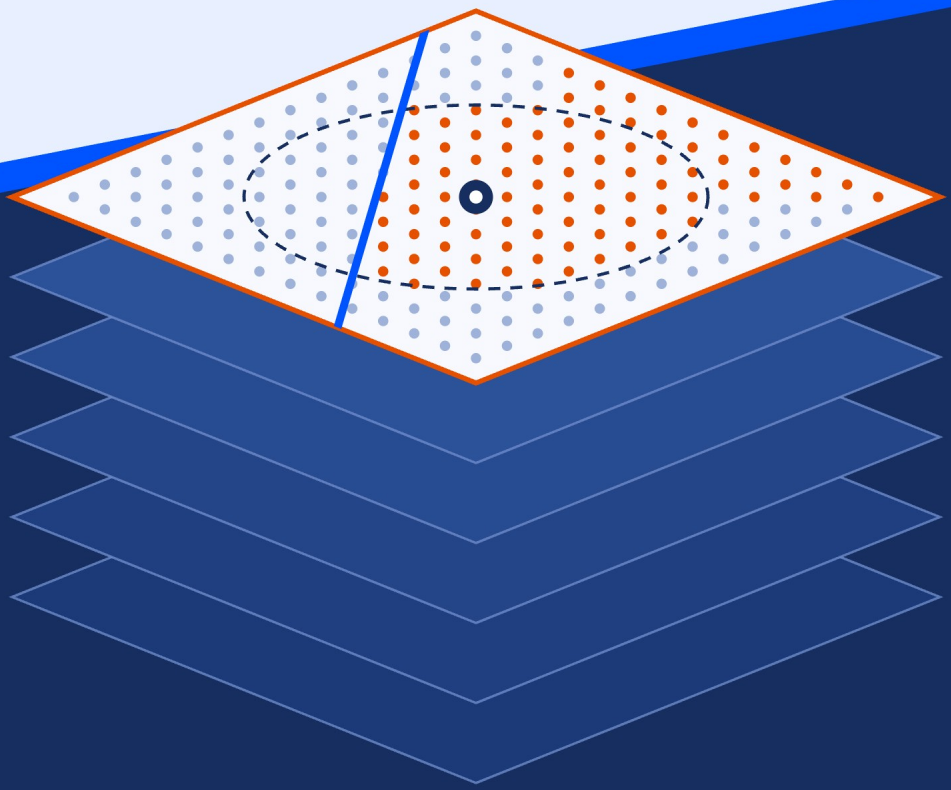
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Beyond the circle

Five data layers that make the paper leaflet smarter in door-to-door distribution



Your data-driven distribution plan

05 Shopper movements

04 Census & audiences

03 Traffic & catchment

02 Points of interest

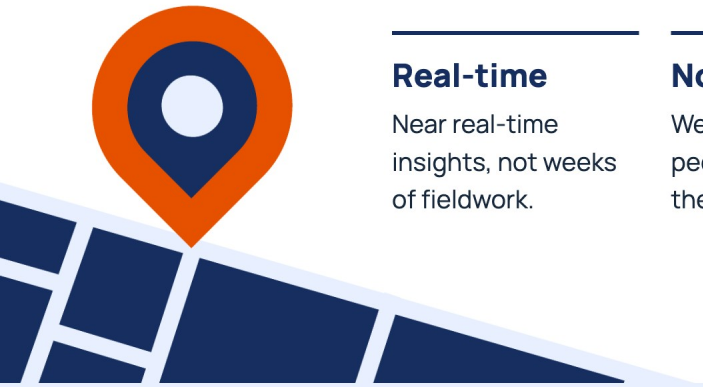
01 Own customer data

● Mailboxes selected with data ● Mailboxes left out

AI-powered market research 🚀

Accurat uses smart AI models to provide near real-time insights into shoppers, brands and markets, based on **real-world consumer behavior**. This is how we innovate in market research across the Benelux, France and Germany.

Every day, Accurat collects millions of real-time location data points from hundreds of thousands of consenting users. By cross-referencing them with points of interest, the locations of your business and those of your competitors, we provide **a clear picture of actual, unbiased consumer behavior**.



Real-time
Near real-time insights, not weeks of fieldwork.

No bias
We measure what people do, not what they say.

Deep dive
Compare periods, competitors, store groups & audiences.

Market view
See your whole market, beyond your own sales.

