About Food Demand Forecasting Challenge

Demand forecasting is a key component to every growing online business. Without proper demand forecasting processes in place, it can be nearly impossible to have the right amount of stock on hand at any given time. A food delivery service has to deal with a lot of perishable raw materials which makes it all the more important for such a company to accurately forecast daily and weekly demand.

Too much inventory in the warehouse means more risk of wastage, and not enough could lead to out-of-stocks - and push customers to seek solutions from your competitors. In this challenge, get a taste of demand forecasting challenge using a real datasets.

Problem Statement

The client is a meal delivery company which operates in multiple cities. They have various fulfilment centers in these cities for dispatching meal orders to their customers. The client wants us to help these centers with demand forecasting for upcoming weeks so that these centers will plan the stock of raw materials accordingly. The replenishment of majority of raw materials is done on weekly basis and since the raw material is perishable, the procurement planning is of utmost importance. Secondly, staffing of the centers is also one area wherein accurate demand forecasts are really helpful. Given the following information, the task is to predict the demand for the next 10 weeks (Weeks: 146-155) for the center-meal combinations in the test set:

- **Historical data of demand for a product-center combination(Weeks:1 to 145)**

- **Product(Meal) features such as category,sub-category,current price and discount**

- **Information for fulfillment center like center area, city information etc.**

Data Dictionary

1. **Weekly Demand data (train.csv):** Contains the historical demand data for all centers, test.csv contains all the following features except the target variable

Variable	Definition
id	Unique ID
week	Week No
center_id	Unique ID for fulfillment center
meal_id	Unique ID for Meal
checkout_price	Final price including discount, taxes & delivery charges
base_price	Base price of the meal
emailer_for_promotion	Emailer sent for promotion of meal
homepage_featured	Meal featured at homepage
num_orders	(Target) Orders Count

2. **fulfilment_center_info.csv:** Contains information for each fulfilment center

Variable	Definition
center_id	Unique ID for fulfillment center
city_code	Unique code for city
region_code	Unique code for region
center_type	Anonymized center type
op_area	Area of operation (in km^2)

3. **meal_info.csv:** Contains information for each meal being served

Variable	Definition
meal_id	Unique ID for the meal
category	Type of meal (beverages/snacks/soups....)
cuisine	Meal cuisine (Indian/Italian/...)

Evaluation Metric

Submissions are evaluated on **Root Mean Square Error (RMSE)** between the predicted probability and the observed target.