

**IT DOESN’T HURT TO ASK…**

An MIT xPRO Guide to Discussing Professional Development with Your Employer

**How to Use This Guide**

1. Take a look at the Data Science and Big Data Analytics: Making Data Driven Decisions [course page](https://xpro.mit.edu/courses/course-v1%3AxPRO%2BDSx/?utm_medium=lead-gen-asset&utm_source=other-campaigns&utm_campaign=dsx%20&utm_content=dsx-r14-fl20-prof-dev-guide). Note which topics and learning outcomes align with your manager’s goals.
2. Look at the “Data Science Stats” on page two and “Common Objections” on page three to help augment your letter, or support a follow up conversation.
3. Customize the yellow areas highlighted in the template on page 3 and send it to your manager.
4. Have any other questions about the course that might help your case? Email us! xpro@mit.edu.

**Data Science Stats**

Bring these facts and figures into the conversation!

* “Many organizations like ours want to be data-driven, but most aren’t there yet…”
* **Stat:** A 2019 [NVP report](http://newvantage.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Big-Data-Executive-Survey-2019-Findings-Updated-010219-1.pdf) stated that “most companies are still not data-driven and will not be anytime soon,” with only 31% of organizations deeming themselves data-driven, down from 37.1% in 2017 and 32.4% in 2018.
* “In fact, it’s unlikely that we are using our current data properly”
* **Stat:** [Only 4% of companies make good use of data analytics](http://www.bain.com/publications/articles/the-value-of-big-data.aspx) — leveraging the right combination of people, tools, and data to drive improvements, according to Bain & Company.
* **“**The need for data-driven decision making has never been higher, because with the Internet of Things (IoT), we are creating data faster than it can be analyzed.”
* **Stat:** An estimated 3.7 billion people currently use the internet, and [90% of the world’s existing data was created in the last two years](https://www.forbes.com/sites/bernardmarr/2018/05/21/how-much-data-do-we-create-every-day-the-mind-blowing-stats-everyone-should-read/#fb09ac360ba9). With this kind of proliferation in data, the demand for big data analytics has never been higher.
* **“**Training your workforce in big data analytics will do more than improve sales.”
* **Stat #1:** According to [Forbes](https://www.forbes.com/sites/louiscolumbus/2018/05/23/10-charts-that-will-change-your-perspective-of-big-datas-growth/#1aa044af2926), more than 30% of businesses attribute the fundamental changes in their research and development practices to big data analytics.
* **Stat #2:** A Deloitte [report on corporate talent and leadership](http://www.ihrc.ch/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/predictions-2013-final-1.pdf) showed that companies using data-driven decision making to inform recruitment and training saw a 5–10% improvement in customer issue resolution rates and a $1.2 million in cost savings for each percentage point of improvement total savings – which resulted in 5 to 12 million dollars from a single data-driven initiative.

**Want a quicker summary?** Send your boss this link: <https://curve.mit.edu/3-reasons-you-should-be-taking-an-online-data-science-course>

**Common Objections**

Your employer will have questions. Let’s help you answer them.

* **Objection:** “It costs too much”
* **Response:** It might cost more to neglect workforce training. Companies that prioritize employee development make median revenue of $169,100 per employee while companies that don’t make less than half of that: $82,800 ([Source](https://www.cornerstoneondemand.com/sites/default/files/whitepaper/smb-wp-nonexistent-tm-strategy-costing-money.pdf))
* **Objection:** “It will take you too much time and distract you from your work.”
* **Response:** This course is designed for professionals, with an estimated time commitment of 4-5 hours per week for only 7 weeks. Learning a new skill online does take time, but the format is flexible, offering learners the ability to watch lectures and read case studies on their own schedule. Plus, the time a company invests in training will save them time in the long run. A study by the National Center on the Educational Quality of the Workforce (EQW) supports this, finding that a 10% increase in educational development produced an 8.6% gain in productivity. ([Source](https://www.businessknowhow.com/manage/higherprod.htm))
* **Objection:** “How is this different from those other online courses?”
* **Response:** MIT xPRO courses are created and taught by MIT faculty, and are optimized for learners who are full-time professionals. Their data science course was created by the Institute for Data, Systems and Society (IDSS), and includes 20 case studies, hands-on-projects, and access to cutting edge, research-based multimedia content developed by MIT professors and industry professionals.

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| Hi [MANAGER’S NAME] I would like to submit a request for professional development through the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's online course *Data Science and Big Data Analytics: Making Data-Driven Decision*s. This course offers training that I believe is directly relevant and beneficial to what we're trying to accomplish within [COMPANY NAME]. **Program Summary:** Through digital lectures and hands-on case studies based on examples from real-world business scenarios, I will acquire the theory, strategies, and tools I need to:* Apply data science techniques and use tools like R and Python to address our organization’s data management challenges.
* Identify and avoid common pitfalls in big data analytics.
* Deploy machine learning algorithms to mine our organization’s data.
* Interpret analytical models to make better business decisions.
* Understand the challenges associated with scaling big data algorithms.
* Convert data sets to models through predictive analytics.

**Cost & Duration:** The course cost is $899 (USD) and it starts on May 4, 2020. This program is designed for full-time working professionals so the schedule will work with my current position. For more information, visit: [https://learn-xpro.mit.edu/data-science](https://learn-xpro.mit.edu/data-science?utm_medium=lead-gen-asset&utm_source=other-campaigns&utm_campaign=dsx%20&utm_content=dsx-r14-fl20-prof-dev-guide) Thank you for considering my training request, [YOUR NAME] |