



Business challenge

To succeed, marketing campaigns must deliver the right message at the right time, via the right channel. But when is the right time and what is the right channel? GroupM aims to help clients find out.

Transformation

To help marketing campaigns stand out against the background noise, GroupM Nordic uses machine learning algorithms to gain greater levels of insight into the targeting, timing and placement of ads—driving dramatically higher conversion rates.

Business benefits:

Enhances
brand performance by serving more relevant, compelling ads to consumers

Up to 50%
higher marketing campaigns conversion rates deliver greater value to clients

Saves
time on analysis, helping GroupM serve more clients with better results

GroupM Nordic

Embracing data science to increase marketing campaign conversion rates by up to 50 percent

The world's largest media investment company, GroupM is responsible for one in three ads globally. Employing 27,500 people at 400 locations around the world, it reports annual revenues of USD 1.2 billion.

"IBM Data Science Experience is the first solution we've seen that offers machine learning, integration and automation in a single coherent platform."

Baltazar Ozonек
Head of Marketing Technology
GroupM Nordic

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Demystifying consumer desires

Advertisements succeed when they appeal to our desires—but desires are complex and ever-changing. For media investment companies such as GroupM Nordic, the challenge is to understand the myriad factors that lie behind each of our purchasing decisions, and identify the most influential triggers that drive us to buy.

Baltazar Ozonек, Head of Marketing Technology at GroupM, explains: “One of the keys to effective marketing is to deliver the right messages to your target audience at precisely the right moment.

“For example, the success of a fast food ad could depend on catching people just before they leave work, and tempting them to relax with take-out instead of spending their evening in the kitchen.”

GroupM Nordic uses analytics to help decide when and where its clients should place their ads.

Due to the ever-increasing scale of the advertising datasets that need to be analyzed, and the speed at which decisions need to be made in the world of online advertising, it's vital to make the analysis as fast and automated as possible.

Emil Lauritsen, Digital Developer at GroupM Nordic, elaborates: “We run several hundred campaigns each month, placing ads via video sites, search engines and other media.

“Our ads create billions of impressions—and we analyze each campaign down to the level of a single impression. Many statistical analytics and modeling techniques struggle to cope with so much data at the speed required to optimize ongoing campaigns.”

Baltazar Ozonек adds: “That’s why we’re using the latest data exploration and machine learning technology to help automate and accelerate our analytics processes, to give our clients clearer insight into the customer journey as it unfolds.”

Revealing revolutionary insights

GroupM Nordic has drawn on its longstanding partnership with IBM to unlock new analytics capabilities, using IBM® Watson Analytics™ for rapid data exploration, and IBM Data Science Experience to build, train and deploy machine learning models.

Baltazar Ozonек comments: “Our data science team is based in Copenhagen, and IBM has a strong presence in the Nordic region. We were impressed not only with their technology, but with the level of expertise IBM could provide both here in Denmark and internationally.”

Emil Lauritsen adds: “As soon as I started playing around with Watson Analytics I could see its potential to improve the way that we work. It’s so intuitive, and it provides impressive results so quickly, that as soon as we show it to anyone they are eager to start using it themselves.”

GroupM Nordic uploads huge datasets to IBM Watson Analytics and uses the solution’s built-in data discovery capabilities to reveal patterns and trends in the data, helping to create hypotheses about the right times and places to release ads. By constantly tweaking the parameters and monitoring the results, the company can create a virtuous circle of continuous improvement over the course of a campaign.

“IBM Watson Analytics shows us the power of artificial intelligence in action,” says Baltazar Ozonек. “We can take data from a whole range of sources—such as Google, Facebook and our clients—and analyze it at dizzying speed, uncovering surprising insights into consumer purchasing behavior that help us optimize campaigns in-flight.”

GroupM was also the first company in Europe to adopt IBM Data Science Experience. It is an interactive, collaborative platform, which gives data scientists access to a wide range of open source tools, including Jupyter Notebooks and RStudio. The solution can run in the IBM Cloud, in a private cloud or on your desktop.

“Watson Machine Learning is brilliant because it lets you try out a lot of different machine learning models on your data very quickly, so you can get an idea of what techniques are going to work best,” says Emil Lauritsen. “This gives you a real head-start on building your own custom models for your data. In fact, we were able to get our first model into production in less than a month.”

Baltazar Ozonok adds: “IBM Data Science Experience is a unique solution offering machine learning, integration and automation in a single coherent platform. As a cloud solution, it also helps to solve the challenge of building a scalable infrastructure to handle huge datasets: whatever hardware we need, IBM can spin up for us almost instantly.

“The combination of data science and automation is vital: instead of just providing one-off analyses, we can continuously re-analyze and monitor the performance of each campaign, helping our models get smarter over time. We can even deploy machine learning models directly on our clients’ websites – a new service that puts them in a market-leading position for advertising intelligence.”

Enabling sky-high conversion rates

Both Watson Analytics and Data Science Experience are already delivering significant improvements in the efficiency of GroupM Nordic’s data science workflows—as well as helping to drive measurable results for the company’s clients.

Emil Lauritsen gives an example: “We have already been able to achieve a 50 percent increase in the conversion rate for an existing marketing campaign through insights that we gained from IBM Watson Analytics.”

Looking to the future, GroupM Nordic sees both Watson Analytics and Data Science Experience as critical tools in its strategy to maintain an industry-leading position. By helping clients target their campaigns more effectively, the company is also helping to reduce the number of irrelevant ads that consumers encounter.

Baltazar Ozonok concludes: “The size and complexity of advertising datasets are growing at an unprecedented rate. This presents opportunities for advertisers and publishers, but also poses a risk of getting lost in a sea of data.

“Watson Analytics and Data Science Experience help us navigate these vast datasets, providing analysis and automation tools that help us understand how consumer journeys evolve over time, and find new ways to achieve return on advertising investments.”

Solution components

- IBM® Data Science Experience
- IBM Watson Analytics™

Take the next step

IBM Analytics offers one of the world’s deepest and broadest analytics platform, domain and industry solutions that deliver new value to businesses, governments and individuals. For more information about how IBM Analytics helps to transform industries and professions with data, visit ibm.com/analytics. Follow us on Twitter at @IBMAalytics, on our blog at ibmbigdatahub.com and join the conversation #IBMAalytics.

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