

Preface

This dissertation is the result of my studies on data augmentation in database marketing. I am particularly interested in data and how it can be used to differentiate people in order to automatically generate individualized communication. I am always surprised on how much data we leave behind as digital footprints and – at the same time – how little we know about our customers as database marketing analysts. It is my utmost concern to reduce this information gap.

I have concentrated on the combination of statistics and communication during my media management degree at the University of Mainz. After an internship at Lufthansa German Airlines, I was granted the possibility to conduct my first data augmentation for the database marketing department at Miles & More, the frequent flyer program of Lufthansa. I was employed as a database marketing analyst in 2010 and have been working in this exciting field since.

There are enterprises specialized in data collecting and usage, e.g. Google, Facebook, and Apple. When using their platforms, we experience targeted communication. However, we seldom really notice it, because relevant information is not something one realizes (unless struck as daunting). Much more often, we perceive advertisements as irrelevant, misplaced, or inappropriate. The vast amount of companies does not have a detailed data basis to segment and select customers for differentiated marketing communication.

At work, we had many discussions about which external sources can be used for database marketing purposes and how. There is a general reluctance regarding for example volunteer surveys and social media sources. In these sources, data has been collected for a non-representative subgroup of customers only. Furthermore, most of the data cannot or must not be matched on an exact basis. Data augmentation projects require a considerable amount of know-how, time, and money. It is not approached, unless the return on marketing investment can be anticipated.

To me, these external sources provide a set of opportunities. Their contained information cannot be obtained otherwise. External sources are beneficial, because they are up-to-date, easy to acquire, and cheap. Service providers offering data fusion services are often overpriced and less experienced in the respective data. Without much effort, internal database marketing analysts can do a better job. By highlighting important facts to regard, I want to facilitate the use of data augmentation in companies.

Also, I would like to encourage the academic discussion regarding data augmentation in database marketing. A wide range of augmentation approaches has evolved, both in direct marketing and online marketing. However, the scientific foundation for these approaches is sparse. I believe that the methods and use cases for data augmentation will advance, if the academic discussion is pushed. I would like to make a contribution to this matter.

I am much obliged to thank all persons that supported me during my dissertation project. First and foremost I thank Heinz-Werner Nienstedt for his supervision, support, discussions, and enthusiasm. I was very happy to be able to continue to study at your chair at the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz.

At the same time, I worked at Lufthansa Miles & More as a database marketing analyst. I could not have had a better working environment for completing a dissertation, while working at the same time. I thank my superiors for the positive acceptance of my "hobby", the flexibility, and the

support in all matters – including the possibility to use SAS. I also thank my team members for inspiring discussions and challenging questions. It was good to be able to get a direct feedback from the future beneficiaries of my work.

It was a great pleasure to get the chance to discuss my work with two of the most important researchers I cited, Susanne Rässler and Pascal van Hattum. Both of them surprised me by being eager to engage in my ideas and plans. Thank you for inviting me to Bamberg and Amersfoort, respectively, and for taking the time to review my work. I was able to present my working paper at the 2013 EMAC Doctoral Colloquium in Istanbul to Arnaud de Bruyn, Arvind Rangaswamy, and Ujwal Kayande. Thank you for pushing me and for being so motivating. We had a very productive and encouraging atmosphere in our track. I also thank Heather Skinner and Nick Lee for reviewing my work at the Academy of Marketing 20th Doctoral Colloquium in Cardiff.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband, family and friends for motivating and understanding me in any possible way. Thank you for familiarizing with my complex topic, for proof-reading, and for listening. You have always been so proud and never questioned my success. I could not have asked for any more support.

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