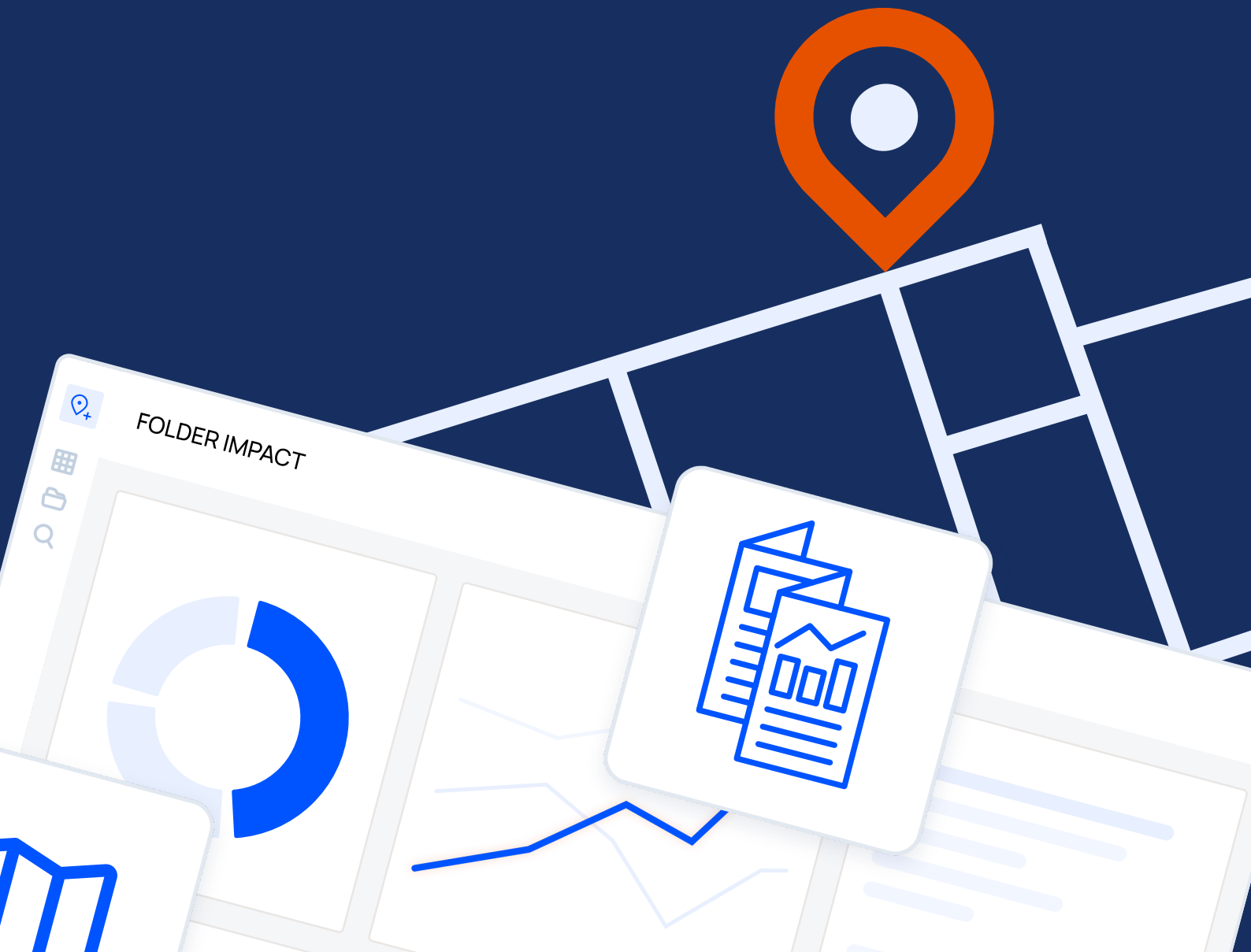
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A practical guide: door-to-door explained

Lessons learned from 200+ evaluated door-to-door leaflets and multiple cases



AI-powered
retail insights

Accurat is a leader in retail & media **location intelligence**, active in the BeNeLux and Germany. By understanding real-world consumer behaviour, we **empower brands to improve decision-making.**



