STATE OF DATABASE QUALITY & ACCURACY

Practitioners Delivering Deeper Buyer Intelligence & Personalizing Marketing Messages

INTRODUCTION

As more buyers demand relevant, customized engagement, marketing teams are prioritizing their database strategies to maintain quality, better identify high-value accounts and inform their next move. In fact, *Demand Gen Report's* "**2022 Database Strategies & Contact Acquisition Survey**" showed that **45% of marketers** plan to implement a formal data acquisition strategy this year.

To help B2B marketers build more valuable databases, this special report explores how B2B marketers are producing and procuring higher quality data, including:

- **How businesses are utilizing deeper analytics** — such as intent, AI, engagement data and other third-party sources — to refine messaging and offer deeper customer experiences;

- **How to connect and analyze data** across applications and platforms for a 360-degree view of the buyer;

- **The tools and tactics** modern B2B orgs leverage to fill in gaps in their databases and sustain data quality; and

- **The importance of aligning data sources** across the organization to avoid silos and develop campaigns tailored to audience needs and expectations.

MITIGATING DATABASE QUALITY CHALLENGES

The ability to pinpoint high-value accounts and tailor personalized messaging throughout the buyer's journey has become essential for B2B marketers, making database quality critical to success. But marketers **struggle with several challenges**, such as:

- No standard procedure for marketing/sales teams to update data (52%);
- Siloed data (42%);
- Not enough data on current customers (40%); and
- Lack of resources and experience (30%).

The pandemic and resulting economic rollercoaster have created new hurdles, said Brooke Bartos, Director of Marketing Operations and Analytics at **InvoiceCloud**. She continued that the standard 30% database churn has "accelerated beyond comprehension" in the past two and a half years as both B2B buyers and marketers rapidly change positions. Constant change means both internal teams and the data service providers they previously relied on are struggling to keep data up to date, explained Bartos.

That results in fragmented data, which often arises when multiple buyers on different teams purchase different datasets without coordinating, added Curtis Marshall, SVP of Business Data Partnerships at **AnalyticsIQ**, "making it difficult to condense it all into one record of truth."

For larger organizations, integrating those multiple datasets is often the biggest challenge, noted Danny McKeever, Senior Director of Marketing Operations and Technology at **Integrate**. At smaller organizations, the lack of standardized processes is the primary problem McKeever sees. "Broken processes" for creating leads, accounts and contacts or for inputting data are common in fast-growing organizations that haven't taken time to prioritize database quality.

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>
> **BROOKE BARTOS, INVOICECLOUD**

DATA IS EVERYTHING IN MARKETING — MAKE SURE IT'S ACCURATE

With Danny McKeever, Integrate

Data serves as the lifeblood of all marketing operations, informing everything from a prospect's name to high-level details about what interactions an account had with a particular platform. With that in mind, it's imperative that marketers truly understand the importance of maintaining a healthy, accurate database.

The *Demand Gen Report* team sat down with Danny McKeever, Sr. Director, Marketing Operations and Technology for Integrate, a precision demand marketing platform, to get his take on best practices for database maintenance and the pitfalls of dirty data.

Demand Gen Report: What are some of the current trends you're seeing in database quality and accuracy?

Danny McKeever: It's important for data to be accurate, compliant and governed. However, many companies still struggle with database quality, and this can stem from several scenarios. For instance, if a company has acquired other companies, they may have data in disparate systems and face difficulty merging the data. Or for many enterprise companies, they may have data in too many locations or little rigor in who uploads data into the system. Often, the database is an afterthought or not a priority for the organization and results in the organization being held back from moving forward along the marketing maturity model.

DGR: Though it's the obvious question to ask, why is it so important to ensure databases are up to date with the latest customer information?

McKeever: Today's B2B buyers act much more like B2C buyers and have higher expectations of being heard, known and understood. They're also consuming content across multiple channels, like social media, digital ads, content syndication and in-person and virtual events. In short, our buyers exist in a digital-first world and sellers must adapt accordingly.

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In marketing, data quality is everything. Without the latest customer information, you can't even begin to reach your buyer. For instance, if you have the wrong business email or the wrong name, or you do not know that the person has moved on to another company, your opportunity to reach your buyer is lost before it's even begun. Or if you have the wrong data on service level agreements or rules of engagement, you run the risk of uncoordinated outreach with multiple team members simultaneously reaching out to a prospect.

Not only is it important to have the right data to reach the right buyer, but it's also important to adhere to data privacy rules and regulations, such as GDPR, CCPA and other privacy laws, which impose hefty fines for non-compliance.

And finally, if you don't have clean, compliant data, you can't measure your performance, understand your impact or improve your processes. Measurement is so important to marketers because it's how we defend the spend and seek to refine and improve.

DGR:** **What are some of the biggest elements hurting data accuracy, and what steps can companies take to alleviate them?

