

FordDirect Uncovers AI-Powered Insights 75% Faster, Driving Sales and Service

FORDDIRECT

The digital marketing solution provider for Ford Dealers and Lincoln Retailers turned to the DataRobot AI Platform to shorten the time to understand customers and prospects, enabling highly personalized touchpoints. The highest-scored leads are 18X more likely to buy a vehicle.

INDUSTRY

Automotive

INFRASTRUCTURE

Microsoft Azure

PRODUCTS

DataRobot AI Platform

- AI Experimentation
- AI Production

Databricks

COUNTRY

USA

Challenge

In building 360-degree customer views, FordDirect must interpret thousands of customer signals from across Ford, dealers/retailers, and third parties with the goal of personalizing customer touchpoints.

Solution

The DataRobot AI Platform enhances FordDirect's Customer Journey Platform. Linked with Microsoft Azure and Databricks, the platform provides AI-powered recommendations, optimizations, and direct signals that its dealers, retailers, product partners, and Ford's digital marketing teams rely on.

Result

Replacing a legacy system, FordDirect decreased its technology debt by approximately \$3 million. From data access to implementation, they're now 75% faster due to AI automation as compared to hand-developed models, freeing data scientists to spend more time on new projects. The highest-scored leads are 18X more likely to buy a vehicle, a segment valued at an impressive \$6.5 million.*

FordDirect: An Indispensable Marketing Partner

In the competitive vehicle market, dealers who can anticipate when consumers are ready to buy have an edge.

For Ford Dealers and Lincoln Retailers in North America, a unique partnership makes that possible. FordDirect, a joint venture between Ford Motor Company and Ford Dealers and Lincoln Retailers, serves as their trusted advisor and digital marketing solution provider.

"There really is nothing like FordDirect in the automotive industry," said Tom Thomas, Vice President of Data & Analytics at FordDirect. "Our mission is to be an indispensable partner to the dealers and retailers and drive more sales and service for them and Ford."

AI for More Personalized Customer Experiences

FordDirect's Customer Journey Platform captures thousands of customer signals – from web visits, calls, chat interactions, and other touches – across Ford, dealers, retailers, and third parties in near real-time.

To help make sense of the data, FordDirect relies on the DataRobot AI Platform, which integrates with Microsoft Azure and Databricks.

"DataRobot is our AI platform of choice. Together with our Customer Journey Platform, we have a unique ability to identify, communicate, and engage with our consumers through highly personalized touchpoints," Thomas said. "We're doing things like AI-powered recommendations, optimizations, and direct signals that our dealers, retailers, product partners, and Ford's digital marketing teams rely on."

SUMMARY

FordDirect is a partnership between Ford and Lincoln dealerships and Ford Motor Company.

Its mission is to help the dealers and retailers it serves succeed at retail.

This unique partnership adds unmatched insights because Ford Motor Company provides data, as well as direct streams of incentives and digital content.

The company serves as the data hub for Ford and Lincoln dealerships. This allows it to analyze consumer interactions and offer an enhanced suite of products that help Ford dealers and Lincoln retailers drive retail sales and brand loyalty unlike other solutions on the market. For more information, visit forddirect.com/.

Want more information on how you can get these results?

[Learn More](#)

From Start to Implementation 75% Faster

As FordDirect and its data science partner RXA @ OneMagnify tackle each step of the data science process, DataRobot automates the machine learning process. The platform helps prepare data, determine features, move models into production, validate them, set governance rules, and monitor and measure models to improve continuously.

“One of the things I love about DataRobot is the ability to actually model against different feature sets,” said Jonathan Prantner, Chief Analytics Officer at RXA @ OneMagnify. “You can model against all the features plus the ones that DataRobot has derived, or use the platform’s predictive powers regarding which features are most important.”

Then, DataRobot automatically trains potentially hundreds of models, enabling data scientists to zero in on the winning ones.

Once in production, the platform provides detailed insight into model performance. Data scientists spend less time on maintenance and more time on new projects.

“DataRobot automates every phase, so data scientists can actually focus on data science,” Prantner said. “It really turns one data scientist into four. And that’s not a number that we are just throwing out there. Compared to a custom hand-developed model, from data access to implementation, it takes one-fourth the time.”

Finding Prospects 18X More Likely to Buy

FordDirect runs several large-scale models for use cases such as forecasting, multi-touch attribution weighting, media mix modeling, customer and dealer/retailer segmentation, natural language processing, and propensity scoring.

One of its top-performing models identifies customers with a likelihood to purchase within the next 90 days. Using this propensity model, FordDirect found that the highest-scored leads are 18 times more likely to buy a vehicle. In fact, 90% of all buys happen in the top 20% of scored customers – a segment valued at an impressive \$6.5 million.*

Moreover, they find that model performance is five times faster than the original model, allowing the company to score more customers and service vehicles over time at the dealerships.

Testing and Monitoring New LLMs with Generative AI

By adopting DataRobot, FordDirect replaced legacy technology systems and decreased their technology debt by approximately \$3 million* – all while improving agility, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Next, FordDirect looks forward to scaling with generative AI use cases to add additional value, and unifying workflows for both predictive and generative AI. The platform offers the ability to test and try new large language models quickly, and rapidly build, securely operate, and confidently govern the performance of those LLMs in one place.

“The combination of DataRobot and FordDirect has really given our dealers and retailers an advantage in the marketplace in terms of increased sales, service, higher ROI, and stronger customer loyalty,” Thomas said. “What we’re able to do is unprecedented.”

*Figures provided by FordDirect based on their own experience.



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Vice President of Data & Analytics,
FordDirect

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