Statistical Consulting Interactions

Department of Computer-Oriented Statistics and Data Analysis,
Augsburg University

Antony Unwin

Abstract

There are several components to every consulting project. The most important ones are the scientific/industrial partners, the background and goals of the project, and data. A statistician has to interact successfully with every component for the project to be a success and an essential step is to encourage the project partners to interact with their own data. There is no better way to ensure that domain knowledge is fully integrated into any analysis.

Partners are not always explicit about what they know, about what is possible and about what they want. It's not always clear to them either. Consultancy in projects is more of a process than the accomplishment of a task, so continual interaction is needed. Sometimes this is easy, sometimes it is more difficult. This does not always have much to do with any intrinsic difficulty of the subject matter.