McKeever: Some of the biggest reasons for poor data accuracy include siloed data and a lack of processes around data entering the system. For instance, if you have data residing across multiple systems (e.g., CRM and marketing automation platforms) that are not talking to each other, that can result in conflicting data. To alleviate siloed data, implement technologies that streamline and automate the entire data handling, enrichment and governing processes. Integrate has a governance engine that ensures the right accounts and people on those accounts are fully opted in and compliant.

It's also important to implement processes on your teams to prevent dirty data from entering your systems. This could result from either manually entering incomplete data or if you uploaded a list with incomplete account or contact information. Take, for example, a list import from an event provider that only includes first name, last name and account, but no email — that's dirty data. You need to determine technologies and process to address this bad data before it even enters your marketing automation system.

Another process pitfall is inconsistencies in how your company logs data within your systems. All too often, people work outside of the systems and technologies that are in place, for instance, when not all sales reps log data into Salesforce, and this results in inaccurate forecast data. Implement internal processes (or even a company-wide agreement) that prevents bad data from entering your systems in the first place.

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*DGR: **Can you discuss Integrate's precision demand marketing approach and how it applies to database quality?***

McKeever: Precision demand marketing addresses how to market amidst today's complex world. It combines an always-on approach with an account-based focus, and offers a buyer-driven, omnichannel strategy that is more agile, precise and personalized to our buyers.

If you don't have the right data of where an account and/or the buyer is in their journey, what channels they are in or their contact information, it's impossible to orchestrate personalized experiences with precision. At its core, Precision Demand Marketing is good marketing, and good data is imperative to enabling good marketing.

*DGR: **How does maintaining a cleansed and accurate database benefit companies in the long term?***

McKeever: Having a high-quality database is not only about building pipeline for today, but also for building pipeline for tomorrow. Ask yourself:

- Do you have the database to support and capture those engagements and to understand who is interested and who isn't?

- Do you have a high-quality database to react to market changes and influences?

- Do you have the database to provide the right message at the right time in relation to what just happened in the market? If not, then you're either implementing mass-blasts or missing out on in-market accounts.

We need to shift our way of thinking about marketing and smash that traditional sales funnel. The new way is for marketing to partner with sales across the buyer's journey like so:
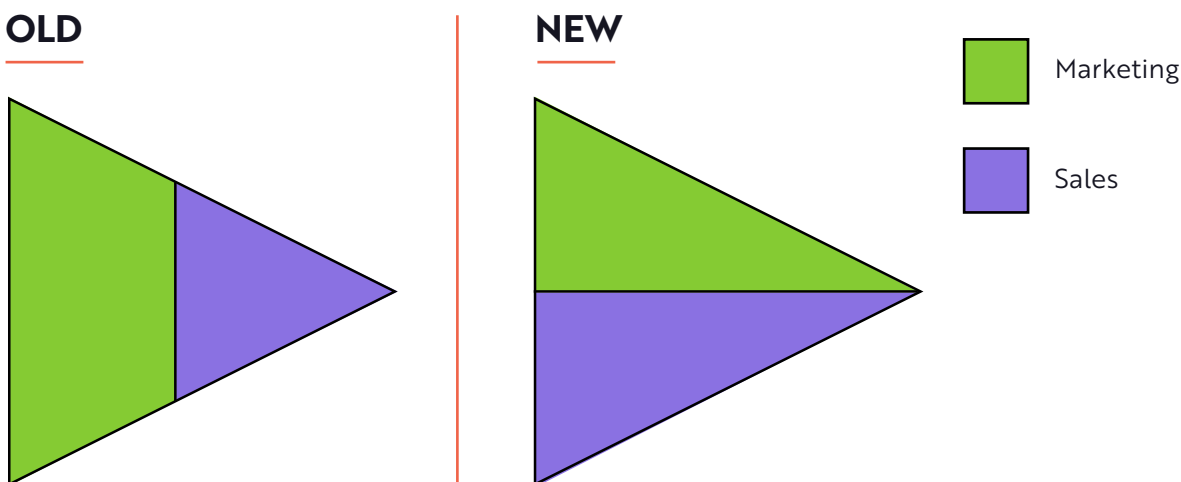
UNDERSTANDING THE DEEPER POTENTIAL OF DATABASES

Going beyond contact information and demographics to collect deeper buyer intelligence can help marketers identify segments, pinpoint key stakeholders within target accounts and better personalize messaging. Ultimately, this enables marketers to deliver more value to sales teams, shorten sales cycles and grow revenue.

In fact, **54% of practitioners** would like to collect data on purchasing timeframes, 52% wanted to collect intent signals, 52% wanted more detail on pain points and 40% wanted budget information.

