

A how-to guide for media organizations

Converting data into business wins

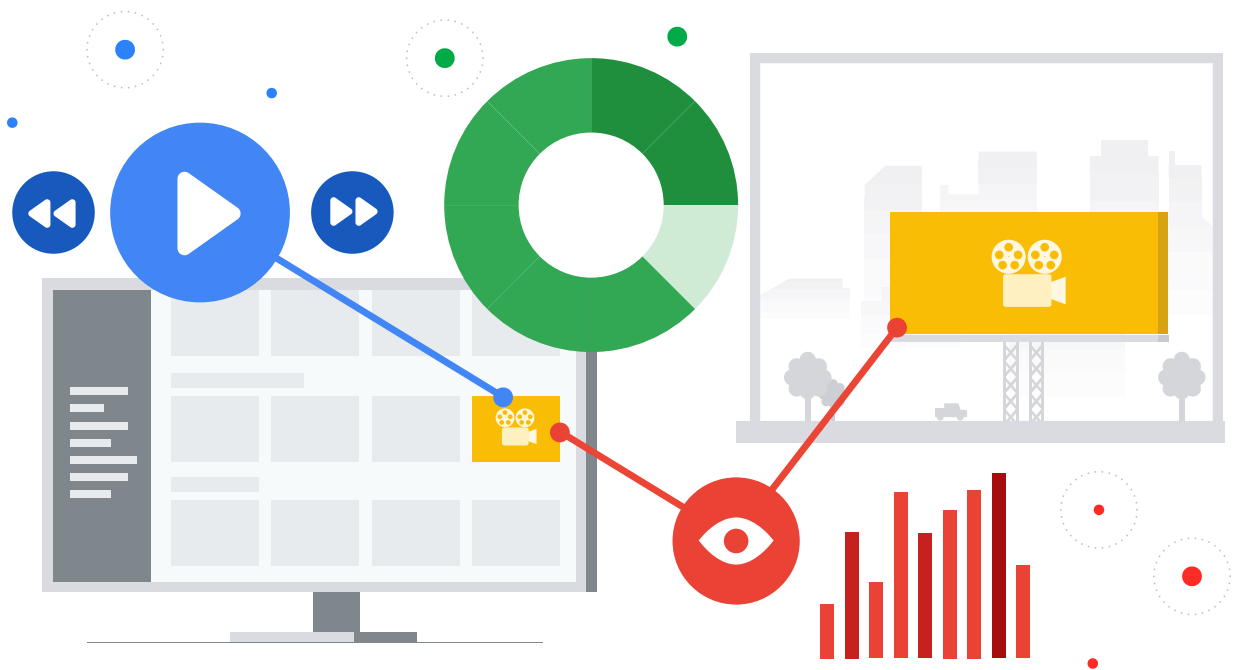


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Introduction

Previous generations that marveled at black-and-white televisions with only three available channels would not recognize the current media landscape. Today, live streaming, pay-per-view, and subscription-based viewing have dramatically transformed the industry. We can choose what content we want to watch and how and when we want to watch it. Increasingly, we are choosing to consume streaming content, which now constitutes a quarter of all television minutes viewed. Netflix owns the largest share of those minutes at 34%, followed by YouTube at 20%. In its short life span, Disney+ now accounts for 4% of total streaming time.

Always-on, personalized streaming media consumed on a range of devices has created a whole new world for consumers and media providers alike. The changes involve the type of content being created, the amount of content consumed, the volume of data generated, and the opportunities for entirely new business models that no one could have predicted just a decade ago. You no longer have to wait a week to watch the next episode of your favorite show to be released on TV. Now, you can binge entire seasons in one sitting. And it's highly likely that each of us is watching a different trailer or ad or receiving a different recommendation for what to watch next.

More data drives improved user engagement

All of these changes simultaneously create challenges and opportunities for media companies. The increase in streaming content and the opportunities to analyze consumer behavior have produced an explosion of data, with traditional data warehouses struggling to handle the data growth. These warehouses were not designed to handle the growing volume of data, run advanced analytics, or scale quickly and cost-effectively. Data is likely to be fragmented across the organization in multiple data silos, making it hard to effectively utilize and leverage information. In fact, 42% of media CIOs report difficulty in predicting and managing the growth of data.