Trusted by retailers and media across the Benelux

DELHAIZE · Dirk · JUMBO · BURGER KING · Brico · Aveve · MediaMarkt · Hubo · ZEB · Gamma · Tom & Co · Bauer Media Outdoor · Lijncom

About this paper. Parts of this whitepaper were drafted with the help of AI. All content was reviewed and validated by the Accurat team.

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Every leaflet plan starts with a circle

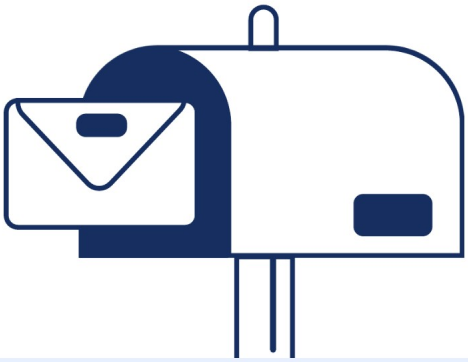
The smart ones don't stop there

The door-to-door leaflet is still one of retail's **widest-reaching media**. It lands in almost every mailbox, every week, and shoppers use it to plan their visits. In our previous whitepaper, based on 122 evaluated leaflets, we showed that **the leaflet works**.

Read our previous whitepaper

Yet many distribution plans still start from a shortcut: **"Around my store. Up to 1,5 km. Decision made."** A circle ignores who lives there, who passes by, where the competition sits and whether the leaflet actually works.

This paper shows how **five layers of data**, stacked per distribution zone, turn that circle into a plan. Each layer answers one question. Together they decide which mailboxes should get your leaflet, and prove what it delivered.



Five layers, built from the bottom up

01 Base layer
Own customer data
Who are my customers?

02 Location layer
Points of interest
Who competes around each mailbox?

03 Refinement layer
Traffic & catchment
Where do all customers come from?

04 Targeting layer
Census & audiences
Where do potential customers live?

05 Shopper layer
Shopper movements
What is the impact in the market?

What your peers say: how retailers plan today

56%
feel they lack the data to distribute smartly (score 1–2 of 5).

46%
review their plan only once a year; in contrast, 23% every campaign.

>95%
don't use a control vs exposed test yet; most rely on sales alone.

14%
use no data at all to build their plan.

Source: live poll among 44 retail and media professionals at BD Media's Leaflet Masters, Bornem, October 22, 2026. Answers are anonymous.

01

THE BASE LAYER – OWN CUSTOMER DATA

Who are my customers?

Start with what you know

Loyalty cards, receipts and webshop addresses are the most reliable data you have: you know exactly who buys what, and how often. But this layer only shows people who are already customers and use your card.

WHAT YOUR PEERS SAY

19% rely only on own customer data to build their distribution plan. Another 14% use no data at all.

Live poll at BD Media's Leaflet Masters 2026, 44 respondents.



● Card holders
◌ Customers without card

WHAT YOU SEE

- Where your customers live
- How often they visit
- When they visit
- How loyal your best customers are

WHAT YOU MISS

- Shoppers without a card
- Their visits to other stores
- Visits to competitors
- Zones with untapped potential

Is a zone weak because people don't like you, or because nobody there knows you yet? Own data alone can't tell.

Case study

A supermarket retailer looks beyond the card

Starting point

An internal model chose the distribution zones, based mostly on loyalty-card data. Card data was also the only KPI for the leaflet.

What we added

Market metrics for 20.000+ zones. For the 2.500 key zones, over 12 weeks: **share of visits** and **visit distribution** (which store each zone feeds).

What we learned

Card and visit data correlate strongly for nearby zones. But the nearest store is not always the chosen one, and competitive zones need a different approach.

Key takeaway

Start from your own data: it is the most reliable layer. Just don't let it be the only one, and never the only KPI.

02 Who competes around each mailbox?

Same distance, different chances

Two zones at the same distance from your store can perform very differently. This is influenced by other players in the same area. A points-of-interest (POI) database links every location to a retailer, with metadata such as opening days and store format.

WHAT YOUR PEERS SAY

8% would add POI data first. A missed opportunity: read on to see why competition matters.

Live poll at BD Media's Leaflet Masters 2026, 44 respondents.

Every zone gets a competitive profile

METRIC PER ZONE	EFFECT
Own stores within 1, 5 or 10 km	▲ more = better
Assortment in store or square meters	larger = better
Distance to your closest store	▼ more = worse
Competitors closer than you	▼ more = worse
Specialists in relevant categories	▼ more = worse
Opening days nearby, e.g. Sunday	open = worse

Same leaflet, two zones

Zone A — LOWER LIFT

Many competitors nearby

Fewer loyal customers, fewer visits

Zone B — HIGHER LIFT

Few competitors nearby

People visited the brand before

All else equal. Pattern from a DIY leaflet model.