"In this age of personalized marketing, understanding the factors and motivators driving decision makers' and influencers' behavior has become more and more hypercritical," said AnalyticsIQ's Marshall. He pointed to third-party data as a major contributor to understanding buyers' needs, as it can add contextual information to data from self-owned sources, enabling more personalized campaigns.

For example, Marshall noted data could reveal that in addition to his business role, he's an avid golfer, ski enthusiast and enjoys podcasts. "You can then design marketing plans around the fact that I like podcasts or I'm a skier or that, because I'm [in B2B], there's no need to send me consumer information."

The right data can also help marketers identify their ideal clients and improve segmentation. "Marketers don't necessarily know who their best types of clients are until they engage with third-party organizations that help them understand their current data and clients," Marshall added.

Collecting deeper data is essential for moving beyond a traditional marketing model in which marketing does its work and hands off to sales, said Integrate's McKeever.

"In a forward-leaning organization, marketing and sales work hand in hand from the beginning to closed-won," he continued. "When bringing data to bear to build the proper buyer journeys, it's important to have that data thought about and structured in such a way that you can surround the account with the right messaging [across channels]."

McKeever advised going beyond demographic and firmographic data, which tends to be at the persona or account level, to collect data on buying groups. Because larger enterprises often have multiple personas and buying groups, he believes marketers should have all the right personas in buying groups built out before going to market.

Gathering deeper data offers value outside sales and marketing, Erin Pearson, VP of Marketing at Evaluserve, who noted, "The first question people ask when analyzing data is, 'Where am I getting the most meetings?' But the more interesting question is, 'Where am I getting the most pipeline and how much of that pipeline is closing?'"

"In a forward-leaning organization, marketing and sales work hand in hand from the beginning to closed-won ."

DANNY MCKEEVER, INTEGRATE

LAYOFFS, 'QUIET QUITTING' & THE GREAT RESIGNATION: WHAT IT MEANS FOR DATABASE MARKETING & ABM EFFORTS

By Laura Ashley, B2Lead

According to recent surveys by PBS and PricewaterhouseCoopers, **38% of adults** in the U.S. report changing jobs in the past two years, and **50% of U.S. companies** are anticipating reducing their headcount. In addition, Gallup pollsters found that "quiet quitters" make up **half of the U.S. workforce.** The biggest trends that are undoubtedly impacting B2B database marketing and demand generation efforts are:

- **The Great Resignation:** Whether it's due to the Covid-19 pandemic or general unhappiness, it's clear that the workforce is ready to make a change and find a new job;

- **Layoffs:** While no functions are safe from companies scrambling to protect their bottom line amid recession, reports indicate that there is a high concentration of cuts in management/leadership roles; and

- **Quiet quitting:** The percentage of engaged workers in the U.S. declined in 2021 for the first time in more than a decade, **according to Gallup**, as only 34% of employees said they were actively engaged, compared to 36% in 2020.

For marketers to address these challenges, they need to understand what target buyers are experiencing.

First, bureaucracy is trending up. With inflation on the rise, businesses are looking harder at their balance sheets and identifying where to trim costs. This puts more obstacles in the way of purchasing, which includes everything from sales and marketing spend to software and headcount.

Second, expectations are up. Perhaps more than ever, it's a "do more with less" time, in terms of labor, technology and budgets.

Finally, the only thing certain is uncertainty. Are we still in a pandemic, or aren't we? Are we in a recession, or aren't we? Factor in the upcoming elections… oof. Plus, with inflation touching nearly all aspects of life, it's enough to make anyone reach for their nearest prescription of feel-good medicine while they doom scroll. Wait, did we just define quiet quitting?

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To proactively anticipate these changes, marketers and supporting agencies can:

1. Account For Job Changers To Budget Accordingly

Job changers must be proactively accounted for when forecasting marketing spend and estimating monthly lead generation. They can make up a significant portion of your database, as up to half of employees talk about searching for a new job at any given time. This means that if your program is generating 100 leads per month, you could end up with 800 new contacts by the end of the year instead of the 1,200 you originally predicted.

2. Run Target Account List Campaigns Against Broader Audiences

These broader audiences can include industry, company size and target title campaigns — you might be surprised at the amount of ABM coverage you get with the broader campaigns. For this to be effective, use an actual A/B testing approach and track total leads, cost-per-lead, total opportunities and cost-per-opportunity.

3. Budget For Overages

For every three leads you purchase, assume that you'll ultimately end up with two, which is especially true if your sales cycle is longer than six months. It's also important to negotiate with your demand generation vendors in advance about the possibility of purchasing the overage leads they generate.

If you're limiting yourself to a certain number of contacts per target account, you could be missing out on an opportunity to better round out your buying group. By being prepared for overages and willing to negotiate for them, you can get ahead of the churn resulting from employment volatility.

Although we can't control the increasing rate of job turnover, we absolutely can — and should — account for it in our planning and forecasting.

