

Promo & Discount Effectiveness Analysis

Increasing GMV Without Killing Margin

Role context: Senior Data Analyst

Tools: DuckDB (SQL), Python

Dataset: Sample Superstore (public dataset)

This analysis evaluates how different discount depths impact GMV, margin, and customer behavior, with the goal of identifying promotion strategies that drive sustainable growth.

0 Executive Summary

This analysis evaluates the effectiveness of discount strategies in driving GMV while protecting profitability.

Key findings show that nearly half of total GMV is generated without any discount and delivers the highest margin. Aggressive discounts above 20% fail to increase basket size and significantly erode profitability, even among returning customers.

The analysis recommends prioritizing non-discount growth, scaling low discounts selectively, and restricting deep discounts to controlled clearance use cases.

1 Business Context & Question

Discounts are commonly used to stimulate demand and grow GMV. However, excessive discounting may increase revenue at the expense of margin and long-term sustainability.

Business Question: Which discount levels increase GMV without materially hurting margin?

2 Data Preparation (SQL via DuckDB)

```
In [1]: import kagglehub
import shutil
import os

# 1. Tentukan folder tujuan
target_dir = r"C:\Users\yohan\workstation\fore\Promo Effectiveness Analysis"

# 2. Buat folder jika belum
if not os.path.exists(target_dir):
    os.makedirs(target_dir)

# 3. Download dataset (ke folder cache sementara)
temp_path = kagglehub.dataset_download("vivek468/superstore-dataset-final")

# 4. Memindahkan isi file dari cache ke folder tujuan
# ambil semua file di temp_path dan pindahkan ke target_dir
files = os.listdir(temp_path)
for f in files:
```

```

src_path = os.path.join(temp_path, f)
dst_path = os.path.join(target_dir, f)

# copy/move (shutil.move akan menghapus di cache asli)
shutil.copy(src_path, dst_path)

print(f"Dataset berhasil dipindahkan ke: {target_dir}")

```

Dataset berhasil dipindahkan ke: C:\Users\yohan\workstation\fore\Promo Effectiveness Analysis

```

In [2]: import pandas as pd
import os

path_folder = r"C:\Users\yohan\workstation\fore\Promo Effectiveness Analysis"
files = os.listdir(path_folder)
file_target = next((f for f in files if f.endswith('.csv')), None)

if file_target:
    full_path = os.path.join(path_folder, file_target)

    try:
        # Percobaan 1: utf-8 (default)
        df = pd.read_csv(full_path)
    except UnicodeDecodeError:
        try:
            # Percobaan 2: Latin1 (umum untuk file Windows/Excel)
            print("UTF-8 gagal, mencoba encoding latin1...")
            df = pd.read_csv(full_path, encoding='latin1')
        except UnicodeDecodeError:
            # Percobaan 3: ISO-8859-1
            print("latin1 gagal, mencoba encoding ISO-8859-1...")
            df = pd.read_csv(full_path, encoding='ISO-8859-1')

    print(f"\nDataFrame '{file_target}' berhasil dimuat!")
    print(df.head())

    # Simpan dataframe ke variabel global untuk analisis selanjutnya
    # %store df # Jika di Jupyter, ini berguna
else:
    print("\nTidak ada file CSV yang ditemukan.")

```

UTF-8 gagal, mencoba encoding latin1...

DataFrame 'Sample - Superstore.csv' berhasil dimuat!

Row ID	Order ID	Order Date	Ship Date	Ship Mode	Customer ID	\
0	1 CA-2016-152156	11/8/2016	11/11/2016	Second Class	CG-12520	
1	2 CA-2016-152156	11/8/2016	11/11/2016	Second Class	CG-12520	
2	3 CA-2016-138688	6/12/2016	6/16/2016	Second Class	DV-13045	
3	4 US-2015-108966	10/11/2015	10/18/2015	Standard Class	SO-20335	
4	5 US-2015-108966	10/11/2015	10/18/2015	Standard Class	SO-20335	

	Customer Name	Segment	Country	City	...	\
0	Claire Gute	Consumer	United States	Henderson	...	
1	Claire Gute	Consumer	United States	Henderson	...	
2	Darrin Van Huff	Corporate	United States	Los Angeles	...	
3	Sean O'Donnell	Consumer	United States	Fort Lauderdale	...	
4	Sean O'Donnell	Consumer	United States	Fort Lauderdale	...	

