

# 3 Pain Points Agencies Must Overcome to Turn Data Into Action



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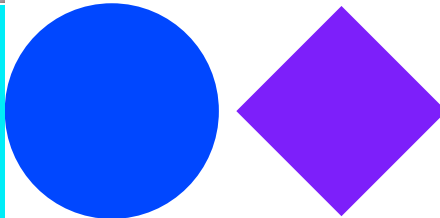


## Marketers are swimming in data.

And it just keeps piling up. In fact, 90 percent of the world's data was created in just the last two years. But if we have so much of it, why haven't we used it to solve all our problems?

The true issue at hand isn't finding the data. Instead, it's understanding how to navigate mass amounts of data generated from hundreds of digital marketing and advertising channels. Getting a handle on the data must come first. Only then can marketers determine which optimizations and actions to recommend. Large media companies and agencies in particular can struggle with managing analytics, relaying insights to clients, and turning those insights into action. Technology can help here — you need to break data free from walled gardens and platform silos to achieve a unified view of data — as can having a game plan in place for identifying what data matters, what your stakeholder or client needs and preferences are, and how to create recommendations based on data.

Creating a data narrative that resonates, unifying data into a single platform and scaling marketing analytics are all pain points that agencies need to overcome if they want to turn data into action. Let's take a closer look at how to overcome those obstacles.



# 1

## Creating a Data Narrative that Resonates



Today, businesses have access to almost too much data and it can be overwhelming to manage and to make proper use of it. Having access to too much data can make it hard to create a narrative that resonates with clients or business stakeholders in proving the value of your marketing campaigns and programs. So what's the best way for agencies to manage and analyze client data so they can work towards making strategic recommendations for their clients?

"All marketers suffer the challenge of data deluge or having just too many points of data that need to be aggregated and normalized so that it can become usable for analysis and performance reporting,"

NinjaCat CEO Paul Deraval explained. "Agencies need to take a step back to curate the key data points that will help their clients understand how their marketing programs are helping them reach their business goals. You can't just provide a link to a set of dashboards and hope the client will understand what's happening. It's much more effective to tell a data story – create a packaged report with insights, commentary and recommendations to deliver more value to your client."

One of the biggest mistakes that Andy Davidson, Head of Analytics and Data Strategy at Big Village, sees brands and agencies making when it comes

to managing analytics is rushing to data curation without paying attention to the purpose of that data.

"Rather than racing to acquire data and perform analytics, the most important step in the process is establishing goals."

ANDY DAVIDSON,  
HEAD OF ANALYTICS AND  
DATA STRATEGY AT BIG VILLAGE

Davidson urges agencies and media companies to establish goals for their data. “Rather than racing to acquire data and perform analytics, the most important step in the process is establishing goals,” Davidson shared, “Then allowing those goals to dictate the sources that are curated and acquired.” This approach helps you narrow your focus on the data that has the potential to make the largest impact.

Knowing what the goals of the data are makes it much easier to then craft an effective narrative. This is why it’s so important to align goals and expectations up front. This makes it possible to later clearly and concisely report back on the same story without getting lost in the weeds. The key here is to pursue data curation and storytelling, as opposed to data deluge via dashboards.

One of the other challenges Davidson consistently comes across in managing data and then relaying insights is telling a unified story with the data. “A lot of times, particularly in the measurement

space, agencies and brands often place importance on measuring the impact and the effectiveness of investments they make in marketing,” Davidson explained. “Particularly in that space, you see fragmentation in the measurement platforms and the data sources, and therefore the measurement platforms. Sometimes there are multiple measurements of the same media activity and sometimes there are different success criteria for the same campaign.” Davidson believes that this lack of focus often creates confusion. It presents an opportunity for agencies to grasp onto the measurements that are desirable to their clients and then to eliminate the other metrics and noise from reporting. Telling a unified story can help you avoid some of these pitfalls.

Deraval suggests starting by mapping out the metrics that matter to your client and explaining that data in a way they can understand. “You’ve got to put it in their terms,” Deraval said, “They don’t necessarily want a laundry list of numbers and percentages on

a dashboard full of widgets.” According to Deraval, the recipe for success lies in knowing your audience’s appetite for data. Is this a CMO who just wants an executive level summary on the strategy or do they want to get down into the weeds about keyword or device performance? A data scientist might not want a presentation and may want to simply access the raw data so they can analyze it themselves. “The key to success is to know your audience, know their appetite for data, and then deliver,” Deraval said. If your audience is data analysts, you can allow them access to the raw data. You need one platform that can serve both use cases.

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PAUL DERAVAL  
NINJACAT CEO



## 2

## Unifying Data Into a Single Platform

Another major data challenge that agencies and media companies frequently run into is data aggregation to gather performance metrics from multiple advertising channels. “Doing data wrangling for an individual client or brand is really hard,” Deraval shared, “Doing it at scale across hundreds or thousands of clients is extremely difficult.”

There are three critical benefits to unifying marketing data into a single platform:

- **TAMING DATA CHAOS.**

Traditional marketing reporting requires marketers to collect data from multiple marketing and advertising channels, combine it into reports or dashboards, analyze it for performance insights, and share it with stakeholders. A data engine such as NinjaCat eliminates 90% of manual data management efforts.

- **SPEED TO INSIGHT / DIFFERENTIATE TO WIN.**

Marketers benefit from radically faster analysis cycles. When marketers stop spending hours manually aggregating data into reports and dashboards, they can redirect that time into uncovering business-changing insights and optimizations. This enables them to optimize budget and KPI performance across all sales and service channels at scale.

