WHAT'S WORKING IN DATABASE STRATEGIES?

Cleansing Data To Ensure Relevant Outreach

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INTRODUCTION

As B2B marketers rely more heavily on digital channels for outreach, they are increasingly leveraging data and technology to deliver relevant messages to engaged audiences. According to the "**State of Marketing Automation 2022**" survey, 38% of respondents cited improving data and decision-making as an important advantage of marketing automation, and 43% are focused on improving the customer experience.

In other words, spammy, impersonal outreach doesn't cut it anymore. Instead, B2B practitioners are recognizing the importance of 1:1 connections and building the foundation needed to generate and fuel account- and contact-level insights, which requires a finely tuned database. To that end, *Demand Gen Report's* "**2023 Database Strategies & Contact Acquisition Benchmark Survey**" revealed that 69% of practitioners plan to increase their database strategies investments throughout 2023.

"The customer experience has evolved so much, and automation is helping to make everything more relevant," said MJ Patent, VP of Marketing at **Logically**, an information technology services and active security management company. "That's forcing companies to make sure they have data integrity, and that all their strategies are backed by data."

With desires to increase customer acquisition and bolster brand loyalty, marketers are focused on generating better insights and deeper intelligence into key prospects and accounts. Specifically, practitioners are adding as many new contacts as possible, targeting specific segments for better engagement, identifying key stakeholders in high-value accounts and more.

This special report takes a deep dive into how B2B marketers are refining their data strategies, with a focus on how successful practitioners are executing data-backed outreach. Specific topics of discussions include:

- How modern practitioners are building their first-party data strategies to strengthen their 1:1 targeting capabilities through highly relevant outreach;

- The power of ensuring all departments have access to a centralized database of knowledge and best practices for maintaining such a large hub;

- The steps companies are taking to address their biggest data challenges, which include struggling to collect account, recipient and contact-level data; and

- The role of third-party data providers in helping practitioners create more targeted outreach.

BLENDING FIRST- & THIRD-PARTY DATA
FOR RELEVANT OUTREACH

As marketers work to generate deeper insights, they're looking to leverage external data to round out data sets. While just **one-third of marketers** relied on third-party data providers in 2021, nearly half of practitioners turned to third-party validation in 2022 — but practitioners need to be cautious when incorporating third-party data into the mix.

"Knowing the data quality from third-party providers is critical," said Patent. "While the data quality is never going to be perfect, you need to understand your threshold for data integrity. Where are they getting the data? How often do they refresh the data? Do they have processes internally to validate the data?"

That said, it's not just about relying on third-party data; effective database strategy management requires an infusion of first-party data. In a world where organizations seem to be at the mercy of conglomerates such as Apple and Google regarding privacy, modern practitioners are building up their first-party data strategies by focusing on collection methods such as:

- Website-based registration forms;

- Subscription databases;

- In-person events and trade shows;

- Web directories; and

- Co-registration on partner websites.

When integrated strategically and thoughtfully alongside first-party data, third-party data can provide a wealth of information about companies, individuals and industries.

For context, Erin Pearson, VP of Marketing for analytics and domain-specific AI solutions provider **Evalueserve**, explained that, "If we determined that our target audience is CMOs that have changed companies, a blend of first- and third-party data would help us track that information, use the change as a trigger and send a customized messaging sequence."

Proof Point

Protis Global, a global search firm, needed to find a solution that integrated with its Applicant Tracking System and would provide the company with quality, professional data to enhance the third-party data its sales rep were manually adding. The company turned to a **platform** that served as the singular source of truth for verifying information, finding the right companies and contacts and ensuring reps and recruiters are working off of the most accurate data available for candidate searches. As a result, Protis now sees an 85% connect rate (versus 25% previously) and decreased the time its reps spent searching for information.

ENSURING VISIBILITY WITH A CENTRALIZED DATABASE

No matter how clean, integrated or comprehensive data might be, it'll be useless if it's trapped in a spreadsheet on someone's laptop. Promisingly, **more than half (55%)** of practitioners indicated that they're on the right track with a centralized hub of information.

However, only **10% of marketers** are focusing on data consolidation capabilities when evaluating new marketing automation tools. Still, it's imperative that marketers prioritize the creation of a centralized database, as it ensures that all stakeholders are accessing the standardized, accurate data.