IMPLEMENTING BEST PRACTICES FOR BETTER DATA

AI and machine learning technology can provide marketing insights and automate processes, but without quality data, these tools can't deliver meaningful results. The experts explained that successful marketing teams:

1. **Get buy-in from the top**, as "the first barrier to clean data is the people part of it," according to Evaluserve's Pearson;

2. **Align teams around goals**, as "people need to understand that if they don't input data accurately, they might lose budget next year," continued Pearson;

3. **Build trust**, because "data silos between sales and marketing teams often stem from mistrust," noted McKeever;

4. **Create processes and train teams**, which starts with defining processes for inputting data, McKeever said;

5. **Develop data quality management systems**, which InvoiceCloud's Bartos explained will include in-house manual efforts and external technologies; and

6. **Eliminate silos** by "making a business decision to bring all groups that purchase data together to explain why each specific type of data is important," added Marshall.

Third-party vendors are useful tools to supplement self-owned data. Some **43% of marketers** in *Demand Gen Report's* survey use data enrichment vendors and 35% use data append vendors to enhance existing data.

"At some point, you need tools that can do a lot of the heavy lifting for you — tools that combine system integration, business process automation, data validation and formatting, and bring all your data sources together to normalize it into a common ontology and structure that fuels your analytics, CRM, marketing automation and other critical systems," explained Gary Maggiolino, Sr. Manager of Global Health Marketing Technology at **InterSystems**.

"For me, the key to database quality begins with analytics and understanding where all your data exists and what state it's in," he continued. "Where do the roadblocks, gaps and silos exist? What structure and format are the data in? To enable that kind of data clarity, you need a strong investment in the right analytical tools for your organization, followed by business process tools to close those gaps, put processes and workflows in place, and integrate and structure your data."

Additionally, third-party lead and account enrichment solutions can collect information marketers may not have in-house, such as account firmographics, said Pearson. "They can help you segment your campaigns better and reduce the number of form fields you need." Next, she suggested adding intent data and predictive revenue tools.

Ease of use and support are critical when vetting vendors, Pearson noted. More experienced teams seeking a hands-off experience will want a simple user interface that everyone on the team can use. Small teams may prefer to work with smaller vendors that offer a more personalized, consultative approach to customer success.

Bartos advised taking advantage of free trials to give each vendor a list of accounts or prospects for which data is historically hard to find.

"See what they return to you, use it and do a head-to-head [vendor] comparison," she said. "Ask colleagues in your industry for recommendations, too, as most people will tell you very honestly who they like."

Last, but not least, keep on the right side of privacy regulations. "It's not just about having the right accounts and people," McKeever cautioned. "Make sure third-party vendors provide data that's fully governed and compliant."

THE FUTURE OF DATA-DRIVEN MARKETING

When asked what marketers should keep in mind for the future, privacy laws top the list: "A number of state-by-state privacy laws are coming into effect over the next year," said Bartos.

"Regulations are changing weekly," agreed Marshall, who advised organizations should have a group that keeps abreast of what's going on and understands the current and future regulatory landscape.

Keep an eye on the cookie-less future, too: "It keeps getting pushed back, but it's going to happen," Bartos warned.

Transparency about your use of data is increasingly important, Pearson said. Younger generations want to work with ethical companies and view privacy as part of this. "Think through your data governance strategy," she advised. "How can you protect data to show that you're not just a vendor, but a partner?"

Marketers should also think more strategically about how marketing data can influence product development or customer success, Pearson said. For instance, record customer service calls and use AI to pull out key customer insights.

Ultimately, said McKeever, databases can become recommendation engines for marketing. "Being able to pull together digital engagements at the account level and tie them to [individuals] when they become known in the future allows marketers to become more predictive so they can target the right people at the right accounts with the right conversations to maximize deal size and bring the greatest benefit to customers."

It all starts with database quality: Committing to database quality is the first step to creating a strong foundation and building a database not just for today, but for tomorrow.

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Integrate is the leader in Precision Demand Marketing, an emerging category to help B2B marketers develop and deliver an omnichannel demand strategy, convert customer and prospect data records to revenue, and drive marketing ROI. Integrate works with high-growth and enterprise organizations like Salesforce, Microsoft, Akamai, and Plural sight to power their Precision Demand Marketing strategies. Over the past decade, Integrate has evolved from solving the complex challenges across each demand generation channel to powering account-based, buyer-driven omnichannel experiences. Today, Integrate's Demand Acceleration Platform helps marketers orchestrate connected buying experiences that drive qualified conversations at scale, simplify ABM management, and accelerate revenue generation.

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INFO@B2LEAD.COM

DemandGen REPORT

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.

201.257.8528
INFO@DEMANDGENREPORT.COM

KAREN AXELTON, CONTRIBUTING WRITER