

5 Questions to Ask Your Data Cleaning & Append Service Partner

by Catherine Reed - Thursday, September 29, 2016

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Are you considering data cleaning as ...

- An Amazon seller looking to expand the information in your customer database?
- A financial institution looking to match known customer addresses with phone numbers?
- An online retailer looking for physical addresses for the members of your email list?
- A company with out-of-date or inaccurate customer information?
- A business who is missing key information to market to potential customers in the widest variety of ways?

Do any of those sound like you? If so, your business is not living up to its potential.

An incomplete customer and marketing database can lead to missed opportunities. Not only may you be unable to connect with a potential customer in your method of choice, you may miss the opportunity to connect entirely. This is where the process of data cleaning and append services enters the picture.

What Does Append Mean (data cleaning or append)?



Data cleaning or data append can refer to a process of either verifying existing data or adding new information to an existing database through the matching of key factors. For example, an email append works by locating email addresses associated with customer data you have already obtained. You might want to locate the email address from a postal address or a phone number for example. The process fills in the gaps, providing you with more marketing opportunities through expanded methods of communication.

Why is a Data Cleaning & Append Valuable to Your Company?

Data cleaning & append services provide your company with additional communication avenues for contacting potential customers. Often, it is easy to acquire certain basics, like a person's name or a business name. Obtaining the extra information to aid in your marketing efforts is often difficult and time-consuming.

Potential new customers may be open to providing one or two pieces of information, such as a first name and email address, or if you're an Amazon FBM reseller you may only have a name and postal address. While this data can help you begin marketing efforts, it does not open up all of your available options. By working to fill in the missing pieces, you can advertise to these customers or potential customers in multiple ways.

While the data cleaning process is typically used to remarket to existing customers, data append can help with marketing to new customers, it is also particularly useful for expanding contact methods with current and previous customers.

Many businesses neglect their existing customers even though they are easier to convert into returning customers than finding new customers¹. You already have some contact information, as you have done business with them before. Filling in the gaps to improve marketing efforts just makes sense.

The ideal form of advertising for one demographic is not necessarily going to entice another. By acquiring additional customer data, you can better target your marketing towards that customer's preferences.

Why You Need a Professional Data Partner

Our world is driven by data.

Data gives us insights into our customers; how they think, how they choose, and why they buy. Keeping up with the incoming information is a challenge, even for your most important metrics. As big data has become more prominent, your business's focus is often directed towards information you can effectively monetize. Unless your business centers on gathering customer data only, your information may be lacking.

Even if the process of appending data sounds simple, it requires a large amount of effort. A wide variety of records are accessed, and the data is compiled from incompatible sources. While this may be plausible for your business to take on, you know your efforts are better spent elsewhere.

Instead of directing your energy to database maintenance, partner with a company that has already done the legwork. Data cleaning and append services focus their business on the data you need. This isn't a secondary concern that is stealing efforts from other areas. No, it is part of their business's mission. Their goal is to give quality information at a competitive price, and their success depends on doing that effectively. Not only can partnering with a professional data provider be more cost-effective for your business, it allows you to concentrate your efforts toward more pressing matters.

How to Pick the Best Data Append Partner



Now that you understand the benefits of working with a partner to clean and append your data, you need to pick the best option available.

While it may seem that all data cleaning and append services are the same, I can assure you that they are not. Before you pick the best partner for your business, consider the following 5 questions:

1. Which Pieces of Data Do You Have, and Which Do You Need?

Not all append services are the same. Some, such as the [data append service](#) offered by SearchBug, are capable of extrapolating data from a single data point or multiple data points, such as a person's name, phone, or email address. Others services may need specific fields from you just to return one missing piece of data.

For example, some data append services need both a customer's name and complete mailing address to even attempt to find an email match. Others will run the query based on the person's name alone, providing you with more opportunities to find matches.

By identifying which pieces you are hoping to gather based on what you have available, you can find a service to meet that need more effectively.

2. How Many Records Need to be Appended?

Certain services have minimums in place based on running hundreds or thousands of records. The minimums are in place regardless of the number of records. In fact, many services do not advertise their pricing upfront. Instead, you must contact them directly to get a quote.

However, other services, SearchBug included actually believe in upfront pricing and reasonable minimum processing fees. If you are only looking for information on 20 records, the difference between two service minimums is often substantial.

3. Do They Charge for Hits and Misses?

Data append services may use a variety of pricing models. Some will charge you by the batch, regardless of the rate of success. Others charge you per hit, so you only pay for the data they actually find. Depending on the quantity and quality of your current data, this can lead to significant price differences.

When choosing between companies, make sure you understand exactly what you will pay for and why you will pay for it.

4. What is the Services Success Rate?



Even if you provide the customer's name and mailing address, some company's success rates of finding an email address or cell phone may average only 10%.

