

alteryx

The Cloud Analytics Platform Buyer's Guide



Intro

A Guide to Using This Guide:

We've designed this guide so you can get all the information you need **in less than 5 minutes.** (We get it, you're a busy person.)

So here's how it works:

Each person has different roles and responsibilities in selecting a cloud analytics platform. Because of that, we've created this guide for five specific functions within an organization. They are the people who:

1. **Need Insights**
2. **Analyze Data**
3. **Perform Advanced Analytics**
4. **Own The Analytics Strategy**
5. **Own The Analytics Infrastructure**

For each person, we focused on three primary responsibilities. We included features each should consider when comparing and selecting a cloud platform.

All you have to do is click the function that most applies to you and begin. There. Doesn't that sound easy?

Let's begin.

Menu

I'm someone who:

[Needs Insights >](#)

[Analyzes Data >](#)

[Performs Advanced Analytics >](#)

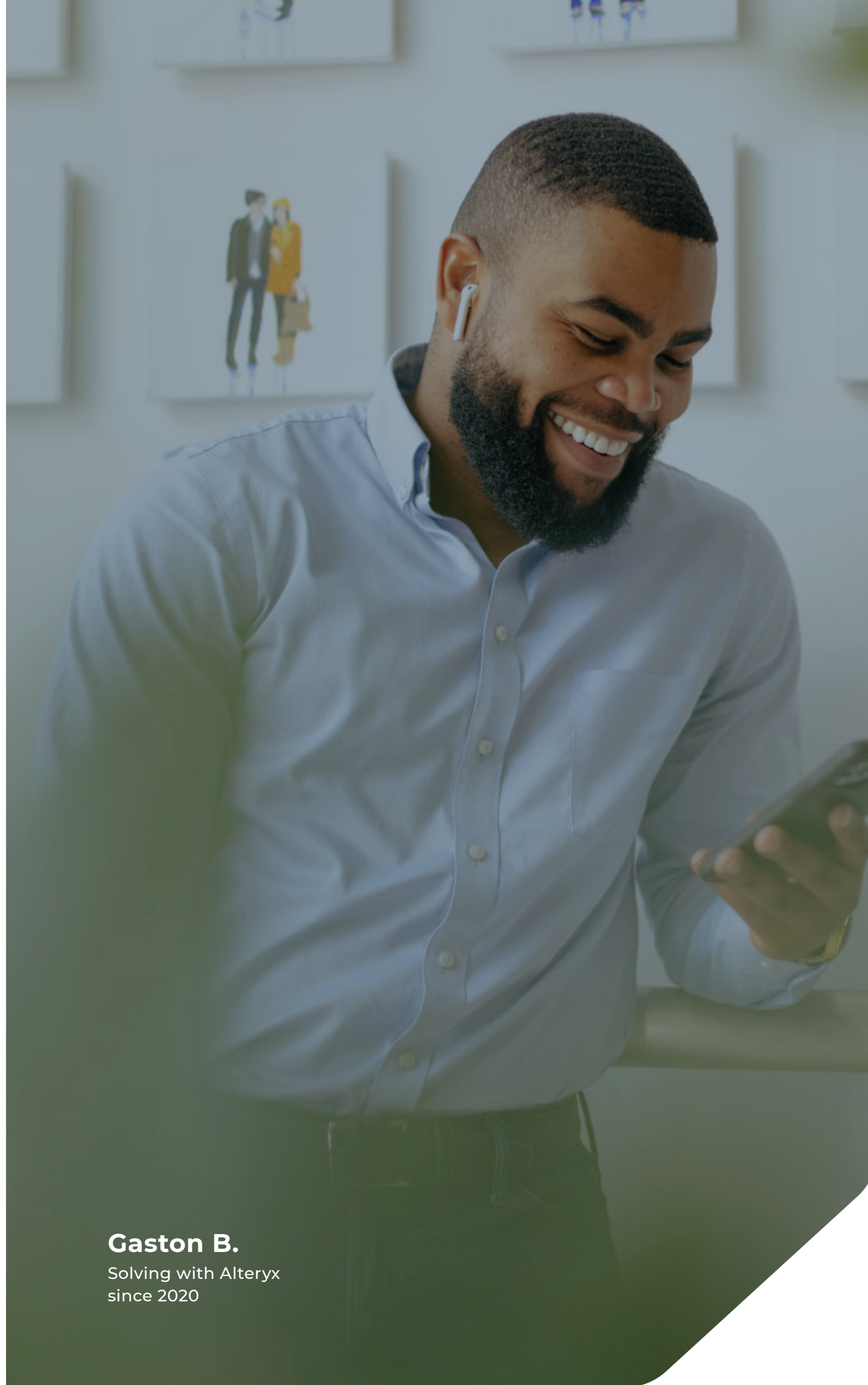
[Owns The Analytics Strategy >](#)

