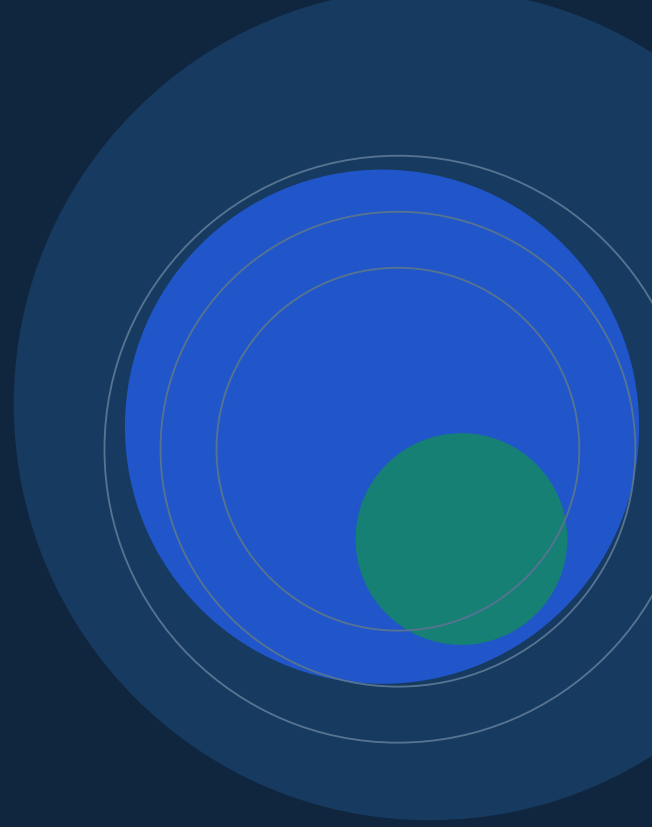




HIGH CITY CONSULTING | 2026 CAREER BRIEFING

The Future-Ready Analyst

Five capabilities for staying relevant as work changes

A practical guide to the workplace shifts behind the AI-Ready Business, Data & AI Analyst Accelerator

The work is changing. The opportunity is to change with it.

AI is not simply adding another tool to the workplace. It is changing how organisations research, analyse, communicate and make decisions. Some tasks become faster. Expectations rise. The value of a role increasingly depends on how well someone connects tools with business context, evidence and judgement.

That can feel uncertain, especially if you are starting your career, considering a change or trying to stay current in an established role. The useful response is not panic and it is not chasing every new platform. It is building a combination of capabilities that remains valuable as the tools continue to change.

39%

Core skills are moving

The World Economic Forum expects 39% of workers' core skills to change by 2030.

Source: WEF Future of Jobs 2025

70%

AI literacy is practical

Skills England reports that 70% of UK workers are in roles with tasks AI could perform or enhance.

Source: Skills England 2026

2x

Change is faster in exposed roles

PwC finds skills in the most AI-exposed jobs are changing more than twice as fast.

Source: PwC AI Jobs Barometer 2026

The signal across the research

Technical confidence matters, but it is only part of the picture. Analytical thinking, communication, collaboration, judgement, problem solving and responsible AI use appear repeatedly across the evidence.

The job title may stay the same while the expectation moves.

The effect of AI will not arrive as one dramatic moment. It appears in everyday work: faster first drafts, more available data, new automation, higher expectations and more decisions to make about quality, risk and relevance.

More of this can be accelerated	More value moves towards this
Routine preparation	Defining the question and checking what matters
Producing information	Interpreting evidence and explaining the implication
Following a brief	Challenging assumptions and improving the problem
Using one specialist tool	Moving confidently across data, AI and business workflows
Completing a task	Owning the quality, judgement and outcome

What this means for your career

If you are starting out: evidence of how you think and apply skills can help you move beyond a list of courses or qualifications.

If you are changing direction: your existing industry and workplace experience can become an advantage when combined with structured analysis, data and AI fluency.

If you are already an analyst: strong fundamentals remain useful, but broader data confidence, AI-enabled workflows and decision support can extend your impact.

Five capabilities for staying relevant as work changes.

These capabilities appear repeatedly across the research and reinforce one another in practice. The strongest value comes from the combination.



Research basis

Skills England: practical AI literacy, judgement, problem solving, collaboration and digital fluency.

Research basis

WEF, Microsoft, McKinsey and PwC: analytical thinking, human judgement, communication and the ability to direct AI-enabled work.

From the right question to useful evidence.

01

Problem framing

Separate symptoms from causes, define the outcome and turn uncertainty into a question worth solving.

Practise it: Take a vague request and write the problem, affected people, desired outcome, evidence needed and assumptions to test.