Now, if that company with a 10% success rate is charging you by the batch, **you are paying for a 90% failure rate.**

5. Does the Service Specialize?

Certain data append services specialize in certain industries. While specialization may sound like a positive, it can actually lead to missing information. If your company does not fit into the company's

niche, you might not get the best data for your needs.

Once you have found the best partner for your business, you can see improvements in your data in as little as a few hours when running a small batch, to a few days for larger ones. Additionally, companies like SearchBug are able to coordinate faster processing in emergency situations.

Once the data is returned, you are now able to take advantage of additional marketing techniques that have been alluding you.

How to Use Your New Data

Now that you are working with more meaningful data you can direct your marketing efforts in new ways. You can create cohesive campaigns based on the newly available contact methods, targeting your ideal customers in their preferred way. You will also be able to consider previously unattainable alternatives, such as creating a Facebook Custom Audience campaign.

Targeted Campaigns through Facebook Audiences

Creating a custom audience in Facebook allows you to target ads to your current audience². This helps make sure your social network-based advertising is getting presented to your ideal customer base.

You can even use the information to create new Lookalike Facebook Audiences, allowing you to reach out to new customers who share certain key characteristics with those you have identified as customers. This gives your marketing efforts, even more reach and can lead to higher success rates.



Advertising through New Avenues

Since your data now has more information, you can begin marketing to potential customers through different mechanisms. For example, if you recently appended email addresses, starting a new email campaign for those specific contacts is ideal once you get permission (or use the email address to create

custom Facebook audience ads to get permission). Not only will this allow you to reach them through a new mechanism, you can also create targeted material for your first communication.

The new data is leveraged by your marketing department to further current efforts or take things in a new direction. For example, you may offer a specific deal to your previous customers using the newly acquired contact method. Alternatively, you may consider direct marketing to customers who were just identified as living within a particular county, city, zip code, or area code if you obtain phone numbers.

Quality Control and Verification

Another benefit of cleaning data is the ability to validate current information. For example, you can make sure customer addresses are valid and current. This prevents material from being directed towards incorrect, or earlier addresses. Data cleaning also allows you to remove inaccurate entries, effectively scrubbing the data of unnecessary information.

Ultimately, this process can result in notable cost savings. For example, you will not have to pay for mail that was misdirected based on old information. Additionally, you will not need to store as much data once you remove the inaccurate information. This can lower the amount of server space necessary to house the records. If you take part in cloud-based computing solutions through a vendor, using less memory can lead to smaller storage charges.

The analysis of your data will also produce results that better reflect your current business state. Instead of sifting through incomplete records or erroneous data, your analysis can focus on current and up-to-date information.

Working with SearchBug's Data Append Service

SearchBug designed their data cleaning and [append services](#) to help you get more meaningful customer data. SearchBug want's to solve your most pressing marketing and regulations issue by making sure that each of your advertising communications reaches your ideal customer and that you are not at risk of TCPA or other state and federal regulations for example.

If you aren't sure SearchBug can work for your business, here's the story of how CBC National Bank improved their marketing efforts by partnering with SearchBug for expert-level appending services:

CBC National Bank's Goals

CBC National Bank had a large customer database plagued by out-of-date and inaccurate information. Not only was the data a strain on internal resources, it was also wreaking havoc on their marketing campaigns.

CBC National Bank wanted to improve the accuracy of their database, allowing them to leverage the information to improve marketing efforts across all of their product lines.

SearchBug's Solution

The Batch Phone Append service offered by SearchBug was an ideal solution. CBC National Bank was able to verify customer and client information in their database while capturing and appending leads in real-time. SearchBug's integrated tools allowed them to make connections across the 5 billion real-time database records in SearchBug's system. CBC National Bank was able to capture the accurate records they needed to capitalize on their sales and marketing efforts.

“Searchbug’s Batch Phone Append tool has provided us with a return of accurate phone numbers which has enabled us to increase sales.”

Mark Hauser

-VP of Marketing at a CBC National Bank

SearchBug offers more than services, it offers solutions. If you want to take your marketing efforts to the next level, partnering with SearchBug can ensure you are working with the most accurate data possible.

Isn't your business worth the investment? Work with SearchBug today, for better data tomorrow.

1 Alex Lawrence, “Five Customer Retention Tips for Entrepreneurs,” Forbes, November 1, 2012, accessed September 8, 2016, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/alexlawrence/2012/11/01/five-customer-retention-tips-for-entrepreneurs/#4444a34117b0>.

2 “What’s a Facebook Custom Audience?,” accessed September 8, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/business/help/341425252616329>.

* Paul Brown, “Want to Increase Sales? Target Your Existing Customers,” Forbes, January 22, 2014, accessed September 8, 2016, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/actiontrumpseverything/2014/01/22/want-to-increase-sales-target-your-existing-customers/#1b55821e65ba>.

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