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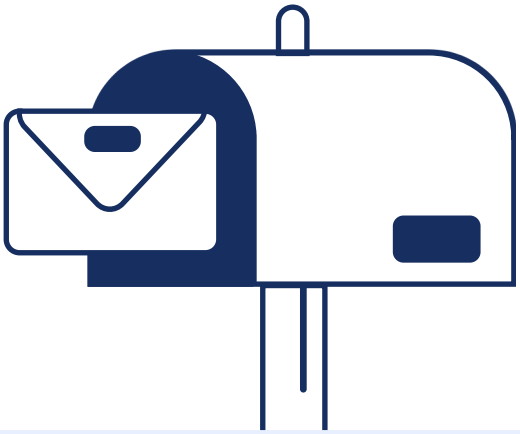
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Data driven
door-to-door insights

The facts behind one of marketing's most discussed channels.

In today's **complex marketing landscape**, with fragmented media use, rising costs and sustainability pressures, the **door-to-door leaflet still sparks debate**.

For years, its **effectiveness relied on belief rather than proof**. Now, thanks to AI-powered analytics and location data, we can **finally measure the real world impact** of leaflet campaigns with the same precision as digital, linking exposure to store visits and to actual customer behaviour.



How to make door-to-door data-driven?

By measuring store visits on a daily basis using location intelligence, it is possible to **calculate drive-to-store impact** and even measure the **market effect** of your leaflets. Two main methods were used for this paper;

To isolate a leaflet's true effect, you want to compare two groups: an exposed group that **received the leaflet** and those that did not. The latter acts as a **control group**.

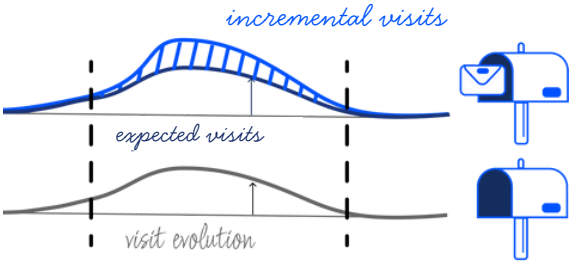
Exposed: households that received the leaflet.

Control: similar households that did not.

1 Define drive-to-store impact with campaign lift

To calculate the drive-to-store effect, the model compares expected visit behaviour based on the control group with observed behaviour for the exposed.

The resulting uplift — the **incremental lift** — represents the **additional impact** generated by the leaflet. It is the percentage increase in visits that can be directly attributed to the leaflet, **after accounting for external influences**.

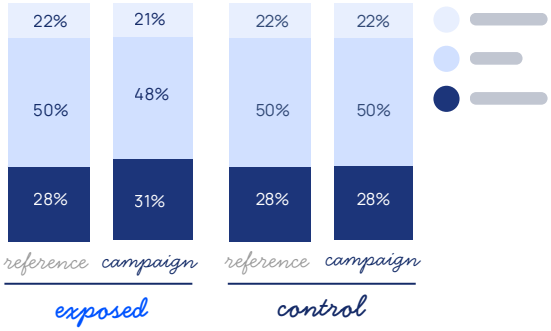


2 Define a market effect with a Share of Visits analysis

Share of Visits (SoV) show **how visits in the market are distributed across retailers** for a given period.

A **positive change in SoV** for the exposed group compared to the control group during the leaflet period vs the reference period, **identifies a positive market effect**.

Even if own figures show less growth, a positive SoV change reveal that **you outperformed competitors.**



Everything you always wanted to ask...

Questions marketers should be asking themselves about the leaflet

As a retailer your budgets are defined. Door-to-door is known to take a big chunk in most retailers' marketing mix. With good reasons, the leaflet has a proven effect, as we will demonstrate further in this paper. To bring clarity to the discussion, we conducted **extensive research to answer the questions marketers have been asking for years**.

1. Does the leaflet work?

For years, the effectiveness of door-to-door leaflets has been debated. Today, **data gives a clear answer**. By linking leaflet exposure to actual store visits, we can prove how it drives both traffic and market share growth.

The result: measurable, verifiable proof that the leaflet remains a powerful, strategic part of the marketing mix. Changes should (and now can) be supported with data.

2. How do I create a good leaflet?

A **successful leaflet** is not only about reach but **about relevance**. By analysing performance across campaigns, we identify which creative elements, formats and calls to action drive the strongest response.