Research signal: McKinsey describes a shift towards framing questions, interpreting results and guiding machines.

02

Business context

Understand customers, stakeholders, processes, constraints and commercial realities before recommending change.

Practise it: Map a current process, identify stakeholder needs and explain where value is lost or risk is created.

Research signal: Skills England highlights problem solving, collaboration, communication and digital fluency as cross-cutting needs.

03

Data and insight

Turn a business question into measures, test the evidence and explain what the finding means for a decision.

Practise it: Use SQL or another analysis tool to answer one meaningful question, then write the implication in plain language.

Research signal: WEF identifies AI and big data as fast-growing skills while analytical thinking remains a critical core skill.

From available information to responsible action.

04

Judgement and influence

Challenge weak assumptions, weigh trade-offs and communicate a recommendation that people can understand and act on.

Practise it: For a real decision, document the options, evidence, risks, unknowns, recommendation and what would change your mind.

Research signal: Microsoft identifies quality control and critical thinking as increasingly important, while PwC finds judgement and leadership becoming more valuable in AI-exposed work.

05

AI fluency

Use AI to improve research, analysis and communication while retaining responsibility for relevance, accuracy, privacy and risk.

Practise it: Choose one recurring task. Define where AI can help, the input it needs, how output will be checked and what must remain under human control.

Research signal: Skills England calls for the ability to use, verify and safely integrate AI tools. McKinsey identifies AI fluency as a rapidly rising demand.

Fluency is more than prompting

A strong AI workflow includes a clear purpose, useful context, verification, awareness of sensitive information, judgement about what to accept and responsibility for the final outcome.

How ready is your current skill set?

Score each statement from 1 to 5, where 1 means 'not yet confident' and 5 means 'I can do this consistently and explain my approach to someone else'.

01	I can turn an unclear request into a well-defined business problem.	1 2 3 4 5
02	I can understand and communicate across stakeholder, process and technology perspectives.	1 2 3 4 5
03	I can translate a business question into useful measures and evidence.	1 2 3 4 5
04	I can use SQL or another analysis tool to test data and explain the result.	1 2 3 4 5
05	I can weigh options, challenge assumptions and make a reasoned recommendation.	1 2 3 4 5
06	I can use AI purposefully and verify the quality of its output.	1 2 3 4 5
07	I understand the privacy, control and risk considerations in an AI workflow.	1 2 3 4 5
08	I can explain my thinking clearly in an interview or senior conversation.	1 2 3 4 5

Use the result as a conversation with yourself, not a verdict.

Look for the lowest two scores and the combinations that would create the most value for your next role. A data skill without business context can produce irrelevant analysis. AI fluency without judgement can create confident mistakes. Communication without evidence can struggle to influence. The goal is a connected skill set.

Start building evidence, not just awareness.

Week	Action	Evidence to keep
1	Choose a real business problem and write a one-page problem frame.	Problem statement, stakeholders, outcome and assumptions.
2	Define three useful measures and analyse a small dataset.	Queries, checks, chart and plain-language insight.
3	Use AI in one analysis workflow and document how you checked it.	Prompt, output, verification and control notes.
4	Create a short recommendation and explain it to another person.	Options, decision, risks, feedback and revised story.

Want a structured way to build the full combination?

The AI-Ready Business, Data & AI Analyst Accelerator is an eight-week live programme from High City Consulting. It combines business analysis, Agile, SQL, data insight, judgement, communication and responsible AI use through one connected workplace case.

Next cohort begins in September 2026

Tuesday and Thursday evenings, with an optional Saturday clinic.

£1,195 including VAT

Two-payment option available.

Explore the programme and register interest

Registering interest does not require payment or commit you to enrol.

The evidence behind the guide.

The guide interprets the sources below for career-development purposes. Figures and findings should be read in the context of each source's methodology and publication date.

World Economic Forum

Future of Jobs Report 2025

[Open the source publication](#)

Skills England

Annual skills report 2026

[Open the source publication](#)

Microsoft

2026 Work Trend Index: Agents, human agency and the opportunity for every organization

[Open the source publication](#)

PwC

2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer

[Open the source publication](#)

McKinsey Global Institute

Agents, robots, and us: Skill partnerships in the age of AI

[Open the source publication](#)

About High City Consulting

High City Consulting helps organisations and professionals make better use of business analysis, data, product thinking and AI. The AI-Ready Analyst programme is grounded in more than 20 years of practitioner experience across Amazon, Sky, Enterprise Rent-A-Car and consulting engagements spanning retail, travel, financial services and the public sector. That experience includes platforms serving more than 100 million users and over £100m in value opportunities shaped through data product strategy and execution.

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