This struggle is magnified by the overlap of legacy and streaming media content produced by many providers. For example, companies like CNN produce traditional media like cable broadcasts, as well as their own mobile apps with video content. CNN's content is also streamed from



other company's services, like Xfinity, Roku, and others. That's a lot of data for these companies to ingest and analyze from disparate places.

While the massive data volume poses a challenge, it also represents a unique opportunity. With thousands to millions of digital consumers, media and entertainment companies are in a unique position to leverage their big data assets for more profitable customer engagement. This new media landscape presents exciting opportunities for monetization, more highly defined personalization, and entirely new business models.

Netflix is renowned for their reliance on data analytics, and their analysis appears to be working. Most networks have a 35% success rate for new television shows. So far, Netflix appears to have a 70% success (renewal) rate for their original content. We'll dive into how Netflix is using analytics to greenlight content later in this paper. At a high level, it's apparent that they're doing something right with data. We're here to reassure you that it's possible to leverage your own data and convert these exciting opportunities into higher profits.

How Looker can help

Looker helps you break down the data silos, convert the mass of raw data into useful insights, and establish a common data model across your organization so that everyone can access the same insights and get trusted answers. Most importantly, applying those insights as business solutions enables you to act on opportunities in this exciting new media landscape.

This eBook will show how Looker can help you identify opportunities and convert them to business wins using a set of Looker Blocks. We'll dive into the following use cases:

- Smarter content creation
- Enhanced personalization
- Data-driven advertising
- Keeping partners in the loop





Use Case I: Smarter content creation

With so many streaming options and content available, you're competing for consumers' time, attention, and dollars. Streaming technology has improved, bandwidth has increased, and the pool of content has become so deep that viewers can watch anything they want on any device at any time. You need to stand out in this incredibly noisy and competitive space. Doing that means determining what content will resonate with your audience.

It's likely you're drowning in data. You've got access to viewing history, searches, reviews, ratings, location and device data, clickstreams, log files, and social media sentiment. Event analytics can help you discover how people are interacting with your product to find trends. The key is to understand what that trend information is telling you about your customers and their preferences so you can act on those insights.

Here's a look at [some of the events](#) Netflix analyzes:

- When customers pause, rewind, or fast forward
- What day customers watch
- The date customers watch
- What time customers watch
- Where customers watch (by zip code)
- What device customers use to watch
- When customers pause and leave (and whether they come back)
- The ratings given (about 4 million per day)
- Searches (about 3 million per day)
- Browsing and scrolling behavior

With this data in mind, let's look at how Netflix used analytics to source blockbuster content. Their original film, *Bird Box*, was a huge success—despite mixed critic and user reviews. Netflix's analysis of customer data indicated a formula for success that proved true: combine a recognizable star (Sandra Bullock) with a diverse and well-known cast, a data-backed release schedule, and prime advertising real estate within Netflix's own platform. With this winning combination of decisions, *Bird Box* netted 45 million views in its first week alone.

How Looker can help with smarter content creation

Looker can provide a complete view of your products and content to executive management, product management, and anyone who needs performance data metrics. Seeing the whole picture can help you begin to answer critical questions like, "How do I anticipate which content will be most successful in the market?", "How do I predict what shows will capture viewer engagement and produce the highest ratings?", and "How do I pursue customer channels with the highest revenue growth?"

There are many analytical patterns to consider. We offer Blocks (pre-built pieces of code) that can serve as your starting point to build out analysis as unique as your data.

Event analytics shows you how audiences interact with your application or website. You can sessionize individual user event flows to understand friction points in the consumer experience, create custom event funnels to understand conversion points along the user journey, see how frequently audiences engage with your content, and see how well you retain visitors.

