

The impact of bad data on event marketing performance

Other white papers include:

- Visitor retention
- Showprom in a downward recession
- Communication
- Market research
- Knowledge leadership
- The exhibitor knowledge gap
- Trade show sales

Keep up to date with developments and business opportunities through our online Market Intelligence Service.

Introduction

Twenty years ago a database was something rare. Today, every organisation has multiple 'islands' of data. These islands of data help managers to get their jobs done and are usually managed by standard database software and spreadsheets, although larger organisations have invested in powerful CRM and ERP systems to bring all customer-facing information together. Despite the promises of huge data systems, most organisations still run on stand-alone databases.

Continuing software improvements have given managers access to capable, off-the-shelf tools which help them to function daily with the data at their disposal. That is why most businesses today have a marketing database to track and capture prospects, a customer database for the accounts department, a sales contact system, a customer services database, and many more.

Any system, including a database, will inevitably develop errors. No matter who collects the data, manages it or uses it, different databases will always go their own ways. For the business, the costs of such 'bad' data start to add up.

They can include lost marketing and sales opportunities and an eroded brand image. This is why today's critical issue with data is neither storage nor availability, but quality. Once the quality of current data is addressed managers can go on to change other parts of the data capture and management process to engineer bad data out of the system in the future.

In this white paper we will discuss data quality and outline some of the things managers need to take into account when improving it, how to capture data, how to manage it and a brief look at how to market to it.

So what's the problem?

Take a database, any database. Then let someone else work on it. Within a month you will have a number of errors. These will range from ones that upset customers but keep the cash flowing, like spelling their names wrong, to ones that impede customer service, like getting the postcode wrong so collateral cannot get through.

The most common errors are missing data, spelling and punctuation mistakes and inconsistencies, the right data in the wrong field, partial data, and repeated data. Our experience suggests that the error rate in most commercial B2B databases is around 30%.

That's millions of records with incorrect data of one kind or another. Even if we allow a percentage for 'churn' as businesses change address and personnel, or employees change job titles and contact numbers, there's still a huge amount of avoidable clutter in every database. Almost certainly yours.

Data is always missing: You want a database to store all the data you need – but it almost certainly doesn't. Every time we examine a database, there's missing data.

Take some simple examples. The 'title' field in a database is typically only 30% filled. The 'job title' field is usually just 50% complete, and of the remaining 50% a significant number are strange or invented. Many entries confuse job title with job function, and in some prospecting databases job title/function confusion is widespread and many contacts are listed with 'unclassified' as the job title. We also find many empty 'first name' fields or just an initial. But for us the biggest single surprise is always the number of missing phone numbers – up to 30% of records.

Missing data can usually be found. Junk data can be identified and corrected. It is not rocket science. And if the organisation is too busy, service providers such as WRS can help. The question for managers is: *If you don't have critical data like the right name, an email address or a phone number, why keep the data?* Many managers never ask this question because they never analyse the database. Others keep redundant data because they are assessed on activity: a larger database impresses their directors.

Data is always wrong: It is obvious that an internal database – one that holds employee details for example – will become out of date as soon as the information is captured. The question for managers with this sort of database is: *How up to date do you want to keep it?* In an ideal world, every employee's manager should tell you when a staff member leaves, but that is never going to happen. The alternative is to contact managers regularly and update the records. This is resource-intensive and not always practical.

The issue is this: *If it is this hard to keep an in-house database correct, how much harder is it to keep a customer database correct?* Your employees can let you know if you spell their names wrong; your customers are more likely to move their accounts to companies that can at least get their names right.

Data is always in disguise: Bad data comes in several forms:

- **Duplicates.** The same record, twice or more. Easy to spot and

correct, even using a standard spreadsheet.

- **Duplicates Level 1.** Same name/different address, or same address/different name. Is the same person? Has the person moved? Some people may have two addresses because they work from two or more sites. They may use a home address to subscribe and a work address for other contacts. The only way to clean up these issues is to contact the person and check. A costly approach.

- **Duplicates Level 2.** Variations within the same field. So here we may have A. Smith, or A.Smith, or A Smith, or Alan Smith or Allen Smith, all at the same address. Once again calling is the best way to sort this out.

- **Duplicates Level 3.** Inconsistent company names. For example, BT, B T, B.T., B. T., British Telecommunications, British Telecoms PLC, BT Limited and so on.

