

# HOW TO USE DATA FOR BETTER B2B LEAD GENERATION



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## INTRODUCTION

**“No matter how grand the campaign, how thoughtful the strategy or how well produced the content, nothing matters more to marketers than lead generation. At the end of the day, if sales are being handed either too few leads, or too poor a selection of leads, their job becomes more difficult and the sales funnel becomes that little bit less effective.”**

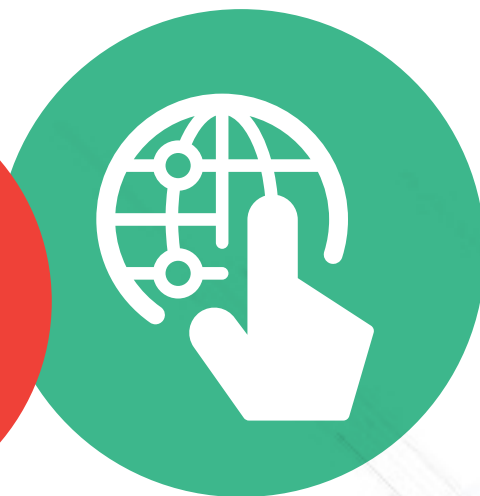
**Sam Geapin, Digital Doughnut**

As B2B marketers, one of our primary aims is to generate leads for the sales team. More than that, we want to generate the RIGHT leads, which will then turn into customers. Delivering more leads increases the likelihood of winning more sales – and the lead generation process itself helps to build brand awareness and foster longstanding relationships.

**According to HubSpot**, “a lead is a person who has indicated interest in your company’s product or service in some way, shape, or form”. In simpler terms, a lead is a piece of data: it is information about a person or organisation.

In this eBook, we will explore how you can not only generate B2B leads, but generate the right B2B leads. We will look in particular at how you can use data-driven marketing to improve your B2B lead generation. And we will explore the marketing channels you might use, whether direct mail, telemarketing, email, or a combination of the three.

*We want to generate the RIGHT leads, which will then turn into customers.*



## THE CHALLENGE OF MODERN B2B LEAD GENERATION

What is lead generation? Definitions vary, but **HubSpot sums it up nicely:**

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*“Lead generation is the process of attracting and converting strangers and prospects.”*

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To look at it another way, lead generation is the practice of acquiring data about people who could potentially be interested in your product or service.

There was a time when it worked well to gather a big list of contacts from anywhere we could. We were able to send them a mass email or cold call them and expect to get decent results for our efforts.

But today’s potential buyers are swamped with information and have become more discerning about how they learn about a potential supplier and how they will engage with that supplier. As marketers, we have to be smarter about acquiring contacts and smarter about nurturing those contacts into qualified leads.

The most effective B2B marketers today have recognised the need to focus on quality over quantity when it comes to lead generation. That’s not to say that volume is not important – but many marketers realise they need to be more strategic about acquiring and using contact lists.

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According to a survey by the **B2B Technology Marketing Community on LinkedIn:**



**68 per cent** of marketers said “increasing the quality of leads” was their top priority for 2016.

For the first time, that result ranks ahead of “more leads” in the survey.

This recognition that quality is more important than quantity means that many marketers will have to alter their approach to lead generation. Instead of simply trying to stuff the sales funnel with any (and only somewhat relevant) target data, they will need to do a better job of planning their data-gathering strategy.

The wrong data will generate the wrong leads. It’s not really rocket science, but too often marketers focus all their attention on the campaign and consider data as an afterthought. The best campaign in the world will be an expensive waste of your marketing budget if you have not spent time nailing your data strategy.

For instance, you’re setting yourself up for failure if you’re attempting to connect with someone that has no interest in your product or service; or if you’re sending a piece of direct mail to an old address.

So what’s the solution to this conundrum? The key is to not become too bogged down in lead generation per se – but to keep the people represented by your leads in mind at all times. Are they a good fit for your product or service? Is it the right time to try to catch their attention?

*When you take the time to identify and understand the right people to target, the quality of your B2B lead generation will be greatly improved.*



## USING DATA-DRIVEN MARKETING TO IMPROVE B2B LEAD GENERATION

Data should inform your marketing campaigns from start to finish, helping you to build strong relationships with the people who will benefit from your product or service. Data-driven marketing allows you to connect with the right people, in the right way, at the right time. It helps you understand your prospects better so you are able to answer their questions and solve their problems; to show them why you are the organisation they should do business with.

**In an article that appeared on the Direct Marketing Association (DMA) website, Ryan Fulton, of Occam DM Ltd, writes:**

*“Data is the critical starting point to ensure your brand stand[s] out from the competition. After all, it is data that powers the intelligence that makes better decisions - and customer dialogue - possible.”*

To summarise, data-driven marketing generates higher quality leads; higher quality data. On the other hand, without the right data you will struggle to carry out data-driven marketing in the first place. So what can you do?

