

BusinessWeek



How to Make the Most of Your Database Lists

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If deals are the currency of good partnerships, then lists are the currency of good marketing. Without good lists, good content, and good timing, you'll quickly find your company among the poor performers in your category. Cultivating a high-quality contact database requires a lot of effort, patience, and painstaking attention to detail. Very few companies do this well and they are the few who reap big rewards. Start by assessing your current situation:

- How big is your existing prospect database?
- Does it reflect your target prospects well?
- How did it grow?
- Do you have processes in place to ensure consistency (e.g., should IBM be entered as I.B.M., IBM, or International Business Machines?)
- When was the last time your database was validated?
- Are contacts tagged appropriately (by industry, size, product, campaigns, etc.)

Getting your database into good shape can take weeks or months, and requires combing through it contact by contact, getting sales input, making corrections, ensuring consistency, etc. By paying the right attention to cultivating a winning prospect database, you can significantly improve the results of your marketing campaigns. And that usually means driving more revenue, which makes you a winner.

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