



*The role has been coined '**the sexiest job of the 21st century**' by the Harvard Business Review and there is good reason for it.*

Data Science can be a highly rewarding career path. However, not everyone is cut out for the job. Being a great data scientist takes a certain set of skills.

We've compiled a list of all the things that make up the best in the business.

A high level of education

Not strictly speaking mandatory. But those working under the title without, at least, a master's degree are a very small minority (less than 20%). In fact, almost half of all data scientists have gone as far as completing a PHD.

The ideal education would be in the realm of mathematics, statistics, or computer science.

Is able to understand coding

There are a variety of different types of coding prevalent in the industry. A data scientist needs to be able to understand at least some of them.

Python, C/C++, Java, Pearl. All of those regularly crop up in data science. With Python being the most prevalent.

Has a certain level of proficiency in statistics

If you think back to your stats classes, the words 'statistics' and 'data' go hand in hand. And it's true that statistical knowledge is important for data scientists in all companies.

The successful data scientist at the very least knows enough about statistical tests to determine which ones to use and when.

Is comfortable handling imperfect data

In reality, a lot of data that will need to be analysed will be troublesome to some degree. There will be numbers missing. It might be formatted inconsistently. This will be worse in businesses that don't work with data-related products. Or in young companies where the incoming data scientist is the first data professional they have hired.

As such a data scientist needs to be able to deal with the inconsistencies appropriately.

Communication skills

Not everyone understands the technical jargon involved in data science. And as one of the people that does, it may fall to the data scientist to translate information in layman's terms for those not that way inclined.

Many organisations see a data scientist as the person that helps others make data-driven choices.

They also need to pick up on the issues experienced by those non-technical professionals and take that into account in their work.

Intellectual curiosity

Data science is all about uncovering new information. To be successful in the industry, a data scientist will need to have the enthusiasm for discovery.

They don't just need to answer questions but also be passionate enough to ask the right ones too.

A good head for business

Knowing the problems that are the most pressing within your company is vital to the role of a successful data scientist. And that means having a full understanding of the business side of the industry.

So...

A solid foundation in computer science and applications, modelling, statistics, analytics and maths. Business acumen, coupled with the ability to communicate findings to both business and IT leaders in a way that can influence how an organisation approaches a business challenge.