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Big Data Analytics Are Revolutionizing Marketing

Anybody tracking the rise of big data has seen an ever-growing list of industries transformed. Marketing is now solidly on that list, and anybody who does not embrace big data as a key decision-making tool is missing out.

Thankfully, access to and understanding of big data is growing as quickly as the mission-critical role it plays at the heart of an increasingly digital economy.

A democratization process is under way that is helping more people unlock insights through big data without reliance on the in-demand data scientist position within an organization. It's helping the average person with software tools that can

QUICK TAKE

- *A democratization process is under way that is helping more people unlock insights through big data.*
- *The list of make-or-break areas where big data*

intuitively manage analytics in real time. And it's helping these same people deploy familiar data sources in ways that can be easily shared within an organization or during customer-facing presentations.

By now, most marketers understand that they don't have to put up with huge infrastructure costs and glacial timelines of building their own custom analytics environment. But many do not fully know what capabilities are out there. Regardless of the analytics products or services a company chooses, let's remember some of the underlying reasons why leveraging big data has become so crucial in today's ultracompetitive marketing landscape.

The list of make-or-break areas where big data reaps marketing advantage continues to grow. Whether you're looking to analyze survey responses, track social mentions or campaign revenue, assess buying behavior, compare trends from multiple account records, or parse geographic variations in brand loyalty, you need a foundation of [agile \(/cmo-com/home/articles/2014/1/27/relevance_and_roi_th.html\)](http://www.cmo.com/home/articles/2014/1/27/relevance_and_roi_th.html) management systems that handle streams of complex, often unstructured data from multiple sources. From small companies to huge agencies, every corner of today's marketing world is learning the value of big data.

Data Blending

The best approach for many marketing firms and departments is to combine every piece of information—every click, page view, tweet, campaign response, email open, form complete, support request, purchase, and download—into one complete

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dashboard. This approach might mean mixing existing, multiple data sources in a way that overlays varied information into single, visually coherent, and flexible workspace that allows you to manipulate and play with the data to reveal trends and insights.

A key requirement is that these insights are easy to share in a clear, visually compelling way with others, whether they be internal colleagues in charge of strategy or client decision makers. One of our customers, SIGMA Marketing Insights, stresses this visual analytics function as crucial to its sharing strategy and insights with clients. In light of customers demanding self-service business insight and reduced data discovery time amid easy mobile access, SIGMA relied heavily on a system to provide answers quickly and intuitively with just a few mouse clicks to put data on display for clients in a powerful way.

Marketers' own lives get easier as well. Susan Baier, owner of Audience Audit and a Tableau customer, said she has escaped the drudgery of painstakingly constructing Excel charts from scratch. "I spent, easily, 20 hours just working with the data before I could start building charts," she told us recently. "And I'm fast with Excel."

Data Support For Marketing Instincts

Marketers have easy access to user-friendly products to manipulate the way data looks—the layout, colors, and other graphic elements—and the ability to easily and securely share reports with colleagues and

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clients. These can include unique URLs that can be simply emailed, or recipients can subscribe to for automatic updates.

The marketplace for analytics is crowded, which means vendors need to build solutions with maximum accessibility and minimal learning curves. Particularly with visual analytics, developers need to avoid the need for complex coding or engineering requirements so more people can access data to round out their marketing instincts.

Data does indeed help inform smart decision-making, especially when that data can be rendered in flexible, innovative ways to unlock new insights from existing information. How you look at the data can even change something as fundamental as your verdict on whether a marketing campaign was a success or failure. There have been social campaigns, for instance, where the marketing funnel shows how campaign efforts didn't boost social mentions, but did increase the percentage of Web visitors who downloaded and registered a product. This detail could have easily have been overlooked in a nondata-intensive environment.

Fortunately, the big data revolution and easy analytics have removed most excuses to ignore data when making today's most important marketing decisions.

To learn more about big data, attend the Adobe Summit, March 24-28. [Click here](#)

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