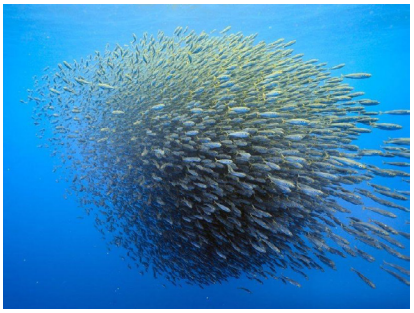
UNANIMOUS A.I.

Case Study: Sales Forecasting in Uncertain Times

Customer: Ermi LLC



Introduction

It is hard to find a business that has not been disrupted by COVID-19. When the pandemic first began, Ermi LLC, a healthcare company dedicated to restoring motion loss post orthopedic injury/surgery, looked to Swarm AI® as a way to forecast the pandemic's impact on their sales. During normal times, Ermi would study historical averages and growth models to produce its quarterly goals, but during the pandemic, factoring in the unknown was challenging, especially as it related to long-term forecasting.

In April and October of 2020, Ermi turned to Unanimous AI's Swarm® to help it predict the impact of COVID-19 on its ten sales districts in the United States. By swarming with district managers, sales teams, and support teams, Ermi was able to analyze market productivity for the second half of 2020 and the beginning of 2021. The information it gathered from the Swarm sessions allowed Ermi to adjust sales goals and incentive plans, better positioning its team and its expectations surrounding the business.

Using Swarm, we were able to leverage our historical performance to predict what has been a historically unpredictable year.

-Bob Baumgartner,
RN, BSN, VP, Marketing

What is Swarm AI?

Swarm AI® technology provides a powerful combination of real-time human insights and AI algorithms, enabling significantly more accurate results than traditional methods.

Modeled after swarms in nature, which converge on optimal solutions with extreme efficiency, Swarm AI turns networked human groups into AI-optimized systems, enabling accurate insights, decisions, and forecasts to be quickly generated from consumer groups or business teams.

Applying the power of Swarm AI is easy using the Swarm platform. It can be accessed from anywhere in the world using standard web browsers and can generate actionable results in a matter of minutes.

For more information, visit the following links:

Unanimous AI
https://unanimous.ai/what-is-si/

Swarm technology
https://unanimous.ai/swarm/

Method

Ermi used Swarm® to analyze COVID-19's impact on its two main customer groups: Worker's Compensation and Veterans Affairs. During virtual meetings, a cross functional group of district managers, sales affiliates, and the sales support team worked together to create sales forecasts using Swarm. The group responded to questions in Swarm and discussed the results in the virtual meeting. The questions were focused on how sales for their respective customer groups would change in upcoming time periods.

For each customer group, Ermi asked three questions: First, whether sales in the group would increase or decrease for the Quarter in question (Figure 1). Next, they identified a general percent change in sales, and followed that with a more precise estimate by which sales would increase or decrease. This method was repeated across all 10 districts with their respective cross-functional groups to refine the forecasts.

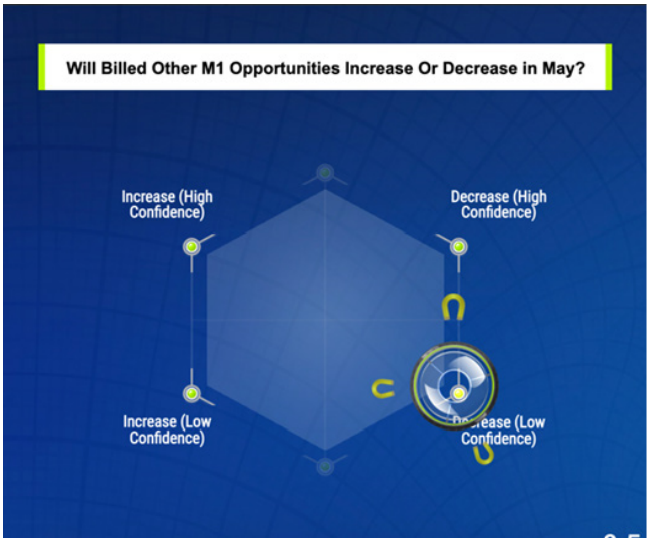


Figure 1: An example of a question that gauged the effect COVID-19 would have on sales for that period.

Normally we would have just done a survey but that approach doesn't allow the collective intelligence to really direct us to the correct decision quickly and efficiently.

-Jonathan Shaw,
DPT, MBID, VP, Sales

Using Swarm®

Swarm is a collaborative intelligence platform for generating AI-optimized insights from networked human groups. The power of Swarm is that the underlying algorithms don't rely on how participants report their sentiments (as reporting in surveys has been shown to be unreliable and inconsistent), but instead processes how each participant behaves when converging in real-time as part of an interactive system.

With questions lasting no longer than 60 seconds, Swarm provides a platform for orderly deliberation of significant questions. Instead of replacing human intuition, Swarm AI amplifies it through proprietary intelligence algorithms that read the complex human behaviors that arise from the interactions of participants during real-time deliberations. In this case, the company was able to accurately forecast COVID-19's impact on sales, better positioning it to support its sales team.

Results

By utilizing Unanimous AI's award-winning Swarm technology, Ermi accurately forecast its 2020 Q3 and Q4 sales performance. By comparing the behaviors of swarms composed of participants from multiple districts, Ermi gained advance insight into the percent that sales in their respective customer groups would increase or decrease for the given quarter.

Data from each Swarm session provided specific user-friendly data points for the team to use. In addition to the standard Swarm output, Ermi utilized an advanced interpolated solution provided by Swarm for questions with ordered answers that identifies the value that best represents the swarm's collective response. As shown in the Support Density chart in Figure 2, although the swarm converged on 20%, a value closer to 15% was calculated to be a more accurate answer. Ermi also utilized Swarm's measurements of the teams' conviction and confidence in its responses.

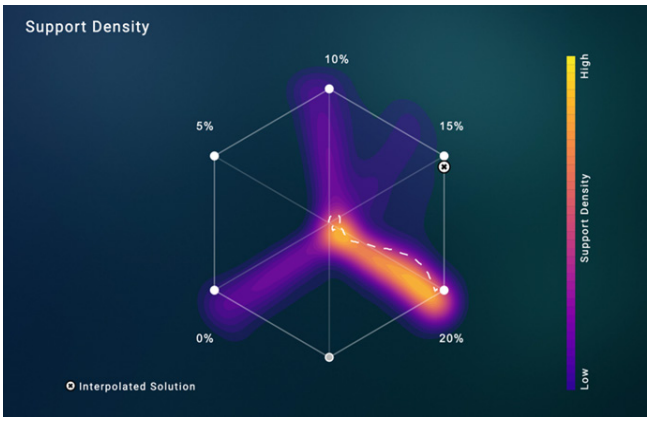


Figure 2: Support Density plots depict how the swarm responded to a question about projected change. Advanced analytics produced an interpolated solution which improved the accuracy of the Ermi's forecast.

By looking at these data points, and combining the results from across its groups, Ermi received a clearer picture of what the year ahead would look like. Armed with accurate forecasts, Ermi was able to adjust goals, incentive plans, and sales strategies, and better support its sales team during a very difficult year.