The **data reveals clear best practices** for layout, frequency, offer type and even paper format to help marketers create leaflets that stand out, connect and deliver results.

3. How do I package my leaflet?

Distribution defines impact. Whether sent as a standalone item, bundled, or through targeted packaging, the way a leaflet is delivered affects how it is noticed and remembered.

Through comparative analysis for two verticals and over 30 leaflets, we identified that there is a **clear difference between being on the cover as being part of the package**.

4. Where to deliver for highest impact?

Relevance also means **being in the right place**. With data-driven geographic insights, we pinpoint where each region, city or neighbourhood delivers the best campaign performance.

By analysing visit share and audience profiles, marketers can make **informed decisions on where to invest** ensuring every leaflet contributes meaningfully to campaign success.

How were these questions answered?

In this whitepaper, insights are based on **+200 leaflet evaluations** across verticals including brands such as:

- **Grocery**
- **Do-It-Yourself**
- **Gardening**
- **Electronics**
- **Fashion & Shoes**
- **Beauty & Health**
- **Pet food**
- **Home & Interior**

Key metrics evaluated

The impact of each door-to-door leaflet campaign is assessed **across key metrics**, providing a complete view of campaign performance.

Leaflet meta data

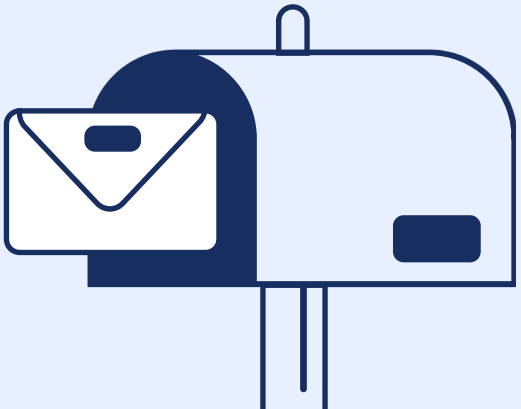
Leaflets can be large or small, existing of 4 or even 40 pages. They can be targeted or address nearly all households. Some are promo oriented whereas others tell a compelling story providing content. Each of these choices help define success. 10+ meta data metrics were **evaluated for success** as we will highlight in **"How to create an impactful leaflet".**

The Change in Share of Visits

As explained before, it shows how a brand's **proportion of total store visits evolved compared to competitors**. It is a key metric used to provide answers for both the effect of the leaflet (Q1) as where to drop (Q4)!

Campaign Lift

This metric reflects the **percentage change in total visits** against the expected baseline. A measure you can easily compare and correlate with many other data points as we did to answer the impact of the leaflet (Q1), how to drop (Q3) and even where to drop (Q4).



1. Does the leaflet work?

The leaflet works!

With rising paper and distribution costs, many **retailers have scaled back** or paused their leaflet campaigns. Almost every time, **they return to print after seeing performance drop**. Brands like ALDI Süd and Lidl Netherlands have tested reductions only to resume after measurable declines. Also in Belgium brands often return after initial tests.

Retailers can already measure the impact of such decisions using their own sales & loyalty data, **while location data** offer deeper, more granular insights into **how shopper behaviour changes, adding an extra dimension** to the internal analysis.

As a retailer you have many questions...

- If I distribute a leaflet, **do I perform better** than my competition?
- If I **reduce or stop leaflets**, what is the impact?
  - Does a partial reduction lead to measurable loss?
  - Does a full stop cause a larger decline and how fast?
  - Does this depend on the competitiveness of my sector?
- If I **increase leaflets**, do I gain Share of Visits in new areas?
- Is the impact **short-term or long-term**?
- Does leaflet activity also **affect other key metrics**, such as loyalty, frequency or market share?
- ...

Location data, combined with own insights, provides a clearer answer to each of the above.