### **1 Carry out data analysis and profiling**

A good place to start is with your current B2B database. This is one of your most valuable resources – but only if it is in great shape. After all, you can't implement data-driven marketing if you don't first understand your data. You probably have lots of high-value contacts, but understanding as much about them as possible will enable you to reap the benefits.

Before you instigate this process, you need to ensure your database is clean. Are any of the records it contains out-of-date, incomplete, or illegally acquired? Are there any duplicates or poorly formatted records?



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Discover how clean data can help you generate more leads and win more customers.

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If the answer to any of these questions is yes, it's crucial to implement data cleansing and enhancement. That will remove any records that are out-of-date or acquired illegally, filling in existing gaps, and removing duplicates. There are various tools and resources you can draw on to help with this process, but the best way to achieve this in the most complete way is to work with a B2B data consultancy, who will carry out the entire process on your behalf.

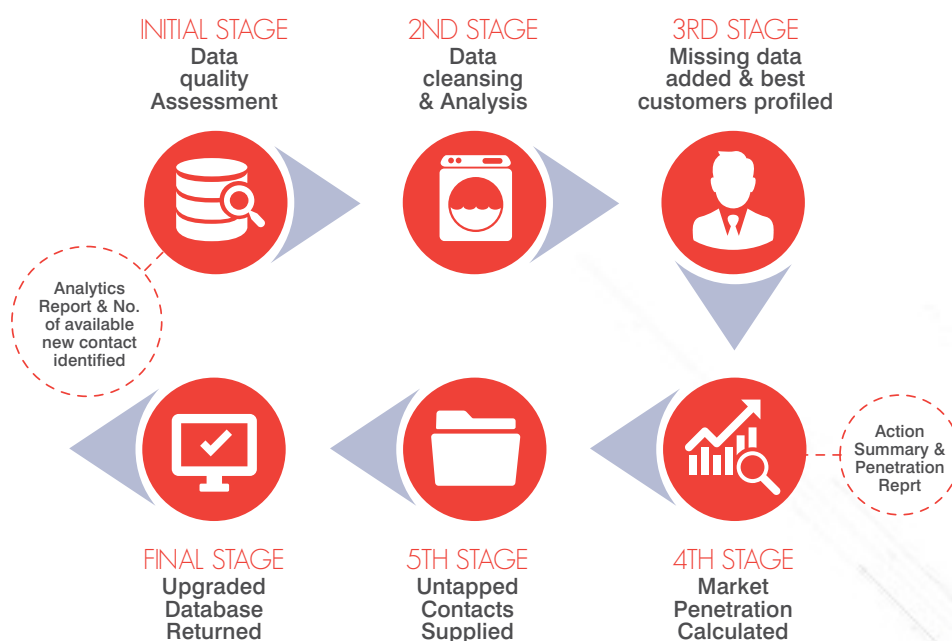
As you might imagine, a data consultancy will have access to tools, expertise and databases that you will not. A good consultancy spends its time focused on helping its customers get the best results from data.

Once your data is clean, you can perform data profiling and analysis. This process will enable you to really get to grips with your database by identifying important trends and characteristics. You can work out the key attributes of your best customers and, therefore, who you should be targeting in the future. For instance, you might analyse your database by industry sector or sub-sector, size, location, spend, and/or job titles. This will enable you to pinpoint clusters of similar potential customers who you aren't currently addressing.

Imagine uncovering a fresh list of target contacts exactly like your existing best customers. You certainly will have a strong idea of how to engage with that target group!

Again one of the best ways to achieve this entire process successfully (perhaps the only way, actually) is to partner with a B2B data consultancy, who will have the capability and expertise to make things run smoothly.

## The process of data cleansing, analysis and profiling



*You can produce high-quality, finely-targeted, properly-segmented lists, which can be used to guide your marketing campaigns*

## 2 Implement a B2B data strategy

All of these findings can be used to influence your future marketing efforts and to draw up a B2B data strategy. The key questions are: what does your audience want? And how can you give it to them?

You can produce high-quality, finely-targeted, properly-segmented lists, which can be used to guide your marketing campaigns. You can then create tailored content to reach each of these segments and leverage the marketing channels that elicit the best response – whether that's email, telemarketing, direct mail, or a combination of the three – while frequently updating your lists based on your findings.

You might also consider purchasing a new B2B data list from a reputable provider. They will work with you to create a targeted list based on your research into your current database. The records included in this list will be accurate, relevant and suited to your needs.