[Owns The Analytics Infrastructure >](#)

Features For People Who Need Insights

For you, the person who needs insights, your cloud analytics platform needs to help you with:

- Reporting and projects, goals, and more
- Interpreting the results to make decisions and meet goals
- Collaborating with teams to deliver on objectives



Reporting:

These are the features that make reporting easier.

- **Automated Insights and Interactive Dashboards:** A new spin on a trusted reporting format, interactive dashboards automatically analyze your data using AI. The dashboards show anomalies in your data and create presentation-quality reports you can schedule and share.

You can use these to quickly find the answers you need without needing technical knowledge or skills. More advanced versions include a search-engine-type interface to answer questions you type and enter.

- **Self-Service Reporting:** This capability helps you create reports and share them without needing to have any technical knowledge. A platform that includes self-service data preparation can make this easier by allowing users to prepare their own data and import it into a reporting process someone else has built. Features that support this include self-service workflows and analytic apps.



Lilian S.

Solving with Alteryx
since 2017

Interpreting:

To deliver on business goals (and beat expectations), forecasting, what-if analysis, and predictive capabilities can help you make confident decisions. But you'll need features that make it easy to implement and scale advanced analytics.

- **AutoML:** Automated Machine Learning and AI can look at your data for you and help you understand which factors share the strongest relationships and correlation. Many platforms come with machine learning capabilities, but they are often difficult to use or not intuitive. So, if you want one that's easy to implement immediately, look for cloud platforms that make it easy for anyone to use.

If you work in an industry where bias in decision making can lead to fines, such as finance, you'll want a cloud platform that can deliver interpretable results using explainable AI. Again, you'll need this feature to be self-service and designed for someone without a data science background.



Ira W.
Solving with Alteryx
since 2021

Iain R.
Solving with Alteryx
since 2021

Collaborating:

Make sure your platform integrates with any services you use to share or visualize information or third parties that might need to view your data.

- **Scheduling:** Look for platforms that include sharing and scheduling features, whether you share ad-hoc reports or send reports out regularly.
- **Visualization:** Make sure your platform can export data to any BI visualization tools you use or that it can create visualizations. Information should update in real time as needed.
- **Auditability:** Your cloud platform should contain a notetaking feature and provide a clear data lineage for external and third-party reviewers to audit your information. This feature will save you time and the headache of potential fines.

Features For People Who Analyze Data

For you, the person who analyzes data, your cloud analytics platform needs to help you with:

- Importing data, assets, workflows, and more to use for analysis
- Analyzing data quickly and accurately
- Learning new skills, shortening your learning curve, and career advancement

Importing:

These features make it easier to find and share data assets. Make sure your cloud platform can handle all the different data sources your company uses—and could use in the future. Consider the data you import from third-party sources or data you wish you could incorporate to improve analysis.

- **Centralization:** Look for platforms that provide a searchable asset hub or database that contains all the workflows, analytics, and datasets your company uses or has created.
- **Access Controls:** A platform with a governed and centralized asset management hub will ensure that people can only access assets and datasets they have permission to use. This feature is beneficial if you deal with confidential information, such as personal information and health data, and want to share your work.
- **Data Access:** Your cloud platform needs to work with your data lakes, data storage platforms, third parties, APIs, all your data types, and more. Consider additional data types or sources you would like to use and how you would integrate real-time information within your analytics.
- **Data Storage:** Consider where you need to store your data. Look for platforms that can automatically export assets to the appropriate locations. Include others on your team who might want to query the data you have rather than dig through a database.



