C960 Task 2 Molina

May 23, 2024

Adam Silver, CTO

SNC Inc.

123 Easy Drive

St. Louis, MO

Dear Mr. Silver,

I am pleased to submit this project proposal for your consideration. As a Sports News Company™, it is understandably your goal to provide your customers with the most accurate and up to date sports news and stats. With AI and machine learning in the news, it would be a great time for your company to leverage the power that they hold.

The proposal outlines a machine-learning-based data product aimed at enhancing the analysis of basketball players' statistics for future performance predictions. For instance, if a player like T. Haliburton from the Indiana Pacers averages 18.5 points per game, the algorithm will provide a likelihood of the player scoring above or below his average in future games.

The clients will benefit from having the top-tier information regarding player performance, game outcomes and likelihoods, allowing SNC. Inc. to create better content for its viewers and have increased credibility as a news platform. The sportscasters will have their decision-making process improved by being given additional insight into future games/players.

The funding requirements will be $15,000 for the initial upfront cost to cover the compensation for the chosen ML engineer. The ongoing costs for maintenance and upkeep of the infrastructure that the program runs on will be $2000 a year.

Sincerely,

Abraham Molina

Senior Director

Molina Software Solutions

Project Proposal: Predictive Analysis for Basketball Player Performance

**Summary of the Problem**

Sports News Company (SNC Inc.) seeks to enhance its analytical capabilities to provide deeper insights into basketball player performance. The current system lacks the advanced analytical tools needed to meet client demands for detailed performance predictions.

**Benefits of the Data Product**

The proposed data product will:

* **Improve Accuracy**: Utilize advanced machine learning algorithms for precise performance predictions.
* **Support Decision-Making**: Offer detailed insights to aid strategic decisions.
* **Increase Credibility**: Position SNC Inc. as a leader in sports analytics.

**Outline of the Data Product**

The data product will:

* Analyze historical player performance data.
* Predict future points scored utilizing feature analysis using stats like assists, steals, rebounds, etc.
* Feature a simple interface for result interpretation.

**Description of the Data**

The data product will use:

* **Historical Player Data**: Stats from past games, including shooting percentages, rebounds, assists, points, blocks, steals, etc. In addition, the expected average of the players points will be added alongside the data so that the learning algorithm can have even more insight into why the player beat or missed their average
* **External Factors**: Data such as game location (home/away) and minutes played.

**Objectives and Hypotheses**

* **Objective**: Develop a model that accurately predicts if a player will score above or below their average points.
* **Hypothesis**: Advanced features and machine learning will improve prediction accuracy over traditional methods like simple averages and fan sentiment.

**Outline of the Project Methodology**

**Understanding -** First, I'll get a clear idea of what SNC Inc. wants. They need an algorithm to predict if a basketball player will score above or below their average points per game. This helps them in making better predictions and providing more insightful content for their viewers.

**Gathering and Cleaning -** Next, I'll gather all the data we can get on the player's stats. This includes points, assists, rebounds, minutes played, shooting percentages, and details about the games (like whether they were home or away), and I’ll clean this data to make sure there are no errors or missing values.

**Exploring the Data/Features –** I will create some sample visualizations so that I can see patterns and trends. Then, I will choose features to account for like minutes played, shooting percentages, etc.

**Building/Testing –** I will use a logistic regression for this project that will predict the probability of the player scoring above or below their average points. The features mentioned previously will serve as additional feature data that will affect the outcome of the test. For example, if player T. Haliburton is a consistently high scorer, but his rebounds + assists are climbing and they have a negative correlation, that can impact his predicted score.

**Evaluation/Delivery –** Once the model is trained, I will evaluate its performance by performing back-tests. Finally, I will deliver the algorithm to SNC. Inc. along with the associated documentation and reporting as necessary.

**Funding Requirements**

* **Initial Cost**: $15,000 for development.
* **Annual Maintenance**: $2,000.

**Impact on Stakeholders**

* **SNC Inc.**: Better decision-making and competitive advantage. Opportunity to lease access to key insights and analytics.
* **Players and Teams**: Insightful performance trends and improvement areas.
* **Fans and Analysts**: Better viewing experience with more accurate insights from sportscasters.

**Ethical and Legal Considerations**

* **Data Privacy**: Ensure data is anonymized and securely stored.
* **Transparency**: Clearly communicate how predictions are made.
* **Compliance**: Adhere to data protection regulations.

**Relevant Expertise**

Molina Software Solutions (MSS) has a proven track record in data science and machine learning. Our team has delivered successful projects across various industries, and we are confident in our ability to deliver this project effectively.

We look forward to working with SNC Inc. to develop this innovative data product and enhance our analytical capabilities.

Executive Summary for IT Professionals

**Decision Support Problem or Opportunity**

Sports News Company (SNC Inc.) aims to enhance its analytical capabilities by developing a machine-learning-based data product that predicts basketball players' future performance. This product will address the need for advanced statistical analysis, enabling more accurate and insightful predictions and enhancing customer engagement.

**Description of the Customers and Their Needs**

The primary customers for this data product are sports analysts, team managers, and dedicated sports fans. These customers require detailed and accurate player performance predictions to make informed decisions, improve game strategies, and provide engaging content for their audience. This product fulfills their needs by offering precise insights derived from historical data.

**Existing Gaps in Data Products**

Currently, SNC Inc. lacks the advanced analytical tools required to provide deep insights into player performance. The existing system focuses on basic statistics and does not leverage machine learning for predictive analysis. This gap limits the ability to offer detailed predictions and strategic recommendations, which the proposed data product aims to address.

