Scaling accuracy and automation with Anaplan Forecaster

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Forecaster — in one slide

Native time-series forecasting inside Anaplan — built for planners, running where your plans already live.

12 algorithms, Ensemble-selected

Classic statistics to ML, deep learning and Google's TimesFM foundation model. Pick one or let Ensemble backtest candidates and select the best fit per item.

A range, not just a number

Configurable quantiles on every forecast (e.g. P10 / P50 / P90), full distribution available on request. Plan to a service level or risk appetite, not a single guess.

Backtest before you trust it

Every model is scored on held-out history (MAPE, wMAPE, RMSE) before a forecast reaches your plan — accuracy is measured, not promised.

Explainability across all algorithms

See which drivers moved the number — feature contributions on every algorithm, deeper Impact Analysis on advanced ones. Trust what you can interrogate.

External drivers & data-quality Insights

Bring your own related data — holidays, promotions, pricing, macro signals. Automated Insights flag outliers, gaps and sparsity before you model.

Lands in your plan, instantly

Forecasts are generated from, and written back to, your Anaplan models — no exports, no integration project, no data-science team required.

What makes it work in practice:

Clean history · The right algorithm for your data shape · Drivers you can forecast forward · A backtest planners trust

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Ensuring project success

How to set yourself up for success and mitigate risks

Keys to a strong project start

01 Expectation setting and alignment

02 Quantifiable definitions of success

03 Related data

04 Clean data

Data Problems that Change the Answer

The forecast needs a consistent business meaning behind each observation

What you find	Why it matters	Practical treatment
Missing values or zeros	Missing data differs from inactivity	Define zeros and repair gaps
Stockouts	Sales can understate demand	Flag periods and review treatment
Partial current period	Partial actuals mimic a decline	Use closed periods or a clear policy
New codes or structures	History may lose comparability	Map history or segment affected items
Missing future drivers	Future inputs need assumptions	Supply the horizon or omit the driver

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Forecasting Level and Horizon

The most detailed forecast is useful only when the data supports the decision

Forecast level

Match the item to the decision.

Product by location may support replenishment.
Region by segment may support a finance review.

Forecast horizon

Match the look-ahead to the action.

Use the shortest horizon that supports lead times, commitments and the planning cycle.

History requirements depend on the algorithm, frequency and horizon. Validate sparse items separately.

Building Trust: Backtesting Before Production

Can the forecast predict history it did not use for training?

Training history

Held-out history

Most recent observations: a period equal to the forecast horizon

Earlier

Most recent → cutoff

A fair comparison uses the same

- Items and periods
- Forecast horizon
- Information available at the cutoff
- Error metric and business priorities

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Building Trust: Explainability

Connect the model's evidence to the business context

What the model can show

- Relative driver influence
- Which products are easily forecastable

What the planner adds

- Does the pattern make sense?
- What has changed?
- Which future event is missing?

Driver influence does not establish causation

Explainability detail depends on the algorithm and subscription tier.

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A Repeatable Planner Review

A recommended workflow to configure in your Anaplan planning experience

Planner sees	Planner action
Forecast within an agreed tolerance	Accept the baseline through the review process
Large variance with material business impact	Investigate the item and its inputs
A known future event outside the baseline	Record an adjustment, reason and owner
Repeated error or persistent bias	Review data, method and exception rules

Preserve the model baseline alongside the planner-adjusted forecast and approved plan.

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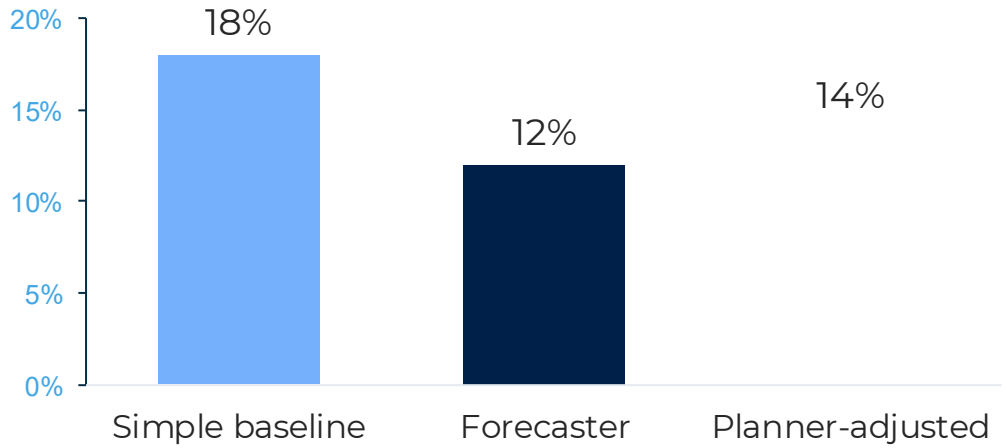
Do Planner Overrides Add Value?

Forecast value added compares each step on the same evaluation basis

Weighted absolute percentage error (WAPE), illustrative



Illustrative values only. WAPE = sum of absolute errors ÷ sum of absolute actuals.

Lower error is better

In this example, the override increases error by 2 percentage points.

Forecasting by exception

An illustrative scenario

The decision

Which assumptions and products need attention before the review?

Forecast context

Monthly units by product family and region. *Six-month horizon.*

Planner judgment

A promotion changed after the last run. Confirm the driver input, review the forecast, and record any additional adjustment.

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How A Forecaster Project Runs

Each phase ends with evidence that supports the next decision

01

Scope the decision

Agree target, level, horizon, baseline and owner.

02

Prepare and test

Data data data! Resolve input issues. Create the collection and model. Review backtests.

03

Run a parallel cycle

Use the forecast alongside the current process. Record planner feedback.

04

Scale the process

Expand coverage after results, review ownership and refresh routines hold up.

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A Strong First Use Case

A recurring decision, a useful forecast, and someone accountable for using it

Good pilot conditions

- A stable target and consistent history
- A clear planning horizon
- An owner with a baseline to compare

Needs extra preparation

- New items or sparse observations
- Major changes in the business
- Inputs without a reliable future view

Examples: replenishment demand by product and region, or a monthly revenue outlook.

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A Pilot that Proves a Business Outcome

What is success?

Measure	Comparison	Decision it supports
Forecast performance	Current baseline, same items and horizon	Is the forecast useful in priority segments?
Planner effort	Review time and cycle time before the pilot	Does the process reduce avoidable work?
Business decision	A named planning decision and owner	Should we scale, refine or stop?

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Ownership After Go-live

A forecast remains useful when someone owns the next cycle

Business owner

- Defines the decision and review rules.
- Approves how the output enters the plan.

Planning team

- Reviews exceptions.
- Records assumptions and adjustments.
- Learns from results.

Model and data team

- Maintains inputs and mappings.
- Runs refreshes and monitors failures or drift.

The recurring review covers forecast error, bias, overrides, input quality and usage.

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