Data-driven marketing significantly improves the quality of your B2B lead generation and prevents you from wasting time attempting to build relationships with the wrong people. And those prospects that you do target are far more likely to engage with your organisation, thereby improving response rates to your campaigns. On a longer-term basis, you can carefully nurture new leads and customers, according to their specific wants and needs.



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Discover why good B2B data is so valuable to your business.

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## IMPROVED DATA ENHANCES YOUR B2B LEAD GENERATION CHANNELS

With high-quality, targeted data at hand, you can leverage different marketing channels to optimum effect. At all times, your focus should be on your potential customer – their needs and how you can help.

### Direct mail

In a world where the digital has permeated into every area of our lives, the power of direct mail can appear questionable. However, it is still an important tool in the marketer's toolbox.

In fact, research shows that direct mail performs better than some other marketing mediums. Posting on the [DMA website](#), David Amor, managing director of First Move Direct Marketing Services Ltd, says:



*“Whereas an average email marketing campaign will yield a response rate of just over 1 in 1000, response rates of **1 in 25** or better are possible for an expertly planned and executed direct marketing campaign.”*

With improved data, you can reject the old tactics of sending a mass mail to everyone on your contacts lists. Instead, you can make it more personal. There's a lot to be said for holding a tangible letter in your hands that's addressed to you - and, given how easy it is for businesses to send out emails, a direct mail campaign suggests that you've gone the extra mile to connect with your audience.

And you don't just have to stop at using people's first name. You can segment your mailing list to ensure that different groups of people get the most appropriate content for them – whether that's based on their job title or industry sector.

Nor do your mailings have to be just a letter. Many organisations have driven **successful lead generation campaigns** by sending well-considered items in small parcels, what the industry often terms “lumpy mail”. Your marketing message can really stand out in the mind of your prospect if they receive it in the form of a clever item.

***A direct mail campaign suggests that you've gone the extra mile to connect with your audience.***





*With smart cold calling you don't go straight in for the kill – i.e. the hard sale.*

## Telemarketing

Cold calling continues to retain its importance as a valuable lead-generation tool. With a strategic approach underpinned by data, cold calling can work very well for your organisation. With this approach, what we might call “smart cold calling”, you are contacting people and companies that you've researched; who look like the right fit for your organisation; who are likely to be interested in your product or service.

With smart cold calling you don't go straight in for the kill – i.e. the hard sale. Instead, you demonstrate how you can genuinely help the person at the other end of the line. **Writing for Business 2 Community, Dave Brock describes the type of smart cold call we mean:** “Calls to someone we have never met before and whose day we are interrupting unexpectedly, BUT, it is well researched (both from an enterprise and individual point of view), it is to a customer well within our sweet spot, it is focused on the customer issues – and probably never even mentions a solution. Further, its goal is to educate, provide insight, get the customer to think differently and to learn how they could improve.”

So what does this actually look like? You might call up a prospect, address them by their name and then go on to discuss a particular issue that they are facing or are likely to be facing. The discussion should be helpful and informative and must be centred on them, not on you and your solution. It's probably only further down the line, in a subsequent call or calls that you might broach how your own company can help.

## Email

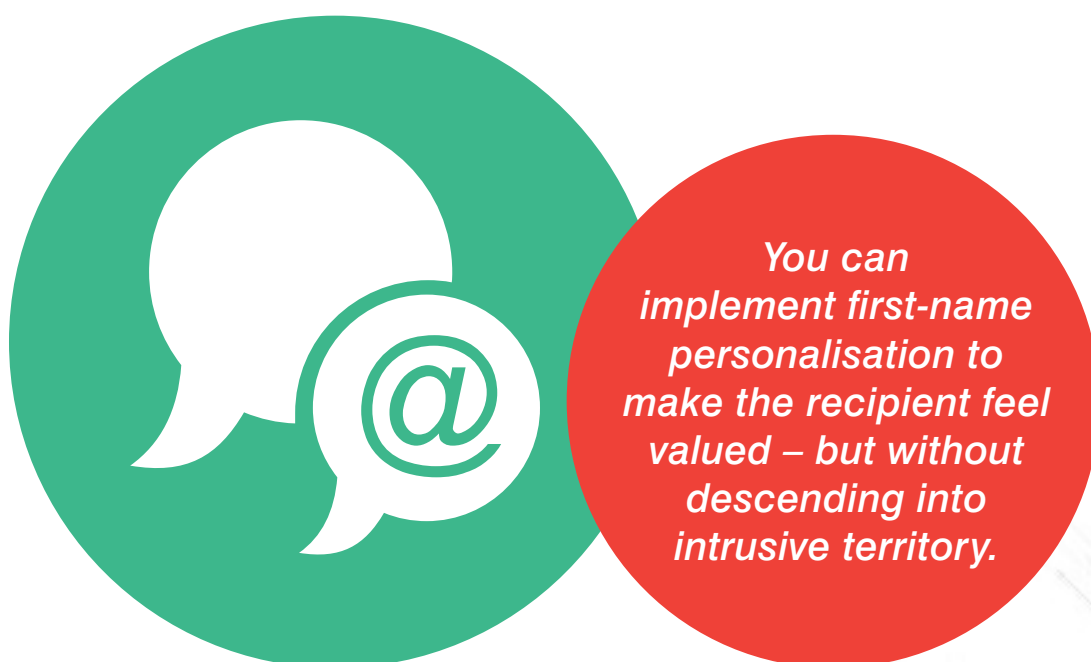
Email remains one of the most important modern marketing channels. Email marketing campaigns are cost-effective and have a high return on investment (ROI) when the right design, messaging and lists are used. According to the **Direct Marketing Association's (DMA) National Client Email Report 2015**, email has an average ROI of £38 for each £1 spent.