Use cases

Follow the competition with your leaflet

A competitor opens a store near yours

Compare the zones around the new store with all other zones.

A competitor runs a big promotion

Isolate the zones near that store and treat them apart.

Stores start opening on Sundays

Group the zones that may be affected and follow them.

Key takeaway

Check the competition first. In a DIY chain's zone score, competitor parameters weighed more than most other metrics, and when it cut leaflets, visits went mainly to one specific competitor.

03

THE REFINEMENT LAYER – TRAFFIC & CATCHMENT DATA

Where do all customers come from?

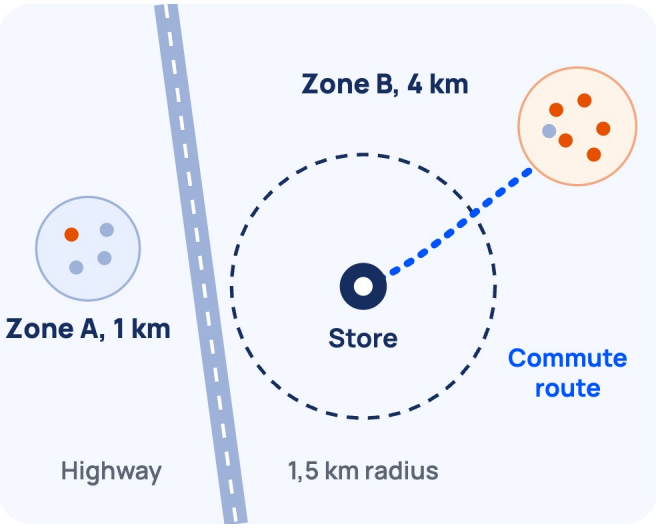
People don't live in circles

Rivers, highways, work and school routes shape where shoppers come from. Location data shows where the visitors of a store actually live: all of them, not only your card holders.

WHAT YOUR PEERS SAY

56% would add traffic & catchment data first: by far the most chosen layer.

Live poll at BD Media's Leaflet Masters 2026, 44 respondents.



Zone A is only 1 km away, but behind a highway: few visits. **Zone B** is 4 km away, but on the commute: many visits. The circle gets both wrong.

Consider how each store concept plays a different role:

Local store – visitors live close by, on foot or by bike. Distribute densely around the store.

Destination store – visitors come from far, mostly by car. Distribute wider, along the routes in.

What location data adds to the circle

Location data shows where the visitors of a store, or of a whole retail park, really live and how they travel. So the same budget can go to the mailboxes that are truly in your catchment area.

Drive-time catchment

Who lives within 5, 10 or 15 minutes of the store: inhabitants, income and the audiences that matter to you.

Traffic passing by

Where do the people who pass the store every day live? That is the potential the store could still capture.

Origin of visitors

In which home zones do a store's visitors live, as a share of all visitors? For all shoppers, not only card holders.

Key takeaway

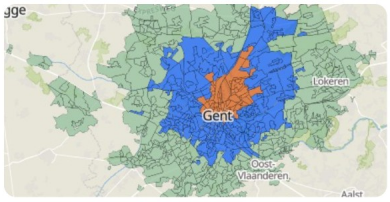
Distance alone misleads. Plan your mailboxes around where all your visitors really come from, not around a circle on the map.

Case study

A big-box store in Ghent: where is the gap?

Theory, traffic and visits

Three views on the catchment of the same store: who lives nearby, who passes by and who actually comes in. Comparing them zone by zone shows where the leaflet can still grow.

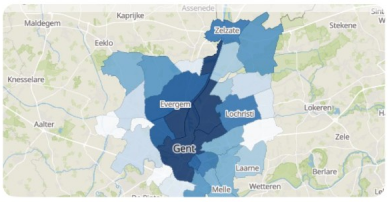


0–10 10–20 20–30 min

1 – THEORETICAL (CENSUS)

667.597

inhabitants (292.754 households) within a 30-min drive

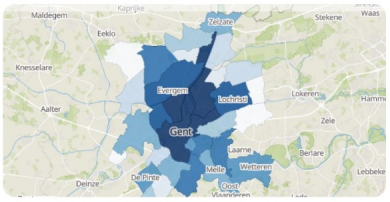


0% 21,24%

2 – POTENTIAL (TRAFFIC)