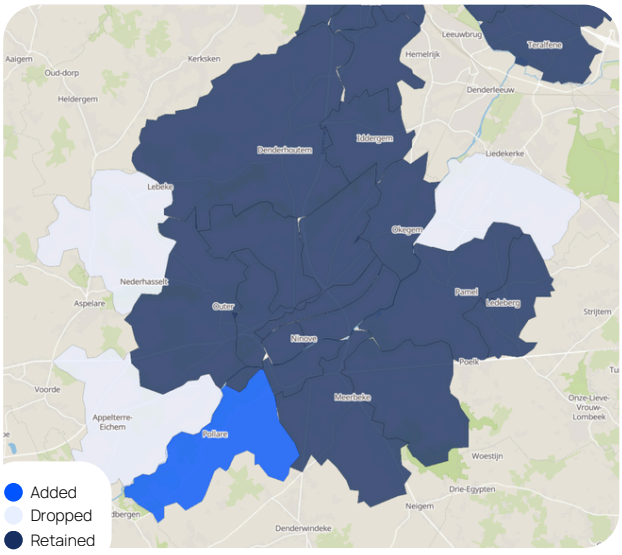
Case study

The impact of reducing leaflet distribution

5 different cases across verticals (food, DIY & fashion) were evaluated in which we measured the effects of **reducing leaflet coverage** across different zones — comparing areas where leaflets were retained with those where distribution was stopped. The **impact of adding zones** was also evaluated.

Across several campaigns, the results showed a consistent pattern:

- When **foldering** is continued in **low-competition** periods, share of visits **(SoV) increased** compared to zones where no folder was distributed.
- **Stopping** leaflet distribution led to **SoV declines** in high-competitive periods & **stability** in low-competitive times.
- Maintaining leaflet presence **protected visit share** & put a hold on competitor gains in busy periods.
- Newly added zones typically **showed an increase in SoV** proving that a change in media behaviour leads to a change in consumer behaviour.



Conclusion:

A strong leaflet presence is **crucial during competitive periods**, it prevents SoV loss and can even drive uplift. In **quieter periods**, the leaflet **provides a competitive edge**, even if pausing activity won't immediately harm performance.

2. How do I create a good leaflet?

Away with gut feeling, let data guide you...

When working with door-to-door campaigns, **many questions arise about the folder format**. How many pages should it have? Is inspiration & design worth the effort? Should we use a theme? How large should the promotions be? ...

To answer these questions, we **analyzed 122 leaflet campaigns and their impact.** Find results below of our findings:

Field	Category	Subcategory	Proportion	Score vs avg*
Brand related	Sector	Home & Deco	16%	90
		Food retail	25%	109
		Garden & Pet	12%	112
		DIY	20%	97
		Beauty	20%	93
		Other	6%	100
Folder related	# of pages	<20 pages	39%	104
		20-48 pages	38%	96
		+48 pages	23%	99
	# of folders	Targeted	39%	106
		Mass	61%	93
	Paper format	Traditional	96%	100
		Special size	4%	93
	Frequency	Weekly	40%	94
		Bi-weekly	60%	106
Content related	Theme	Clear theme	18%	108
		Generic folder	82%	98
	Promo vs inspiration	Inspiration	14%	105
		Promotional	86%	99
Promo related	Promotions on cover	0-2	20%	115
		3-5	65%	92
		6+	16%	115
	Type of promo	Low prices	17%	86
		Promotions	83%	103
	Avg promo %	0-15%	19%	120
		15-25%	70%	99
		+25%	12%	97
	Promotional emphasis	Highly visible	83%	104
		Sober	17%	81

***** Drive-to-store impact scores have been normalized for their category. Each folder was compared to its category average instead of the overall average.

The best performing leaflet?

Traditional size

<20 pages

have a **clear theme**
are **inspiring**

Have a cover with
<2 or **>6 products**

Offer between
0-15% discounts

Are **targeted**
(as opposed to mass)

higher discount ≠ guarantee for sucess

the more **eye-catching**
the more powerful

3. How do I package my leaflet?

Packaging makes the difference

Even the best-designed leaflet only works if it gets noticed. Research shows that the way a leaflet is presented, bundled and delivered influences how it is seen, handled & remembered.



Whether distributed as a standalone item, combined with other leaflets or included in a targeted bundle, each approach has a different effect on visibility, recall and response.

In a crowded letterbox, **packaging can determine whether a leaflet captures attention or gets lost**.

With so many packaging options available, retailers face **key strategic questions**:

- **Where** do we want to be positioned within the package?
- Is it **worth** the extra cost to appear on the cover?
- Should we stand out as a **separate folder**, or integrate into a bundle?
- ...