Postal Code	Region	Product ID	Category	Sub-Category	\
0	42420	South FUR-BO-10001798	Furniture	Bookcases	
1	42420	South FUR-CH-10000454	Furniture	Chairs	
2	90036	West OFF-LA-10000240	Office Supplies	Labels	
3	33311	South FUR-TA-10000577	Furniture	Tables	
4	33311	South OFF-ST-10000760	Office Supplies	Storage	

	Product Name	Sales	Quantity	\
0	Bush Somerset Collection Bookcase	261.9600	2	
1	Hon Deluxe Fabric Upholstered Stacking Chairs,...	731.9400	3	
2	Self-Adhesive Address Labels for Typewriters b...	14.6200	2	
3	Bretford CR4500 Series Slim Rectangular Table	957.5775	5	
4	Eldon Fold 'N Roll Cart System	22.3680	2	

Discount	Profit
0	0.00 41.9136
1	0.00 219.5820
2	0.00 6.8714
3	0.45 -383.0310
4	0.20 2.5164

[5 rows x 21 columns]

In [4]: df.info()

```
<class 'pandas.core.frame.DataFrame'>
RangeIndex: 9994 entries, 0 to 9993
Data columns (total 21 columns):
 #   Column           Non-Null Count  Dtype  
--- 
 0   Row ID            9994 non-null    int64  
 1   Order ID          9994 non-null    object  
 2   Order Date         9994 non-null    object  
 3   Ship Date          9994 non-null    object  
 4   Ship Mode          9994 non-null    object  
 5   Customer ID        9994 non-null    object  
 6   Customer Name      9994 non-null    object  
 7   Segment             9994 non-null    object  
 8   Country             9994 non-null    object  
 9   City                9994 non-null    object  
 10  State               9994 non-null    object  
 11  Postal Code        9994 non-null    int64  
 12  Region              9994 non-null    object  
 13  Product ID          9994 non-null    object  
 14  Category             9994 non-null    object  
 15  Sub-Category        9994 non-null    object  
 16  Product Name        9994 non-null    object  
 17  Sales                9994 non-null    float64 
 18  Quantity             9994 non-null    int64  
 19  Discount             9994 non-null    float64 
 20  Profit                9994 non-null    float64 
dtypes: float64(3), int64(3), object(15)
memory usage: 1.6+ MB
```

```
In [8]: import duckdb
query = """
SELECT
    "Order Date" as ORDER_DATE,
    "Customer ID" as CUSTOMER_ID,
    Discount as DISCOUNT,
    sales as SALES,
    profit as PROFIT,
    quantity as QUANTITY,
    CASE
        WHEN discount = 0 THEN 'No Discount'
        WHEN discount <= 0.10 THEN 'Low (0-10%)'
        WHEN discount <= 0.20 THEN 'Medium (10-20%)'
        ELSE 'High (>20%)'
    END AS DISCOUNT_BUCKET
FROM df
"""

# Execute the query in DuckDB
data_prep = duckdb.query(query).to_df()
data_prep.head(3)
```

	ORDER_DATE	CUSTOMER_ID	DISCOUNT	SALES	PROFIT	QUANTITY	DISCOUNT_BUCKET
0	11/8/2016	CG-12520	0.0	261.96	41.9136	2	No Discount
1	11/8/2016	CG-12520	0.0	731.94	219.5820	3	No Discount
2	6/12/2016	DV-13045	0.0	14.62	6.8714	2	No Discount

3 Baseline Performance by Discount Bucket

```
In [19]: query = """
SELECT
```

```

DISCOUNT_BUCKET,
ROUND(SUM(SALES),2) AS GMV,
ROUND(SUM(PROSIT),2) AS PROFIT,
ROUND(SUM(PROSIT) / SUM(SALES) * 100, 2) AS MARGIN_PCT
FROM data_prep
GROUP BY DISCOUNT_BUCKET
ORDER BY MARGIN_PCT DESC
"""

baseline_discount = duckdb.query(query).to_df()
baseline_discount