- **Invalid or obsolete data.** This includes 'gone away' contacts. Every database will have names that have moved on, and the older the database the more there will be. The typical failure rate can range from 10% for a new list to 50% for an older list. In business, these errors are usually detected by the sales team when they try to call lists provided by the marketing department! However, old data is inevitable in any database. The question for managers is: *What are you going to do about it?*

- **Bad addresses.** These are usually basic failures in data entry, such as putting the town in the wrong column. Postcodes make some of these issues less important.

Counting the cost – cash: So what? Well, how much do you earn per customer per year? How much more could you earn if

you could market to more 'clean' records in your marketing, customer and prospecting databases? Most businesses generate 80% of their cash flow from a solid core (around 20%) of their customers. Losing even 1% of this loyal base through bad data can potentially reduce cashflow by around 2-3%. It's the quality of your data that matters, not the quantity as many managers still believe.

Counting the cost – reputation: In addition to the cash opportunities lost by bad data, managers also need to consider the impact of junk on brand

image and customer relationships. Customer campaigns based on bad data quickly run out of potential. Provided that today's customers remain loyal the impact may not be significant. But as and when they fall away (and they will) cash flow will suffer. Every business needs to recruit new customers to replace outgoing ones, but if it cannot even get their names or addresses right how successful will it be?

It takes years to build a good reputation, and months to throw it away. For some reason, managers hardly ever consider the impact of data quality on a brand.

High impact, low priority: Many managers believe that it is cheaper to address data issues as they emerge than to manage data proactively. This is based on a false calculation. True, spending time to maintain data adds to overheads – but dirty data loses profits! This is why neglecting data is a false economy. Unless a database is actively maintained, bad data will accumulate until it reaches critical mass. It is at that tipping point that a business can lose real money.

Is your data really necessary? Bad data sometimes gets that way because it is never used. We go further: we believe that a lot of it need never be collected in the first place. Think of the web sites that demand a full set of contact details before

... poor-quality data leads to significant costs such as higher customer turnover, excessive expenses from contact processes like mail-outs, and missed sales opportunities. But companies are now discovering that data quality has a significant impact on their most strategic business initiatives, not only sales and marketing. Other back-office functions like budgeting, manufacturing and distribution are also affected.

– Gartner Research

registering you for an event or adding you to a newsletter. What is the point? This is why many data collection forms are filled with rubbish. People will enter junk to get where they want to be.

Amazingly, some of this junk data is actually used! Mailers are sent to 'x' at an address that's 'x', 'x', 'x', 'x'. Why? Because once rubbish has been collected it is cheaper in the short term to mail it than to clean it.

What's the world like in your universe?

The definition of a customer, according to the dictionary, is someone who pays for goods or services. The use of good data is to attract enough prospects in order to turn them into customers. There are many factors to consider when building your database.

First, let's start off with your universe.

What is your Universe?

Actually, it's the amount of consumers available to buy your product (event or service), take part in your event or participate as a visitor or other attendee. Don't confuse your Universe, with your target market. We will go over identifying your target market later, but for now let's discuss your universe.

Why is it important to know your universe?

Simply because most organisers or service providers don't think about this very simple part of attracting customers. Business owners think that everyone is a potential customer, so when they run their marketing, they do so poorly.

A shoe store may have a very large universe—people who wear shoes. If it's a ladies shoes store, naturally, the universe is women. But what happens if you only offer orthopedic shoes? Does this change your universe? Yes, it does. The universe is still women who wear shoes, but now it has been reduced to a much more defined universe. Other factors such as age, demographics, race, or gender will not be considered until you start talking about specific markets, therefore, let's see a few other examples.

Look closely at your product. Then determine the size of your universe. Why is this important? Because before implementing any marketing strategies, you must know that your universe is large enough to support you financially (will you attract enough exhibitors?) or your event (will you attract visitors?).

Knowing your Universe also means that you'll need to know the competition in your universe as well as the supply and demand for what you're doing. This is important because you need to know how to position your product, and if the demand is large

enough to support your competitors as well as your business.

This does not mean that you can't take away market share and blow away your competition, but it helps when you do your homework and know with certainty that your Universe is large enough to successfully grow your product.

How to Identify and Target Your Specific Market

The number one mistake most business owners make when going into business is not targeting their specific market.

Six steps to better data.