**Data Available and Required**

* **Available Data**: Historical player performance statistics, including points, assists, rebounds, minutes played, shooting percentages, and game details (home/away).
* **Required Data**: Additional external factors such as estimated averages and player injuries to enhance predictive accuracy. This can be gathered from public facing sources.

**Methodology for Data Product Design and Development**

1. **Data Collection and Preprocessing**: Gather and clean historical and external data to ensure accuracy and completeness. The actual main data will be pulled from a [reputable stats website](https://basketball-reference.com), which will definitely require cleanup as some of the columns are extraneous (like game number, age in days, etc.)
2. **Feature Engineering**: Create new features that capture important patterns and relationships in the data. Some of the chosen ones include the points to rebounds + assists ratio and 2-point field goal to 3-point field goal ratio. These data fields provide crucial insight as the model will attempt to classify the data using all of the fields. Coupling home/away status, the team played against, and these additional ratios (typically not present on traditional sports statistics sites) our model will provide a cutting-edge estimate of a player’s performance.
3. **Model Development**: Train and validate the chosen machine learning model to identify the best-performing features. As mentioned previously, the model development will consist of building the model in python utilizing Scikit-learn, and feature engineering by choosing specific fields that will provide the model additional insight into classifying data.
4. **Implementation**: Develop a user-friendly application to present the predictions and insights. As of now, the plan is to have the interface be primarily command line, with popout windows for the various graphs generated by matplotlib.
5. **Data Validation and Testing**: Continuously evaluate model performance and make necessary adjustments. The model may need to be tweaked to increase accuracy or prevent errors.

**Deliverables**

1. **Data Collection and Preprocessing Scripts**: Tools to gather and clean data will be developed. These tools will encompass manual collection methods, such as gathering and collating data from various sources that cannot be easily or quickly scripted. The data will be extracted from the referenced website and saved into a .csv file, which the program will subsequently read. Additionally, methods will be developed within the program to preprocess this pre-formatted data, ensuring it is accurately loaded into the tables. This will include steps to clean the data, handle missing values, and format it appropriately for analysis, ensuring a seamless integration into the data pipeline.
2. **Feature Engineering Documentation**: Detailed explanation of the features used. The features will provide the model with additional insight so that it can better classify data. For example, say a basketball player tends to go over his average much more often when he attempts more 3 pointers vs 2-point field goals. The model will pick up on this metric due to the engineer specifically adding it in, along with many other features that can factor into the model’s accuracy. All features will have their purpose and design fully documented so that stakeholders can better grasp why they are being used and in what manner.
3. **Trained Machine Learning Model**: The predictive model with performance metrics. Classification reports that include accuracy scores and a confusion matrix will help the data engineer better understand and tune the model for accuracy.
4. **User Interface Design**: An interface for displaying predictions and insights. The developer will provide a simple command line interface.
5. **Final Report**: Comprehensive documentation of the project, including methodology, results, and future recommendations.

**Implementation Plan and Anticipated Outcomes**

* **Phase 1: Data Collection and Preprocessing** (3 days/24 working hours)
  + **Outcome**: Clean and structured dataset ready for analysis.
* **Phase 2: Feature Engineering and Model Development** (10 days/80 working hours)
  + **Outcome**: A trained machine learning model with high predictive accuracy.
* **Phase 3: Implementation and Integration** (2 days/16 working hours)
  + **Outcome**: A functional interface for end-users.
* **Phase 4: Testing and Validation** (1 day/8 working hours)
  + **Outcome**: Verified and validated data product ready for deployment.

**Validation and Verification Methods**

* **Cross-Validation**: Ensure model accuracy and robustness through cross-validation techniques.
* **Back-Testing**: Evaluate model performance using historical data to simulate real-world scenarios.
* **User Testing**: Gather feedback from end-users to ensure the product meets their needs and expectations.

**Programming Environments, Costs, and Human Resources**

* **Programming Environments**: Python (with libraries such as pandas, scikit-learn, and matplotlib) and VS Code.
* **Costs**: Initial development cost of $15,000, annual maintenance cost of $2,000.
* **Human Resources**:
  + Data Scientist (1): Responsible for data collection, preprocessing, and model development.
  + Software Developer (1): Responsible for interface development and integration with model.
  + Project Manager (1): Responsible for overseeing the project timeline and deliverables.

**Projected Timeline and Milestones**

* **Milestone 1: Data Collection and Preprocessing** (Start: 05/27/2024, End: 05/28/2024, Duration: 3 business days)
  + **Dependencies**: None
  + **Resources**: Data Scientist
* **Milestone 2: Feature Engineering and Model Development** (Start: 05/29/2024, End: 06/11/2024, Duration: 10 business days)
  + **Dependencies**: Completion of Milestone 1, dataset normalized
  + **Resources**: Data Scientist
* **Milestone 3: Implementation and Integration** (Start: 06/12/2024, End: 06/14/2024, Duration: 2 business days)
  + **Dependencies**: Completion of Milestone 2, model completed
  + **Resources**: Software Developer, Project Manager
* **Milestone 4: Testing and Validation** (Start: 06/15/2024, End: 06/15/2024, Duration: 1 day)
  + **Dependencies**: Completion of Milestone 3, interface created
  + **Resources**: Data Scientist, Software Developer, Project Manager

By adhering to this structured plan, Molina Software Solutions will deliver a high-quality data product that enhances SNC Inc.'s analytical capabilities and meets the needs of its customers effectively.