?" For some, it's properties, for other companies it's around volume and sales and market share. Every company has a different lever that's core to driving value within their company. There is no perfect model for every company. Understanding the value of the company like this was one factor in structuring the data analytics strategy.

The other factor was the question about how hard is it to do today? Do you have the people to do it, and the tools, technologies, and processes? Even if you had all those things, and you had the perfect model, are you able to implement it and, at the other end of the analytics process, do you have the team to implement the findings? Are you able to measure the effects of that? Are you able to keep that within your current process, or do you have to change the whole entire process?

The point is, we're not looking at just the analytics process. I asked the team to look at the entire process, first and foremost. Any time that we do analytics, we should look at the entire process, because even if we have the ultimate solution, we might not be able to use it properly.

**Can you give me an example of this in action?**

Take media buying as an example. L'Oréal buys a lot of media, TV ads, and so on.

Now, I might give you the perfect model to say how much exactly to spend in each channel. But if that's not the way we buy media, or if that doesn't make sense in the process, it's a useless model to so there's many other factors to assess. With that in mind we did another round of maths to understand the roadmap and determine what's the value score, what's the ease of implementation score, and from there we could create a roadmap off the back of the analytics work.



***SO, THE ULTIMATE QUESTION IS EITHER “WHAT'S THE PROBLEM THAT YOU'RE TRYING TO SOLVE?”, OR, [...] “WHAT ARE THE KEY THINGS THAT DRIVE REVENUE IN YOUR COMPANY?”***



***THIS PROGRAM [L'ORÉAL FOR THE FUTURE] BUILT ON OUR PREVIOUS SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENTS WITH A MUCH MORE AMBITIOUS AND CONSIDERED APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY.***

**How did the decision to focus on value first help with adoption across the organisation?**

If you start with data ecosystem, you pour all this money into enhancing it, you run the risk of people turning around and asking, "since we've spent so much money, what value have we actually got out of it?" By doing things the way that we have, we haven't spent a cent, but have created a lot of value.

Additionally, I'm cognizant that there's a false kind of promise that people have surrounding the required data or supporting ecosystem, and this approach sidesteps that problem.

**Finally, L'Oréal are leveraging data to do some innovative work around sustainability. Could you share with our audience a little of the work you are doing in that space?**

First let's set the scene on where L'Oréal is on our Sustainability journey. 2020 marked a very important year for sustainability, with the start of what climate experts defined as the most critical decade of action. And with this, L'Oréal responded with the launch of L'Oréal for the Future. This program built on our previous sustainability commitments with a much more ambitious and considered approach to sustainability.

Notably, L'Oréal partnered with key organisations (CDP, UN Global Compact, World Resource Institute (WRI) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) – in what is our voluntary transition towards a low carbon economy – and this is in line with the 1.5°C trajectory. L'Oréal worked with these groups to understand 1) what is our impact, 2) what are the threats currently facing our planet and 3) the necessary changes we need to make.

We know we must act and that we have a responsibility. L'Oréal always strives to be an ethical and engaged business – and as such contributing to issues facing our environment and society remain a priority. In addition, some of the crucial issues facing our world, threaten the way we currently do business. And this means we must adapt, or face not having a viable business in the future.

Through L'Oréal for the Future, we will continue to transform ourselves and this is about respecting planetary boundaries. Our commitment is to operate within the limits of the planet and to run a business to within a framework that Earth can withstand. We are also focused on empowering our business ecosystem helping it transition to a more sustainable world and

we are involving our customers, suppliers and consumers in our transformation process. In addition, we are contributing to solving the challenges of the world by being part of the solution. We are allocating 100 million euros to impact investing dedicated to the regeneration of ecosystems and the development of the circular economy, and 50 million euros to a charitable endowment fund to support highly vulnerable women.