- Review it as it is collected. It costs ten times more to clean data after it has been stored. This is why so many organisations accumulate bad data and carry the costs of mailing to the wrong (or non-existent) person or address. Simple housekeeping should be in place to validate data during collection to achieve quality gains and cost savings.
- Analyse the database. What is in it? Is it what you need? How reliable is it? Are there any errors like duplicates? What is your strategy for maintaining it?
- Measure the challenge. How can you manage an issue if you cannot put a number on it? Database problems have to be analysed to help managers measure the scale and importance of the cleaning task. Managers need to 'see' where data is missing, inconsistent, corrupt or duplicated so they can decide what needs to be done and choose the most appropriate response. Some form of analysis tool that's faster and easier to use than a standard spreadsheet may be helpful, especially for managers who do not regularly touch data but need to keep information under control when they need it.
- Get it right for the future. Once data problems are highlighted, they can be engineered-out for the future by changing collection and entry processes. Any errors in existing data will have to be tackled as resources permit, although something beyond a spreadsheet may be required.
- Develop a plan. You know that a problem almost certainly exists in your data! Do you have a plan to overcome it? Every manager needs a strategy for measuring and managing data quality problems, as well as the tools to make the necessary improvements.
- Get started! The market is rich in tools that will help you to address any data issue. From desktop utilities to enterprise applications, they need to be evaluated to ensure a perfect fit for your budget and needs. Service providers such as Dun & Bradstreet, Harte Hanks and IDG are also there to help. The days of struggling with a rigid spreadsheet can soon be over.

There are many businesses who have no clue of what a target market is, or how to identify it. So, what is a target market is, and how you can identify it?

Let's take the example of the shoe retailer. If the retailer specializes in orthopedic shoes for women, they should further break it down to the specific market the retailer will target. The exact market can be women who wear orthopedic shoes between the ages of 45 and 75, who have been to a podiatrist in the last 5 years, and live within a ten mile radius of their retail location. Naturally, because of the internet, this retailer no longer needs to only target locally, they can go worldwide, or at least within the United States or country they reside within.

Breaking it down as much as possible will help you target your market like a laser beam focuses on it's target. So, how do you target your market? You simply do so by addressing your advertising and marketing efforts to your market as opposed to the shotgun effect most businesses use today.

In general, most businesses advertise to the mass audience in the hopes that their intended market just happens to look at their marketing and take it upon themselves to take some type of action. However, you'll increase response to all of your marketing efforts if you simply target your market.

Using the same shoe retailer as an example, let's say you want to attract maximum customers...wouldn't it make sense to advertise in a publication that addresses women between the ages of 45 and 75 and had the possibility of visiting their podiatrist, rather than advertising in a generic newspaper that addresses the general public? Yes, it does. But which publications are there, and how do you find them is the question.

Off-line, you can consult your local yellow pages, or call your county's Chamber of Commerce. You can also find a list broker that can sell, or rent you a list that targets your specific market. Advertising on-line will make your job even easier. You can create Google adwords, banner ads, text ads, Pay-Per-Click, or e-mail campaigns that address your specific market.

How to build & maintain data

Data sources: • Organic — Consider all the data you own that may or may not have been consolidated, including lists from current and past registrations, inquiries to Web sites, survey respondents, prize-drawing entries, etc.

• Association partners — Association lists are usually updated at least annually and have names of people involved in the target industry.

• Exhibitors — Lists tend to be current buyers or qualified prospects with past purchases or recent inquiries. If exhibitors are hesitant to give lists, ask them to send lists to a third-party fulfillment house or supply promotions that exhibitors can distribute.

• Industry publications such as magazines and directories — Lists indicate interest in the industry but are broader in range and may be more difficult to target, unless the publication offers selection processes.

• Related shows or associations — Broaden your scope to include related industry lists. For example, the International Pool & Spa Expo might consider lists from shows or associations involved in outdoor furniture or gardening.

• Competitive shows — You may be able to obtain lists from shows serving different segments of the same industry but be prepared to share your lists in a trade arrangement. Competitor's lists are "rare but coveted."

• Reputable list brokers/sources — Brokerage lists are easy to obtain but not the best tactic to rely on. They may be too broad or updated infrequently.

What to include: Capturing new names- Deciding who or what companies to include in your exhibitor database comes down to three simple questions: Does this person or company exhibit in your show now? Have they exhibited in the past? And is there even a remote possibility that they will exhibit in the future? Answering "yes" to one or more of those questions automatically identifies someone who should be a denizen of your database.