73,8%

of passers-by live within 30 min; 47% within 10 min

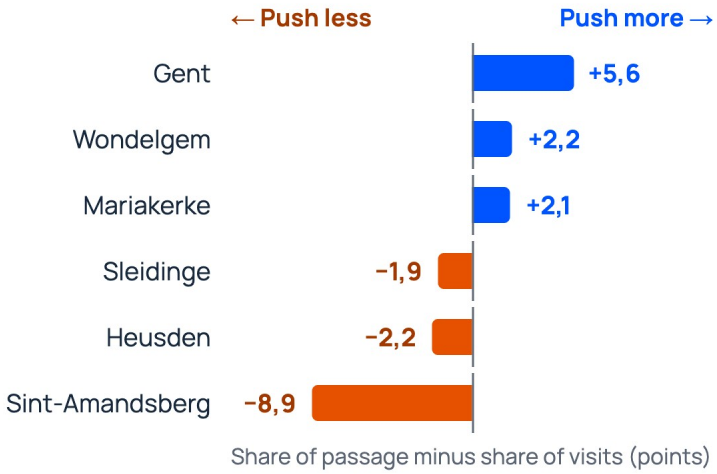


0% 15,69%

3 – ACTUAL (VISITS)

77,5%

of visits come from within 30 min; 48% within 10 min



HOW WE RANK ZONES

Gap = share of passage − share of visits

Index = actual ÷ potential × 100

Positive gap: more people pass by than come in. Gent itself: 21,2% of passage, 15,7% of visits.

Negative gap: already over-represented. Sint-Amandsberg: 15,2% of visits on 6,3% of passage.

Maps: Accurat, © MapTiler © OpenStreetMap contributors. Calculated at sub-municipality level and not yet weighted by inhabitants. At neighborhood level the picture becomes more precise, especially for a large zone like Gent.

Key takeaway

Push your leaflet where many people pass your store but few come in: that is untapped potential. Zones that already over-deliver need less.

04 Where do potential customers live?

Use audiences, like other media do

A classic medium can modernize: outdoor media proved it by selling precise audiences for years, such as “every billboard that over-indexes on young families”. The door-to-door leaflet can do the same, starting with a profile for every distribution zone.

WHAT YOUR PEERS SAY

10% would add census & audience data first.

Live poll at BD Media’s Leaflet Masters 2026, 44 respondents.

Census data: the right edition in the right mailbox

Inhabitants & households · Families with kids · Social class · Houses vs apartments · Gardens & solar panels

Open census and building data put the right edition in the right mailbox: a **garden & pet edition** in zones with many gardens, a **family edition** where many young families live, and a **premium pack** in zones with a higher social class.

Go beyond demographics: target behavior

Discount shoppers · Frequent shoppers · Hard discounter combiners · Pet store visitors · DIY shoppers · Sunday shoppers · Competitor loyals

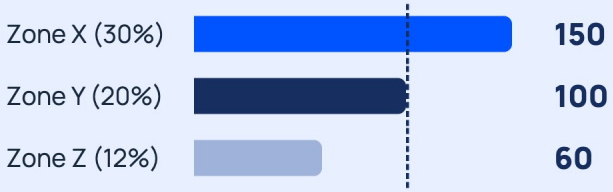
Store-visit data shows how people actually shop, and which share of each zone’s residents belongs to an audience.

Focus on zones where your audience is over-represented

Rank zones by index for the audience that matters to your brand. Above 100: over-represented.

Index = % audience in the zone ÷ % audience in the market × 100

Illustration: discount shoppers are 20% of the market (index 100)



But don’t over-target: some audiences, like gender, barely differ between zones.

Key takeaway

Target where audiences really differ between zones. Everywhere else, reach is the leaflet’s strength.

05 What is the impact in the market?

Measure share, not just visits

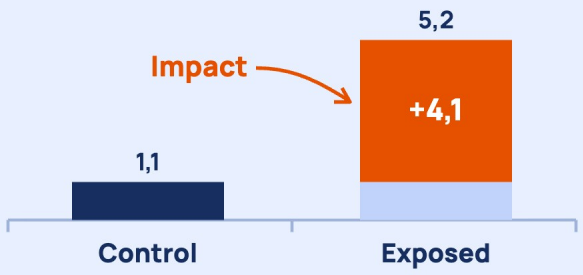
The last layer closes the loop. Look at your share of all visits in the market, not only your own visits. Weather, holidays and competitor promotions hit everyone the same, so a fair evaluation of your leaflet's real impact needs a smarter model: one that compares test and control zones, even when the market drops.