```

Out[19]:

	DISCOUNT_BUCKET	GMV	PROFIT	MARGIN_PCT
0	No Discount	1087908.47	320987.60	29.51
1	Low (0–10%)	54369.35	9029.18	16.61
2	Medium (10–20%)	792152.89	91756.30	11.58
3	High (>20%)	362770.15	-135376.06	-37.32

Insight

No-discount transactions generate the highest GMV and margin ($\approx 30\%$). Low discounts remain profitable while medium discounts significantly compress margin. High discounts destroy profitability, producing negative margins despite sizable GMV.

Discount depth is the strongest driver of margin erosion.

4 GMV Distribution vs Margin (Scale Check)

In [15]:

```

query = """
SELECT
    DISCOUNT_BUCKET,
    ROUND(SUM(SALES), 2) AS GMV,
    ROUND(SUM(SALES) / SUM(SUM(SALES)) OVER () * 100, 2) AS GMV_SHARE_PCT,
    ROUND(SUM(PROSIT) / SUM(SALES) * 100, 2) AS MARGIN_PCT
FROM data_prep
GROUP BY DISCOUNT_BUCKET
ORDER BY GMV DESC
"""

gmv_share = duckdb.query(query).to_df()
gmv_share

```

Out[15]:

	DISCOUNT_BUCKET	GMV	GMV_SHARE_PCT	MARGIN_PCT
0	No Discount	1087908.47	47.36	29.51
1	Medium (10–20%)	792152.89	34.48	11.58
2	High (>20%)	362770.15	15.79	-37.32
3	Low (0–10%)	54369.35	2.37	16.61

Insight

Nearly 47% of total GMV comes from non-discounted transactions with the healthiest margin. Medium discounts contribute significant GMV share but at much lower profitability.

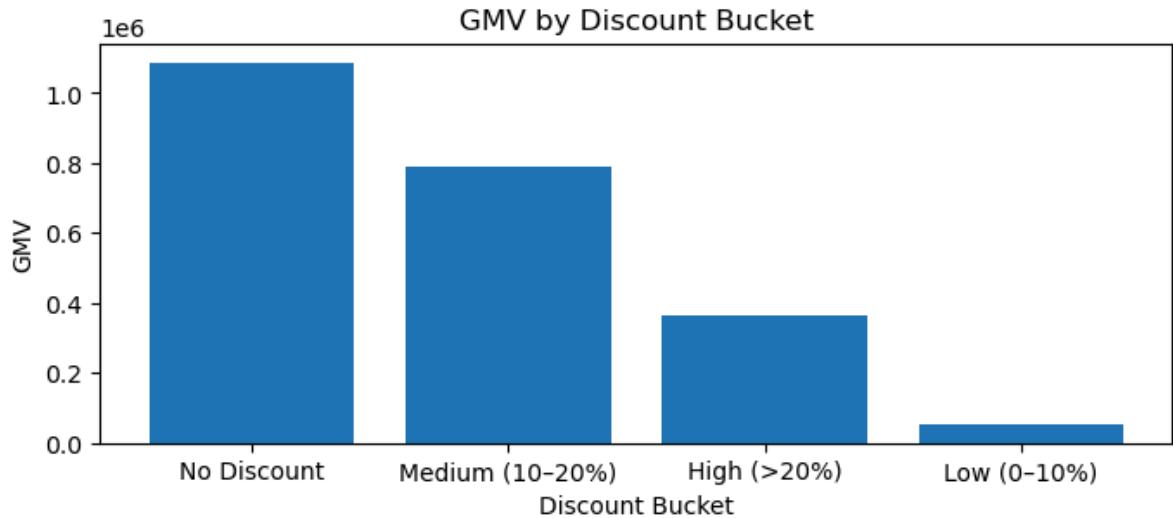
High discounts contribute meaningful GMV but are economically unsustainable.