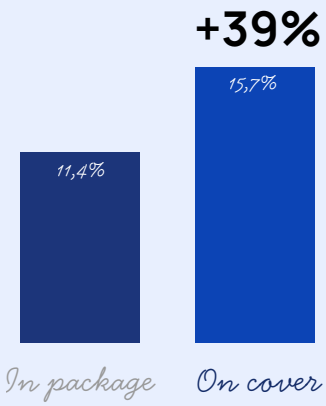
These questions highlight that **packaging isn't just about saving on distribution costs**. It's about maximizing return on every printed copy.

Case study

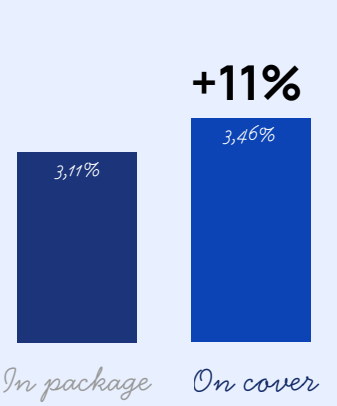
In the package vs on the cover? Assessing the difference.

Based on a control and exposed group the **drive to store lift** was calculated for 4 different campaigns. Three were distributed as part of the package, 1 was distributed on the cover of the package.

In package vs **on cover** for a fashion brand



In package vs **on cover** for supermarkets



Although the test sample is small, **results are highly significant**. A relative difference of +39% cannot be ignored and supports gut-feeling: **to be the first leaflet in the bundle pays off**.

For the supermarket industry, where campaign lifts are typically smaller given their higher frequency of both leaflets and visits, an equally significant effect can be noticed: a **11% uplift for the cover-version** compared to the leaflets that are distributed in the package. In this case over 30 leaflets were analysed.

Conclusion:

For these cases, once again it is **proven that the leaflet works**. We can conclude that advertising on the **cover generates an even higher drive-to-store impact**. More tests in the future will most probably confirm this thesis again.

4. Where do I distribute?

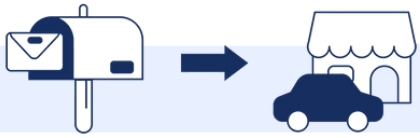
Smart distribution goes beyond “nearby”

Choosing **where to distribute remains one of the most difficult decisions** in leaflet marketing. Traditional methods based on loyalty data or surveys often target large postcode zones, while real impact happens at the neighbourhood level. Typical belief is that distributing leaflets within a catchable perimeter around the store yield best results. Although that is true to a larger extent, **today’s methods leave room for improvement**.

Today, retailers can **combine open-source and location data** to distribute their leaflets more intelligently. This approach allows them to **identify high-potential zones** by considering factors such as household density, income levels, store proximity & competitor presence. As a result, planning becomes **evidence-based rather than assumption-driven**.

Think how you can leverage the following metrics for a smarter distribution plan:

- Your **share of visits** per zone
- Your **competitor’s** share of visits
- **Store presence** for you and your competitors to define competitive areas
- **Households**, **social classes** & **age groups**
- **Behaviour-based audiences** such as loyals, combiners, discount shoppers, city dwellers...
- **Weighted taxes** to cover for audiences or even impact
- ...



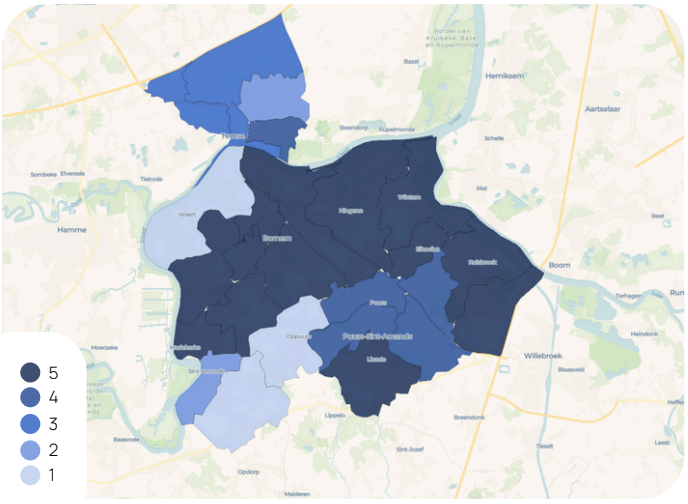
Case study

Beyond proximity — testing smarter distribution for a DIY retailer

In the following case study, the main goal of a DIY retailer was to **determine how far from its stores leaflet distribution should extend**. A test was conducted across 12 stores, divided into groups with reductions up to 50 percent.