Current customers — Current exhibitors have demonstrated their ability and willingness to do business with your show. Roll out the database carpet for them. Remember the 80/20 Rule — 80 percent of your business comes from 20 percent of your customers — and you'll want to focus on these heavy hitters, making sure you've updated all relevant data about them.

First-time exhibitors are also vital. You need them to replace the inevitable attrition from failed companies, budget cutbacks and competitive shows. Plugging them into your database allows you to track their relationship with your company from the start, and that information may help you discern a new exhibitor trend as it happens.

Past customers — One of the biggest mistakes show managers make is forgetting about those who have exhibited with them in

the past. Once you've sold someone, even if he or she drifted away, you'll have an easier time selling them again than making a first sale to an unidentified prospect.

Start by tracking dropouts from your last few shows. Carefully consider each lost exhibitor and what might have gone wrong. Then get in touch again, with a personalized marketing approach that stresses the improvements you've made in your event.

Potential customers — Time to get creative. Think of everyone who could or would exhibit at your show, if only you approached them with the right pitch. What about your competitors' customers? How about an emerging niche market? Companies that sell spin-off products to your target customers, divisions of large corporations, small one-person operations — they all should be included in your database.

When it comes right down to it, your database should include everyone who might wind up in a business relationship with you. Once you've compiled the information, start devising targeted communications that will tell them about your show.

What to look for: • Don't take a random "shotgun" approach. Hone in on your niche market.

- Ask the provider to substantiate how the names were obtained to see whether the purpose actually fits with yours. Lists of buyers of a product are more valuable than prize-entry lists, for example.
- Business-to-business or business-to-consumer cooperative databases that have proven reputations should be willing to provide a representative sample for testing.
- Check the quantity and geographic distribution of the list.
- Ask how often the list is updated. Because of rapid workplace changes, every two to three months is ideal, but most lists will be updated only once or twice a year.
- Inquire about return percentages for snail-mail lists or bounce-back rates for e-mail lists.

- Ask about response rates to see if they're similar to your established lists. Determine your own threshold to balance spending on current clients vs. access to new names.
- Check the depth of the list. In addition to names, addresses, phone or e-mail, does the list include titles, buying authority, purchasing history, budget figures? The more details, the better you can target.
- For e-mail lists, inquire about open rates and click-through rates, as well as bounce-backs.
- Be leery of list deals that sound too good to be true. Bargain rates may be old lists with lots of bad information or unqualified names.

Maintaining your lists: Regardless of where you originally obtained prospect names, once they respond to you, they're yours to maintain. Give the people on your marketing datas every possible opportunity to update their information.

- Ask for contact information/title/demographic updates at least once a year.

TOP TIPS

1. Quality rules. Understand how data is captured, verified and maintained.
2. Test older data. Often cheaper and underused, it can be just as cost effective if screened correctly.
3. Identify who has used the data more than once and who is using it. Frequency may indicate quality, but could point to saturation.
4. Arm yourself for negotiation. List managers work on commission and can be less flexible. Data owners, such as lifestyle surveys, could offer greater value.
5. Ask for net name agreements to cover the cost of data lost through duplication. Make your claim within three months and measure performance on the net cost.
6. Avoid buying the same data twice and ask for the source. It's a volume game, with many owners licensing data to several managers under different guises.
7. If using cold data for the first time, consider a strategy and budget that allows testing of at least two sources of different types of data to aid ongoing planning.
8. Make sure your bureau knows what it can expect to receive. Provide a list of lists and ensure all suppliers clearly label their outputs.
9. Follow the DMA guidelines and codes of practice. Ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act. Use data within six months. Screen against the DMA preference services. Sort and return all goneaways.
10. Analyse performance on ROI. Look at past response rates.

- Put a link on every page of your Web site allowing people to enter or update their contact information.
- Send your first "save the date" mailing at first-class postage/return service requested so you can receive forwarding information to clean your list before subsequent mailings.
- Have a dedicated fax line for contact updates.
- Be sure to follow all "can spam" laws about opt-in and opt-out requests concerning e-mail and "do-not-call" regulations for telemarketing.

Rules of thumb:

- Expect at least a 10 percent to 15 percent change rate if you update your business list once a year.
- If an e-mail bounces twice, delete it from your list.
- Be willing to negotiate trades for good lists. Offer booth space, publication bins, advertising or your own list in exchange for a valuable source of good prospects.

