

James de Souza

Co-Founder

Two decades in data analytics. Seven years alongside the coaches who work with executive teams.

For twenty years, James's job was to make very large volumes of data usable by people who were not analysts. He owned a global insight platform at dunhumby, with development teams across the US, UK and India and launches into Mexico and Turkey. Later, at the Post Office, he ran customer analytics, built a centre of excellence, won joint-venture funding for it and led a team of twelve.

He still gets his hands dirty when a problem warrants it. A convenience retailer needed to know what mattered to its customers, and to give six thousand product lines a category and a pricing strategy each, in time for a critical system launch that wasn't going to move. Half a billion rows of transaction data later, the Trading Director said it had looked very easy. It hadn't been. Looking easy is most of the job.

James learnt that reading people is harder than reading their data when, some years ago, a direct report expected something of him he wasn't giving (at least not in the way it was looked for from James). He found out too late to fix it easily, and left unchecked it would have cost the confidence of someone in their leader. The challenge was that different people on the same team needed different things from James, and no average would have told him which. Time spent in the same rooms as leadership coaches and Executive teams, has only served to reinforce that.

That conviction is also why Treehouse exists. Two decades of making customer data usable had given him a discipline the people side of organisations was still doing without. The gap came into focus during the pandemic, when how people work together turned out to matter at least as much as how their customers behave, and the tools for reading it were a decade behind the ones he knew. Two businesses can look identical from the outside and still need completely different things from the people inside them. Closing that distance is what Treehouse is for.

Key skills

- Data & AI strategy
- People analytics
- Executive advisory
- Team leadership

"The most elegant model means little unless it reaches someone who can act on it."