A smart model assigned an **impact score per zone (1 to 5)** based on many parameters. Lowest scoring zones (1) were switched off first. By comparing changed zones with leaflet receiving zones, **the effect of each reduction level was measured.**

- **Zones further from the stores** typically received lower scores on average.
- In areas where **leaflet distribution was stopped**, **share of visits (SoV) declined** more than in comparable control areas where activity remained unchanged.
- The **lower the score** of the zone, **the greater the relative loss** of visit share.



Conclusion:

A quick reading of results might lead to a simple “drop the zones farthest away first”. However, one could as well conclude that a bold move to **switch leaflets from the nearest zones in favour of zones further away** might yield even growth! To be continued...

Conclusion & Recommendations

Proven impact if you get it right

After analysing hundreds of door-to-door campaigns across sectors, one conclusion stands out: **the leaflet still works, when used intelligently.**

Success doesn't come from simply printing more, but from **understanding where, how**, and **for whom** leaflets create real impact.

Data now allows marketeers to **treat the leaflet as precisely as any digital channel**: measuring reach, effectiveness and ROI, and turning long-held assumptions into measurable facts. When used strategically, the leaflet strengthens both **short-term sales & long-term shopper loyalty**.



Tips & Tricks
for smarter leaflet marketing

As the challenge is no longer proving that it works, but **learning how to make it work smarter**, take the following tips into account for your next leaflet plans.

1. Think beyond reach, focus on relevance

Not every household needs to be reached. Use data to target the right zones, audiences and times, rather than covering every postcode.

2. Measure like digital

Set up control and exposed groups to isolate the leaflet's true impact. **Compare share of visits (SoV)**, loyalty shifts and **campaign lift** — not just distribution volume.

3. Design for attention, not pages

A leaflet with fewer than 20 pages, a clear theme and an eye-catching offer consistently performs better than bulky, unfocused ones. **Quality beats quantity**.

4. Combine creativity with data

Use data-driven models to define optimal zones and test packaging or frequency strategies. Real-world results will tell you where to invest and where to scale back.

about accurat

Retail Media

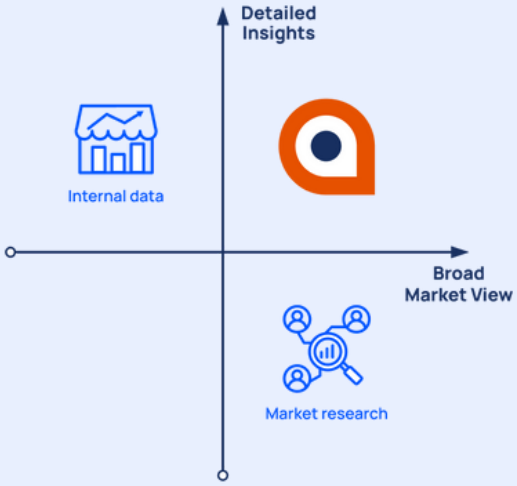
AI-powered market research 🚀

We use location intelligence and larger panels to provide near real-time **insights into shoppers, brands and markets**. This is how we innovate in understanding consumer behavior.

Navigate the retail landscape with behaviour-based insights.

Internal data provides **detailed insights** but is limited to your business. **Traditional market research** offers a **broad market view** but lacks depth.

Accurat bridges this gap by combining a market-wide perspective with granular location intelligence, **turning real-world behavior into actionable insights**.



Discover why picking accurat is the right choice.

Every day, Accurat collects **millions of real-time location data points** from hundreds of thousands of consenting users. By cross-referencing these data points with Points of Interest, we provide a clear view of actual, unbiased customer behaviour.

Our solutions are often called **"Market Research on Steroids"**, offering clear benefits:

24/7 & Real-time

Say goodbye to waiting weeks or months—our big data algorithms provide **actionable results in just minutes.**

No bias

Rely on **unbiased, reliable market research** ensuring our panel represents the entire population.

Deep dive

Analyze periods, benchmark **competitors**, focus on specific **store networks** or assess **audience impact**.

Market view

Understand **your market and competitors** with tailored insights that go beyond sales data.

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Request your free leaflet impact analysis offered by BD MEDIA

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