When it isn't the list:

- Poor response isn't always the fault of the list. Examine whether your message and graphics are appropriate and appealing for the target audience. One company created two different e-mails to send to a test sample. One produced much better click-through results than the other, so they used the better one for the mass marketing.
- Timing is an issue with e-mail and snail mail. Sophisticated direct marketers know which day of the week and time of day to send e-mails and how far in advance to drop printed materials.
- Integrate your marketing efforts. Don't rely on one method to reach your audience, especially when you're trying to reach new prospects. Mix up magazine advertising, direct mail, e-mail, PR and other media.

The Importance of data

Many marketers spend a lot of time and money in the production of marketing collateral. You can have a great product and an attractive marketing message, but if you do not have the proper target market all of your efforts have gone to waste.

Marketing data is a key component in any marketing campaign. You should not compromise your marketing efforts by cutting corners on the purchase of your marketing data. There are millions of lists available and a little research can go a long way. Study your product or offer and determine your best target.

Who would want or need to purchase my product?
Should I market to businesses or households?
How will my product benefit the consumer?
What is the best geographical market?
Can I market my product nationwide?
Do I need to narrow my geography to a more local region?

Remember, marketing data can get very targeted. For example, if you are targeting households you can narrow your search by age, income, homeowner, female present, child present and many more. Business marketing data can be broken down by sales volume, employee size, type of business(SIC Codes), phone numbers and fax numbers.

Purchase of the marketing data: This is as important as all other aspects of your campaign. Analyze your target consumer and pick the list that best suits you needs. A list broker can give you valuable tips and advice and the service will cost you nothing. A marketing data broker has access to most all available lists so they will provide you with the best list that suits your needed. List owners would only want to sell their own list. So the services of a broker can be more widespread because they are not offering just their own lists the options can be greater.

Analysis of the results: You can measure the success of your campaign by tracking the responses and the number of new

customers that are generated from your efforts. Remember, just a few new customers can more than cover the cost for the campaign. Evaluate what was successful and tailor your next mailing to meet those needed.

How To Choose A Marketing data Provider: Choose a company that can offer a wide variety of marketing data. An effective list broker has access to most all available marketing data. This way your marketing efforts will not be limited to just a few types of lists. If you purchase from a company that only offers consumer lists then if you wanted to expand your prospects to businesses you would then have to go to another company for the business lists.

A marketing data broker will be able to provide you with a greater variety of services and marketing data verses going directly to the marketing data compiler. The compiler will obviously favour their own lists where as a broker will have access to a wide variety of marketing data where they will be able to help you choose the best list for your target market. A broker can usually offer better pricing than going to the compiler because of the volume discounts offered to brokers.

List response is often confused with list deliverability. A list could be 100% deliverable, but perhaps you did not get any responses to your offer. Automatically it is assumed that the list was "no good." It could be that the marketing data was targeted to the wrong market. Again, we stress the importance of making the marketing data work for you by knowing your target audience. Keep in mind that the national rate of response for direct mail is 1/2 to 1% and depends on many factors....attractiveness of your marketing, cost of your product and timing of the marketing.

Guide to list buying

Getting hold of the right data is the key to its success, but list buying can be a challenge. With thousands of lists on the market to chose from (including consumer and B2B lists), the thought of sifting through millions of potential customers could leave data buyers feeling slightly daunted. But thankfully, there's an abundance of companies on hand to guide you through the entire process. So exactly who's who in the list-buying chain and how can you ensure that the data you're buying is accurate, up to date and will land you with responsive and loyal customers?

At the top of the list-buying chain are the list owners, who have assembled their own client databases from various direct marketing campaigns, questionnaires and surveys. Larger owners may have an in-house sales team that sells its data to other companies. But what are the other options? Step forward the list manager, whose job it is to act as an exclusive salesman for the list owner and keeps the database up to scratch by ensuring it's regularly cleaned and updated. And there to quiz the manager about the contents, price and state of a list are the list brokers and agency planners.

A list owner will always say their data is best, but it's the broker who offers the best advice to the buyer because they know what lists are out there and what might work better. But even though brokers spend time shuffling through dozens of lists until they reach those that match the buyer's objectives, this is of no cost to the buyer. In fact, brokers work on a commissioned basis of between 10 and 20 per cent, paid for by the list owner.

A broker has no personal involvement with a list they just want to pick the best one for the buyer's business so they keep inviting them back.

