

# How To Zero In On The Right Prospects And Win More Customers With Email Data

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After years of struggling to successfully apply data, the marketing world has finally reached a tipping point with regard to data usage. Today, an abundance of data-driven tools, strategies and resources is fueling stronger campaign results and creating greater impact on business outcomes overall.

Since establishing my firm more than two decades ago, I've seen how data has risen as a marketing force through the years among Fortune 1000 firms and small to midsize businesses alike. Our clients have found new ways to use it, optimize it and extract value out of it. Particularly in customer acquisition campaigns -- which focus on engaging new contacts -- data can be leveraged to zero in on the right prospects and personalize communications based on the buyer journey.

Whether an organization is proficient in its use of data or just getting started, from what I've seen, there's always room for adjustments and improvements. Here are four ways to get the most out of your data in order to drive high-quality leads and nurture prospect relationships in customer acquisition campaigns.

## 1. Don't Put All Your Eggs In One Data Basket

With the abundance of information available today, more data means more options. Many businesses are acquiring their own data. In addition, in the recent "Marketing Data And Technology Strategy" report by Ascend2, which surveyed 233 marketing influencers, 50% of respondents said their top data source is their own internal sales and customer service teams.

From my perspective, the most effective email campaigns leverage multiple sources of data, ideally internal marketing data combined with prospect/acquisition data from a reputable third-party provider. The combination provides a more comprehensive overview of opportunities, market conditions, the buyer and more. Acquisition data expands your marketing reach beyond prospects you've already engaged with while enabling you to segment and evaluate the audiences that best characterize your target market.

## 2. Invest In Identifying The Right Audience

Another benefit of leveraging multiple data sources (specifically with regard to acquisition data) is that it can allow you to strategically build your overall audience and develop it as a business asset. Audience building involves carefully orchestrated segmentation efforts to optimize reach to new prospects based on their interests and stage in the buyer journey. By taking a strategic approach to developing your email acquisition audience -- including scaling it, enriching it and optimizing it over time -- you can more consistently and effectively identify the right audiences to target with campaigns.

Strategic audience building can accelerate results on the front end (or top) of the sales funnel and is one of the top trends I'm keeping my eye on, especially as personalization becomes an even higher priority for buyers. Marketers who focus on strategically building their audiences put their businesses in the position to potentially drive greater return on investment.

## 3. Use Integration To Create More Seamless Experiences

The demand for a seamless experience across marketing channels continues to grow and is only amplified as businesses keep moving toward delivering a responsive, personalized marketing experience. More than ever, omnichannel marketing requires tight integration across the technology stack to create a consistent experience for customers and prospects throughout their journey, regardless of the channels they use.

Integrating acquisition email campaign data with social and display advertising campaigns, or into CRM platforms, for example, creates a unified brand view and can generate powerful results.

## 4. Deliver A One-Two Punch With Email And Programmatic

Programmatic is a fast-growing marketing channel that most of us have been exposed to online. While still emerging, the concept of integrating acquisition email campaigns with display advertising is a powerful combination that is gaining traction. These two channels offer a successful one-two punch, sparking a prospect's interest with an email message and then following up with a targeted, relevant display ad (or vice versa).

This approach becomes more effective with the strategic use of email acquisition data. When you experience email engagement as your campaigns are released -- whether your messages are opened by your recipients or if they click on any links -- the next step is to follow up on that initial interest with a retargeted display ad. This allows you to get in front of your recipients again to reignite their interest. At Outward Media, the approach we take is to serve three to five ads to each prospect over time.

It's exciting to see marketers increasingly use data and analytics. And while it's clear that high-quality data can drive strong results in acquisition email campaigns, I remind my clients that it's a process -- one that relies on ongoing testing to optimize efforts. It's worth the effort, however. The prospects you target want and have grown to expect personalized, relevant marketing. When you can deliver it to them, you'll be able to win more customers and see business growth increase as a result.

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