

OPTIMIZING AD SPEND WITH HIGHTOUCH, SNOWFLAKE, AND DBT

SOFTWARE



COMPANY Lucid
LOCATION South Jordan, Utah

SNOWFLAKE WORKLOADS USED



Due to the increasing number of complexities in a given business, it's getting harder and harder to collaborate and express complex ideas in real time. Lucid is a visual collaboration suite that combines virtual whiteboarding, intelligent diagramming, and cloud visualization to help hybrid teams of all sizes innovate faster. Lucid has millions of users across 180 different countries that leverage Lucid in some capacity.

CHALLENGE: Creating a 360-degree view of the customer

With a relatively limited data stack built around AWS Redshift, Lucid had no ability to personalize customer engagements across channels. There was no 360-degree view of the customer and this meant that it was impossible to optimize ad spend/performance or create customized marketing campaigns for different audiences. Transforming the raw data in Redshift was a nightmare, and sending data to various business tools and ad platforms was even more difficult.

"In many ways, we developed our tech stack with a vision for the future, but we also wanted to solve the problems we have now. The problem with any out-of-the-box analytics suite is that you are restricted to only doing what it supports natively. CDPs [customer data platforms] are not extensible to what you want them to do," Lucid's Director of Strategy and Analytics, Weston Rowley, said.

SOLUTION: Building a modern data stack on Snowflake with dbt and Hightouch

Snowflake as a single source of truth

Searching for a robust data platform that could act as both a data lake and a data warehouse, Lucid turned to Snowflake. Snowflake consolidates Lucid's platform into a single centralized platform and lets the company ingest data from multiple sources.

“With Snowflake we don't have to leverage a data lake. We can use the same processes across all of our different data flows. Snowflake can act as the giant bucket where we dump our raw data.”

—WESTON ROWLEY, Director, Strategy and Analytics, Lucid

Since implementing Snowflake, Lucid has been able to establish a single source of truth for all of its customer data and remove all of the barriers that came with Redshift.

"Many of our metrics that run the business come through Snowflake at some point in time. Once our data is in Snowflake, everything is easy to work with and there is absolutely no friction," Rowley said.

Snowflake's native separation of storage and compute gives Lucid unparalleled flexibility and makes it easy to scale up or down as needed. With Snowflake powering analytics, Lucid can finally trust the data.

dbt for transformation and modeling

Once the data is in Snowflake, Lucid still has to transform it from its raw state and build data models so that it can be used not only for analytics but also for data activation. This is exactly where dbt comes into play.

"All of the logic that goes into calculating our core metrics lives in dbt and it's essential to everything that we do related to analytics—dbt is the underpinning of everything," Rowley said.

Since implementing dbt, Lucid has been able to build a number of custom data models that are purpose-built for different marketing and analytics use cases. These models include:

- Offline conversion LTV valuations for different ad platforms
- Custom audience segments for ad platforms and marketing campaigns
- Recently acquired customers from channel partners
- Custom objects (such as leads, subscriptions, accounts, licenses, and so on) for marketing automation emails

- Business metrics for executive reporting
- Errors and alerts for Slack notifications

Instead of having to write ad hoc SQL queries and leverage custom code, dbt gives Lucid the ability to standardize, orchestrate, and execute SQL queries directly against Snowflake. Lucid's strategy and analytics team uses dbt for 95%–98% of all their data transformations.

Hightouch for Data Activation

Before adopting Hightouch for Data Activation, Lucid built several

“dbt is so much faster than writing in another language and it's incredibly flexible. You can run anything in dbt that you can write in SQL. What would otherwise take several hours can be done in a few minutes with dbt.”

—WESTON ROWLEY, Director, Strategy and Analytics, Lucid

custom data pipelines to send customer data to Marketo. However, this data came in from multiple different sources, which meant pipelines were prone to failure. The constant data rate forced Lucid to keep a close eye on API limits and campaign backlogs. In addition to this, far more users were pushed into Marketo than were actually needed, which meant Lucid was constantly fighting to keep the user count within the appropriate limit.

Sending data to ads platforms was also a nightmare. A single integration to Google Ads could take upward of 12–16 hours of engineering time to build, and this is not even accounting for the maintenance involved to keep it up and running; and with no built-in alerting, it was nearly impossible to know when, where, or why specific failures occurred. Since pipeline breakages could have a huge impact on Lucid's ad spending efficacy, manual CSV files were adopted instead.

Since implementing Hightouch, Lucid has been able to optimize bidding in Google Ads to achieve a 52% increase in ROAS and a

“Thanks to Hightouch, I no longer have to wake up on Saturdays and Sundays to upload manual CSV files. With Hightouch, we can trust that the same data that lives in our internal reports is the same data that is getting passed to our ads platforms.”

—MALLORY REESE-BAGLEY,
Senior Marketing Operations Manager, Lucid

37% increase in new users. Instead of taking 12–16 hours to launch and test a custom API job, a single integration in Hightouch can be set up in five minutes and the most complex data models can be set up in two to three hours, saving an average of 12.5 hours. Before Hightouch, Lucid had no ability to create first-party audiences for specific marketing campaigns. Thanks to Hightouch Audiences, Lucid can now target high-value customers and launch cross-promotion campaigns for existing customers based on usage.

“We just started using Hightouch Audiences, but now the marketing team no longer has to come to us to build an audience,” Rowley said.

RESULTS:

- Lucid now has a data-driven marketing tech stack built on Snowflake Data Cloud, dbt, and Hightouch.
- With dbt and Snowflake, transformations that used to take hours can be done in minutes.
- Using Hightouch and Snowflake, Lucid achieved a 52% increase in ROAS in Google and a 37% increase in new users.
- Since adopting Hightouch and Snowflake, Lucid's engineering team has been able to save an average of 12.5 hours of engineering time per integration.

WHAT'S NEXT:

Turning insights into actions

As a **product-led growth** (PLG) company, driving product usage and accelerating adoption is vitally important to Lucid. With Snowflake, dbt, and Hightouch working in unison, Lucid's data models will only continue to improve, enabling the data team to address more-complex use cases around analytics and data activation to acquire even more customers.

ABOUT SNOWFLAKE

Snowflake delivers the Data Cloud—a global network where thousands of organizations mobilize data with near-unlimited scale, concurrency, and performance. Inside the Data Cloud, organizations unite their siloed data, easily discover and securely share governed data, and execute diverse analytic workloads. Wherever data or users live, Snowflake delivers a single and seamless experience across multiple public clouds. Join Snowflake customers, partners, and data providers already taking their businesses to new frontiers in the Data Cloud. snowflake.com