WHAT YOUR PEERS SAY

>95% don't use a control vs exposed test yet; most judge on sales alone.

Live poll at BD Media's Leaflet Masters 2026, 44 respondents.

Growth in share of visits, in pp (illustrative example)



The smart model: control vs. exposed

Control zones show the market without your leaflet; exposed zones add your leaflet. The difference is its effect. It also works the other way around: stop in some zones, compare them with zones that keep the leaflet, and you see what you lose.

Case study

What happens when the leaflet stops?

A beauty & care retailer skips one week

−1,8 pp share of visits, no leaflet

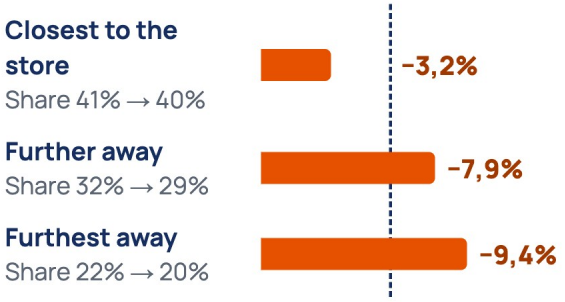
−0,1 pp control zones

The share of people visiting fell from 36,8% to 32,1%; frequency barely moved. A repeat test five weeks later: −0,9 pp vs 0,0 pp.

The leaflet brings people in.

A DIY chain switches off zones around 12 stores

Relative change in share of visits, by distance:



--- Market trend for the chain: −5,8%

Key takeaway

Close to the store, the leaflet is a reminder. Further away, it is the reason to come.

The leaflet professional's checklist

Beyond the circle, layer by layer

The leaflet works; our previous whitepaper proved it. The question now is **where** it works best. Most plans use only the base layer. Every layer you add makes each euro of paper work harder, and the shopper layer tells you which next step pays off.

01 BASE LAYER

Start from your own data

- [ ] Map where your card holders live and how often they visit.
- [ ] Name what your card can't see: non-card shoppers, competitor visits.
- 💡 Use own data as the base, never as the only KPI.

02 LOCATION LAYER

Map the competition

- [ ] Count the competitors that are closer than you, per zone.
- [ ] Flag zones near competitor openings, promotions and Sunday openers.
- 💡 Know which competitor gains when you cut.

03 REFINEMENT LAYER

Use the real catchment

- [ ] Replace the circle with the catchment of all visitors.
- [ ] Local store: distribute densely. Destination store: along the routes in.
- [ ] Push where passage exceeds visits.

04 TARGETING LAYER

Target behavior

- [ ] Profile every zone with census and audience data.
- [ ] Rank zones by index for the audience that matters to your brand.
- 💡 Don't target where audiences barely differ: there, reach wins.

05 SHOPPER LAYER

Measure, then refine

- [ ] Compare campaign impact versus fair control zones.
- [ ] Measure share of visits, not only your own sales.
- [ ] Review the plan regularly, not once a year.

The bottom line: the leaflet works, data decides where

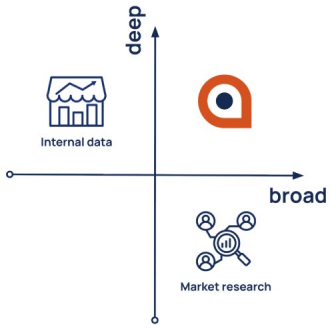
Start from your own data, add the market layers one by one, and measure regularly against fair control zones. Each review makes the next leaflet smarter.

ABOUT ACCURAT

Navigate the retail landscape with behavior-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**.



How Accurat supports your leaflet

Measure leaflet impact

Control vs exposed zones, share of visits and campaign lift, for every leaflet you distribute.

Plan smarter distribution

A score for every distribution zone, combining your own data with the four market layers.

Benchmark your leaflet

Compare format, theme and promotions with 122 leaflets evaluated together with BD Media.

2018
founded in Ghent, Belgium

100+
partner apps with opt-in, GDPR-compliant data

17,2 billion
location coordinates processed in 2025

4
markets: Belgium, the Netherlands, France and Germany

accurat

Ready to take your leaflet beyond the circle?

Get in touch with Accurat or BD MEDIA

More info

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