Analyzing:

Make sure your platform has everything you need to analyze data and advance your learning.

- **Low-Code, No-Code:** Self-service cloud platforms make it easier to build, execute, and iterate on analytic processes. It's also helpful if you're able to customize functions using code as needed.
- **Advanced Analytics:** Cloud platforms that automate advanced analytics, plus machine learning, help in fields where you need to forecast or run what-if scenarios. Platforms that include NLP, OCR, Image-to-Text, and more will help automate converting unstructured and structured file types, such as PDFs, forms, images, and more.
- **Reporting:** Make sure your platform provides resources, integrations, or features that help you with visualization, sharing reports, and more if you need them.



Learning:

Adopting a new analytics platform requires learning how it works. You should be able to quickly pick up on the things you know while having resources to learn the things you don't. A cloud platform should also enable learning and career advancement, scaling with your expertise.

- [Self-Guided Learning](#): If you're looking to add extra insight or advance your career, look for platforms that help you learn while you produce results. Check for a self-guided machine learning feature within the platform and free lessons that help you become familiar with the product.
- **Community**: Look for platforms that have a dedicated, active user base. You'll want a place you can look for answers to questions others have asked and a place you can ask questions, too.

Features For People Who Perform Advanced Analytics

For you, the person who performs advanced analytics, your cloud analytics platform needs to help you with:

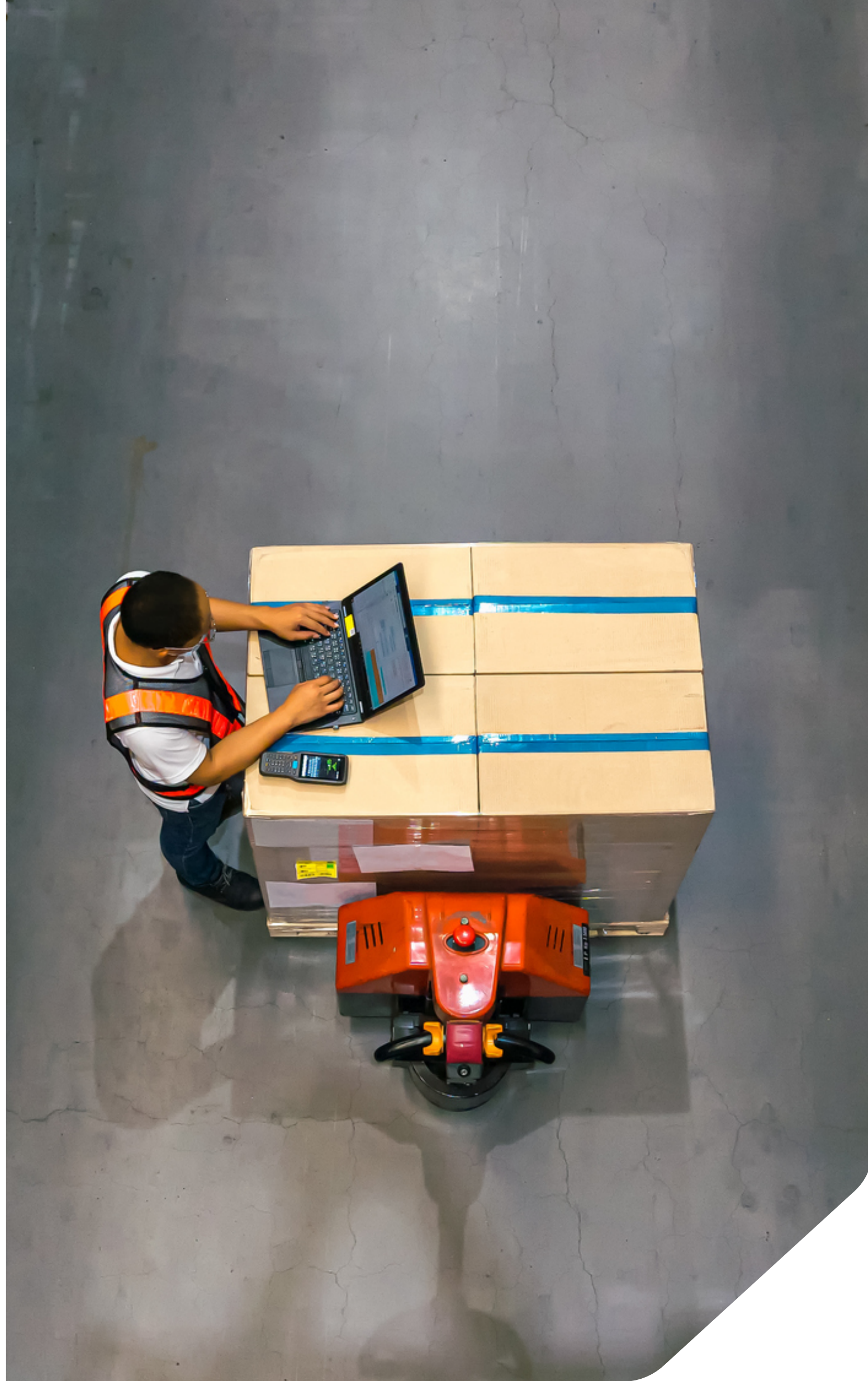
- Modeling the data quickly and accurately
- Deploying models for others to use
- Monitoring the health of the data and model performance



