alteryx   targetsmart

TargetSmart Creates a Comprehensive National Voter Profiling Database Using Data Blending in Alteryx

CHALLENGE

For the Obama for America Campaign, TargetSmart needed to build voter propensity models and score national files for a variety of political fundraisers. Campaign staff required up-to-date, accurate phone and text-message lists at hundreds of locations around the country, in a matter of hours, not days.

SOLUTION

Alteryx allowed TargetSmart to blend a multitude of data sources into a comprehensive national voter profiling database. The incredibly fast, built-in data-cleansing and geo-coding capabilities of Alteryx proved to be critical for TargetSmart customers, who relied upon these capabilities to combine, clean, search, and sort lists of voter prospects by address and phone.

RESULTS

- **Deeper Insights:** Increased market share and experienced 400 percent greater than projected revenue performance due to better, more accurate data delivered to customers
- **Hours vs. Weeks:** Blended multiple, disparate data sources spanning decades of voter information into a comprehensive voter registration data warehouse in three weeks versus three months
- **Intuitive Workflow:** Compiled reports in a matter of minutes instead of several days, enabling clients to recieve results with tight turnarounds

Introduction

TargetSmart Communications is a political data firm specializing in providing leading information resources, database services, and communications solutions. Washington, D.C.-based TargetSmart supports a variety of political activities for campaigns and political organizations, including national party committees and the Obama for America Campaign. These applications include fundraising, voter registration drives, polling and political research, grassroots advocacy, and a variety of voter targeting and outreach services.

Situation

TargetSmart works with political organizations that must process millions of records of data from dozens of data sources, from national, state, county, and city records, in order to identify voters, track their tendencies, and accurately count and call upon unregistered voters prior to an election. TargetSmart was using open source software solutions in an attempt to merge multiple databases, two of which consisted of 200 million voters each. The company used these databases to derive voter information for a variety of political purposes, including fundraising, polling, voter registration, and other activities.

For the Obama for America Campaign, the company needed to build voter propensity models and score national files for political fundraising campaigns, as well as identify those individuals most likely not to vote. Campaign staff required up-to-date, accurate phone and text-message lists at hundreds of locations around the country, in a matter of hours, not days.

Unfortunately, government data for various voter categories involves hundreds of different file formats. In addition, compiling voter registration lists for states and counties is difficult—no universal format exists, and many states are not compliant even when standards are recommended. While data is continuously being aggregated, it must also be constantly updated, cleansed, and enhanced with demographic profiling data, and all of this must be managed at very fast speeds for TargetSmart clients to act upon the data in a timely manner.

TargetSmart's choice of data processing tools was leading to a troubling lack of efficiency, accuracy, and reliability. Since TargetSmart operates as a small business, and it was relying primarily upon three employees to handle these data compilation and business intelligence needs, the company realized that it needed a better solution to quickly processing vast amounts of data from multiple, disparate sources.

Solution

Initially, TargetSmart thought about integrating a collection of open source tools and standard SQL databases, but the company abandoned this strategy after running tests with a free evaluation copy of *Alteryx Analytics*.

Over the course of a few months, TargetSmart used Alteryx to blend a multitude of data sources—including seven very large demographic data files, three companies' lists of phone numbers, millions of email addresses, and variously collected archives of regional and state voter file records—into a comprehensive national voter profiling database. The incredibly fast, built-in data-cleansing and geo-coding capabilities of Alteryx proved to be critical in enabling TargetSmart to combine all of this data into its proprietary national voter registration database, called VoterBase, processing decades of national voter information in three weeks versus three months..

Using its newly constructed voter data powerhouse, TargetSmart successfully competed in a bid to win the Obama for America Campaign as its client, beating out two entrenched competitors in this market and raising the bar for the industry in the area of data blending and advanced analytics.

Results

"Alteryx allowed us to get in and not only become a competitive voter file vendor, but also to win major accounts and provide services to clients like Obama for America," said Steve Brighton, Principal at TargetSmart Communications. "With Alteryx, we were able to do in minutes and hours what we were having trouble

doing with conventional data processing systems in days and weeks. As a result, over the last year we have seen an increase in our market share and a rise in revenue beyond projections by more than 400 percent."

TargetSmart considers Alteryx one of its key competitive advantages, since its speed and accuracy does the work of five data administrators. Alteryx allows TargetSmart to be competitive in an industry where a few vendors have been deep-rooted for decades. With Alteryx, TargetSmart is now an "up and coming" vendor that easily produces high-quality data, quickly and efficiently. VoterBase is able to aggregate, analyze, and deploy data rapidly and with precision, providing demographics, ethnicity, voter information, and propensity scores for party or issue affiliation and general political leanings.

In addition, TargetSmart uses Alteryx to routinely upgrade its offering by integrating multiple national databases, each containing hundreds of millions of records, whenever new compilations are available. In this way, TargetSmart's VoterBase maintains its leadership as a comprehensive, cleaned and current picture of the nation's electorate, ready to summarize any request by counts, provide detailed spatial maps, or deliver lists of voter profile analyses by county, neighborhood, or household. With Alteryx, TargetSmart can update and geocode files five to 10 times faster than with its previous system.

Alteryx's speed and data throughput capacity enabled TargetSmart to use its vast voter database to provide accurate voter targeting for fundraising and telephone polling and to assist with growing unregistered voter registrations. During the heat of the Obama for America campaign, TargetSmart was able to use the power of Alteryx to deliver a summary and count within an hour or two of a campaign request for a series of metro or region areas. Within another hour or two, phone, email and physical addresses were available in lists, ready to put in the volunteers' hands.

"With Alteryx, we were able to do in minutes and hours what we were having trouble doing with conventional data processing systems in days and weeks."

—Steve Brighton, Principal at TargetSmart Communications

alteryx