



The Critical Links Between Marketing Automation and Data Management for B2B Marketers

**TIPS FOR MAXIMIZING YOUR
MARKETING TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT**



5 Critical Marketing Functions That Are Data Dependent

To illustrate the importance of data across a broad range of the marketing charter, let's examine **five critical marketing functions** that rely heavily on a sound data management strategy for success:

1. Target market intelligence.

Looking for your product's sweet spot? Perhaps you're analyzing a new market opportunity, such as a new region or a new set of buyers. Or, maybe you need to better reach all the right contacts within a particular segment. In both cases, to hone in on your target, **good data** is an absolute requirement. Without it, in the short-term you won't be able to effectively analyze your customer segments and current opportunities — your data will lack specificity or simply be incorrect. And, in the long-term, you won't be able to **drive strategic analysis** about target market size, coverage, penetration or scale.

2. Content personalization.

Today's smartphone and tablet-toting consumers expect answers instantly. And busy B2B buyers want personalized, relevant content that goes beyond an email with a name slapped on it. But if you want to provide **customized content** on your website or in your latest campaign — a tailored home page or pre-populated forms, for example, based on a persona or where the buyer is along the purchase journey — you need great data that is clean, complete and actionable. Sure, your marketing automation platform may offer the latest content personalization options, but if you don't have the data to back it up, you won't be able to take advantage of it.

Essential marketing functions, such as lead scoring and nurturing, rely heavily on an up-to-date, robust database.



3. Lead scoring and routing.

What are your best leads and what should you do with them? Lead scoring and routing can help you make those calls. Lead scoring, which combines various forms of data combined with algorithmic rules, helps **uncover a lead's level of importance** and whether you should continue to nurture it or pass it along to sales. Lead routing makes sure your hard-won leads get to the right sales rep at the right time, with **automated routing rules** based on a variety of parameters. But for scoring and routing rules to be effective, the data needs to be dead-on; the last thing you want is bad data leading to incorrect scoring, or a sales rep getting the wrong lead.

4. Lead nurturing and engagement.

Demand generation is expensive and time-consuming, so you want to make the most of every hard-won lead. Good lead nurturing (building relationships with qualified prospects) and lead engagement (providing the right content to the right prospect at the right time) is key, but requires **complete and accurate data**. Have the wrong email address? Your campaign won't even be seen. The wrong name or other contact information? A sales rep might start an initial conversation on the wrong foot. On the other hand, missing information is also a problem, because lack of details and texture can lead to a generic conversation rather than a targeted, **personalized exchange** that helps close the deal.



5. Reporting and analytics.

To take advantage of the latest reporting and analytics tools available on today's marketing automation platforms, you need to feed in great campaign information. Perhaps you're looking to do internal analysis that provides a window into how you're functioning operationally as a marketing team — how many leads flow through your system or conversion rates by channel.

Or, maybe you want to **capture information** about how different tactics are working with different prospects — in what order they downloaded materials, when they attended events — to identify the **critical mileposts** on the buyer journey. Without great data, reporting and analytics becomes nothing but anecdotal research, where investment decisions in marketing tactics are based on a gut feel rather than **real data**.



Drive Smarter Marketing Decisions With Better Data Management

In the B2B marketplace, companies have to be spot-on to attract and engage their target decision-makers in their target market. However, the process is **more complex** and requires marketing to **deliver value** over a longer period of time before prospects are ready to engage. In fact, it can take more than a half-dozen touches before a lead is qualified to move along to sales.

And while sales used to do more of the heavy lifting along the buyer journey, today's B2B buyers may be far along their purchase journey before even reaching out to a vendor with the desire to speak to a sales rep.

That means marketers need a strategy to **manage the data that supports the buyer journey**, with prospect information that is up-to-date and accurate.

It is essential for marketers to have a data management strategy that supports the buyer's journey.



4 Steps To Prepare Your Database For Marketing Automation

1. Do a database audit for all the records in your system.

Before anything else, you need to get your baseline numbers in place. So find out the basics, such as how many records are in your marketing automation system, versus how many are in your CRM. This will help you define your success throughout the development of your marketing data strategy.

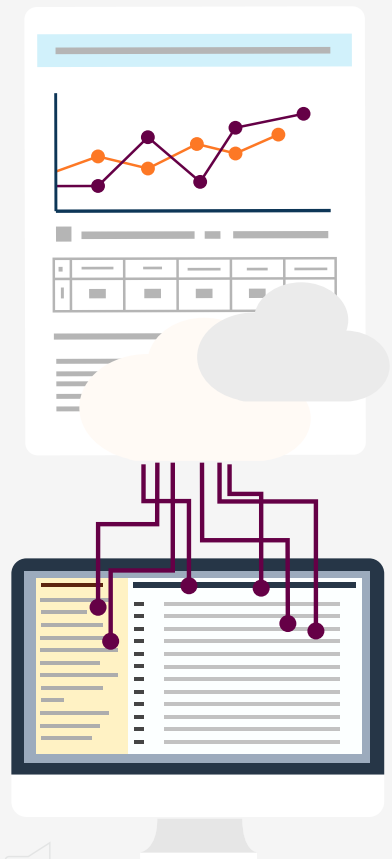
2. Perform an initial data health scan.