Modeling:

Everyone has a different level of analytical experience. Whether you're starting with advanced analytics, making a career shift, or are an experienced veteran, these features make life easier.

- **Automated Data Quality/Schema Drift Detection:** Ensure the accuracy and meaning of your data remains the same as you create models. This helps with data lineage and auditing, too.
- **Self-Guided Machine Learning:** Learn how to build machine learning models while delivering results. Platforms with this feature will help you learn what models to use in which situation.
- **Automated Machine Learning:** Upload your data and get immediate feedback on the quality of your data, the best model to use, and what the results mean. This feature is handy for reporting and informing those who will use the results to make decisions.



Deploying:

Once you build the model, you'll want to ensure others can use and interact with it to make decisions.

- **Integrations**: Ensure your platform can integrate models with the services your organization uses for sharing data science models. That, or make sure your platform can provide the services you need for deployment and interaction.
- **Scheduling**: Scheduling ensures your reports arrive on time, a must-have in fields where decisions require real-time information.



Monitoring:

- **Resources:** Some models can become resource intensive. Cloud platforms that leverage data warehouses for processing and execution, also known as pushdown processing, can increase processing speeds by up to 90 percent.
- **Interpretability:** Cloud platforms with model explainability help you explain the factors contributing to a model's output. This feature is especially useful in finance, insurance, and fields where decisions are made based on multiple individual factors and data points. It's especially helpful for non-technical users or those without a background in data science.

Features For People Who Own The Analytics Strategy

For you, the person who owns the analytics strategy, your cloud analytics platform needs to help you with:

- Democratizing data across your organization and ensuring adoption
- Optimizing your organization for analytics and workforce trends
- Expanding the use of analytics to new use cases and departments



Democratizing:

To ensure people will adopt the platform you've put in place, you'll want features that support learning and shorten the learning curve.

- **No-Code, Low-Code, and Drag-and-Drop:** These features make it easier for you to expand the talent pool you hire from and your ability to train internally.
- **Learning Resources:** Support people learning a new platform with cloud platforms that provide external and in-platform guided lessons. Since you won't be able to answer every question, choose platforms with a large community of active users and experts. They'll be able to help answer questions your team has and support their learning.
- **Business Capabilities:** Make sure the platform benefits the entire organization and everyone who uses and interacts with it. Self-service analytics, analytic apps, automated insights, interactive dashboards, and more will help with reporting, interpreting, and making decisions.

