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Using weather analytics over weather data for relevant marketing

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Weather affects everyone daily. It influences countless decisions we make, from what we wear to what we eat to our entertainment choices. The weather is a key driver of consumer behavior, greatly influencing what we buy, when we buy, and where we buy it.

In marketing, it is becoming more common to leverage the weather to create strong messages that resonate with your target market.

Weather allows marketers to connect with consumers on a highly local level, targeting them with a relevant message at the right time. Seems straightforward? Think again.

Weather vain

The weather does not affect all consumers equally.

Weather's effect on consumer demand is much more nuanced than you may think. In fact, it is based on a variety of factors including time of year, location, recent weather experiences and the product or service being offered.

By solely using weather data instead of weather analytics in your digital campaigns, it is assumed that the same conditions affect all consumers equally. This, however, is not the case.

Consumers in Los Angeles react differently to light rain and 72 degrees Fahrenheit than consumers in Seattle. Nor does it drive them to make the same purchases. So why advertise the same to all locations experiencing the same weather?

It is critical to understand these regional variations and nuances to allow you to more effectively market your products and services.

Detailed analytics that combine years of sales data and weather data is really the key to isolating, identifying and quantifying weather's true influence on consumers.

These weather-driven demand measurements correlate historical purchasing patterns with weather conditions by day or week, by market and by category.

Also, these insights allow marketers to ditch the one-size-fits-all approach for more precise targeting strategies that account for the different buying-behavior profiles that exist across thousands of unique time, geography and product intersections.

Degree of difference

Knowing how your target audience reacts to the weather around them will allow you to capture and capitalize on favorable consumer demand.

Take the springtime, for example, when the weather is extremely volatile. The threshold for seasonal products varies by time and location in cities across the country.

To shoppers in Boston, temperature anomalies of +6 degrees F above normal max temperatures (~55 degrees F) drive consumers to purchase warm weather products, although this will change throughout the season.

In Chicago this time of year, a +11 degrees F temperature anomaly above ~59 degrees F drives diners to outdoor restaurants or to buy a new spring dress.

Meanwhile in Atlanta, a temperature anomaly of +7 degrees F above normal max temperatures (~70 degrees F) puts a spring in shoppers' step.

Marketers have the opportunity to optimize digital strategies by promoting into locations experiencing favorable weather.

For example, comparing March 2015 versus March 2014, marketers can see how the weather variations year-to-year greatly impact consumer demand.

Last March in Charleston, SC, there was only one day where demand was favorable for short-sleeve shirts. March 2015 had 11 favorable days.

Suncare products had five more favorable days in March 2015 than 2014 in Los Angeles.

In Miami, shorts had 10 more favorable days this March than March 2014.

Seattle had 7 more favorable days in March 2015 than March 2014 for iced tea.

USING WEATHER ANALYTICS, not weather data, to identify when and where conditions will be favorable for your product or service can lead to higher-response metrics, increased brand awareness and increased return on investment.

Even though the calendar says "spring," it does not mean spring has sprung everywhere.

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