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The Definitive Guide to Strategic Analytics

Introduction

Traditional analytical and statistical tools have not kept up with the evolution of the data that is now critical in strategic decision-making. Most of the common business intelligence (BI) and ad hoc query tools on the market today are unable to pull together and present this information at the point-of-decision, i.e., in front of the decision-maker in the right context, at the right time. And, if they are able to access today's new and always-evolving data types, the data is often out-of-date or stale by the time the required army of expensive statistical scientists has crunched the numbers on complex problems. Glacially slow time-to-insight just doesn't cut it when you're trying to understand the impact of marketing on customer behavior in a multi-channel retail and marketing environment and then compare performance against a variety of 'what-if' models. By the time the decision-maker has the information in front of him or her, the business opportunity is long gone.

From social media and 'big' data to spatial and cloud hosted data, an ever-growing array of new data types is increasingly critical in enterprise decision-making. Some of this data refreshes and updates so often that it is literally a moving target for analysis. The reality is that this data is often incompatible with the structured, inflexible reality of traditional data models.. What's more, while some data may be stored within the enterprise infrastructure, other data may not, instead located in a public cloud environment, in a software-as-a-service (SaaS) application, or simply as a continuous stream of unstructured information.

Alteryx knows that you need strategic analytics to make strategic decisions. You need access to all the critical data required for an informed, impactful decision—and you need it now, not tomorrow or next week. That's why we take a different approach to modern business analytics that enables you to bring together all the data you need, when you need it, so you can do the sophisticated analysis upon which your business relies, quickly and easily. And we deliver it in a cloud-based solution that doesn't require an advanced degree, millions of dollars, or lengthy, time-consuming cycles to make these decisions.

However, it takes more to drive change in strategic decision-making than great technology and a good data artisan. It also requires new set of best practices to adapt to this new paradigm. Based on our experience working with innovative companies driving strategic decisions with analytics to gain a competitive advantage, we have developed the following list of top 10 ways companies use Alteryx to leapfrog their competition and make impactful, well-informed business decisions.
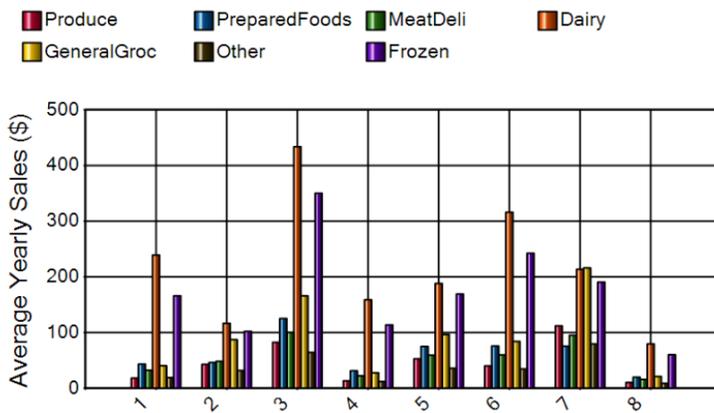
Top Ten Ways You Can Use Alteryx to Gain a Competitive Advantage

Organizations around the world using Alteryx today have gained a competitive advantage by using Alteryx Strategic Analytics to make well-informed business decisions. By following these 10 best practices, you can get the most value out of your investment in strategic analytics—and see the difference in your bottom line.

1. **Know the value of a Facebook "Like" (or, just because you have a Twitter account doesn't mean it's helping your business)**

   Social media analytics are nothing new and have helped many organizations optimize their marketing, recruiting, and even product development via crowdsourcing. However, while information about customer preferences, sentiment, or actions contained in this data often resides in isolation, it is critical to strategic decision-making and must be easily integrated into

Customer Clusters for Facebook Likers

Legend: Produce, PreparedFoods, MeatDeli, Dairy, GeneralGroc, Other, Frozen

(Chart: Average Yearly Sales ($) vs. clusters 1–8)

analytics. For example, integrating this information with point-of-sale (POS) and loyalty program data can help define the value of a customer "Like" on Facebook. This insight reveals the difference in purchase behavior (and therefore value) of a customer at the store level for a particular product category.

By allowing very simple integration of data from Facebook, Twitter, foursquare or Yelp with your corporate data, Alteryx can deliver that insight and help improve marketing and, therefore, sales performance. With design-time data integration and transformation, data artisans can create powerful analytic applications using the critical data that business decision-makers need to make the right strategic moves.