Blocks to consider:

- [Event Analytics by Segment](#)
See comprehensive information around webpage and/or application usage, which can be explored and analyzed in near real-time.
- [Content Daily Active Visitors by Segment](#)
With this Block, you can see daily, weekly, and monthly active visitors to your website from data collected by Segment. The Block also shows frequency of engagement with your content and retention of content visitors.
- [Peer Comparison](#)
Peer Comparison analysis shows you how one group—categorized by an individual or set of determinants—is performing against another group. This allows you to gain a comprehensive view of an individual content’s performance based on any number of attributes that you collect about that content, user, or any other characteristic.
- [State or Status Data](#)
Analyze and visualize state—specific types of data that can change over time at any moment—or historical data. You can use this to run time series analysis to identify trends and accurately reflect the history of the data and analyze subscription dipping at points in time.
- [Google Analytics 360](#)
Explore your Google Analytics (GA) data the way people explore your website. This Block has flexible configuration capabilities so you can unlock custom insights beyond the standard GA reporting and integration with the BigQuery Machine Learning platform.

Looker Extension Framework

The Looker [Extension Framework](#) is a development foundation that significantly reduces the effort and complexity of building custom JavaScript data applications and tools. You can use this framework to integrate social media feeds into your dashboards to highlight global and regional trends and understand how they may impact content consumption patterns.

Looker and BigQuery integration

Leverage the [Looker and BigQuery Machine Learning \(BQML\) integration](#) to do advanced audience segmentation, analyze market trends, and identify consumption patterns. Combining Looker with BQML democratizes the use of machine learning by providing data analysts and business users alike the ability to build and run models using existing business intelligence tools and spreadsheets. This enables business decision making through predictive analytics across the organization.



Use case II: Enhanced consumer personalization

By understanding exactly how, when, and where your customers are interacting with your content, you can create tailored and personalized experiences. This goes beyond simple content recommendations—“If you like this show, you might also like these shows”—to further strengthen your brand. For example, HBO suggested that viewers explore their “Game of Thrones” video game product line after finishing the series.

Similarly, Netflix delivers customized content to its customer personas. As former Netflix Vice President of Communications Joris Evers said, “There are 33 million different versions of Netflix,” tailored to targeted audiences.² The platform personalizes the way every customer’s homepage is organized, and even the artwork that represents each piece of content. Successfully delivering personalized content requires a single, consolidated view of the customer.

IBM [recommends](#) “harnessing data across touchpoints and third-party sources to enrich that understanding with deeper demographic, behavioral, and preference data.” You need to understand and properly correlate the meaning behind your customer data. And, it’s important to [build trust](#) that “separates the signal from the noise and delivers personal recommendations” to your users so they glean value from your recommendations. We’re here to help you do that.

How Looker helps with enhanced consumer personalization

Many of the recommendations from the previous section will help you understand your audiences better, leading to insights that can help you personalize the consumer experience. The analytical patterns listed here can help fortify your understanding.

Blocks to consider:

- [Retention Analysis](#)
The Retention Analysis Block helps you understand how well you're retaining various cohorts of customers and what to do if retention starts to drop.
- [Affinity Analysis](#)
The Affinity Analysis Block allows you to see the association between any two events. Commonly used in "Market Basket Analysis" to determine how often items are purchased together, this can be extrapolated to a number of different use cases. This pattern meshes well with data from media companies. Any entity-relational data structure plays nicely with affinity patterns.
- [Subscription Analysis](#)
The Subscription Revenue dashboards show customer contracts in a calendar format that makes it simple to track metrics such as churn, retention, net new, and additional sales. How might you want to personalize your platform for a brand new customer, versus someone who is showing indications of churning soon? While the answer depends on you, this Block can help you quickly see who is in each stage of the subscription journey.



Use case III: Data-driven advertising

By leveraging the data you collect from your viewers, you can create advertising that is more relevant to them, and improve the efficiency and predictability of your advertising operations. You'll understand what is driving ad spend and optimize your strategy to fit your audience's preferences, increasing the ROI for every dollar spent.

This falls into an area [Gartner](#) calls "addressable advertising: technology-enabled strategies to selectively segment audiences and serve different ads or ad pods (groups of ads) within a common program." Gartner goes on to say: "Segmentation can occur at geographic, demographic, behavioral and, in some cases, self-selected individual household levels... since addressable advertising can be better tracked and targeted, it offers a [better return on the dollar](#) than traditional linear advertising."

