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PRO TIPS for creating and fostering a high-performing analytics team:

Effective analytics team management requires knowing the challenges they face and having a framework in place to address them. The model I use is called TRAC: Trust, Resources, Air Support, and Contribution.

Trust: Analytics professionals do technical work on tight deadlines across multiple projects and clients. It's complex work, and the line between guidance and micromanagement can get very fine. Analytics managers need to trust their team's expertise, delegate work, and avoid stepping in unless asked. This also helps team members build trust with their clients and in themselves.

Resources: Like everyone, analytics teams need resources to do their jobs well. Sadly, as a support function, their *needs* are often treated as "wants" or "nice-to-haves." A great analytics manager uses their influence and creativity to source what's needed for success, from equipment, software, and data to training, development, and work-life balance.

Air Support: Analytics clients often have conflicting interests, and some even try to bully their analytics team to bump projects up the queue or to "find" a particular number that's not supported by the data. If allowed to continue, this behavior can disrupt workflow, weaken morale, and threaten the team's credibility.

We all need to "manage up" sometimes, but many junior analytics staff don't feel empowered to push back against clients who bully them, especially when caught between two opposing clients. Some even feel downright unsafe doing so. A great analytics manager champions their team and its work, mediates conflict when it arises, and continuously demonstrates the value of the team's objectivity and independence.

Contribution: Analytics professionals do their best work when they understand how it's used and why it's needed, but organizational silos often keep them from understanding clients' needs deeply. Managers can maximize morale, performance, and client satisfaction by ensuring team members understand what's expected of them and how it contributes to company goals.

Analytics managers using this model should discuss their performance against each pillar in their one-on-one conversations with their supervisors and direct reports using whatever level of detail/formality seems appropriate to the person and situation. Tracking performance will help managers create a thriving analytics team that consistently delivers value and gets the recognition it deserves.

Cheers,

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PS - This report was free too. Want to hire me? 😊