"If you have data in your customer relationship management platform (CRM), marketing automation system and about 15 other platforms, where's your single source of truth?" said Patent. "You first need to determine the one place where you want that data to live and then figure out what data is repeated across multiple platforms to consolidate it."

Research shows that the CRM is the favored centralized knowledge repository for 43% of marketers, and Pearson explained that practitioners tend to favor the CRM due to its ability to provide various levels of access depending on the role.

As part of that centralization, Christina Kay, VP of Marketing for online review platform ResellerRatings, added that data visibility is critical, as it helps marketers keep their finger on the pulse of the customers and prospects.

"When you don't have your database integrated or streamlined, it impacts cross-departmental communication," explained Kay. "A singular source enables us to customize the view of the data. On the executive side, for example, we can do a lot of our forecasting and revenue modeling based on individual and company targets."

Proof Point

Sisense, an AI-driven decision-making platform, found itself with a variety of solutions that remedied isolated problems across the business. As its sales and marketing teams were left working with disconnected datasets, the company turned to a B2B database company and its suite of products to optimize existing workflows and unify data. Since adoption, Sisense has saved more than $300,000 per year.

CONTINUALLY CLEANSING DATA TO ENSURE RELEVANT OUTREACH

When it comes to ensuring that outreach is meaningful to recipients, B2B marketers are focused on cleaning their internal data as the first line of defense. The DGR survey confirmed that **63% of B2B marketers** are focused on leveraging data insights to personalize content and messaging, but those insights are only as prescient as the data driving them.

"The biggest issue for marketers, ourselves included, is keeping the database clean," said Kay. "We're using automation to handle issues such as duplicates at the deal-, company- and contact-level because if you have a deal-level duplicate, it will throw off reporting."

Kay noted that ResellerRatings seeks to minimize database issues, such as inconsistencies, by employing an automated error tracking system that continuously monitors data integrity.

In fact, automation and artificial intelligence (AI) solutions are quite useful in helping practitioners overcome database management challenges that can hamper personalization efforts, added Pearson.

"We're using AI- and analytics-powered custom solutions to look through our database to segment our database based on the contacts that are in our top target industries," continued Pearson. "Who are the titles within those industries that we're seeing success with? And then once we have it segmented, we're able to start seeing customer reports based on our own data, in terms of who our competition is."

Proof Point

SecurityMetrics, an industry compliance and data security solutions provider, attends multiple industry events and purchases attendee lists (ranging from 100 to 10,000 attendees) to help their sales team generate opportunities and on-site meetings. The company used to manually cleanse the data, which was time-consuming and tedious, so SecurityMetrics enlisted a data management platform that could automatically improve the overall data quality of its CRM. Since implementing the new solution, the company imported more than 200 lists and prevented 5,200 duplicates in 2022.

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>
> **CHRISTINA KAY, RESELLERRATINGS**

CONCLUSION

Impersonal outreach doesn't work in today's data-driven world, as B2B marketers have access to a wealth of information about prospects, their companies and their industries. The challenge is ensuring that data is clean, updated, comprehensive and accessible to all stakeholders.

The increased reliance on data puts enormous pressure on marketers, tasking them to answer questions such as:

- Is internal data up-to-snuff?

- Are we bringing in the right external data so that our messaging is targeted and resonates with the audience?

"Ensuring that core data is clean and accurate is table stakes," said Logically's Patent. "From there, you have to develop an understanding how you leverage data effectively for superior customer experiences and engagements."
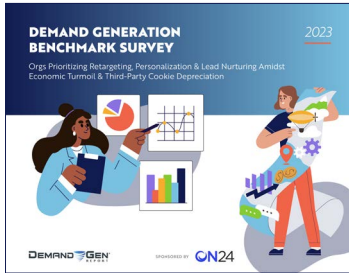
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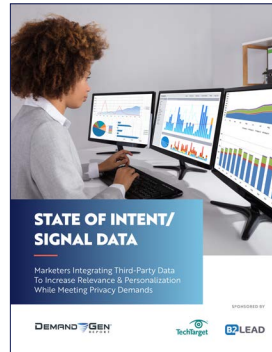
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Demand Gen Report is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multichannel demand generation efforts.

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