

SAS delivers priceless retail planning capabilities in the hypercompetitive Age of Amazon

AI-fortified, cloud-ready SAS Intelligent Planning Suite enhances the customer experience for global retailers and consumer goods manufacturers

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Recent enhancements to the SAS® Intelligent Planning Suite have infused it with artificial intelligence (AI) and cloud agility to help companies localize assortments, optimize inventory, automate forecasting and maximize profits. Leading companies like Carrefour, Grupo Exito and Nestle rely on analytics leader SAS and its proven portfolio of software and services to succeed despite fierce competition.

Effective planning makes a bottom-line difference whether a retailer sells electronics, groceries or apparel. Manufacturing goods like candy bars, tires or blue jeans also require precise forecasting and planning. In the end, the most successful companies use data and analytics like artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to satisfy shifting consumer demand.

For Grupo Exito, South America's largest retail group, demand planning is a critical function that influences the business from sales and staffing to production and inventory replenishment. With 2,600 brick-and-mortar outlets and a thriving online business, improving its inventory position even by a small percentage can result in big improvements overall. In Grupo Exito's case, a foundation of SAS analytics helps reduce and optimize inventory, improve forecast accuracy, improve demand planning efficiency, and analyse demand data in nearly real time. Formerly constrained by data, Grupo Exito now freely manages burgeoning databases. That agility helps the retailer manage its supply chain more precisely.

"Before we couldn't have future forecasts; we could only plan one week ahead," said Sandra Orrego, Demand Planning Manager at Grupo Exito. "Now with SAS, we can plan 52 weeks ahead which helps us make more accurate purchases, manage inventory volume, decrease shrink and increase sales without having so many inventories."

"AI and advanced analytics like machine learning are transforming the retail industry, and as tech companies like SAS continue to innovate, leading retailers embrace more intelligent and data-driven decision making," said Brian Kilcourse, Managing Partner at market-intelligence company RSR. "By optimizing product assortments, pricing and inventory management, these retailers improve their customers' experience while increasing sales."

According to a recent RSR survey, only half of retailers are satisfied with their current merchandising and pricing technologies. "That's good news for technology leaders, and it underscores a strong desire by retailers to improve their retail forecasting and merchandise planning," said Kilcourse. Read more in RSR's 2019 Mastering The Art Of Merchandising In The Technology Age benchmark report.

"Retailers around the world are looking for innovative ways to leverage artificial intelligence (AI) to drive smarter retail decisions," said Shiva Kommareddi, Managing Partner of Core Compete, a cloud analytics services firm. "SAS Intelligent Planning builds on its 30-year history of providing cutting-edge and integrated solutions for retail planning and merchandising as well as consumer goods demand planning. A multi-cloud solution like SAS provides retail IT executives an agile, innovative choice while retaining the option to switch to alternative cloud providers".

"Cloud-ready, powerful SAS analytics help retailers create a holistic view of customers without the need for an army of statisticians," said Dan Mitchell, SAS Director of Retail and CPG. "Rather, with automated machine learning and other AI technology that's instantly deployable through the cloud or on premise, SAS advanced analytics help retailers better understand and serve their customers, optimize merchandise planning, and boost overall results."

Recent enhancements to SAS® Intelligent Planning Suite leverage the power of SAS® Viya®, a single consolidated and cohesive environment for large-scale data manipulation, exploration, advanced analytics and AI. SAS Intelligent Planning helps retailers and consumer goods manufacturers create a 360-degree view of customers, and it gives them the ability to infuse advanced analytics throughout all processes to:

- Localize merchandise assortments, customized by market, region, city or individual store
- Enhance the accuracy of sales planning and forecasts
- Optimize inventories to maximize customer satisfaction and minimize stock-outs
- Set effective prices to maximize profitability and minimize deep-clearance discounting

To learn more about helping retailers effectively connect with consumers, download the whitepaper Experience 2030 – The Future of Customer Experience is Now. Follow SAS on Twitter at @SASsoftware and @SASRetail. Follow NRF 2020 news at #SASatNRF.

About SAS

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