

# 2020 State Of Database Quality & Accuracy

B2B Marketers Ramp Up Investments  
In Tools & Tactics To Augment & Automate  
Contact Acquisition Strategies

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— KATHY MACCHI, INVERTA

## Introduction

With most B2B brands forced to go all-in with digital marketing and sales initiatives during most of 2020, having an accurate and actionable database has become an even bigger business priority. As organizations look to connect the dots on buyer behavior between campaigns and channels they are testing, they are quickly realizing that clean and complete data is essential to track the behaviors and interests of key buyers.

In addition, as more brands continue to shift from batch-and-blast email campaigns to more targeted initiatives like account-based marketing and customized outreach, they are quickly seeing that the value in tools and processes to augment and automate data are critical investments.

Leading consultants, analysts and marketing practitioners in the B2B space all suggest that the risk/reward of investing in systems and processes to clean and augment data is becoming a much clearer picture.

David Raab of [Raab Associates Inc.](#), a marketing and advertising consultancy, explained that accurate identity data makes it possible to stitch together information from separate sources, allowing marketers to build a more complete picture of each customer and form a more accurate database.

“This enables companies to see the relationships between events in different channels, such as how email promotions impact telephone sales calls,” said Raab. “It also lets companies pull together fragments of the same identity, so marketers can understand that three seemingly separate, low-value customers are really pieces of a single, high-value customer.”

Kathy Macchi, VP at marketing consultancy [Inverta](#), pointed out that the investments in data quality are paying dividends by reducing friction and creating more relevant experiences for buyers.


“If your database has all of its business’ relevant data sources (contact data, account records, etc.) aligned in an easy-to-access location, with a plan on how to best extract and implement that data, your database will benefit your buyers as much as your business,” Macchi said. “Buyer experiences will be personalized, leading to increased brand awareness, higher revenue generation and higher win rates.”

While [recent research](#) from *Demand Gen Report* supported the growing prioritization of data — with 77% of respondents stating they have a data acquisition strategy in place — there is still substantial room for improvement, as only 16% of companies rated their data acquisition strategy as solid.

Industry experts point out that inaccurate or incomplete data is a substantial drain for companies, especially on operations teams that spend a lot of their time working with data. The analogy many insiders have used is that operations teams in companies with outdated and inaccurate data spend more time acting as “firefighters or plumbers” fixing leaks, rather than doing strategic work that drives revenue.

This special report will provide specific examples and prescriptive advice into how B2B organizations can combat issues with database quality and accuracy, with specific coverage of key trends, such as:

- The key relationship between clean data and accurate reporting;
- Strategies for updating database strategies to support ABM and more advanced segmentation; and
- How companies can prepare to integrate intent data and other new intelligence sources into their database.



“If you don’t have good quality data, you won’t even know how many trials you’re creating.”

— LAURA PATTERSON, VISIONEDGE MARKETING

## Data’s Direct Link To Insights & Reporting

Beyond potentially adding friction to the buyer journey, the other major pitfall most B2B marketing and sales teams experience from outdated or incomplete data is an inability to track and measure the true impact of their efforts.

“If you don’t have good quality data, you won’t even know how many trials you’re creating,” said Laura Patterson, President of **VisionEdge Marketing**, a marketing performance consultancy. “Your marketing might be really good and you might get a high conversion rate to quality trials, but a bunch of bogus stuff will come in from the other end. You might see your conversion-to-customer rate might be really low, when in all reality, it might actually be better than that.”

Marketing practitioners also shared similar pains from managing multiple data sources, which have historically been disconnected. Josh Ren, Director of Marketing Operations at cloud security platform **Netskope**, pointed out that faulty data impacts company operations on a fundamental level, making CRMs slower and clunkier.

“What I’ve seen people do is try to make systems that are not designed to handle massive quantities of data or to process massive quantities of data,” Ren stated.



## Database Quality By The Numbers:

**77%**

**OF MARKETERS STATED THEY HAVE A DATA ACQUISITION STRATEGY IN PLACE, BUT THERE IS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.**

*Demand Gen Report 2019 Database Strategies Survey*

### **THE TOP CHALLENGES PREVENTING MARKETERS FROM IMPLEMENTING A FORMAL DATA ACQUISITION STRATEGY INCLUDE:**

**LACK OF RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT A FORMAL STRATEGY**

**56%**

**EMPLOYEES' LACK OF EXPERTISE/EXPERIENCE TO IMPLEMENT A FORMAL STRATEGY**

**31%**

**NO ALIGNMENT BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS TO BREAK DOWN DATA SILOS**

**19%**

*Demand Gen Report 2019 Database Strategies Survey*

### **THE TOP CHALLENGES MARKETERS FACE WHEN MAINTAINING DATA QUALITY IN THEIR CONTACT DATABASE INCLUDE:**

**78%**

**DATA IS OLD/OUTDATED**

**61%**

**NOT ENOUGH TIME/  
RESOURCES TO  
IMPLEMENT AN  
EFFECTIVE PROCESS**

**49%**

**LACK OF STANDARD  
OPERATING PROCEDURE  
FOR MARKETING AND  
SALES TO KEEP DATA UP  
TO DATE**

*Demand Gen Report 2019 Database Strategies Survey*

**73%**

**OF MARKETERS RATE THEIR COMPANY'S ABILITY TO GATHER AND UTILIZE INTENT DATA IN THEIR GO-TO-MARKET INITIATIVES AS EXCELLENT/ABOVE.**

*Intent Data's Expanding Impact Report*

# Activating Quality Data With Sales & Marketing Efforts: The Time Is Now

**MICHAEL BIRD,**

**PRESIDENT OF SALES & MARKETING SOLUTIONS, DUN & BRADSTREET**



Companies have finally agreed that data quality is important. We looked a bit closer, though, and noticed a disconnect. Companies haven't connected the value of quality data to the more advanced marketing approaches necessary in today's digital world.