Low discounts remain underutilized relative to their margin performance.

In [34]:

```
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt

plt.figure(figsize=(8,3))
plt.bar(gmv_share['DISCOUNT_BUCKET'], gmv_share['GMV'])
plt.title('GMV by Discount Bucket')
plt.ylabel('GMV')
plt.xlabel('Discount Bucket')
plt.show()
```



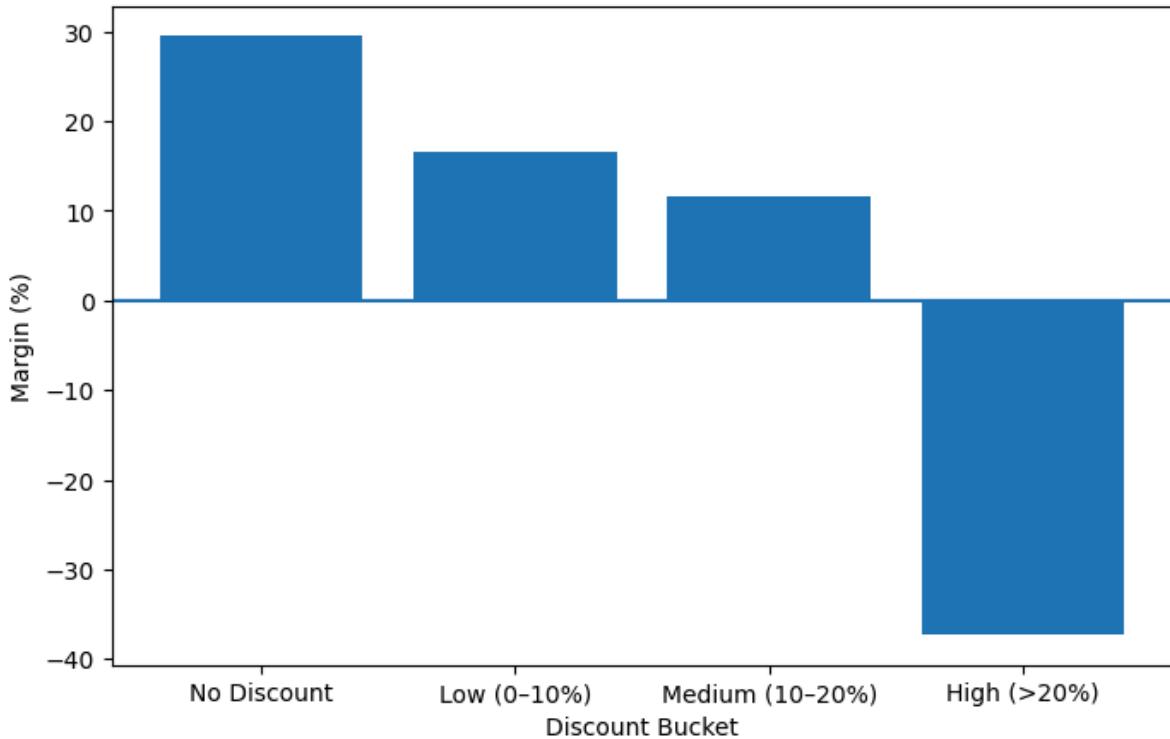
Insight

Nearly half of GMV is generated without discounts. Medium discounts contribute significant GMV but at much lower profitability.

In [35]:

```
plt.figure(figsize=(8,5))
plt.bar(baseline_discount['DISCOUNT_BUCKET'], baseline_discount['MARGIN_PCT'])
plt.title('Margin Percentage by Discount Bucket')
plt.ylabel('Margin (%)')
plt.xlabel('Discount Bucket')
plt.axhline(0)
plt.show()
```

Margin Percentage by Discount Bucket



Insight

Margin declines sharply as discount depth increases. High discounts result in structurally negative margins.

