

Analytics: The Science of Business

by Jon Craighead

"If you cannot not measure it you can't improve it." Peter Drucker

Analytics is defined as the discovery, interpretation, and communication of meaningful patterns of collected data and is most valued when aligned with previously authenticated historical information. This is the science of the interpretation of analytical data applied to formulate insight and utilization. Analytics depends on prompt, confirmed, and validated statistical indicators. Organizations may apply such insight into selected data to describe, predict, and improve business performance or expansion. This process is specifically valuable in assessing marketing optimization and trends. Such findings are invaluable in the organizational interpretation of expense, marketability, and sustainability. Additionally valued is the insight into credit risk, fraud, and market security vulnerabilities.

A word of caution: this analytic process is more than merely a collection of data. It is utilizing established interrogative approaches to provide a precise application for a specific business requirement, such as location, customer resources, client culture, workforce, and procurement practices. Routinely factored in is competition. Once the data are gathered, the next step is analyzing their potential utilization and how to apply this information to an organization's objectives. There are usually multiple options of analytical findings to consider regardless of an organizational strategy or scope. This necessitates clear objectives outlined in the initial planning process; providing a clear intent and purpose that's defined and understood. The more the intent is in the foreground, the more likely you'll know when you've achieved your objective.

One must take care to avoid a rushing to conclusions, allowing a complete and thorough data analysis to unfold. As valuable as this data is, it does not singularly connect you to your customer. As in the past, you must start with the needs of your customers and focus on creating value for them, all the while remembering they, like you, are caught up in the dynamic of the unknown. This means their operational patterns are in an evolving state of fluctuation and uncertainty. This ultimately requires your partnership to validate and update your marketing approaches, thereby providing you a more holistic view of both the customers' needs and the market trends. Working in harmony with your customer will promote a solid and long lasting partnership. It's always primarily based in relationship.

Relationship in this business context goes beyond affinity and social etiquette. This is you and your clients or customers united in partnership for the creation of a better result in a business outcome that is designed together. You are joined in a common cause with an intentionality for accomplishing more together than separately. It may take the form of you and your client designing a creative objective together to produce a better productive outcome, which is always more effective than you telling the customer what they need. Your input along with the customer's intention will likely create a more successful and effective operational plan. The most successful outcomes are consistently the result of an earnest relationship, resulting in both parties coming away with a more functional plan of action that is designed and focused on the predetermined outcome. This sort of partnership of mutual respect and reliable data builds a lasting platform of trust that perseveres the ebbs and flows of a dynamic business environment over time. The ultimate outcome of this partnership is you become joint stakeholders in each other's success.

We have excellent technology to assist us in doing our work more effectively than ever before. These tools are accurate fast and reliable. They are a tremendous asset to us in our demanding work; simply put, they are indispensable. Analytics minimizes the guesswork of planning. Yet they are not a substitute for human interaction. When these technologies are aligned in cultivated relationships they are an invincible force. This has been proven irrespective of the size of the organization, from a one-person business to an international conglomerate. When the key ingredients of relationship – honor, respect, competence and generosity – are merged with advanced technologies, the consistent outcome is success.

To ignore the impact of technology today is both unwise and risky. At the same time, to ignore the relationship component to success puts you in even greater peril.