- **SCALABILITY.**

Highly automated, packaged performance reporting enables unified campaign performance reporting at scale.



Unifying data to achieve a single view often requires cobbling together multiple software point solutions for ingestion, storage, analysis and visualization. It can require hiring data engineers, is expensive and is difficult to maintain. Once you have your data in one place, cleaning and normalizing that data in a way that enables an apples-to-apples comparison and attribution is another labor-intensive hurdle. Deraval explained that normalization involves using a model that makes metrics equivalent across platforms.

The solution? You can minimize your martech stack by eliminating point solutions. A martech stack is a set of technology that you can use to manage, measure, and execute your marketing efforts. You want to look for one platform that can ingest, transform, store, and provide reporting in one place, rather than cobbling together different vendors for each piece of the process.

That way, you can use a single holistic measurement to gain a comprehensive view of marketing campaign outcomes

and what is driving the most conversions. Unified marketing measurement can help marketers correlate and aggregate the data that comes from multi-touch attribution. This holistic view makes it possible for marketers to make the correct optimizations based on the many different insights they collect. A good marketing data management platform will allow you to combine your data in a tool that makes it simple to build and share cross-channel reports and dashboards with stakeholders. A truly great platform will allow you to access real-time data and leverage it in proprietary systems, third-party BI tools, and anywhere else you need.

“Marketers should look for a tool that can ingest data from all the marketing analytics and advertising channels they utilize and make it possible to use that data in whatever format they need.”

PAUL DERAVAL  
NINJACAT CEO

“The best way for someone to unify data into a single platform is to utilize a digital marketing data management solution such as NinjaCat,” Deraval explained, “Marketers should look for a tool that can ingest data from all the marketing analytics and advertising channels they utilize and make it possible to use that data in whatever format they need.”

### 3 Scaling Marketing Analytics and Reporting Processes



Another data management pain point agencies must overcome is scaling their marketing analytics and reporting processes so they can grow with their business as their client roster expands. “Marketing analytics and reporting are critical in digital marketing,” Deraval noted, “However, it can be challenging to do well when marketers manually cobble together data from tens or even hundreds of channels and platforms. Agencies, brands, and media companies need to unify marketing and advertising data into a single source of truth to analyze it and act on it at scale.”

You can minimize marketing data chaos through automation, while collecting, harmonizing, and storing data securely. Using technology that can unify data from hundreds of integration partners into one powerful platform can make it possible for you to have all of your data in one place and to create market-leading, unified campaign performance reporting at scale.

Ensuring data cleanliness at scale is also a key challenge. When performance data is collected manually, an accidental keystroke or an incorrect formula can

destroy a report’s accuracy and an agency’s credibility in seconds. Without an automated marketing data management platform, generating accurate, actionable reports that address clients’ performance goals at scale is incredibly difficult.

Instead of manually assembling and managing hundreds of reports, marketers can auto-generate and deliver rich reports to as many stakeholders as needed based on a single report template. “Time once spent aggregating, cleaning, and visualizing data can be refocused on analyzing performance and identifying high-value

optimizations,” Deraval said, “That recaptured time gives your team more energy to focus on high-level campaign strategy and analysis, new campaign development and optimization, and high-touch service.

According to Deraval, for agencies and media brands, the benefits of scaling marketing analytics and reporting processes include the following:

- Higher overall retention rates and the likelihood of expanded marketing spend
- Faster optimization cycles
- Better campaign performance and ROI on campaign spend across your client base.
- Increased competitive win rates
- Sell to larger, more sophisticated clients with larger budgets and higher service expectations.
- More time developing new client relationships
- More time for campaign strategy and analysis
- More responsive customers service and higher quality service experience





## Overcoming Pain Points to Turn Data Into Action

When dealing with large sets of data stemming from various sources, it can be difficult to manage those analytics and relay insights in an effective way. It can be even more challenging to guide clients or stakeholders towards taking the right action. This is why it's so important to know what data and metrics matter to your clients and to also understand how to best communicate with them. While some clients may prefer access to raw data, others need high level insights and visual aids to help them benefit from your data curation.

Relaying data insights in an effective way is one of the best ways to spur the proper action. Both Davidson and Deraval agree that making recommendations backed in data,

and making those recommendations with conviction, is one of the most constructive ways to ensure that the data will be used to make informed decisions regarding next steps.

Agencies in particular face a unique challenge as they are managing multiple data sets for many different clients. With NinjaCat, you can auto-generate polished reports for numerous clients and teams from a single report template. This can help you lower the amount of ad hoc templates your team needs to create and manage. You can use a template from the NinjaCat report library or can start from scratch—making it faster and easier to overcome the pain points associated with managing large amounts of data and turning that data into action.

Once you know what data you want to present, you can generate world-class reports by transforming cold data into beautifully engaging insights with user-friendly, customizable push reports, and dashboards—creating a better experience for agencies and their clients in one fell swoop.

While some clients may prefer access to raw data, others need high level insights and visual aids to help them benefit from your data curation.



NinjaCat is a digital marketing performance management platform built for agencies, media companies, and brands. The NinjaCat platform is powered by the industry's most transformational data model for multi-channel digital marketing analytics, connecting hundreds of data sources into a single source of truth. Marketers using NinjaCat can build and automate beautiful reports and dashboards at scale. By eliminating manual data wrangling and accelerating time to insight, NinjaCat's reporting and campaign monitoring solutions empower teams to communicate effectively to prove the value of their marketing programs to all business stakeholders.

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