5 Basket Behavior Analysis

```
In [16]: query = """
SELECT
    DISCOUNT_BUCKET,
    COUNT(DISTINCT CUSTOMER_ID) AS CUSTOMERS,
    ROUND(SUM(QUANTITY) / COUNT(DISTINCT CUSTOMER_ID), 2) AS QTY_PER_CUSTOMER,
    ROUND(SUM(SALES) / COUNT(DISTINCT CUSTOMER_ID), 2) AS SALES_PER_CUSTOMER
FROM data_prep
GROUP BY DISCOUNT_BUCKET
ORDER BY SALES_PER_CUSTOMER DESC
"""

basket_behavior = duckdb.query(query).to_df()
basket_behavior
```

	DISCOUNT_BUCKET	CUSTOMERS	QTY_PER_CUSTOMER	SALES_PER_CUSTOMER
0	No Discount	759	24.07	1433.34
1	Medium (10-20%)	759	18.26	1043.68
2	High (>20%)	565	9.51	642.07
3	Low (0-10%)	85	4.39	639.64

Insight

Customers purchase the largest baskets without discounts. Higher discount levels do not increase basket size and instead reduce average spend per customer. Aggressive discounting lowers price, not volume.

Discounts reduce price, not basket.

6 Customer Type Classification (New vs Returning)

```
In [23]: # Identify First Purchase
query = """
SELECT
    CUSTOMER_ID,
    MIN(ORDER_DATE) AS FIRST_ORDER_DATE
FROM data_prep
GROUP BY CUSTOMER_ID
"""

first_order = duckdb.query(query).to_df()

# Enrich Customer Type
query = """
SELECT
    d.*,
    CASE
        WHEN d.ORDER_DATE = f.FIRST_ORDER_DATE THEN 'New'
        ELSE 'Returning'
    END AS CUSTOMER_TYPE
FROM data_prep d
JOIN first_order f
ON d.CUSTOMER_ID = f.CUSTOMER_ID
"""

customer_enriched = duckdb.query(query).to_df()
```

7 GMV & Margin by Discount and Customer Type

```
In [24]: # Enrich Customer Type
query = """
SELECT
    DISCOUNT_BUCKET,
    CUSTOMER_TYPE,
    ROUND(SUM(SALES), 2) AS GMV,
    ROUND(SUM(PROFIT) / SUM(SALES) * 100, 2) AS MARGIN_PCT
FROM customer_enriched
GROUP BY DISCOUNT_BUCKET, CUSTOMER_TYPE
ORDER BY DISCOUNT_BUCKET, CUSTOMER_TYPE
"""

customer_type_analysis = duckdb.query(query).to_df()
customer_type_analysis
```

Out[24]:

	DISCOUNT_BUCKET	CUSTOMER_TYPE	GMV	MARGIN_PCT
0	High (>20%)	New	58840.41	-49.07
1	High (>20%)	Returning	303929.74	-35.04
2	Low (0–10%)	New	5202.68	21.47
3	Low (0–10%)	Returning	49166.67	16.09
4	Medium (10–20%)	New	137137.16	11.79
5	Medium (10–20%)	Returning	655015.73	11.54
6	No Discount	New	231812.45	30.53
7	No Discount	Returning	856096.02	29.23

Insight

High discounts fail to profitably acquire new customers and significantly erode margin for returning customers. Medium discounts primarily benefit existing customers rather than driving acquisition. No-discount transactions deliver the strongest profitability across both new and returning customers.

