

Data Analytics and Decisions

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Abstract

A business owner needs to recognize that there are data analysis opportunities that reach far and wide. The use of those tools will allow the business owner to make competent decisions that affect their bottom line and the needs and desires of their clients, customers, and internal organizations. Great leaders serve, not dictate people. Leadership can come in the form of client relationships or from within the organization. On a practical level, well-informed leaders can look at their numbers gradually and try to reach people before they become unreachable. The effective use of data analytics can transform the decision-making approach taken by the organization. Still, the quality of data-driven decisions does not solely depend on the data themselves. Still, it is also linked to the strategies employed for data collection, analysis, and leadership competencies. Drawing on an analysis of secular and biblical literature, current industry practices, and technology, this paper aims to provide practical implications for Christian leaders to effectively manage and lead their organizations based on a mindful understanding of data analytics in the decision-making process.

Keywords: Data analytics, decision-making, Christian leadership, business analytics, leadership, corporate data analysis

Analytics in the Corporation

Small businesses today collect and analyze massive troves of data, so much so that Big Data becomes an imperative asset. Bartlett (2013) suggests that while analytics supplies many of the facts, the problem is that many business leaders seamlessly move from one activity to another, jump back and forth or follow some other route without fully understanding the breadth of data that is presented. It is imperative that savvy managers understand the necessities and the requirements of the customers, clients, and stakeholders and how Big Data applications can play an essential role in this process (Ahmed & Pathan 2019). Big Data enables decision-makers to decide based on what they know instead of what they think (Shamim et al., 2019). The effective use of data analytics can transform the decision-making approach taken by the organization. Still, the quality of data-driven decisions does not solely depend on the data themselves. Still, it is also linked to the strategies employed for data collection, analysis, and leadership competencies in the organization (Janssen et al., 2017).

Christian Leadership in the Corporation

There are data sets, dashboards, and analytics for everything. Merida (2015) poses the question, how should a Christian leader measure spiritual growth? The wisdom of God is the foundation for Christian leadership. A savvy leader can take this a step further and look at the story of the apostle Paul and his concern for Christ's church to grow in wisdom (*New International Version Bible*, 2011, Eph 1:17; Col 1:9). By understanding scripture and other data points, a Christian leader can develop a mission and vision for his company to lead others ethically and effectively. At the same time, share the message of Jesus and develop more disciples. Great leaders serve, not dictate people. Leadership can come in the form of client relationships or from within

the organization. A Christian leader learns to watch for decisions that reflect the needs of his followers and learns to pray and seek biblical guidance, the ultimate data set, in those cases.

Practical Implications

How can Christian leaders use data in their organization to enhance the discipleship process from their clients or within the organization? This author recently attended a conference focused on a database management software, *Keap*, that allows the development of automation protocols in the client relationship process. This automation process is nothing new in the business world. Bergmann et al. (2020) found that since business analytics promises automation of business processes and time savings, various systems can be developed to increase competitive advantage for an organization.

On a practical level, well-informed leaders can granularly look at their numbers and try to reach people (e.g., clients, customers, other stakeholders) before they become unreachable. For example, in this author's business, he can notice when clients attend classes or when group sessions are declining in attendance. As a result, his team can step in and help his contractors use automation tools, such as *Keap*, to reach clients more effectively. Likewise, a savvy Christian leader wants to train his teams to reach out to the clients and do what is necessary to get them back on track.

It is important to note that a client is much more than a number or a sale for a company. They are people with behaviors and needs that a mindful Christian leader wants to understand. The use of data analytics can allow a manager to understand the fundamental concept of connections and relationships (Ahmed & Pathan, 2019). The mindful Christian leader can use tools like Facebook and other social media, to assess and comprehend such relationships and how they are a critical component that drives the customer/client relationship with the

organization. Further, tools like active campaigns, newsletters, sales funnels, offers, and other tools can be tailored to clients based on data previously collected from their interactions.

Biblical Perspective

Clients and customers are just one facet of a business and, more broadly, a Christian leader can revolutionize his business from within. Imagine a business community in which leaders and front-line workers strive to worship God through their daily work. Proverbs 21:1 advises us that “He directs where He chooses” (*New International Version*, 1978, Prov. 21:1). This implies that God turns the heart of kings in the direction He desires; He does not determine the nature of the heart. Christian leaders can resolve their hearts and make their plans according to God’s will. Businesses that run for God’s glory would not always make the right decisions. Still, Jesus will be glorified when leaders who face challenges acknowledge, pray, and seek guidance, and turn the situation into a service opportunity. By understanding the data presented before us, we can lead our organizations and allow God to direct our steps.

Conclusion

A business owner needs to recognize that there are data analysis opportunities that reach far and wide. How those tools are used will allow the business owner to make competent decisions that affect their bottom line and the needs and desires of their clients, customers, and the internal organization. Ahmed and Pathan (2019) describe the use of Big Data, graphical representations, and statistics, while Bartlett (2013) caution business owners on the importance of understanding the data on a more personal and practical level. The scholarly literature shows that automation based on client profiles (Bergmann et al. 2020) can aid decision-making. Also, Janssen et al. (2017) and Gamage (2016) posits that Bartlett’s (2013) point of finding the right people having the right skills was viewed as a significant challenge in interpreting data collected

and how to utilize it in the decision-making process best. Lastly, Christian leaders can seek advice from scripture to guide a coalition to develop a company's mission and vision that thrives on moral values. This team can lead others ethically and effectively while sharing the message of Jesus and develop more disciples among all the stakeholders within the company and even amongst his clients and customers.

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