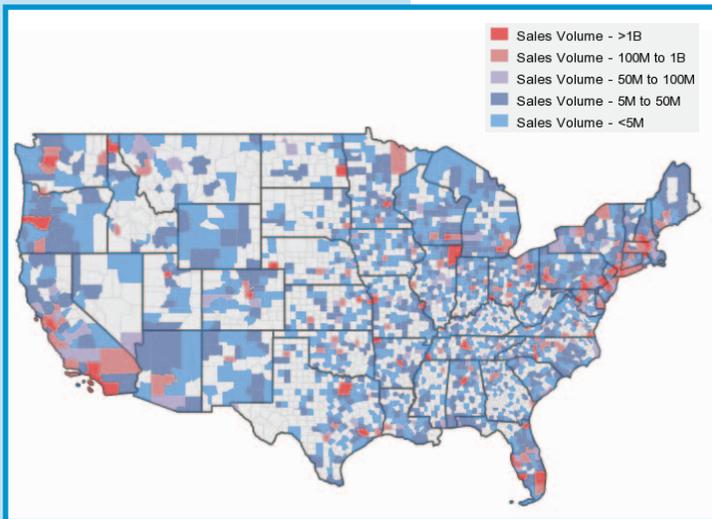2. **Realize return on investment in phase one of your 'big data' deployment**

One of the most frightening stories in the last wave of business intelligence deployments is the one of the very proud CIO who had just invested months of time and hundreds of thousands of dollars on an enterprise data warehouse. When asked how many people were using this data for strategic decision-making, the answer was: "That's phase two." Unfortunately, the current wave of 'big data' deployments is at risk of experiencing similar issues: everyone can see the intrinsic value of a Hadoop deployment but few organizations have gained business value from their investments.

Alteryx allows data artisans to integrate Hadoop data into any analytic application or process, providing a direct path to value. In this way, Alteryx lets your 'big data' become a critical and valuable data source that adds to your overall business insight today, rather than an investment waiting to be realized in five to seven years.

3. **Get the answer you need when you need it – not three months later – so your next strategic investment makes a difference on your bottom line**

If traditional business intelligence and data warehousing is slow and expensive, then agile business intelligence is fast and...well, agile. However, agile business intelligence has largely been limited to a narrow – if very large – set of data that provides simplistic, skin-deep analysis. Additionally, complex questions require sophisticated analysis that a business decision-maker can't find in a simple ad hoc query using an agile tool. Data artisans are caught between the rock of fast data discovery tools and the hard place of ad hoc query tools used with a traditional data warehouse.

The solution? Allow Alteryx to bring together the speed of agile business intelligence analysis with the depth of insight of in traditional statistical or predictive analysis solutions. With Alteryx, you can complete or iterate upon your strategic analysis in minutes or hours, rather than waiting many weeks or even months for the project to fit into a very busy statistical specialist's schedule.

Sales Volume - >1B
Sales Volume - 100M to 1B
Sales Volume - 50M to 100M
Sales Volume - 5M to 50M
Sales Volume - <5M

4. Know where your business is actually taking place

Every business transaction happens somewhere—and the context around that location matters. Which store did the customer visit? What are the demographics for the five-mile area around that store? Which competitors operate within that five-mile radius? All of that data is critical for strategic decision-making. However, location-based business intelligence and geospatial analysis have been highly specialized fields for many years. What's more, the large scale of the data sets involved and the complexity of the tools developed to support location-based data analysis have translated into plenty of missed business opportunities.

Alteryx overcomes these issues and enables companies to easily consume and package the required data for location-based analysis, making spatial intelligence part of an easy to use strategic analytics platform.

5. Use information about every customer and every business to make decisions

Customer data comes from many sources but building business models that will drive strategic decisions requires collecting data about your customers that goes beyond a customer relationship management (CRM) system. Getting access to segmentation, population, firmographic, spatial, and demographic data is often a difficult and costly process, due to the sheer size of the data sets and how often data is refreshed.

Alteryx collects and manages the vast array of data sources available to you – including third-party data sources – so you can focus on getting the right answers to strategic questions using the right data. Plus, you'll get the answers while the business opportunity still exists, not weeks or months later.

6. Move from data to insight to foresight – all from the comfort of your desktop

Statistical and predictive insight is neither new nor innovative. Industries have long conducted micro-segment marketing by combining customer data and predictive models to drive useful clustering and targeting. However, every industry, company, and business function within them are faced with the same problem today: massive volumes of dynamically changing data (e.g., cell phone engineering data or point of sale data linked to loyalty card adoption). Right now, making strategic decisions with this data requires statistical and predictive modeling—but companies cannot realistically wait for or afford specialist help to make those decisions.

Alteryx delivers statistical and predictive capabilities directly within an easy-to-use analytical application development environment by embedding the world's most widely used statistical language, "R," directly into our solution. This allows data or business analysts in line-of-business organizations to easily gain the capabilities of an expensive, specialized data scientist, without extra training or significant financial investment.

7. Build visual insight from insight and foresight, not just simple data

The emergence of data discovery vendors, such as QlikView and Tableau, has interrupted the steady, sleepy growth of the traditional business intelligence sector, becoming a disruptive, positive force in executive suites around the world. However, these applications lack the sophisticated analysis

The Alteryx Competitive Advantage

There are three key reasons you should buy Alteryx over other competing strategic analytic solutions:

1. **Alteryx enables humans to answer complex business questions in 1/10th the time of other solutions**
Alteryx makes it simple to access and combine the right data, apply the right analytic or predictive process to get to the right answers, and then rapidly iterate the analysis to ensure the right decision is made at the right time.

