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Review

Retail Sales Trend Analyzer



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	Abstract
Published on: 17 Apr 2025	<p>Accurate sales forecasting is crucial for businesses to optimize inventory, manage resources efficiently, and improve decision-making. This thesis presents a comprehensive sales forecasting dashboard that integrates time series forecasting models such as ARIMA, SARIMA, and Prophet. The dashboard, developed using Streamlit, provides an interactive interface for users to upload sales data, visualize trends, detect seasonality, and generate future sales predictions. The proposed system enhances business intelligence by providing actionable insights and facilitating informed strategic planning. This study demonstrates the potential of automated forecasting tools in transforming retail analytics. By improving the accuracy of sales predictions, businesses can achieve better financial planning and strategic management, ultimately enhancing overall efficiency and profitability. The research also highlights opportunities for future advancements, such as incorporating external economic factors and exploring deep learning techniques to further refine forecasting accuracy. This thesis presents the development of a Sales Forecasting Dashboard using Streamlit, leveraging machine learning models such as ARIMA, SARIMA, and Prophet. The dashboard provides businesses with real-time insights into sales trends, seasonality patterns, and accurate sales predictions, enhancing decision-making processes. Historical sales data is analyzed to detect trends and seasonality, and multiple forecasting models are implemented to ensure accurate future sales predictions. The dashboard is designed to be interactive and user-friendly, allowing for seamless data uploads and dynamic visualization.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Sales forecasting plays a crucial role in financial planning, supply chain management, and business decision making. Accurate sales predictions enable businesses to optimize inventory levels, reduce stockouts, and minimize wastage, ultimately improving operational efficiency. Traditional forecasting methods often rely on

manual analysis, which can be time-consuming and prone to errors. Moreover, many businesses lack access to sophisticated forecasting tools that can automatically analyze data and generate predictions.

With advancements in data science and machine learning, modern forecasting models offer more precise and dynamic predictions. Time series models such as ARIMA, SARIMA, and Prophet have proven to be effective in capturing sales trends and seasonal patterns. However, businesses often struggle with implementing these models due to their complexity and the need for technical expertise.

This study aims to develop an intuitive and interactive sales forecasting dashboard that simplifies the process of sales prediction for businesses. The dashboard integrates multiple forecasting models and provides realtime insights through visualizations. By enabling users to upload their sales data, explore historical trends, and generate accurate forecasts, the proposed system helps businesses make data-driven decisions.

Objective of the project

Sales forecasting is essential for businesses to optimize inventory, allocate resources efficiently, and improve strategic decision-making. This project aims to develop a comprehensive sales forecasting dashboard that enables businesses to analyze past sales trends and predict future demand accurately. The key objectives of this project are:

- **Sales Data Processing**

- Allow users to upload historical sales data in a structured format.
- Process the data to handle missing values, detect anomalies, and ensure data integrity.

- **Forecasting Model Implementation**

- Integrate multiple forecasting models, including ARIMA, SARIMA, and Prophet, to improve prediction accuracy.
- Enable users to compare model performance and select the best-suited approach for their business.

- **User-Friendly Dashboard**

- Develop an intuitive and interactive dashboard using Streamlit to facilitate data-driven decisionmaking.
- Ensure accessibility for users with minimal technical expertise through a seamless user interface.

Scope of the Project

This project aims to develop a web-based sales forecasting dashboard that leverages historical sales data and advanced time series forecasting techniques. The system is designed to support businesses across various industries, from retail to e-commerce and manufacturing. The scope of this project includes:

1. **Sales Data Integration:** Enable users to upload structured sales data in CSV format. Support preprocessing techniques such as handling missing values, outliers, and data normalization.
2. **Forecasting Model Implementation:** Implement ARIMA, SARIMA, and Prophet models for time series forecasting. Identify long-term sales trends and seasonal fluctuations using statistical and visualization techniques. Provide insights into high-demand and low-demand periods to improve inventory management.
3. **User – Friendly Dashboard:** Develop an interactive dashboard using Streamlit for ease of access and realtime forecasting. Ensure a responsive design that accommodates both technical and non-technical users.
4. **Forecasting and Decision support:** Generate short-term and long-term sales forecasts to assist in business planning. Provide actionable insights based on predictive analytics to enhance decision-making.
5. **Performance Evaluation and Validation:** Evaluate the accuracy of forecasting models using error metrics such as RMSE and MAE. Validate model performance using historical sales data and real-world case studies.
6. **System Integration and Future Enhancements:** Integrate with external business intelligence tools and databases for seamless data retrieval. Explore additional forecasting techniques, such as machine learning and deep learning models, in future iterations.

Existing System

The alarming rise in sales unpredictability and demand fluctuations has driven businesses to adopt traditional forecasting methods such as moving averages and exponential smoothing. However, these methods often fail to capture complex patterns, seasonality, and sudden market changes, resulting in inaccurate forecasts. Most conventional forecasting systems rely on static models with limited adaptability to evolving business trends. These models typically do not incorporate machine learning techniques, making them less effective in handling large-scale datasets with multiple influencing factors. Additionally, existing systems lack interactive visualizations and user-friendly interfaces, restricting accessibility for non-technical users.

The success of accurate sales forecasting depends on the ability to analyze historical data and extract meaningful insights. While some businesses employ statistical tools like Excel-based forecasting or standalone predictive models, these solutions do not offer real-time adaptability and multi-model comparisons.

Furthermore, many traditional forecasting systems do not integrate with modern business intelligence tools, limiting their effectiveness in strategic decision-making. Businesses require a more dynamic and automated approach to forecasting that incorporates advanced machine learning models and interactive dashboards to enhance accuracy and usability.

In conclusion, the limitations of existing forecasting systems highlight the need for an intelligent, data-driven approach. The proposed sales forecasting dashboard addresses these challenges by leveraging time series models, interactive visualizations, and automation to provide accurate, real-time sales predictions. By improving forecast accuracy and accessibility, businesses can optimize their operations and make more informed strategic decisions.

Literature Survey

Time Series Forecasting

Time series forecasting is a critical component of business analytics, enabling organizations to make data-driven decisions based on historical data patterns. It involves analyzing sequential data points collected over time to predict future values. This technique is widely applied in sales forecasting, stock price prediction, demand planning, and more. Traditional methods, including Moving Averages and Exponential Smoothing, offer simplicity but lack the complexity required to capture seasonality and trend variations in modern business environments. In contrast, advanced models like ARIMA, SARIMA, and Prophet provide greater accuracy by incorporating seasonality, trend analysis, and external variables.

ARIMA Model

The Auto-Regressive Integrated Moving Average (ARIMA) model is a powerful statistical method for time series forecasting. It combines Auto-Regressive (AR) and Moving Average (MA) components to capture temporal dependencies and random noise in data. ARIMA models are characterized by three parameters: p (AR order), d (degree of differencing), and q (MA order). These parameters are optimized using techniques like grid search and crossvalidation. Although ARIMA is effective for short-term forecasts, it struggles with complex seasonal patterns. In this study, ARIMA is implemented to model linear trends and short-term fluctuations in sales data.

SARIMA Model

Seasonal Auto-Regressive Integrated Moving Average (SARIMA) extends ARIMA by incorporating seasonal patterns. It includes four additional parameters— P , D , Q , and m —to model seasonality. SARIMA is particularly useful in retail sales forecasting, where sales patterns repeat over time, such as monthly or yearly cycles. This model captures both short-term and long-term dependencies, offering more accurate predictions for seasonally influenced data. In this thesis, SARIMA is utilized to analyze and forecast sales trends with significant seasonal components, providing valuable insights for inventory and marketing strategies.

Prophet Model

Prophet, developed by Facebook, is an advanced time series forecasting model designed to handle irregular data and seasonality effectively. It uses an additive regression model to decompose time series into trend, seasonality, and holiday components. Prophet is known for its flexibility in handling outliers, missing data, and non-linear trends. Its automatic hyperparameter tuning and easy-to-use interface make it a popular choice among data scientists. In this study, Prophet is used for long-term sales forecasts, leveraging its robustness in modeling complex seasonality and trend patterns.

Comparative Analysis of Forecasting Models

This section compares ARIMA, SARIMA, and Prophet models based on their accuracy, complexity, and application scenarios. ARIMA is suitable for short-term predictions with linear trends, while SARIMA excels in modeling seasonal patterns. Prophet, with its flexible seasonality and trend decomposition, provides accurate long-term forecasts.

Methodology

Data Collection and Preprocessing

The sales data used in this study is sourced from retail businesses and stored in CSV format. It includes daily sales records along with dates. Data preprocessing involves:

- Handling missing values using forward-fill and interpolation techniques.
- Converting date columns to datetime format for time series analysis.
- Feature engineering, including extracting month, day, and year from date columns to analyze seasonal patterns.

- Normalization and scaling of sales data to improve model convergence.

Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA)

EDA is conducted to understand data distributions, identify trends, and detect seasonality patterns. Visualization techniques such as line plots, bar charts, and heatmaps are used to explore sales patterns over time. Correlation analysis is performed to understand relationships between sales and time-based features.

Dashboard Design and Development

Streamlit is selected for its ease of use and dynamic user interface capabilities. The dashboard includes:

- File upload functionality for custom sales datasets.
- Trend detection and seasonality insights using Plotly visualizations.
- Model selection options (ARIMA, SARIMA, Prophet) for flexible forecasting.
- Interactive elements for users to specify forecast periods and download reports.

Model Implementation and Evaluation

- **ARIMA:** Implemented using the statsmodels library with grid search for hyperparameter tuning.
- **SARIMA:** Seasonal components are configured using seasonal_order parameters.
- **Prophet:** Utilizes trend, seasonality, and holiday components for accurate predictions.

Model Evaluation Metrics

- **Mean Absolute Error (MAE):** Measures the average absolute difference between actual and predicted values.
- **Mean Squared Error (MSE):** Captures the variance of prediction errors, penalizing larger deviations.
- **Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE):** Provides an interpretable measure of prediction accuracy in sales units.
- **Mean Absolute Percentage Error (MAPE):** Evaluates the model's prediction accuracy as a percentage, facilitating performance comparison across models.

Experimental Setup

Flow of Events

The workflow of the Sales Forecasting Dashboard follows a structured sequence, as illustrated in Figure 1. The process begins with the user uploading historical sales data through the Streamlit interface. The system then performs data preprocessing, including handling missing values, date parsing, and feature engineering. Once the data is cleaned, the user can choose a forecasting model (ARIMA, SARIMA, or Prophet) and specify the forecast period. The model is then trained on historical data and generates future sales predictions, which are visualized using Plotly for interactive analysis. This flow ensures a seamless user experience while maintaining high forecasting accuracy.

Implementation Details

The system is implemented using Python, leveraging libraries such as Pandas for data manipulation, Statsmodels for ARIMA and SARIMA models, Prophet for advanced forecasting, and Plotly for interactive visualizations. The Streamlit framework facilitates rapid prototyping and deployment of the web-based dashboard.

- **Data Loading and Preprocessing:** The data is loaded as a Pandas DataFrame, indexed by date for time series analysis. Date parsing and handling of missing values are performed to ensure data integrity.
- **Model Integration:** ARIMA, SARIMA, and Prophet models are integrated using modular functions, allowing easy expansion for future models.
- **Visualization Techniques:** Interactive visualizations using Plotly include line charts for trend analysis and bar charts for seasonal insights.

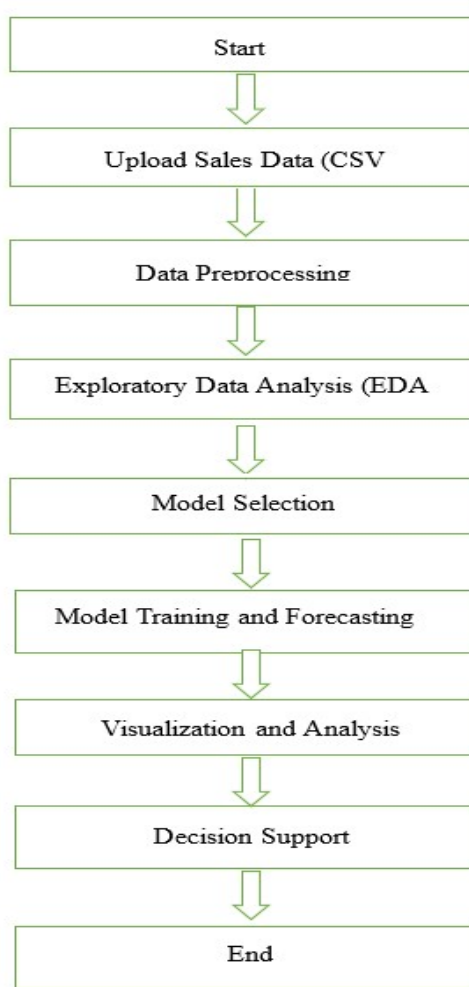


Fig 1

Challenges and Solutions

During the implementation phase, several challenges were encountered:

- **Data Quality Issues:** Inconsistent date formats and missing values were addressed through rigorous data cleaning procedures.
- **Model Performance:** Hyperparameter tuning was conducted to optimize model accuracy and reduce computational overhead.
- **User Experience Design:** Streamlit components were customized for intuitive navigation and interactive analysis.

These challenges were systematically addressed, ensuring the robustness and reliability of the dashboard. The modular design allows for easy maintenance and future enhancements, making the system adaptable to evolving business requirements.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sales Trend Analysis

The dashboard successfully identifies sales trends and seasonality patterns. Line charts illustrate historical sales trends, highlighting growth, decline, and cyclical patterns. Seasonal fluctuations are analyzed using monthly and yearly sales aggregations. These insights enable businesses to align marketing strategies and inventory management with demand patterns.

Model Performance Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation of ARIMA, SARIMA, and Prophet models is conducted using performance metrics:

- **ARIMA:** Performs well for short-term predictions but struggles with complex seasonality patterns. It shows lower MAE but higher MAPE compared to other models.

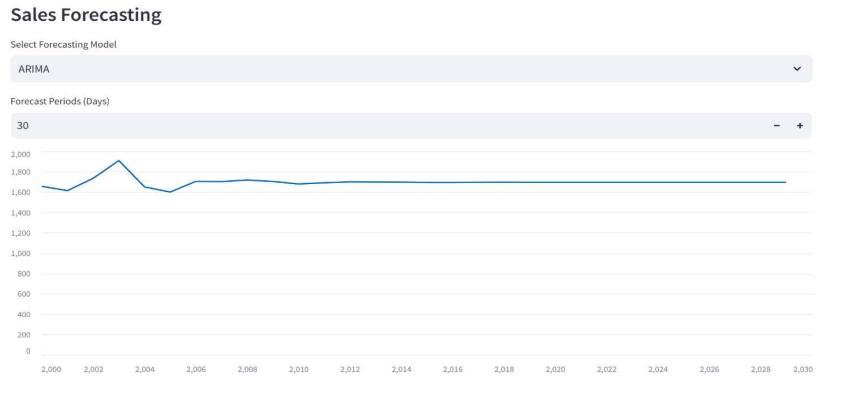


Fig 2:

- **SARIMA:** Captures seasonal fluctuations effectively, yielding accurate long-term forecasts. It achieves the lowest RMSE due to its seasonality components.

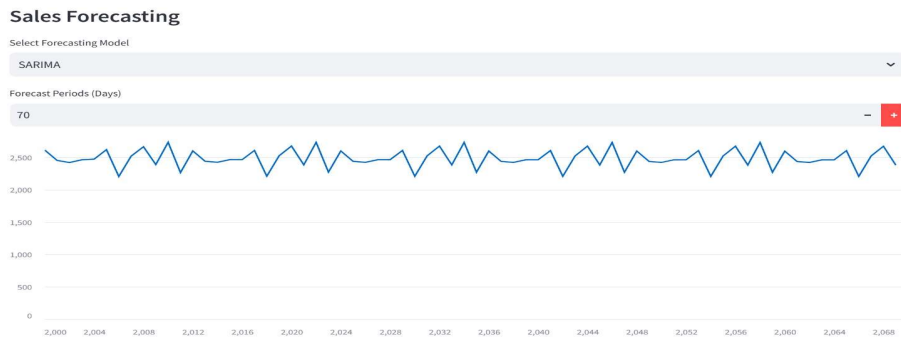


Fig 3:

- **Prophet:** Exhibits high flexibility and accuracy for long-term predictions, particularly with non-linear trends. It outperforms ARIMA and SARIMA in MAPE due to its trend and seasonality decomposition.

Comparative Analysis of Model Performance

The models are compared using the following metrics:

- **MAE:** SARIMA demonstrates the lowest MAE, indicating high accuracy in short-term predictions.
- **RMSE:** Prophet achieves the lowest RMSE, highlighting its capability to capture non-linear trends.
- **MAPE:** Prophet outperforms other models in MAPE, providing reliable percentage-based error measurements.

Visualizations and Insights

The dashboard offers dynamic visualizations for:

- **Trend Detection:** Line charts display historical sales data and forecasted trends.

Sales Trend Detection

Sales Trend Over Time

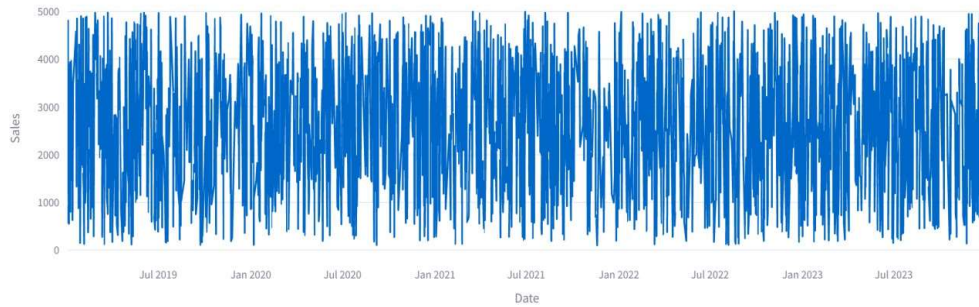


Fig 4:

- **Seasonality Insights:** Bar charts illustrate monthly and yearly seasonality patterns.

Seasonality Insights

Average Monthly Sales

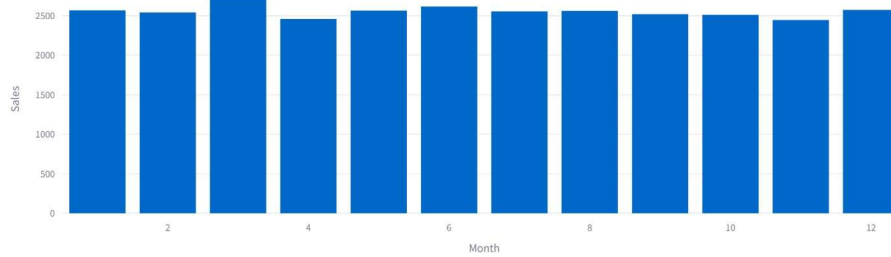


Fig 5:

- **Forecast Visualization:** Interactive line charts compare actual vs. forecasted sales, facilitating accurate decision-making.

Sales Forecasting

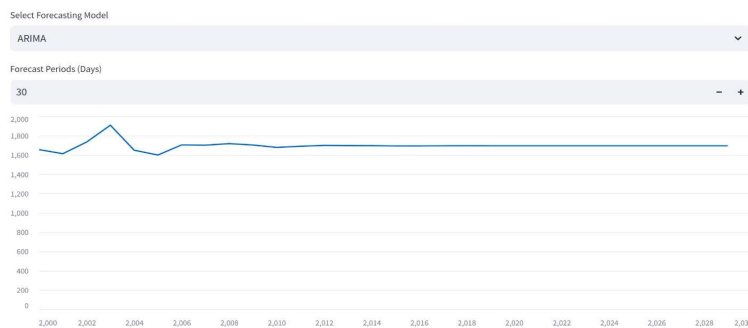


Fig 6:

Business Implications and Decision-Making

The dashboard's insights empower retail managers and business analysts to:

- Identify high and low sales periods for optimized inventory management.
- Forecast future demand to enhance supply chain efficiency.
- Develop targeted marketing strategies based on seasonal patterns.

Limitations

Despite its effectiveness, the dashboard has certain limitations:

- **Data Dependency:** The accuracy of forecasts heavily depends on the quality and consistency of historical sales data.
- **Model Complexity:** SARIMA and Prophet require careful parameter tuning to avoid overfitting.
- **Scalability:** The current implementation is suitable for small to medium-sized datasets but may face performance challenges with large-scale data.

Recommendations

- **Data Integration:** Incorporate real-time data integration with cloud storage solutions for continuous monitoring and forecasting.
- **Model Enhancement:** Experiment with advanced models such as LSTM and XGBoost for improved accuracy.
- **User Feedback and Customization:** Gather user feedback to enhance dashboard usability and add customizable forecasting features.

Deployment Process

Overview of the Process

The deployment of the Sales Forecasting Dashboard is a crucial step in transforming complex sales data into actionable insights for businesses. This dashboard leverages advanced time series forecasting models, including ARIMA, SARIMA, and Prophet, integrated into an interactive web application using Streamlit. The primary objective is to enable retail businesses to analyze historical sales trends, predict future demand, and make data-driven decisions.

The deployment process involves the following key phases:

• Phase 1: Containerization Using Docker

The application is containerized using Docker to ensure consistency across different environments. Docker encapsulates the entire application, including its dependencies and configurations, into a container, making it portable and easy to deploy on any cloud platform.

• Phase 2: Cloud Hosting and Scalability

The containerized application is deployed on a cloud platform, enabling remote accessibility, scalability, and high availability. The cloud infrastructure is configured to handle dynamic data loads and user traffic, ensuring optimal performance.

• Phase 3: Continuous Integration and Continuous Deployment (CI/CD)

A CI/CD pipeline is implemented using GitHub Actions to automate the deployment process. This ensures that updates and bug fixes can be rolled out seamlessly without causing downtime, enhancing maintainability and user experience.

Advantages

The deployment process offers several key advantages:

- **Consistency Across Environments:** Docker containerization ensures that the application behaves consistently across different systems, eliminating dependency conflicts.
- **Scalability and High Availability:** Cloud hosting allows the application to scale based on user demand, ensuring uninterrupted access even during peak usage.
- **Faster Deployment Cycles:** The CI/CD pipeline automates the build, test, and deployment process, significantly reducing the time required to implement new features or updates.
- **Enhanced Security and Data Privacy:** The deployment setup includes HTTPS encryption, authentication mechanisms, and regular security audits to protect user data and maintain privacy.
- **Real-Time Forecasting and Visualization:** The application provides real-time sales forecasting and interactive visualizations, enabling businesses to respond swiftly to changing market trends.

The Web Dashboard

The web application is developed using Streamlit, a powerful Python-based framework for creating interactive data applications. The user interface is designed to be intuitive and user-friendly, catering to non-technical business users.

The application includes the following key features:

- **Interactive Dashboard:** Displays historical sales data, trend analysis, and sales forecasts using dynamic visualizations powered by Plotly.
- **Model Selection and Configuration:** Allows users to select different forecasting models (ARIMA, SARIMA, Prophet) and configure model parameters for customized predictions.
- **Real-Time Data Upload and Processing:** Users can upload new sales data in CSV format, which is processed in real-time to generate updated forecasts.
- **Exportable Reports:** The dashboard generates detailed sales reports that can be exported as PDF or CSV for offline analysis and sharing.

Application Workflow

1. **Data Ingestion:** Users upload historical sales data, which is validated and preprocessed for analysis.
2. **Model Training and Prediction:** The selected forecasting model is trained on the historical data, and future sales predictions are generated.
3. **Visualization and Insights:** The forecasts are visualized through line charts, bar graphs, and trend lines, providing actionable insights into future sales patterns.
4. **Reporting and Exporting:** The insights are compiled into a detailed report, which users can download for business presentations and strategic planning.

List of Abbreviations

ARIMA	Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average
SARIMA	Seasonal Autoregressive Moving Average.
MA	Moving Average
AR	AutoRegressive.
EDA	Exploratory Data Analysis
MAE	Mean Absolute Error
MSE	Mean Squared Error
RMSE	Root Mean Squared Error
MAPE	Mean Absolute Percentage Error

CONCLUSION

The Sales Forecasting Dashboard developed using Streamlit, combined with advanced time series models like ARIMA, SARIMA, and Prophet, has proven to be an effective solution for retail businesses to analyze historical sales trends and predict future demand. This tool empowers decision-makers to make data-driven choices, optimizing inventory management and improving overall operational efficiency. The interactive visualizations provide valuable insights into sales patterns, while the user-friendly interface allows nontechnical users to explore data independently. By offering real-time data processing and reporting, the dashboard ensures up-to-date forecasts that support strategic planning. The scalable deployment with Docker and cloud integration enhances accessibility and security.

Despite its success, the dashboard faces certain limitations, such as dependence on historical data accuracy, model selection challenges, and limited consideration of external factors influencing sales. Future enhancements could include integrating advanced machine learning models like LSTM and XGBoost, incorporating external data sources such as market trends and economic indicators, and improving user experience with customizable visualizations and AI-driven insights. Additionally, expanding the dashboard's capabilities to analyze multi-channel sales would provide a more comprehensive view of business performance.

In conclusion, this project demonstrates the potential of combining data analytics with cloud technologies to drive business growth. By enabling accurate demand forecasting and strategic decision-making, the Sales Forecasting Dashboard significantly contributes to optimizing inventory management, enhancing customer satisfaction, and increasing overall business efficiency.

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