How OneInform can optimize your programs using data science

By Ted Schultz
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About OneInform

E Source OneInform is a suite of artificial intelligence (AI)–powered solutions that facilitate the next generation of programs required for an evolving distribution grid. Think of it as our data science services backbone that provides deeper insights about your customers to help you build and match the right programs with the right participants for optimal outcomes.

Data science at scale

Our data science company takes a customer-centric approach begins with an understanding of each individual customer and then lets machine learning cluster customers into cohorts based on common characteristics around behaviors and energy use. Think about that for a minute: all the predictive data a utility has about a household or business customer—including detailed advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) data—combined with our household, business, environmental, and geospatial external data attributes curated into an AI-ready dataset.

Then our data science services team processes this large volume of data at the individual customer level relative to specific utility objectives. These objectives can range from expanding bill payment options to reduce calls and handling time to reducing demand on congested feeders or rethinking programs offered to low- and moderate-income or small and midsize business (SMB) customers to ensure equity. The key isn't looking at segments but at every unique customer: their decisions, their power usage, and their own attributes and personality.

The power of AI

As a solutions-based data science company, our proprietary AI algorithms are combined to deliver specific solutions to achieve your utility objectives. These algorithms are applied against the AI-ready dataset described earlier to train and produce digital models that are specific to the utility and specific to the unique question your team wants to answer.

One important starting point is using AMI data to develop detailed (at least hourly) weather-normalized energy-usage models for every customer as it's an important ingredient to understanding real customer value and a customer's ability to impact program performance. Once this type of preliminary predictive data science is done, the algorithms are applied. The machines will assess each individual customer and cluster them into cohorts with common characteristics relative to solving a specific objective.

Cohorts with the best customers to achieve your objective will be easy to identify. At one utility, two cohorts representing 14% of their customers were about 60% of the market potential to achieve a specific program objective. With the best customers identified, additional data science is applied to develop cohort micropersonas to facilitate a more-personalized engagement to deliver a positive customer experience. It doesn't stop there as the utility-specific solution models continuously learn as predictive data is updated to improve results.

Read our recent blog Utility moneyball: How E Source OneInform helps you make data-driven decisions to learn more about how OneInform is changing the game.

Scoping for a distributed grid

The evolving role of the distributed grid is requiring utilities to broaden the scope of their customer programs. Here are few examples:

- A Midwest utility wants to improve its ability to serve SMB customers as it recovers from tough times and its current portfolio struggles with cost-effectiveness. OneInform has delivered a new way to view and understand this hard-to-serve category of customers through cohorts with common behavioral load characteristics that represent specific opportunities to deliver value to specific customers.
- A West Coast utility needed to reduce demand during critical times on specific feeders to avoid costly system upgrades. OneInform transformed the utility's demand-response portfolio into a more valuable and targeted resource with a 30% improvement in performance.
- Another West Coast utility needed to reduce calls and handling time as arrears spiked during COVID-19. OneInform differentiated customers and offered new payment options to improve the customers' experiences, especially those who were entering arrears for the first time.

You can find more examples of how our leading data science company and OneInform has helped utilities via the case studies on the OneInform web page.

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