2. **Alteryx gives you the right data you need to make the right decision right now**
Although other solutions allow access to different types of data, the data is no longer current enough to be useful by the time it is integrated. Alteryx allows integration of all of this critical data – including segmentation, firmographic, spatial, population, and demographic data – in moments.

3. **Alteryx allows you to know where and why an event occurs**
While spatial analysis or location intelligence is not unique, Alteryx uniquely integrates it into mainstream analytics and makes it available to all decision-makers. Every transaction happens somewhere and the ability to include spatial analysis in any strategic decision provides Alteryx customers with an edge.

capabilities of business intelligence and analytics solutions, such as SAS or SPSS, which require steep investment in hard-to-find statistical specialists, most of whom aren't available at the snap of your fingers.

The good news is that Alteryx allows the iterative analysis approach of a data discovery solution with the deep analytical capabilities of the traditional business analytics solutions.

8. **Create applications that average human beings can use to make decisions**
Self-service business intelligence (BI), ad hoc query & analysis, and other BI capabilities, which are focused on freeing the business decision-maker from the availability of an analyst, have made great strides in democratizing business intelligence. Unfortunately, the truly strategic decisions typically do not use a single set of data. Instead, they are sophisticated questions that need to be answered by multiple different data sets from different sources and analyzed by humans.

By embedding analytical best practices into applications that a business user can actually use and by providing the ability to pull in whatever data is required for any particular business decision, Alteryx gives decision-makers the independence to use all the data that is available to them to gain the sophisticated insight they need to make impactful, well-informed business decisions.

9. **Treat every piece of data as valuable data, whether it's in the cloud or in your data warehouse**
The widespread adoption of cloud computing means that you never know exactly where your data resides: it could be in your datacenter or it could be hosted in the cloud, either in your organization's private cloud or in a cloud maintained by one of many third-party cloud providers. This makes bringing together the data in your data warehouse and the other business data you need to make critical decisions – social media, big data, spatial and geographic data, for instance – difficult, if not impossible.

Alteryx overcomes the hurdles to bringing together data stored in disparate environments and makes it simple to integrate all the data you need for your particular business decisions in a single desktop application. All the data integration, data quality and data management takes place directly – and automatically – within the Alteryx analytic application, so you can focus on the business at-hand: making strategic decisions that matter.

10. **Value the data artisan, for they truly "get" all of this and all the business decisions you have to make**
Many of the issues discussed in this paper address the need for data and the capabilities to integrate, analyze and share that data. However, the most critical component of the modern BI and strategic analytics framework is the data artisan. They are part of your business group and probably aren't in IT. They understand your business and the types of decisions you make. They understand questions such as do you need to keep an underperforming store open because it is keeping your competitor in check, or how do you ensure profitable customers with low cell phone signal strength do not churn to competitors? They also know what your data sources are and what they look like so they can actually build the data streams to deliver your strategic analytics. Treat them well and give them Alteryx.

Alteryx: The New Approach to Strategic Analytics

Alteryx Strategic Analytics is a desktop-to-cloud solution that combines your business data with the market insight and spatial processing that today's strategic planners need. Now, data artisans can pull, overlay, and analyze any combination of enterprise data, industry content, and location intelligence all in a single picture—so your organization is ready to act, with all crtitical variables right in front of you. No waiting for months for your data environment or statisticians to catch up to your thoughts.

Alteryx offers three components to give you an unmatched strategic analysis software experience:

Designer's desktop used by data artisans to manage and analyze data. This is then embedded into analytic applications.

Analytic Applications used by business decision makers. These are simple to use and focused on specific business problems with embedded analytics, reporting, and visualization.

Cloud services that offer the ability to publish to private or public cloud environments allowing the critical broad sharing of analytic IP to business users, internal or external.

Conclusion

Today's competitive marketplace means strategic business decisions must be made faster than ever before. In addition, these decisions must be more accurate than ever before as well—the margin for error shrinks daily.

However, enterprises like yours have been hamstrung by the current array of strategic analysis tools, which have not kept up with the evolving data reality. Most tools either don't allow integration of data warehouse data along with more recent unstructured data types, such as social media and 'big data' or, when they do, the process is so complicated and expensive that you find yourself without the right data when you need it, either because it took so long to get the right information or because you didn't have the funds to invest in an expensive statistical specialist.

Alteryx changes all that. We take a different approach to modern business analytics that enables you to bring together all the data you need, when you need it, so you can do the sophisticated analysis upon which your business relies, quickly and easily. And we deliver it in a tool that doesn't require an advanced degree, millions of dollars, or lengthy, time-consuming cycles to make these decisions.

With Alteryx and the 10 best practices outlined in this paper, you will be able to leapfrog your competition and make impactful, well-informed business decisions.

To learn more about Alteryx and the best practice approach to strategic analytics that our customers are using today visit www.alteryx.com.

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