dun & bradstreet

WHITE PAPER

How Intent Data Can Unify Sales and Marketing

Marketing and sales departments focus on the same result: growing revenue while spending budgets efficiently. But like a couple on a road trip without cell service or GPS, they can have different ideas about how to reach the same destination.

Marketing casts a wide net, placing ads, trying to stay top-of-mind, and looking for undiscovered customers across platforms. Sales must manage and try to convert leads, balancing customer retention with the requirement to grow new accounts.

What unites sales and marketing is their daily uncertainty about whether they are focusing on the right accounts. Both teams face the justifiable concern that they are flying blind, wasting time and money on guesswork or targeting the wrong buyers with unwanted solicitations. (A quick look at your inbox should convince you the struggle is real.)

If only there was a way to identify the right people and understand what they are looking to buy. It turns out that there is.

Why Intent Data Matters

Intent data can reveal insight into buyers' online behavior, and help you identify if and when someone is actively looking to buy your product. Intent data also helps you pinpoint people who have already expressed interest in what you're selling and are most likely to buy. You identify them early in their customer journey, starting a conversation perhaps before they've even discovered your competition.

This type of insight, of course, is crucial for sales and marketing teams. It allows marketing to focus on multi-channel activation to meet buyers when they're engaging with the market and lets sales focus on prioritizing their best leads.

The three types of intent data

- **First-party data** is customer data you already own. It includes customer lists, their prior buying history and interactions with your organization. It helps you identify visitors to your organization's webpages, engagements with your online channels and collects information from form fills and other web data trails.
- **Second-party data** is first-party data that's been shared with you by another company—usually a trusted partner. If, for example, your company makes widgets, valuable second-party data may come from one of your suppliers that makes after-market accessories for those widgets.
- **Third-party data** comes from a company that collects and aggregates it from various online sources and offers it for sale. Each aggregator is different in its capabilities, the data it holds, and the benefits that it can drive your growth.

Look for data providers that allow you to filter information—including keywords and topics—according to your needs. You might need just one, but you can always add more data sources as you grow.

The purpose and application of intent data stays the same regardless of where you source it from. It helps you unlock prospects, prioritize leads, tailor outreach and identify when someone might be in the market for your product.

How to leverage intent data

Data alone is not a cure-all. It's important to use it correctly in an effective go-to-market strategy. To begin with, you need to start with a foundation of your own trusted data, so you can layer in intent data and see what companies or buying groups may be in the market.

Assembling and cleaning your first-party data so that it can be trusted is often a major challenge. In too many companies, data is siloed. Sales, marketing, support, shipping, web operations, and other departments all have their own data sets; even if they're willing to share, disparate systems may make consolidating that data difficult.

Similarly, cleaning the data until it becomes a single trusted source of truth may require a major effort. It's a vital step, though, to get a 360-degree view of your customers and to allow you to layer on data from other sources. Clean data is a necessity so it will integrate with your tech stack and be used across all your efforts.

Intent data can bring sales and marketing departments together. It can give marketing insight into buyer behavior and help them make more strategic decisions on how and what to target them with next. It may mean, for instance, having salespeople engage with potential buyers on digital channels they're already using as they move toward making a buying decision.

Sales can also use intent data to upsell and cross-sell on existing accounts. If a customer for one of your products is now searching for another product you offer, it's an opportunity to expand the relationship rather than potentially losing the whole account to a competitor.

Intent data, however, can't do it alone; only when you associate it with your own trusted data can it give you a clear enough a picture to know who to engage with, how to engage with them, and what a winning message might be.

> *Remember: keeping customers at the center of what you do is key. If you aren't in front of them when they're showing intent to buy, you will lose them to someone who is.*

COMPLIANCE

When dealing with data in today's world, it's vital to keep regulatory compliance in mind. Intent data—no matter the source—must be gathered, managed, and handled in an ethical and compliant manner. Think about and understand how you handle customer and prospect data, whether anonymized, de-personalized or not, and understand your responsibilities and those of your vendors.

That means:

- Ensuring consent based data collection
- Understanding user trust
- Knowing and adhering to regulations
- Consent-based data collection
- Keeping data secure

It's not just the right thing to do; mishandling data can have serious legal and reputational consequences.

Why Dun & Bradstreet

Dun & Bradstreet is centered around data, data quality and is committed to effective data compliance. We offer solutions that can help you find your customers throughout their buying journeys.

We have tools to help you

- Assemble Data From Multiple Sources
- Connect Platforms
- Clean and Enrich Data
- Continuously Pull In New Data from Intent Sources
- Activate, Measure, and Analyze, and Optimize All in One Place

The unparalleled Dun & Bradstreet Data Cloud offers the world's most comprehensive business data and analytical insights, giving you an inside edge with in-depth, verified, and scored information about customers. It contains more than 545 million records, more than 4 billion IP addresses, and more than 14 billion digital signals covering 1.4 million in-market companies and 35,000 intent topics.

The Dun & Bradstreet D-U-N-S® Number is a unique identifier that helps you understand a business target, opening the door to deeper information about corporate hierarchies and linkages, providing more data about decision makers.

For third-party intent data, we can build a custom solution based on your needs. Or you can rely on our best-in-class Bombora product with pre-defined topics to listen for and a huge exclusive partner network, giving you insight that you can't get anywhere else.

We can help you identify who your buyers are, when they are in market and when they're primed to act. Discover the power of our data, with the capability to offer insights and guide the strategies that help you win.

Grow your business by deepening your understanding of your customers and shortening your sales cycle.

Contact us at dnb.com to learn more.

LEARN MORE ›

ABOUT DUN & BRADSTREET®

Dun & Bradstreet, a leading global provider of B2B data, insights and AI-driven platforms, helps organizations around the world grow and thrive. Dun & Bradstreet's Data Cloud fuels solutions and delivers insights that empower customers to grow revenue, increase margins, manage risk, and help stay compliant—even in changing times. Since 1841, companies of every size have relied on Dun & Bradstreet. Dun & Bradstreet is publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE: DNB).

dnb.com