

Get Your Database Running on All Cylinders

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Good Data Can Only Enhance Your Results

If you want to improve your nurture efforts you must reach the right people. Yet our experience shows that most marketers are hampered by a database that is inaccurate and insufficient. To help you, here are some tips for evaluating and building a database that is rich enough and large enough to meet your needs.

Find Out How Many Buying Centers Are Enough

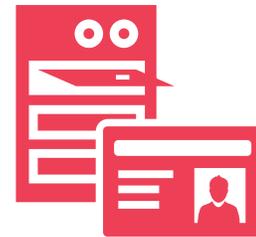
Evaluating the quality of your lists consists of defining a profile of your ideal buyer and then determining what percentage of your list matches the profile. For big ticket B2B, the first step is to determine how many “buying centers” are in your list. If your product or service is sold and implemented at the enterprise level, then the gross number of “buying centers” (economic buyers) will be the number of companies, divisions, and subsidiaries contained in your database.

You can estimate the number of buying centers that you need by determining how many accounts you must sell and factoring in your probable close ratios. For example, if you

need to close 250 new accounts and have a 5% close ratio, you need 5,000 buying centers. An easy way to estimate the number of buying centers is to count the number of mail domains. Obviously a given mail domain can be the same for divisions and subsidiaries of a larger enterprise, so this count will understate the number of buying centers present. A reasonably safe multiplier is 3. For example, if you count 2,000 domains, you probably have 6,000 buying centers. Admittedly, this is imprecise, but it is a meaningful test to help determine if your list is too small.

Determine If You Have the Right People

Once you have estimated the number of buying centers, the next step is to estimate their quality. In other words, evaluate if they are the right type of company in terms of size, industry, geographic location, etc. You can accomplish this by using a random sample. Select 100 accounts and see if they match your ideal sales profile. If this analysis shows that over 75% of the accounts match your profile you can feel comfortable that your list contains the right type of prospects.



Define a profile of your ideal buyer, then determine what percentage of your list matches the profile.

Next, it is necessary to determine whether the specific contacts in the list match the right job roles/levels. You can accomplish this by using the same sampling mechanism described above. You may combine the two steps but you need to keep track of the frequency with which job role and company demographics match. It is likely that you will have many instances in which a contact is the right level and discipline but the company is too small and/or in the wrong industry. Similarly, you will have instances in which the company is a good fit but the contact is the wrong level or discipline.

WebReply considers a database “rich” if at least 70% of the contacts meet these criteria. It is difficult and costly to reach this 70% threshold, but worth the effort. In our experience,

however, most house databases contain 40% or less. So even if you think you have a strong house list, take a closer look and you may find ways to make it even better.



Continual Refinement is the Key to Better Results

Improving your database is not a static activity, but rather a continuous process. You need to continually evolve your database to keep pace with evolving markets. Two tasks are important in this area:

1 Evaluate whether your content maps to the various segments in your database. You may find that you have several segments for which there is no corresponding content. This is like being on stage with a full house and no song to sing. An ongoing analysis will uncover these gaps and give you the opportunity to respond.

2 Analyze your responders against sales accepted leads and closed deals to verify that you are reaching the right people. If the profile of your sales accepted leads does not match your responders, you need to step back and re-visit your database and program strategies.

Embrace "Quality with the Right Quantity"

This type of analysis can be done by any marketing organization that really wants to understand and continually improve their database. Every time you add new names, from new sources, you should follow the best practice steps and check the quality before entering them into a campaign flow. You will see your results increase and sales be more productive as your database quality improves.

About WebReply

WebReply is a marketing and technology company that helps its clients find and educate their best prospects through a personal web experience. WebReply's SmartHub platform is able to recognize each visitor as an individual and tailor the content delivered based on his or her interests.

Our solution is used by demand generation and channel marketing teams to increase the quality and quantity of opportunities.



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