When we asked which activities would be most positively impacted by improved data quality, some advanced use cases — key to realizing quality data's full potential — ranked last on the list. This may be due to lack of experience or not having the right tools yet to deploy these tactics effectively. Organizations need to move quickly beyond basic use cases to fully realize the value of their efforts.

Many sales and marketing teams are still looking for that silver bullet. They hire more people, run more campaigns or add to their martech stacks — only to find growth elusive. They haven't succeeded because their focus has been on the tactic rather than the data driving it. Companies aren't going to achieve sustainable results until they recognize the connection between quality data and sales and marketing efforts, whether these are tried-and-true tactics such as email marketing or some of the powerful emerging strategies like intent.

It's no longer a question of when to take the next step in activating quality data (Hint: that would be NOW!), but how. With a solid data foundation in place, newer tools and tactics are ready to give you the incremental lift you're looking for.

It's time to put that data to work! When you employ leading-edge strategies, based on that solid foundation of quality data, the sky's the limit. Let's get started!



## Aligning Databases To Support ABM Strategies

**Demand Gen Report research** showed that more than 75% of B2B organizations have had an ABM strategy in place for six months or more, with many companies now looking to upgrade to improve the results of their targeted programs.

For example, Ren said Netskope relies on its database to help determine the right accounts to target based on the number of employees within an organization, allowing their executives to easily identify which prospects are from enterprise companies based on the number of employees.


“A key criterion for us is number of employees, because that’s what separates whether or not account executives go after them,” said Ren. “For us, if we don’t have clean data on the number of employees, we can’t even segment our database correctly. We won’t even know who’s going to call or follow up.”

Allen Pogorzelski, VP of Marketing at data orchestration platform **Openprise**, suggested the biggest challenge with aligning a database with ABM strategies stems from having multiple data sources that are aggregating data for different purposes, such as intent data, sales data from Salesforce, etc.

“Where people need to focus their energy is to sit down together with the people who own those systems, talk about individual fields, who owns them, what the values are, how often are they updated and where they came from,” said Pogorzelski. “And if you do that, then a lot of these issues will go away. And you can automate around the ones that can’t.”

“When we do ABM, we know all about that account’s digital behavior beyond just the intent piece of it,” Pogorzelski added. “We’re able to spend a lot less time going after them because we see all the digital behavior among all the people in the company that we’ve ever worked with. And they’re all aggregated into one buying group so we can see who the players are and what each of them are doing.”





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— DAVID RAAB, RAAB ASSOCIATES INC.

## Preparing Your Database To Integrate Intent And Other Signal Data

In addition to integrating intent data to fuel ABM initiatives, many revenue teams are turning to intent, predictive and other types of signal data to help fuel their broader acquisitions and lead nurturing strategies.

“Intent data can be a powerful signal,” said Raab. “Third-party intent data can supplement internal intent data by capturing intent about buyers who have not engaged with a company’s own website or sales team. This is very valuable since it expands the potential buyer universe.”

According to a [recent study](#) presented by *Demand Gen Report* and [True Influence](#), 76% of marketing companies are now leveraging intent data in their go-to-market strategies, with 73% reporting above average to excellent ratings of intent data usage.

However, while most experts agree that intent data can be a great tool, they caution that companies must have the right tools and processes in place before adding additional sources into the mix. According to Pogorzelski, intent data should not be viewed as a complete set that teams can make decisions on without supporting intelligence.




“A lot of companies think intent data is just a panacea that’s going to solve all the problems,” said Pogorzelski. “Intent data is not going to fix the data quality issues that you have — it’s a small part of the bigger picture. The reality is, intent data is just one buying signal, and I think people need to keep that in mind as they build scoring models to attack the right accounts.”

Inverta’s Macchi suggested breaking down the intake process for multiple eyes, allowing other teams outside of one department to decide what information should enter the database. She said this can help marketing and sales use intent data that is accurate and relevant to their marketing strategies, allowing for better outreach and improved internal processes overall.

“People don’t have a good way to operationalize [intent] right now, because it’s time-limited data,” said Macchi. “You have to ask: How do I analyze it? Can I score it? How do I activate it? [Inverta is] starting to do all three now with our number of clients, and I think people are finally saying: ‘Hey, I’m paying for [intent]. Can you help me use it?’”

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— ALLEN POGORZELSKI, OPENPRISE



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— **DAVID RAAB, RAAB ASSOCIATES INC.**

## Conclusion

While managing and maintaining data from multiple systems and sources can seem like a daunting task, industry experts suggested a building block approach to cleaning and augmenting their contact data.

“For most B2B companies, you have a fairly limited target audience,” said Macchi. “I think you can get 80% of the work done without that big of an effort. It seems overwhelming, and everyone just passes the buck. Marketing owns a bit, sales owns a bit, finance owns a bit. And I think getting your team together, saying ‘what can we tackle?’ and actually putting some things in place really helps.”

But while most agree that companies should take a phased approach to data accuracy, the caution that ignoring the problem and living with outdated and inaccurate data will have a negative ripple effect across an organization.

“Businesses need to check the quality of that data, resolve inconsistencies between source systems and stitch together different identifiers that belong to the same person,” said Raab. “Once they’ve done all that, they can identify gaps, assess which gaps are important and look for third-party data sources that can fill them.”



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*Demand Gen Report* is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multi-channel demand generation efforts.

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