Q&A: what lies ahead?

with Dan Barnett

Database Marketing catches up with Dan Barnett, Director of Analytics at Analysis Marketing to talk big data, analysis, skills shortages and the finer points of recruitment.

SO, WHAT DO YOU SEE BEING THE KEY TRENDS COMING UP IN THE WORLD OF DATA AND INSIGHT?

There's a real danger of 'Big Data' going the same way as CRM where it becomes about selling technologies and the often overblown processes that accompany them rather than really understanding and meeting the needs of your customers.

Social media is obviously a big growth area, as an analyst I'm particularly fascinated by Twitter due to its open nature and have been able to nose around and look at the performance and interaction of Twitter accounts in a number of sectors. Twitter can give you a better insight in to how your competitors are behaving than any other social network.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD ANALYST?

Much has been made of 'Data Scientist' being the sexiest role of the 21st century but I recently saw the phrase 'Data Artist' used which I thought was an interesting twist.

You have to have the statistics underpinning any analysis but too often the 'So What' gets

forgotten, there's a big difference between something being statistically significant and it actually being of value to a business. A good analyst understands the numbers but also the workings of that business and the motivations and attitudes of their customers.

AND YOU'RE DOING SOMETHING ABOUT THE SKILLS SHORTAGE?

There are a few good recruitment companies out there but an awful lot of average ones. Far too often analytical recruitment gets lumped in with

IT recruitment and although there's often an element of programming in an analytical role, there's far more to it than just being able to tick off experience of certain packages.

SO YOU'VE LAUNCHED ANALYSIS RECRUITMENT?

Exactly. As we're heavily involved in analytical projects we're up to speed with latest tools and techniques and will be better equipped to understand the type of candidate you need. A job title of 'Data Analyst' could mean anything from someone populating an Excel spreadsheet to someone building complex models. We can also supply analytical services while you are looking to recruit to help fill any gaps.

HOW WILL YOUR NEW BUSINESS HELP ADDRESS THE CLEAR SKILLS SHORTAGE THAT LIES AHEAD?

If you haven't got talented analysts on your books you haven't got a business – so we're looking to offer more for candidates around training and resources as well as data related events which will be of interest to anyone in the sector not just those jobhunting.

Also, for those who are just mildly curious we offer a 'Call me If..' service, lets us know what you're after which can be detailed as you like and we'll only get in touch if something fits, there's few things more annoying than being chased by recruitment agencies who are baffled as to why you don't want to move your whole family to the other end of the country. ■

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