Looker

Building better data experiences

How Looker helps companies create a seamless experience with data

Taking the user experience from paper maps to custom apps

Build a better data experience for your users

Data is being consumed and used all around us in ways never before imagined. Take wayfinding, for example. We've rapidly evolved from relying on maps a few decades ago to pushing a button on a ridesharing app today. Both rely on data to help us get from point A to point B, and how we use and interact with available data is an example of how the data experience works. The app data is easy to interact with; data in a printed map, maybe not so much. Your employees and customers expect to have a seamless experience with data, so let's talk about how to create it.

Imagine data supplied to your employees, customers, operational workflows, products, and services that offers powerful experiences and reaps positive results for every part of your business. Data experiences can represent any number of ways in which companies drive value from data.
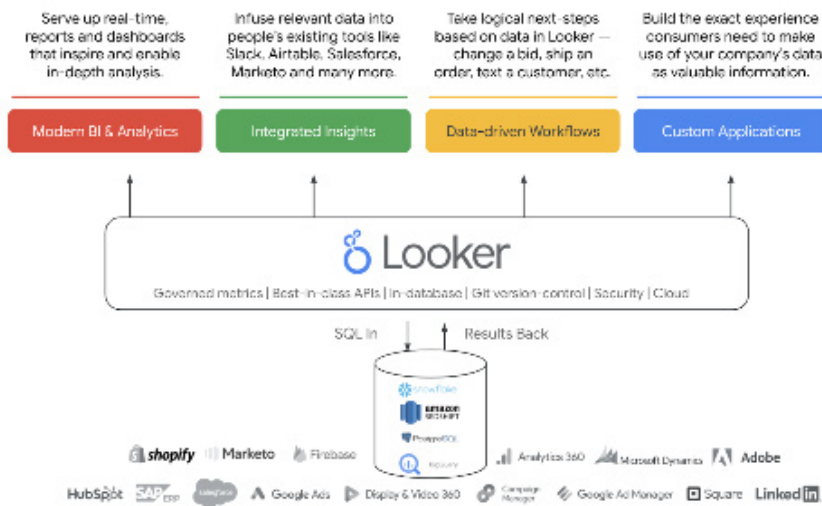
Consider these four interrelated categories of the data experience:

- Modern BI and analytics serve up real-time, relevant reports and dashboards that act as starting points for more in-depth analysis.

- Integrated insights infuse data throughout the organization by going beyond dashboards and reports.

- Data-driven workflows super-charge operational workflows with complete, near-real time data.

- Custom applications build applications tailored for specific teams within a company. metrics, and more.

Car-sharing app Car Next Door empowers employees to make data-driven decisions by putting needed information at their fingertips. For instance, data leads the marketing team to see when Car Next Door has a surplus of convertibles, so customers who have previously borrowed that type of automobile are identified and can receive a custom prompt on their app that serves up vehicles available near them.

Making better decisions with modern BI and analytics

Your teams are eager to learn more about your business, and the best way to help them gain that knowledge is to offer access to trustworthy data with modern business intelligence (BI) and analytics. Information flows to them via relevant dashboards, which become the starting point for digging deeper and performing ad hoc analysis.

No matter their location — the analytics tab of a SaaS tool, embedded within your company's internal portal or via a BI tool — modern BI and analytics experiences are all about exploring and analyzing data that you can trust.

Here are a couple examples of how companies built BI and analytics experiences:

- Namely, a leading HR tech provider, knew that data was a key value-add for their customers. Their in-product analytics tab gives customers the ability to better understand staffing needs with visualizations the customers can easily understand.

- Residential solar power company Sunrun uses self-service analytics with a uniform set of KPIs across core business areas, including sales pipeline management, install operations, and customer operations.

Whether the user is inside your company or an external customer, easy access to trustworthy data enables better, data-driven decisions each day.

"We've installed the analytics platform within three core business areas at Sunrun, including sales operation management, install operations, and customer operations, and we intend to spread it to finance as well as machine-learning initiatives at Sunrun."

Harish Ramachandraiah, Director of Engineering & Analytics, Sunrun

Adding context to your data with integrated insights

Data needs to meet people where they already are. This means integrating the insights people rely on into the apps and tools that your teams already use.

Sales teams spend a lot of time in customer relationship management (CRM) systems as the go-to place for all things related to their sales pipeline. Rather than logging into a separate tool, reps can gain greater context around their deals and customers with integrated Salesforce insights. Your sales reps now have real-time, integrated awareness of customer behavior so additional solutions and services can be offered, making them even more effective at their jobs.

