

Analysing the fast lane

Everyone knows that Formula One is as fast-paced as it gets, with every car on the grid capable of going from 0 to 200km/h in about four seconds and averaging at a speed of 360km/h. But things don't just need to move quickly on the track for a Formula One team to be a success. Behind the scenes, engineers and mechanics need to know exactly what they are doing - and make any fixes as quickly as possible, especially in the highly pressured situation of the pit stop, where every single second counts. When you bear in mind that each team has several cars on the track, this is no mean feat.

 By [Davide Hanan](#) 14 Aug 2013

But how is this relevant to businesses? Well, just as an organisation needs to keep track of exactly what's going on throughout the company via CRM and ERP systems or in its industry by trend-watching, Formula One teams need to keep up to date with everything that's going on around them.

Not only do they have to understand the condition of their cars while the race is going on, but in order to operate as effectively as possible in the pit, they need to have information on previous races and pit stops, so they can act as efficiently as possible, taking on board what has happened in the past. On top of this, they have to keep track of their competitors - not just their final position, but detail, such as how much slower or faster they were.

Similarities with the business world

People don't often think of the similarities with the business world when they think of Formula One, and even less so do they think of big data. And yet the three are actually very closely linked, with correct use of big data playing just as big a part in the success of a team as it can to the success of a business. As technology has developed, Formula One teams have been able to add telemetry to their cars that can record a host of data, from qualification times through to lap times, pit stop information and even cornering information.

Just as a business would make use of this information to see where it could improve its operations, or even to be quicker in the market, Formula One teams and their drivers are able to digest the information to understand their cars fully and how they can get better lap times from them.

With the data from the telemetry available in real time, this information can even be harnessed as the race is going on, so the driver can be advised on the smallest of details, whether it's how to have taken a corner better or if there's a particular part of the lap he is repeatedly losing time on. Similarly, in a business, HR departments can see in real time in which situations staff are most valuable. In retail, this especially comes to force as staff can be reallocated between different branches to meet levels of customer demand.

For the engineering team in Formula One, access to this data in real time is invaluable when it comes to pit stops. To know exactly what is wrong with the car before it pulls in means they can be prepared to make a quick fix as soon as possible - saving precious seconds so the car can get back on to the track when it needs to.

For a business, this is also imperative. When it comes to beating competitors and staying ahead of the market, any organisation needs to know exactly what is happening in real time, so it can not only respond to customers faster, but ensure it is reacting to market changes as they happen.

Speed is clearly of the essence, both in the business world and on the racetrack. So, next time you're watching Lewis Hamilton speed around the circuit, remember that as much data analysis has gone into his drive as you are using to make success of your business.

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