How Kotak Bank Transitioned from Excel to a Modern Analytics Stack with Upskilling

Kotak Mahindra Bank is an Indian banking and financial services company. After struggling with increasingly large datasets, they used DataCamp to transition from Excel to a modern data analysis stack of Python, R, SQL, and Power BI. A monthly report that took seven days to create now took only 30 minutes, leading to 99% time-saving.

- Over 2.7 million customers and 323 branches
- 71,000 employees
- $7.9Bn revenue
- India's fifth-largest bank

Kotak's Challenge

Until recently, Kotak ran a fairly conventional analytics environment—everything was done in Excel. Although this had worked for years, as datasets began to balloon in size, and more complex questions were being asked of the data, problems started to appear. Spreadsheets took too long to run calculations, and sometimes crashed. The team tried breaking the data into smaller chunks and running calculations in each spreadsheet separately, which made things difficult to maintain. Bugs began creeping into analyses, and the team spent more time trying to find errors than running analyses.

> ## In the last year, we were really struggling because the size of the data was growing
>
> ANKIT GOEL, CHIEF MANAGER, KOTAK BANK

The reduction in productivity caused by big data meant something had to change.

The team primarily consisted of financial experts rather than technical experts, so Kotak needed to train everyone from scratch in new technologies to replace Excel.

The Solution

Kotak's managers identified Python, R, SQL, and Power BI as the optimal analytics stack based on their popularity, power, and maturity. Since everyone needed training, they realized that ad hoc training sessions would not be sufficient and that they needed a planned learning program on a platform that scaled to the needs of their whole team.

One team member had already been using DataCamp for their personal development and had positive experiences. They recommended DataCamp as a platform for the organization's learning program, and other employees trialled the platform.

Users particularly loved the interactive nature of the exercises, and the ability to download all the slides as a PDF to use as a reference later on. Ankit Goel, Chief Manager, realized that DataCamp was ideal for upskilling in the new technologies, and pitched this to Paul Parambi, Group President and Chief Risk Officer, who agreed.

The training program was successful, with employees quickly being able to apply the skills they learned on DataCamp in their jobs.

> **For a completely non-technical person to learn coding and successfully implement live projects within the span of a year is tremendous**
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> ANKIT GOEL, CHIEF MANAGER, KOTAK BANK

The Impact

One important win for Kotak was in automating data manipulation processes. One task, performed every month, took an employee seven working days to complete using the old manual process. After the team had taken some Python DataCamp courses, they redesigned the process to automatically run using Python scripts.

> **The seven-day task could now be completed in under 30 minutes— a 100x improvement!**
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> ANKIT GOEL, CHIEF MANAGER, KOTAK BANK
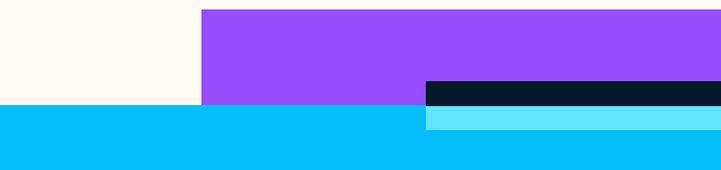
This initial success had knock-on benefits. By adopting a philosophy of trying to automate tasks, they discovered ways of standardizing data formats to make the coding easier. This created a virtuous circle where the standardized data format then provided efficiency gains in other areas of their work. The productivity improvements were astounding.

> **The way people use data has become standardized so it has increased efficiency a lot, with an 80% time saving overall**
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> ANKIT GOEL, CHIEF MANAGER, KOTAK BANK

Beyond pure technical efficiency, having data literacy skills throughout the team has helped save time for senior employees. As one of the few managers at Kotak with strong technical skills, Goel found himself spending a lot of time mentoring employees. Now he can be more hands-off and even find himself learning from his employees.

> **The future of finance is not about paying for expensive software but having the skills to code using open source tools and read and understand data. In my opinion, DataCamp is the best place to learn and practice data analytics**
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> ANKIT GOEL, CHIEF MANAGER, KOTAK BANK

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Contact us

datacamp.com

sales@datacamp.com