

Manage Data In Order To Improve Your Bottom Line

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With the emerging push to analyze “Big Data” and manage massive volumes of information derived from Social Media channels, it is still important to focus on the fundamentals of customer contact management for direct mail and email campaigns. Be it the physical costs of direct mail or the loss of customer contacts from opt-outs and spam reports, improperly managing your customer and prospect databases can have a serious negative impact on your bottom line. There are some simple steps every organization can take to make sure they are saving money and reaching the right customers for any marketing campaign.

The first step is to ensure that prospect data is converted to customer data when that conversion happens. Monthly, I receive a credit card offer via direct mail and email for a credit card I already have. Nothing shows that an organization does not know who their customers are quite like an offer for a product the customer already owns. It is essential that once a prospect is converted, they be removed from the prospecting database, or at least suppressed when a campaign is deployed.

Second, contact address information should be kept up to date. Services such as the USPS®'s NCOA^{Link}® capture move update information and can ensure a campaign is reaching current customers after they have moved. Ever receive an offer for someone who no longer lives at your address that is specific to their account? Most of us have. Move update services can help you to keep your database clean and current, and allow you to reach out with an offer to the right customers geographically.

Next, before any campaign, lists should be cross referenced with transactional information. Did a customer just purchase a big ticket item that makes them unlikely to be an immediate repeat buyer? Or do you have customers who have not purchased in a while? Specifically targeting them with different messages can significantly improve the return on a campaign.

Finally, it is essential to manage customers at the address level. Duplicate elimination can be managed at the full name and address, last name and address, or just address level. The type of matching done will determine how many mail pieces, or even emails, will go to a household. Do you really need to send three postcards to the same house, or will one suffice? Thinking through the appropriate number of pieces to arrive in a mailbox can impact the bottom line of a marketing campaign.

While the allure of Big Data can be an exciting pull for organizations, it is paramount to keep in mind some of these basics when it comes to planning and implementing email or direct mail campaigns.