

JOEL SHAPIRO

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## Prep Questions for Case: “Data Science at Target”

Please come to class prepared to discuss these questions and related variations:

**Question 1.** What were the key steps in deciding that a large-scale analytics investment at Target was a good idea?

**Question 2.** What were the costs / risks associated with a large scale analytics investment?

**Question 3.** What is the tension (if any) between a “test and learn” philosophy with the goals of 1) providing relevant and curated content to customers and 2) needing to show analytics success to get managerial buy-in? How can you reconcile those tensions?

**Question 4.** Was it a good idea to set up EDABI as an equal partnership between data engineers and data scientists? What challenges might make this sort of partnership difficult?

**Question 5.** In testing the effectiveness of a personalized digital experience, the EDABI team defined success as whether a customer searched for and purchased a product in a given online “session.” What are the pros and cons of such a narrow definition of success?

**Question 6.** Why did Desai feel compelled to demonstrate the value of analytics to the business teams? How did he go about it? Do you think it was effective?

**Question 7.** Should EDABI be centralized or decentralized within various product departments (such as Apparel, Electronics, etc.)?