After lecturing data analytics for over 10 years for more than 5,000+ students, I've developed a great understanding of what the power of analytics can do. Constant change in tools and technologies makes this one of the most exciting and rewarding fields of business to be in. Every time I teach a class I still get excited about sharing the insights that data analytics can bring to life.

I get excited to see the moment that the lightbulb turns on for one of my students when they realize that the hours they've been spending to analyze data can now become minutes. I get excited when an executive tells me that they've developed a new found appreciation for data-generated insights that will guide them to create a more effecient data-driven culture in their organization. I also get excited when a non-analytics business professional uses their newly developed skills to generate a visual analysis with insightful findings that they hadn't thought possible.

After teaching analytics-based workshops at CPA Ontario, I'm often asked by business professionals who work with data how they can develop broader analytic capabilities so they can make faster and smarter business decisions and better understand data-based decision making to monitor, measure and manage performance.

While big data is still in its early beginnings, technology advances are starting to catch up to fulfill the promise of what analysts, statisticians, and business leaders have wanted for years. The use of advanced analytics is intensifying and will very soon become the new normal for businesses.

It will be given that every business professional **will have to** cope with data and **will have to** use various data assets and tools to augment the data they work with internally.

For this reason, I encourage all business professionals, from recent graduates, to senior executives to seek out professional business analytics training so that you can develop broader analytic capabilities to make faster and smarter business decisions to monitor, measure and manage performance.

Whether you work for a large or small organization, you most likely use Microsoft Excel. Your job likely involves analyzing, summarizing, and reporting data. It might also involve building models to help reduce costs, increase profits, or better manage operations.

Professional training will teach you how to use Microsoft Excel more competently to analyze data, create models, and generate insights. More advanced training, such as using the R programming language, will further train you in extending your skills to industry strength analytics.

No matter who provides your training, ensure that the classes provide a combination of interactive discussion, case studies, and lecture formats which focus on the use of Excel for analytics. Training should be hands-on, with participants working alongside knowledgeable instructors, learning within the context of real-world, practical examples.

With the right training, you can build your analytical capabilities, learn techniques to solve any business problem in any industry, and gain the confidence in data to impress top companies and executives.

David Elsner, President, DHE Consulting