Zenith breaks new ground in planning through machine learning

Radical automation of media set to change the way industry optimises digital

Zenith has developed ground-breaking automation of digital planning that delivers significant improvement in effectiveness for marketers and is set to fundamentally change the way that agencies and their clients optimise digital media.

Over the past six months a taskforce of data scientists and strategists from Zenith has been developing sophisticated automation of digital planning using the network's machine-learning technology and bespoke algorithms.

Marketers are currently faced with a confusing array of multi-touchpoint customer journeys, so Zenith has looked at how machine learning could be used to efficiently process large amounts of data and to automate the most complex and time-consuming aspects of digital planning.

Using live Aviva campaigns, the taskforce collected advertising cookie data from the technology stack of a leading demand-side platform (DSP) and matched it with corresponding first party sales data. Applying Zenith's machine learning algorithm, the taskforce was able to precisely attribute sales conversions to specific digital interactions.

Then, in an industry first, Zenith was able to automatically optimise Aviva's digital planning by pushing the algorithm output back into the DSP's stack. This dramatic move closed the automation loop – data collection, attribution and a full set of planning changes across multiple digital touchpoints all done automatically.

But Zenith is not stopping there, the network is adding first party drivers-of-demand data into the algorithm in order to enhance the effectiveness of the automated planning changes. In this way, data - such as how price affects sales or the success of creative assets - will be fed into the automated optimisation.

This radical automation of digital planning is being done using cloud-based technology, with the client retaining full ownership of their first-party data throughout the process.

This application of machine learning saw Aviva benefit from a 6% cost-per-quote (CPQ) improvement on car search through implementation of the automation programme. For display, Aviva saw a 10% improvement in CPQ through automation.

Vittorio Bonori, Global Brand President at Zenith, said: "Zenith is leading the way in changing the business model for digital. This important programme is part of our strategy to leverage the power of data and technology to drive profitable growth for our clients."

James Turner, Head of Marketing (Trading) at Aviva, said: "We're delighted that as part of our commitment to digital and media transformation at Aviva we are breaking new ground with this pilot automation of our search and display. The benefits of attribution modelling will be realised in terms of ROI improvement as well as through operational efficiency."

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About Zenith

Zenith is The ROI Agency. The first agency to apply a rigorous and objective approach to improving the effectiveness of marketing spend, Zenith transforms businesses and brands through evidence-led thinking. Zenith is part of Publicis Media, one of four solution hubs within Publicis Groupe [Euronext Paris FR0000130577, CAC40], and has offices within Publicis One. As a leading global media services network, Zenith has over 5000 people working across 95 markets. Supported by Publicis Media's Global Practices, Zenith offers its clients a full range of integrated skills across communications planning, value optimisation, performance media, content creation and data & analytics. We work with some of the world's leading global brands including Aviva, Coty, Kering, Lactalis, L'Oréal, LVMH, Nestlé, Nomad Foods, Oracle, RB, SCA, Sanofi, Toyota and 21st Century Fox.