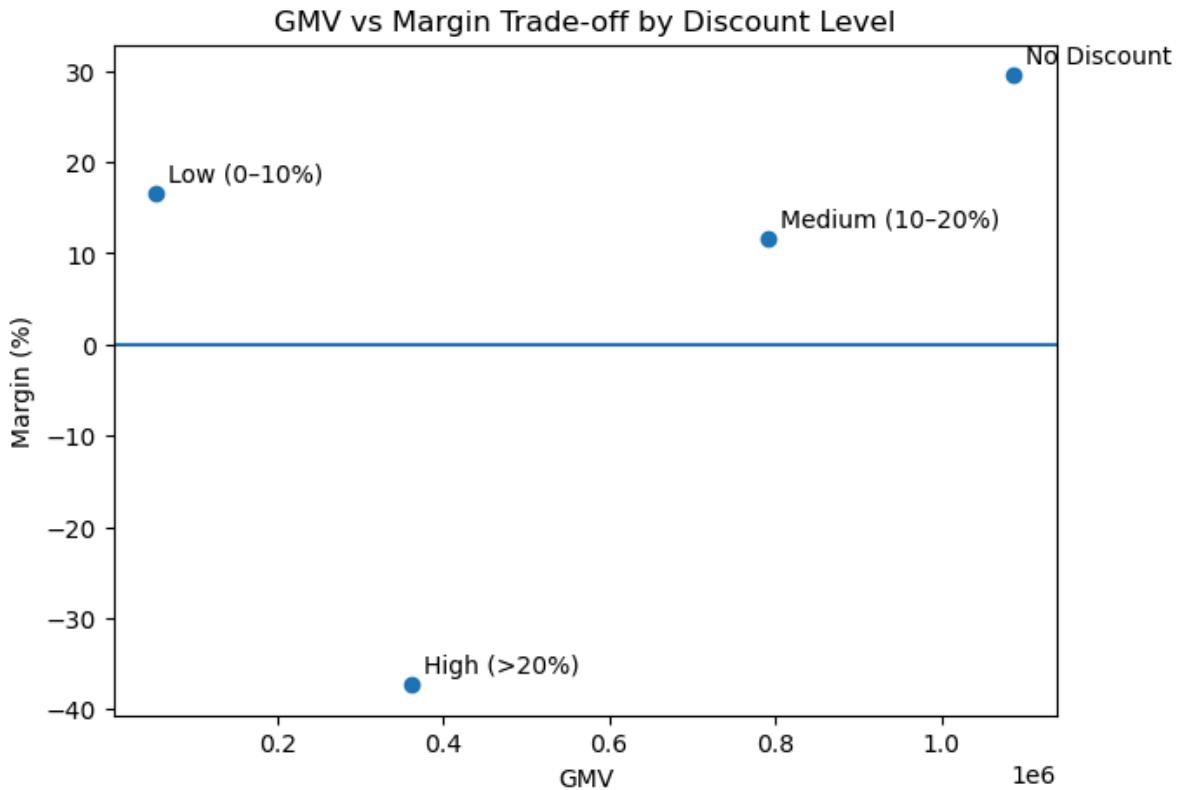
Customer acquisition does not require heavy discounting.

In [36]:

```
plt.figure(figsize=(7,5))
plt.scatter(
    baseline_discount['GMV'],
    baseline_discount['MARGIN_PCT']
)

for i, txt in enumerate(baseline_discount['DISCOUNT_BUCKET']):
    plt.annotate(
        txt,
        (baseline_discount['GMV'][i], baseline_discount['MARGIN_PCT'][i]),
        textcoords="offset points",
        xytext=(5,5)
    )

plt.title('GMV vs Margin Trade-off by Discount Level')
plt.xlabel('GMV')
plt.ylabel('Margin (%)')
plt.axhline(0)
plt.show()
```



Insight

No-discount transactions sit in the optimal zone of high GMV and high margin. High discounts occupy the worst trade-off zone: low margin despite sizable GMV.

8 Recommendation Framework

Executive Summary

- 47% of total GMV is generated without any discount, delivering the highest margin (~30%).
- Discounts above 20% fail to increase basket size and result in severe margin erosion (-37%).
- Medium discounts (10–20%) drive volume but primarily benefit returning customers.
- Customer acquisition does not require aggressive discounting.

Business Recommendations

- Prioritize non-discount growth as the primary revenue engine.
- Scale low discounts selectively to stimulate demand while protecting margin.
- Use medium discounts in targeted campaigns for existing customers.
- Restrict high discounts to controlled clearance scenarios only.

Discount strategy should be driven by profitability, not volume alone.

9 Why This Matters

This analysis demonstrates how pricing and promotion decisions directly impact GMV quality. By shifting from aggressive discounting to targeted, margin-aware strategies, Fore can drive sustainable growth without sacrificing profitability.

In []: