Odysseus vs. Ajax:
How to build an R presence in a corporate SAS environment

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What's With the Title?

Last year I gave a similar talk, but called it David v. Goliath. I now reference two people who fought on the same side, for the armor of Achilles. The difference lies in their characteristics.

Odysseus

- Strong.
- Cunning.
- Intelligent.
- Wins the fight.

Ajax

- Big.
- Strong.
- Not too bright.
- Loses the fight . . . commits suicide.

Who Am I?

- **Currently Senior Sales Engineer for Revolution Analytics.**

- Over 10 years of statistical consulting experience; 6 years of broad analytics, 5 years marketing analytics, 2 year credit analytics.

- Built R presence in 4 companies.

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Where Are We?

- SAS has been growing and gaining market share since 1976.

- In 1991 that began to change as a new competitor, R, was born.

- Now 20 years later R is a viable alternative to SAS, but ...

  There is still resistance in the corporate environment.

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REVOLUTION
ANALYTICS

What is the Goal?

There are two possible goals here...

1. Use R to complement existing software.

   - SAS
   - SPSS
   - ...

2. Replace existing software with R.

We will focus on the first goal, and keep the second as a long term goal that can only happen after the first goal is achieved.

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How Do We Get There?

- Spread the word.

- Start Small.

- Show the Strengths.

- Show the Value.

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Spread the Word.

- Get involved in local R User Groups.

- Play nice!
  - Make friends everywhere, especially in IT.
    - You'd be surprised what a **friend** will do if you simply ask.

- **You** must evangelize.
  - Given any opportunity, talk about R.
  - It may be painful, but become known as "That R Guy/Girl."
  - Organize informational sessions at work.

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Spread the Word

Most roadblocks in a corporate environment are due to a lack of information or adherance to the status quo. Never let there be a lack of information, or be satisfied with the status quo!

Start Small.

- Rome wasn't built in a day,
  - and you won't topple SAS in a day.

- Start by getting R installed on your server/workstation **LEGALLY**. (remember those friends you made in IT?)

- It is sometimes better to proselytize a few than to evangelize to all.

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Show the Strengths.

- Know R's weaknesses.
  - Large data.
  - No support (in a business sense of the word).
  - An existing army of SAS programmers.

- Promote R's Strengths
  - Graphics are a great place to start.
  - Flexibility is another.
  - A growing army of R programmers.

- Use publicly available information and research.
  - Revolution Analytics Collection of R in the Media, for example.

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Show the Value

- R is Open Source!
  - SAS is definitely not.

- Availability of cutting edge methodologies.

- There is a lot of new R talent.

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Summary

- You can build an $\mathbb{R}$ presence if you follow a few simple steps.
  - Spread the word.
  - Start small.
  - Show the strengths.
  - Show the value.