Optimizing:

How well does a cloud platform help you achieve your current and future goals?

- **Automation:** Build workflows once and create self-service analytics. You can reuse the workflows to fast-track new projects, too.
- **Cost Optimization:** Consider the upfront cost along with the total cost of ownership (TOC), such as additional services and add-ons. Evaluate your long-term goals and the expected ROI. End-to-end platforms check off many boxes. Look for evidence that a cloud platform can deliver both short-term and long-term wins, including preventing egress charges by taking advantage of pushdown optimization and keeping the data inside of the cloud data warehouse.
- **Unification:** Look for platforms that have a history of bringing teams together and democratizing analytics. Cloud platforms that are designed for all people in an organization (analysts, data scientists, leaders, and more) perform better than point solutions that only solve one problem.
- **Updates:** Cloud platforms are often SaaS products, meaning they provide automatic updates, making life easier for IT. However, not all cloud platforms provide the same quality and consistency of updates. Seek platforms owned by companies with the resources to continually add certifications, provide software updates, and adequately address issues.



Expanding:

Most analytics initiatives start small and grow from there. If this is true for you, here's what you should consider.

- **End-to-End Platforms:** Look for end-to-end platforms since they solve every data need, including importing, cleaning, reporting, automating, exporting, and more. You can use point solutions and pay-as-you-need services if you're team is small and you have a limited budget. However, their costs add up fast as you add services and seats.
- **Sharing:** Centralized data catalogs can make finding and organizing assets easier as the number of data assets in your organization grows. Seek platforms that make it easy to share existing projects and workflows without version control issues and increase the collective use and knowledge of analytics.

Features For People Who Own The Analytics Infrastructure

For you, the person who owns the analytics infrastructure, your cloud analytics platform needs to help you with:

- Provisioning who can access what to ensure governance
- Governing your data to maintain compliance
- Scaling initiatives to meet the needs of your organization



Provisioning:

People come and go. Make sure you can quickly give and take away permission as needed.

- **Access Controls:** Your cloud platform should have features that let you quickly assign different access levels to people, datasets, and more based on permission levels. Use it to help you govern data, especially in areas with strict regulations, such as finance and healthcare.



Governing:

Regulations are constantly changing. The best platforms allow your teams to implement changes quickly and update all of your processes to maintain compliance.

- **Certifications:** FIPS compliance is a must-have for those in the public sector. Additional certifications that apply across multiple industries include those set by NIST, FISMA, GDPR, CCPA, and more.
- **Data Use Policies:** Ensure your cloud platform follows guidelines such as ISO 22301 and more, which provide plans for continuing operations.



Scaling:

Scaling goes beyond adding licenses. It involves tying all of your analytics initiatives together across departments.

- **Licensing:** End-to-end platforms that include all services in one license are more straightforward to scale than those that provide base packages with add-ons and extensions. They're easier to manage, too.
- **Integration:** The services one department uses will differ from the services another department uses. Ensure your cloud analytics integrates all the different data types, APIs, and services your organization uses.



Where To Go Next:

If you would like information about our cloud analytics platform: [Alteryx Cloud Analytics](#)

If you'd like to try out or see a demo of a recommended solution, then:

For People Who Need Insights:

[Go to Alteryx Auto Insights](#)

For People Who Analyze:

[Go to Designer Cloud](#)

For People Who Perform Advanced Analytics:

[Go to Alteryx Machine Learning](#)

For People Who Own The Analytics Strategy:

[Go to the Alteryx Product Lineup](#)

For People Who Own The Analytics Infrastructure:

[Go to the Alteryx Product Lineup](#)

ABOUT ALTERYX

Alteryx (NYSE: AYX) powers analytics for all by providing our leading Analytics Automation Platform. Alteryx delivers easy end-to-end automation of data engineering, analytics, reporting, machine learning, and data science processes, enabling enterprises everywhere to democratize data analytics across their organizations for a broad range of use cases. More than 8,000 customers globally rely on Alteryx to deliver high-impact business outcomes. To learn more, visit www.alteryx.com.