And because of their experience, expertise and contacts, brokers are in a strong position to bargain. Clients would

probably say they won't pay over a certain cost per 1,000 names, whereas a broker would have more expertise in negotiating. And owners will often quote a cheaper price for brokers if a relationship between the two is firmly cemented.

Managers and owners may not always have a buyer's best interests at heart. The big data suppliers might try to sell you as many names as possible, whereas the broker ensures you only buy the right number of the most appropriate and reliable data. Even so, there are buyers out there who are happy to do the dirty work themselves and head straight to the list owner. Doing this means every decision is their own, including negotiating deals on prices.

On the downside, tackling the list buying industry alone can be a drain on your resources. Sourcing six or seven lists from six or seven owners can translate into numerous phone calls, emails and faxes in an attempt to learn who owns what list, how much they charge for base rental (not to mention selections), negotiating and agreeing a price and finally, placing the order. In contrast, it's often one call to the list broker and the job's done.

Buyers have responsibilities too, and before buying a list it's vital that companies have a well-rounded picture of their target audience. A detailed, transparent brief should be drawn up for the broker, explaining what type of data is required and what the buyer is hoping to achieve from that data.

The more information that's shared with brokers, the better the recommendations are going to be. The brief should not only contain details on objectives and budget, but also the profile of existing customers and results from previous campaigns, good and bad.

For buyers choosing to bypass list brokers, it's important to consider what 'type' of list owner to contact. This depends on the 'type' of campaign being rolled out, be it telemarketing, email or direct mail.

One way of checking the potential of any given list is quizzing the manager on whether or not it has been, or is being used by similar businesses within your sector, and what type of response it has achieved so far.

If the data has worked for them, it's likely to work for you.

Buyers should also check how names are and were sourced, as this could indicate levels of responsiveness. If individuals are sourced from lifestyle surveys, for example, but have never purchased products via mail order, there's nothing that suggests they'll be any more responsive now.

But many believe lifestyle data is a credible option because it's cheaper and comes in greater quantities. You want to make sure people have done something to get onto a list. It's not ideal if they've hurriedly ticked boxes to get to the end of a survey just so they can enter the prize draw.

Recency is often a big drive for list buyers, but if older names are still active it's less of an issue. Dozens of businesses buying new data and targeting new names simultaneously could leave customers bombarded with offers, which may reduce their response rates significantly.

If a database is older than a year, it's important to check that it's regularly updated against suppression files and the preference services to retain the company's reputation and avoid wasting time and money by contacting goneaways, deceaseds and those who have opted out of receiving direct marketing. It's also important to ensure customers with email addresses have opted in to receiving communications from you.

But heading straight for popular selections, such as recency, aren't always as beneficial as you may think. A lot of buyers look to subscribers, but subscription data might be £30 a year, while reader offer buyers can be spending £60 and upwards per offer. So using less obvious selections might increase revenue. Experts also advise that before paying for a list, buyers should test a sample of names and ensure that the remaining individuals in the database are more than enough to target for a campaign.

The actual 'buying' process is all about give and take. Some list owners offer free selections and high volume discounts, for example. Others choose to negotiate net names, where the buyer receives a discount for any duplicates that might crop up in a list when run against their in-house database or external lists.

And lastly, beware. Many suppliers licence their data to various managers under different guises, which means buyers could end up paying for the same lists without realising. If you're in the UK, you should check if list owners are members of the DMA and are on the mail order protections scheme. Also confirm with the Advertising Standards Authority that there are no outstanding complaints against them.

Database Marketing

When Prince Albert launched the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London's Crystal Palace, he ran down his list of potential international exhibitors, eliminated all non-productive prospects, grouped likely participants by their business needs and tailored his sales pitch to the individuals involved.

Our methods have become more sophisticated yet show professionals throughout the world capitalize on the same basic concept: Know everything you can about your customer, and use that information to your advantage.

These days, the challenge is how to negotiate the same success when the sheer size of your exhibitor and attendee universes have expanded beyond your ability to reach them all on a personal level. Your salvation comes through capturing and capitalizing on huge amounts of information — made possible by the latest database management technology — not only to sell better, but also to help your customers sell better, too.

Database marketing defined: A database is simply a collection of detailed information. Everything about your exhibitors and attendees becomes a valuable sales tool — from their names and the sizes of their stands, to their buying preferences and the individual exhibitors they visited at last year's show. Marketing with a database means you can manipulate that information to reach extremely specific audiences with a message custom designed to appeal to their individual needs. Rolling database power into your marketing program also allows you to more reliably predict the future based on past customer behaviour: You can better tell who will buy what next, and when.

