



Live Webinar - Thursday, February 26, 2009 at 2:00pm ET/11:00am PT

Convert Those Leads with Customer Behavior Analytics

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Take Advantage of Slow Times and Catch Up On Data Hygiene

Apr 27, 2009 2:24 PM, By Bill Singleton

Have you always been too busy to clean up your customer database? A slowdown in business can give you the opportunity to catch up on the database chores you have been putting off. Doing so will actually save you money and give you a better tool to use to target the households most likely to buy your products.

Hygiene can pay off quickly. If you haven't wanted your file to be unavailable for even a second and now find yourself with some idle time, take advantage of the lull. Work with your service bureau to run National Change of Address programs.

You can improve your mail deliverability and be assured that fewer catalogs are being left with someone who is just a "current resident," rather than a loyal buyer who wants your latest offers.

Have your customers and prospects de-duplicated with different match logic settings. Each duplicate you find cuts your mailing costs or lets you add another prospect to your campaign. Ask for any dropped records to be returned to you. It takes time to track back through your system to find where errors in data entry occur. Each customer and prospect dropped from your file for bad data is a lost opportunity. The dropped records might have a pattern of missing or incorrect elements that will let you fix your system and increase the reach of your mailings.

Flexibility is its own reward when you look over your customer database. Have you wanted to link online sales to your direct mail sales, or tie customer service records back to the customers' original purchases? Now is a great time to examine your database's structure. Your information technology department might know a way to integrate different sources of customer information from around the company without a complete database rebuild. The more you can learn about your customers the better you can offer them what they want. While you are expanding the fields in your file you can look ahead to what else you might want to do such as adding demographics, psychographics or survey results. Even if you don't want to spend the money to enhance your file now, you can make sure the new information can be added easily when your budget allows you to do so.

It is easy to let data hygiene maintenance and database structural needs slide when you are in the thick of executing campaigns in a hot market. Now might be the best time to catch up on these tasks. Cleaning and improving your customer database even a little can save you a lot in mailing costs, improve your targeting of likely buyers and give you a more flexible database for the future.

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