Research & Analysis / Data Interpretation

Compare your metrics to industry standards, past performance, or control groups with automated significance testing.
Difficulty: Intermediate
Model: GPT-4 / Claude / Gemini
Use Case: Performance Reporting, Competitive Analysis, KPI Tracking
Updated: May 2026
Why This Prompt Exists
“Is 5% conversion rate good?” Without a benchmark, you have no idea — and most people guess.

You get:

- celebrating performance that’s actually below average
- panicking about metrics that are fine given your context
- decisions based on “feels good” instead of relative comparison
- missing real problems because you have no baseline
- stakeholders asking “compared to what?” and you having no answer

But benchmarks provide context:

- industry standard: how do similar companies perform?
- past performance: are we improving or declining?
- control group: did our intervention actually do anything?
- target/goal: are we meeting expectations?
- competitor: are we winning or losing?

Without comparison, numbers are meaningless.

This prompt compares your metrics to relevant benchmarks with statistical rigor.

The Prompt

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Assume the role of a performance analyst who benchmarks metrics.

Your task is to compare your data to relevant benchmarks and interpret
the difference.

Generate:

1. COMPARISON SUMMARY
   - Your metric: [value]
   - Benchmark: [value and source]
   - Raw difference: [absolute and percentage]

2. STATISTICAL ASSESSMENT
   - Is the difference statistically significant? (if data available)
   - Margin of error / confidence interval for your metric
   - Is the difference practically meaningful?

3. CONTEXT FACTORS
   - Why you might outperform benchmark (advantages)
   - Why you might underperform (disadvantages)
   - Differences in measurement or definition

4. TREND ANALYSIS (if time-series data)
   - Are you closing the gap or widening it?
   - Rate of change vs. benchmark rate
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5. RECOMMENDATION
   - Celebrate (you're genuinely ahead)
   - Investigate (gap exists, cause unknown)
   - Take action (gap is meaningful and negative)
   - Adjust benchmark (not the right comparison)

INPUTS:

Your metric:
[E.G., "Email open rate = 22%"]

Benchmark source and value:
[E.G., "Industry average for SaaS = 25% (Mailchimp 2024 report)"]

Sample size / confidence (for your metric):
[E.G., "N=50,000 emails, margin of error ±0.5%"]

Context / industry:
[E.G., "B2B SaaS, enterprise customers"]

Time period:
[E.G., "Q2 2026"]

RULES:
- Distinguish between statistical and practical significance
- Flag when benchmarks are from different populations (not apples-to-apples)
- Note that average is not always the right target (sometimes you want to be above or below)

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- Consider whether the benchmark is aspirational or realistic
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How To Use It

- Run this before any performance review — always bring a benchmark.
- For each KPI in your dashboard, define what “good” means (benchmark + target).
- Use industry benchmarks from sources like Gartner, Forrester, or industry reports.
- Compare to your own past performance as a baseline (year-over-year, quarter-over-quarter).
- When benchmarks aren’t available, use a control group from your own data.

Example Input

Your metric:
“E-commerce conversion rate = 3.2%”

Benchmark source and value:
“Industry average for apparel e-commerce = 2.5% (Statista 2025)”

Sample size / confidence:
“N=250,000 sessions last month”

Context / industry:
“DTC apparel, average order value $65”

Time period:
“May 2026”

Why It Works
Most performance reporting says “we’re at X%” without answering “is that good or bad?”

This framework improves outcomes by forcing:

- comparison summary (your number vs. benchmark, clearly stated)
- statistical assessment (is the difference real or noise?)
- context factors (why the comparison might be unfair — or generous)
- trend analysis (are you improving against benchmark?)
- clear recommendation (celebrate, investigate, or act)

Great benchmarking doesn't just compare numbers — it tells you what to do next.

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