Database marketing helps reveal emerging growth opportunities. It enhances customer relationships by enabling you to address their needs on a personal level, and it shows you where to spend your marketing dollars. Database marketing is the competitive edge.

Why now? For the last two decades, most databases have been stored as computerized files. What's causing the recent explosion in database popularity is the almost mind-boggling power that technology has brought to the game. Show managers can choose from a host of off-the-shelf database software or opt for one of several programs tailored to individual shows by software designers. Technology has made the process easier,

faster and cheaper; and it allows you to use more publicly available information.

Properly executed, database marketing lets you pitch only to those most likely to respond, allowing a greater return on your marketing dollar. Whether you're peddling floor space to international exhibitors or trying to increase your association's show attendee count, database marketing can significantly influence your success.

Database marketing allows you to touch your customers. It lets you come as close to personalizing your contact with them as economics will allow. Those economics are based on how likely they are to respond, how deep you want to go in the database to differentiate them and the cost of the specific marketing vehicles you use.

Organisers see the potential that database marketing but many just don't know how to do it effectively.

Other industries already have experienced long-term success with database marketing. Airlines, banks and credit card companies that have tracked their individual customers for years remain in the forefront. Now they're using parallel computers which gang microprocessors to scan large data collections in an instant. Customized database software cross-indexes records to make information retrieval easier, and they've developed neural-network software that creates a model of customer behaviour based on previous transaction analysis.

By comparison, most show managers are just beginning to invest in such technologies. The rewards, they're discovering, are there. Now they just have to go after them.

Data basics: A good database marketing program begins with a good database. You have to have the means and a method of gathering, storing, retrieving, comparing and presenting information if you want to get the maximum use from your system. Today, that means taking your old computerised files and converting them to a system that allows you to code, call-up and massage your data.

Off-the-shelf packages can provide a good start. You can always have a software designer add more bells and whistles to the system as your needs increase. The good news in database marketing these days is that it's getting easier to access the information you need, and the price is coming down.

Those who'd rather turn their existing lists over to a database contractor can have the information collected, maintained and supplied on an as-needed basis, without ever buying a computer. But think hard before turning this responsibility over to others.

Targeted data use: Whether you develop your own database or choose to turn that responsibility over to others, you've still only solved part of the equation. Next, you have to use that information to build effective marketing programs. You can have

all the sophisticated database hardware and software in the world but you still need the marketing knowledge to do something with it. The two go hand in hand.

Database marketing is not about hardware and software. The database is simply a tool that changes the way show managers communicate with their exhibitors and attendees. The single greatest marketing capability your database gives you is the ability to single out a particular audience, based on past behaviour, and identify the factors that go into that group's buying decision.

Besides identifying proven and profitable customers, a marketing database lets you find new clients who fit the mould of current exhibitors. And the information gives another chance to sell to those who should have an interest in the show but aren't

exhibiting with now. The effect on your bottom line is obvious. Instead of mass mailing general sales material to people who may be disinterested parties, you send fewer pieces to those most likely to respond. The result: lower costs and higher returns.

Targeted sales is only one advantage of database marketing. Having that information carries many other bottom-line benefits as well. Database management and marketing efforts involve an ongoing cycle that includes partnering with exhibitors, increasing attendance and pre-selling his show floor.

Marketing spinoffs: As a show manager, you're not the only one who can benefit from your database marketing information. Your exhibitors and attendees will pay dearly for that kind of industry insight, and you're missing possible revenue sources if you overlook their interest.

Exhibitors often want to use marketing data drawn from that information, because they know it's one of the most effective ways to reach their customers before they arrive at the show. Make certain they know your database is available and easily accessible — at a rate that's both attractive to them and profitable to your own organization.

In marketing your database information, think beyond the obvious exhibitor/attendee relationships. A database should keep better track of companies' product lines and the markets they fit into. It's not enough to match up attendees' buying interests with exhibitors' product lines. Your exhibitors could easily be, and probably are, buying from each other. Track that information, let others know you have it, and you'll have additional database sales outlets.

Remember, too, that your marketing information can be useful to companies beyond your events scope. You could sell your industry-specific information, for instance, to outside companies as they establish or refine their own sales and marketing plans.