To realize the possibilities of data-driven, addressable advertising, you need to leverage the data you have. "Big data makes it possible to understand digital media and entertainment consumption and behavior that can be used along with traditional demographic data to provide personalized advertising in the right context, at the right time and in the right place. Big data applications help improve ad targeting amid increasingly complex content consumption behavior. For instance, since consumers access media and entertainment on multiple devices at the same time, it's helpful to use big data insights to understand when consumers use a second screen so that campaigns can be optimized across devices. Media and entertainment companies can also increase digital conversion rates by offering micro-segmentation of customers to their advertising networks and exchanges."³

You need the ability to understand your users and surface insights from this data to rapidly make advertising decisions. Looker can help you do just that.

How Looker helps with data-driven advertising

With smart analysis, you can identify the best time and channel to purchase advertising slots. You can answer questions for your marketing teams like, “How do I assess the optimal placement for ad spots to maximize a client’s ROI?” And, your licensing team can determine the value of your content to negotiate the best possible deal.

Relevant blocks include:

- [Funnel Analysis](#)
Funnel analysis is the key to understanding how your customers traverse through ads.
- [Google Analytics 360](#)
We mentioned this Block earlier, but it bears repeating. Understanding how people interact with your website can help you make advertising decisions, too.
- [YouTube Channel Analytics](#)
This one’s for you if you leverage YouTube to share content directly with your audiences. YouTube can serve as a lucrative source of revenue generation through ad sales with Google’s AdSense offering. Get a deep understanding of your audience, then make smart advertising decisions grounded in those insights.

Looker Action Hub

In addition to delivering content to Looker’s built-in destinations, you can use actions—also called integrations—to deliver content to third-party services integrated with Looker via an [action hub](#) server. You can create a target audience in Looker and send the audience details back to the system of choice (examples: Segment, Marketo, GA360) via the action hub.

Real-world story: Essence

Essence is the dominant data and analytics engine behind the WPP group, which accounts for approximately 25% of global advertising. The company uses BigQuery and Looker to power its data-driven advertising and build its brand. The results?

- Increased revenue by helping clients increase and quantify campaign success
- Delivered custom applications connected to clients’ specific data models to drive engagement
- Empowered business users to drive better data-driven decision-making via reduced data latency

Learn more [here](#).



Use case IV: Keeping partners in the loop

Leveraging your data for partners is just as important as understanding and deploying it to improve the customer experience. With Looker, you can create custom, branded applications and deliver critical information to your partners so everyone in your ecosystem can rapidly make decisions about content, advertising, and purchasing.

For instance, you can create an external-facing data discovery environment in days with Application Programming Interface (API) Blocks and [Looker UI Components](#). These custom portals and applications can provide information to your partners and content providers so they rapidly know what is and isn't working so they can respond accordingly.

You can also provide ad performance metrics to your ad purchasers, showing metrics like impressions and lift, segmented by the customer viewing the metrics. We recommend [Adobe Analytics](#) for this.

Conclusion and resources

With Looker, you can measure user retention, acquisition, and engagement, and track a huge variety of metrics and events. Putting this data into context to convert the massive and ever-increasing opportunities presented by streaming media and personalization trends will give you a competitive advantage.

Whether you're using your data to enhance the consumer experience, personalize content, or deliver impactful and relevant advertising, Looker has the tools to help. Leveraging Looker Blocks and other resources will help you scale these opportunities and build trust, connection, and loyalty with your audience.

Resources

[The Economist Case Study](#)

[Percolate Case Study](#)

[Infectious Media Customer Story](#)

[“Deepen Audience Engagement in Media with Global-Scale Data and Analytics” Webinar](#)

[“Power to the People: A Stack to Empower Every User to Make Data-Driven Decisions” Webinar](#)

[Looker Extension Framework](#)

[Looker Blocks Directory](#)

[Looker + BigQuery Machine Learning Integration](#)

¹ https://www.salon.com/2013/02/01/how_netflix_is_turning_viewers_into_puppets/

² <https://neilpatel.com/blog/how-netflix-uses-analytics/>

³ <https://www.qubole.com/big-data-in-media-and-entertainment/>