

# A Simplified Guide to SOURCING GOOD DATA

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Every marketer worth their salt knows that the best tool to have for your marketing campaign is a quality data list. A definitive data list with details that meet your exact search criteria not only increases the effectiveness of your marketing efforts, but also provides your sales team with quality convertible leads.

But with so many business information providers out there, how do you source the best data for your needs?

Let's discuss what you should consider when you're shopping for data:

## WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM YOUR DATA?

Before signing up with a data service provider, know what you want to get out of your data. This will help you avoid buying unnecessary and useless information that will waste valuable time, money and resources.

Before buying anything, check your internal prospect database for the data, as the information within may closely match what is already on your target list. A data refresh can sometimes produce a better marketing list than anything you source externally.

## ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Now that you know what you want to accomplish with your data, you can start shopping! Here are some handy questions to help you quiz your prospective data service:

- Does the provider build their database by calling contacts directly, or are they buying data from one or more companies? (Quality data is best when it's collected from the source).
- How 'clean' is your data? Are there guarantees against receiving 'bad' data?
- How is their database maintained, and how frequently is it updated? (Lists should be updated at least every six months for accuracy).
- What is the minimum quantity of data you can buy?
- Do they provide 'samples' of their data? (Samples let you test the accuracy and functionality of their database).
- Can they prevent data duplication by comparing the list with your own database?

## GO IN WITH YOUR EYES OPEN

### Don't let just anyone buy your list for you

If you decide to go down this route, just write a blank check, throw it away (along with your business reputation), and just create a list using Google Search. Whoever sources your data should have in-depth knowledge of your marketing objectives and target audiences.

**A Simple Guide to Buying Good Data**

**1** Having a clear aim for your target audience will help you avoid buying data you don't need, saving you time, money and resources.

**2** A simple data refresh can sometimes help create a more accurate list than anything you can buy from another provider!

**Steps to Follow**

**1** Does the provider maintain their database by calling contacts directly, or are they buying data from one or more other companies?

**2** How is the provider's database maintained, and how frequently is it updated?

**3** Does the company provide 'samples' of the data?

**4** Can they prevent providing you with duplicate data (duping) by allowing you to compare the information to your own database?

**5** What is the minimum amount of data you can buy from the provider?

**6** How 'clean' is the data you're buying? Does the provider you are considering guarantee against receiving 'bad' data?

**Don't trust anyone to buy your data for you**  
The person sourcing your data should know who you are targeting for your campaign.

**Ask Serious Questions**  
Ask about guarantees, legalities, data suppression, opt-in mechanisms samples, and de-duping.

**Experience Counts**  
Always work with companies that have good data credentials and follow ethical and legal marketing standards.

### Don't be naive

Would you buy a 'mint condition' Ferrari for £50 from a stranger you just met? Of course not! Don't fall for the sales spiel, and then wonder why you're getting complaints about spam (or where the seller has gone)!

### Look before you leap

Most sales people prefer you to buy large amounts of data so that you spend more money with them. Do your research and objectively analyse whether it is actually worth buying large vats of untested data.

### CONCLUSION

Don't forget to follow UK and international direct marketing laws (think of the ethics and brand implications of using poor quality and/or illegal marketing data). You also can't go wrong by buying from Direct Marketing Association members.

We really can't say this enough: Do. Your. Research. Your sales team will thank you later!