Say you produce a marine products exhibition. The information you keep on your exhibitors and attendees could be quite helpful to a start-up boat manufacturer or a consumer publication seeking to expand its subscription base. Letting outsiders buy

Key Marketing Tips

1. Know your consumer
2. Provide your marketing data broker with an accurate description of your product or offer. The broker may have suggestions as to the type of list that would best suite your needs.
3. Know the difference is a response and a compiled marketing data.
 - Response marketing datas are comprised of individuals who have responded to an offer either through the mail, phone, and television or through other means of mass communication.
 - Compiled marketing datas are a compilation of information from public records and sources such as the phone book, courthouse records, bankruptcy filings, mortgage deed records and more.
4. Have a customer profile-address your offer to an individual. Understand your customers' needs and desires
5. What is your offer? Be straight forward and enticing in the merchandising of your product
6. Evaluate your costs. What is the cost per lead verses the pricing of your product?
7. Track responses. You can evaluate the success of your campaign by analyzing and tracking the response so with your next mailing you can make adjustments to increase responses, thus increasing business and profitability.
8. Many times it does take more than one contact to turn a prospect into a loyal customer.

your information also gives you an entree for selling them booth space in the future. Consider the potential, then let others know about your database through such vehicles as trade publication advertising and your own direct-mail pieces.

Naturally, you want to carefully control your list and who uses it — not only to ward off competition, but to capitalize on new product opportunities as well. You should always look at the people who use your list to sell their own products. They're making money on your list, and it may be that the conference, seminar, book, newsletter or software they produce is something you should be producing and selling yourself.

In such cases, use your own list to test the waters. Put together a direct mail piece that markets the idea to those who would be most interested. Or create a survey to gauge response to a number of different ideas. You win whether you pursue the ideas or not — at the very least, you'll have captured marketable information that can later be sold to others.

Don't forget to look for new sales angles within your data. For example, if you explore reaction to a proposed seminar topic by surveying your attendees, and 30 percent of them express interest in it, you can more easily entice an exhibitor with expertise in that area to join your show for the first time, expand their existing booth space to accommodate a video presentation, or sponsor an educational session on the topic themselves. It's just another revenue builder to develop through your database.

Database futures: Such opportunities are what database marketing is all about. In the high-speed, yet high-touch, business climate, database marketing brings companies and customers together in a more targeted, personalized and sales-oriented fashion.

Still, database marketing with its sophisticated, technological components has only begun to come of age. As more show managers realize the value of obtaining, then maintaining, accurate and reliable customer information — and using that data to its fullest potential — the practice will become even more widespread.

Keeping up may be challenging. Even now, technology far out-distances most exposition managers' ability to utilize it. It's a brave new world that show professionals must learn to navigate if they hope to stay ahead of the trend. That's database marketing today: Those who aren't using it won't be around for very long."

solving data:toxicology



data acquisition,
analysis, management,
auditing, profiling,
warehousing

There isn't an organization on the planet that doesn't have a data quality issue. Data cleanup efforts are like building a pollution treatment plant downstream on a river to clean up toxins dumped upstream. Wouldn't it be better to go to the pollution sources and work there to prevent the poisons going into the river in the first place? In the same way, it will be more effective if, rather than expending resources in a never-ending cleanup effort; you selectively renovate your source systems so they produce clean, rather than contaminated, data.

Businesses live and die by their data but organisations have a tendency to hide bad data. Nobody cares about bad data – they care about what it's doing to profits so it makes sense that data acquisition is of utmost importance and considerable effort should be made to obtain or generate good data.

But data degrades over time, especially customer information, so you need a long-term approach to detecting, monitoring, and fixing data quality.

That's where we come in. We acquire, analyse, clean, manage, audit, profile, and store data. Think data, think TBG:ES Data Services.

For more information contact us now:

Email: admin@tbgroup.biz

Tel: 07595 586149



Editor: Murve J. Patterson
Publishers: ispy publishing Ltd.

Copyright. ispy publishing ltd. All rights reserved
All information provided by ispy publishing ltd. is for the exclusive use of subscribing persons or organisations. All such content is copyrighted in the name of ispy publishing ltd., and as such no part of this content may be reproduced, repackaged, copied or distributed without the express consent of ispy publishing ltd.
All content, and opinion has been based on sources believed to be accurate and reliable at the time of publishing. ispy publishing ltd. makes no representation of warranty of any kind as to the accuracy or completeness of any information provided and accepts no liability whatsoever for any loss or damage from opinion, errors, inaccuracies or omissions affecting any part of the content.