And with the right data, you can really power up your email marketing. You can implement first-name personalisation to make the recipient feel valued – but without descending into intrusive territory.

As with direct mail, segmentation of your contacts list is crucial to success. There are multiple ways to divide up your contacts – for instance, according to your buyer personas or the role your recipients hold within their organisation.

It's also fairly simple to analyse your results with email and you can use this data to inform your subsequent campaigns. Looking at your delivery rate, open rate and clickthrough rate will help you to identify what's working and what isn't. For example, if your delivery rate is low, this could be an indication that you need to go back through your database with a fine-toothed comb to ensure it is spick and span and free from dirty records. Or it could be the case that you are targeting the wrong market via your campaigns.



## CREATING CROSS-CHANNEL B2B MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Whichever marketing channel you use, consistency of message is key – constantly reinforcing to your audience why you are a great choice. However, often, an integrated cross-channel approach works very well – that is, using one channel to support another. In this way, you can target prospects from a number of angles – without annoying them or going overboard.

**Writing for Adobe's Digital Marketing Blog, Timo Kohlberg says:** "With cross-channel marketing brands have the right approach to orchestrate bidirectional communications through each available channel – whether this is email, website, SMS, direct mail, social media, mobile app, point of sale, call centre, or emerging channels out of the Internet of Things. Marketers need to create experiences throughout the whole customer lifecycle and each message and offer needs to be relevant, contextual and often in real-time. This ensures consistency and engagement in a connected world."

Using direct mail in tandem with a combination of email, telemarketing, and social media can prove highly effective. You might include your social media contact details in a piece of direct mail, for example, or add PURLs (personalised URLs) to your letters. The latter enables recipients to respond to your direct mail marketing message via a personalised landing page – once there, they can access further useful content, such as blog posts and eBooks.

Telemarketing and email can also work well together. After completing a call, you might send out an email that summarises the key points of your conversation and also includes additional interesting information about your company.

In all these instances, the focus is on improving the user experience. If people feel that your organisation is responsive to their needs, they are far more likely to want a relationship. Combine the right B2B leads with marketing campaigns tailored to them and you are far more likely to welcome more customers into your fold.

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## CONCLUSION

Leads are the Holy Grail of marketing - everyone wants them but acquiring them is not always an easy task. As B2B marketers, it is essential that we generate the right leads, which will then turn into customers.

Today's buyers are more discerning than ever and they are not interested in engaging with businesses that can't meet their needs. Therefore, you need to ensure that you only reach out to people who will genuinely benefit from your product or service. Even the most hard-hitting marketing campaigns will fail to make an impact if they are targeted at the wrong people.

Using high-quality data is the key to connecting with the right people, at the right time. Whatever marketing channel you favour – whether that's direct mail, telemarketing, email, or a combination of the three – successful lead generation is dependent on always keeping in mind the needs of the people represented by the data you are using. If you can show them that you have something valuable to offer, they are far more likely to do business with you.



*Even the most hard-hitting marketing campaigns will fail to make an impact if they are targeted at the wrong people.*

## WHO IS MARKETSCAN?

Marketscan specialises in the supply of business to business marketing data and the optimisation of client databases. We are leaders in our field and remain an independent company after more than 3 decades. From the beginning, we set out to lead the industry with innovative data solutions and continue in that vein today.

At the heart of our operation is the Marketscan Megabase™ - the biggest and best UK business database. Meticulously compiled from the nation's leading sources, it gives exceptional coverage and depth. Not only that, we have the expertise to apply it with one-to-one personal service which our clients rate as outstanding. No call centres, no voice mail, or telephone options - just real people whose mission is to deliver a world class service to you.

Call us on **01243 786711** with any questions or to discuss how great data can make your marketing campaigns a success.



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