DataDog, a service for cloud-scale applications that provides server, database, tools, and services monitoring through a SaaS-based data analytics platform, offers integrated insights like this by embedding customer usage data within their CRMl to give sales reps even more context on calls with customers. .
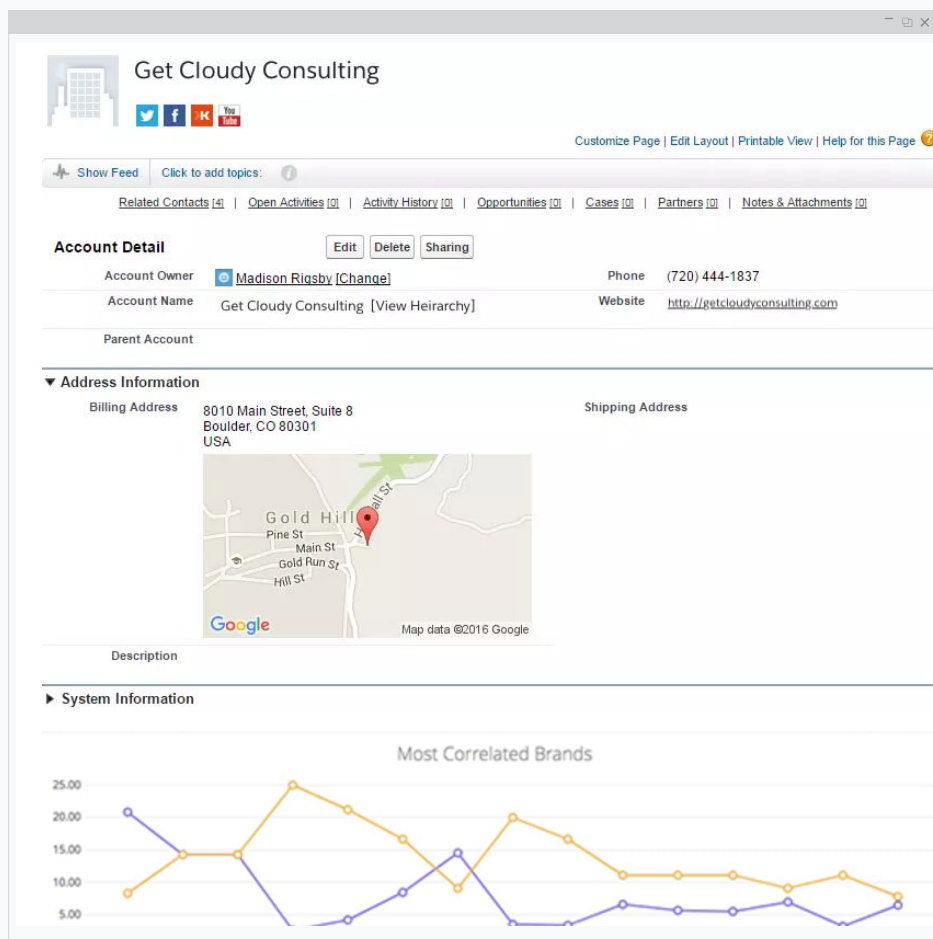
An additional way to infuse integrated insights is demonstrated by Slack. This organization's sales reps were losing hundreds of hours a week preparing custom, data-driven customer presentations. Slack built a data experience that delivered self-service, data-driven decks to reps. Since the launch, sales reps saved nearly 10,000 hours of manual work — and turned existing data into the equivalent of nearly five extra workers.

Infusing fresh, accurate data into data-driven workflows

Data-driven workflows take operational processes and amp up their potential with an infusion of fresh, accurate data. Here are examples of how different departments gain an advantage with workflows:

- A customer shows interest in a new product, so marketing wants to email them.

- Your website slows down, so the ops team needs to fix it.

- A product feature sees a spike in usage, so the product team needs to understand why.

The examples are endless, but for every instance, there is a way to use data to either speed up the response time or automate a manual process. Building data-driven workflows is how you put your data to work for you.

For SalesLoft, data is the lifeblood of their business and every team uses it to understand how their customers interact with products. The company tracks the health of customers by bringing product usage data together with sales data, and if the health score drops below a certain threshold, they want to do something about it. Not only does the customer success manager get notified, but if a health score drops, data that indicates factors causing the drop is sent to their sales engagement platform, where an email campaign is created around solving the behavior that caused the drop.

Futureplay, a fast-growing mobile games studio, uses an advertisement "bid bot" to optimize ad auction bids in real-time across a dozen different media platforms to increase digital ad efficiency. Customer lifetime value is predicted at sign-up, and Futureplay adjusts their bidding to increase ad investments that bring in high-value customers, and decrease ad investments that bring in low-value customers.

Data-driven workflows put data to work in every part of your business, and can save time and money. Operational efficiencies improve with decision support for your teams, and those efficiencies also can be applied to automated processes.

Customizing data experiences to meet your company's needs

Your employees and customers may have unique needs. If an out-of-the-box solution doesn't cut it, you'll want to build a custom product to help users accomplish their goals.

If you think about it, most websites and services are data products. Consider a hotel booking site where search functionality allows users to filter relevant data on dimensions like price or availability then drill into row-level detail on each hotel. When a customer uses it, they don't think of it as data being served up, they think of it as an easy solution to help them discover and book a hotel stay.

Another example of how custom applications can be used is Essence, the analytics arm for the world's largest advertising agency WPP. Essence struggled with consistency, siloed data, and conflicting metric definitions. The company wasted nearly 50% of their time running manual reports. By centralizing data and getting a single source of truth from their platform for data experiences, Essence delivers custom apps to clients by connecting to customers' data models, thereby promoting trust and engagement.

Another top broadcast organization uses a custom application so sales reps ensure that ads are sold for the optimal price, regardless of time slot or market.

The brave new data world awaits

Data experiences tailored for different needs change the dynamic around data. The ability to think creatively about how you deliver data to users turns data into a tool with endless opportunities for impact. The key is finding a solution that allows you to do this with ease, thus freeing your IT and business analyst teams to focus on more value-added activities and create positive data experiences for your users.

Data experiences increase revenue, gain real-time insights to make faster decisions, and secure a competitive advantage. With a platform that powers data-driven experiences from modern BI and embedded analytics to workflow integrations and custom data apps, you will be well on your way to building a data-dependent culture within your company and customers, and being prepared to deliver an optimal data experience to your users.