Next, analyze the health of the four sections we described above: Have you checked for duplicates? Are your records complete? How is your email deliverability? Do you have phone numbers for each record? Can you effectively segment your data?

3. Decide what to do with bad records.

Once you've identified the bad records, it's time to figure out their fate. Do you plan to delete them? Or, are there cases where you should archive them elsewhere? You can mark email addresses as "Do Not Send," but keep their sales history in your CRM.

4. Enrich your database. Once your database is clean — which you've accomplished by completing the above three steps — you can go forward with enriching it as much as possible. That's where you can start using advanced segmentation, as well as precise lead routing rules, complex lead scoring algorithms and dynamic content personalization on your website.



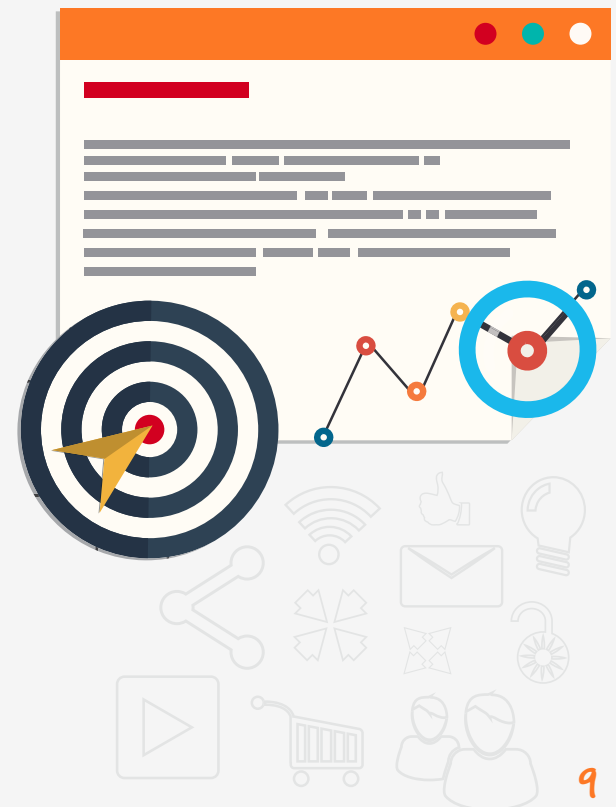
The Evolution Of Third-Party Solutions

The quality of the marketing database is often the “back pain” of your marketing efforts. Historically, marketers have learned to live with it rather than addressing the problem at its core. And, to continue the analogy, many times we avoid doing activities we want to do as a result. It’s hard to run that **highly-targeted content program** if you are not confident you will actually be delivering it to the right audience.

But marketers do not need to build their own internal system from the ground-up to **enjoy data-driven success**. After all, you didn’t hire software coders to build your marketing automation system. Instead, you can look to third-party data management solutions, which excel at reducing data pain. By outsourcing this function, you can plug into a utility provided by **experts outside your four walls** who continuously provide their services on your data at scale.

If you’ve invested money and time in your marketing automation solution, **your database quality is more important than ever** to the effectiveness of your marketing campaigns. But that doesn’t mean you have to reinvent the data management wheel: You can **optimize the revenue impact** of your marketing technologies by making sure your data is healthy — while you stay pain-free and focused on embracing all the sophisticated ways you can drive demand.

Many data-driven marketers are turning to outside sources to help ease their data pain.



Conclusion

B2B marketing has become more **buyer centric**. This typically means organizations must engage with multiple people during the buying process, and deal with more data sets that flow from a far more diverse range of channels — from CRM and email, to social and events. For campaign success, marketers need to **segment audiences** and deliver the most **relevant message** to each prospect, but it takes complete, well-maintained records to reach that goal.

The bottom line: If your company already uses marketing automation — or you're thinking about implementing marketing technology — and you don't have a plan for data management, you're facing an uphill battle.

Tools that assist with **unifying and personalizing** your message across marketing channels have become far more advanced, but triggering messages, content and offers to the correct prospect, at the right time and place, is highly dependent on complete and accurate contact and company records.

Without proper data management, your ability to get the most from your marketing technology spend becomes seriously challenged. A thoughtful, **well-maintained data management effort** can take marketing to a new, strategic level within the company hierarchy.





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About NetProspex

NetProspex is the smarter B2B data partner. We help marketing and sales organizations optimize their revenue impact by increasing the quality and effectiveness of their marketing database. Thousands of B2B organizations rely on NetProspex to manage their marketing data in order to fuel high-performing marketing campaigns and accelerate the creation of sales pipeline. To make marketing databases accurate, targeted and actionable, the company offers a suite of data services backed by its proprietary CleneStep™ verification technology and the industry's largest and most accurate reference database of B2B contacts and companies.

Find out more about the state of marketing data by downloading a copy of our *2014 NPX Benchmark Report*. Or visit us at www.netprospex.com for additional information on our solutions.



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Demand Gen Report is a targeted e-media publication spotlighting 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.

