



# From Decay To Clarity: Mastering Database Quality for Targeted Engagement

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# Introduction

Just like any critical resource, a database requires ongoing maintenance to prevent data decay, which can hinder a team's ability to access reliable information. By regularly updating and cleaning data, organizations can ensure that their insights remain relevant and actionable.

With high-quality data, companies can refine their segmentation strategies, allowing for targeted messaging that resonates with specific audience segments. This focus on accuracy and alignment ultimately leads to more meaningful customer interactions and improved conversion rates. In this report, various strategies will be explored to maintain data integrity and leverage clean data for better segmentation and engagement. Specifically, we'll discuss:

- The power of regularly updating and maintaining databases to ensure information is accurate and relevant;
- How to align marketing and sales teams by providing access to consistent and reliable data sources;
- Why practitioners must position themselves as data experts; and
- An expert Q&A-style discussion about database quality.





## Leveraging Multiple Data Streams To Prevent Decay

Given the tumultuous job market — especially in the **technology industry** — there's no guarantee a previously engaged contact is still around. Whether it's by their own volition or external factors, **more than half (52%)** of American employees are considering making a career change, while 44% are planning to. Due to those turnover rates, databases have the potential to decay at an alarming rate: **70% per year**.

With the prevalence of decaying data, the first step to maintaining a reliable, actionable database, according to David Chirakal, Group Director, Marketing Operations at **Marketbridge**, is a thoughtful data strategy: "Practitioners need to understand the type of data needed and, from there, identify who needs access to that data in what system and in what format," he noted.

Tackling the first half of Chirakal's statement was Mason Cosby, Founder of **Scrappy ABM**, who explained that the most comprehensive databases combine first-party engagement data with third-party intent signals.

"We're now tracking third-party intent data to see what people are searching for," continued Cosby. "We're also using our first-party engagement data to understand who engages with our content. Then, we analyze firmographics and technographics to understand if our target account is a fit."



# The Multi-Faceted World Of Data Cleansing

A Q&A with Joseph Santos, ZoomInfo

Data cleansing as an integral, ongoing part of data management, and when practitioners view it through this lens rather than a one-time event, organizations can significantly improve their data quality for better decision-making. To learn more about best practices for cleansing data, the *Demand Gen Report* team sat down with Joseph Santos, Director, Data Advisory at B2B database provider [ZoomInfo](#), to learn more.

## **Demand Gen Report:** *In your opinion, what's the current state of database strategies*

**Joseph Santos:** The current state of database strategies has shifted toward prioritizing foundational data and reimagining data orchestration. This change has been driven by increased demand for data-driven decision-making and the emergence of technologies like generative AI.

Organizations must recognize the importance of data quality and reliability for accurate insights and analytics. Modern strategies must be able to handle growing data volumes, integrate diverse sources, ensure governance and enable real-time processing. Cloud and hybrid solutions offer flexibility and cost-effectiveness. Organizations that adapt to these changes will be better positioned to leverage their data assets and gain a competitive edge in the data-driven economy.

## **DGR:** *What are some of marketers' top data challenges, and how do you recommend they combat them?*

**Santos:** Marketers face significant data challenges, primarily data quality amid vast and varied data sources. This complexity hinders maintaining relevant, accurate and actionable information, especially for strategies like ABM. Implementing robust entity resolution processes for a unified customer view, prioritizing data interoperability across channels, investing in scalable data management platforms and supplementing first-party data with reliable third-party sources are all effective methods of tackling this complexity. Whichever strategy marketers adopt, addressing data privacy regulations through stringent governance policies is crucial.

The ultimate goal is extracting meaningful insights from this data abundance. By systematically tackling these challenges, marketers can transform overwhelming data into a powerful tool for targeted, effective strategies across all touchpoints.

## **DGR:** *With anonymous buyers so prevalent these days, how can marketers work to uncover them?*

**Santos:** Identifying and engaging anonymous buyers presents a significant hurdle for marketers, requiring a delicate balance between gathering valuable data and respecting user privacy. Strategies include streamlining self-identification with user-friendly forms and "type-ahead" functionality, using progressive profiling to build profiles gradually and offering compelling gated content as incentives.

Integrating third-party data, behavioral analysis and IP-based B2B company identification can provide additional insights. Retargeting, lookalike audiences and interactive content all further engage anonymous visitors, while social media logins and geotargeting help personalize experiences and gather basic information. These approaches allow marketers to transform unknown visitors into leads and customers while providing genuine value.

**DGR: What role is artificial intelligence and other machine-learning technologies playing in database strategies?**

**Santos:** AI and machine learning (ML) are transforming database strategies across multiple areas of data management. They enhance data operations through automated cleansing, improved integration and pattern recognition. In data stewardship, ML algorithms streamline governance and ensure compliance. AI optimizes data organization and improves database performance. ML models enable predictive analytics and advance personalization capabilities, identifying next best experiences for clients.

These technologies also improve query optimization and potentially generate automated insights. Natural language processing makes databases more accessible to non-technical users. However, the effectiveness of AI and ML depends on high-quality foundational data. As they evolve, these technologies are reshaping data management approaches, driving efficiency and value creation from data assets.

**DGR: What areas do you see practitioners investing in database strategies to improve existing data and contact acquisition processes?**

**Santos:** Organizations are investing in reliable third-party data partnerships, data cleansing tools and resolving data debt. Customer data platforms and data governance frameworks are gaining importance for unified data and compliance. B2B companies are focusing on intent data solutions, while efforts to maximize first-party data and break down silos are increasing. Advanced analytics and privacy-preserving technologies are being prioritized. This holistic approach recognizes that advanced technologies require clean, well-organized data foundations.

By addressing these areas, organizations are creating infrastructure to leverage their data assets, optimize contact acquisition, and prepare for future innovations in data utilization and customer engagement.

**DGR: Can you share some best practices regarding data cleansing?**

**Santos:** Effective data cleansing begins with preventing dirty data from entering your system in the first place. Implementing robust validation rules, enriching data at creation and establishing quality gates are essential first steps. Regular audits, standardization of data formats and strategic deduplication help maintain data integrity over time.

A comprehensive approach includes implementing a strong data governance framework, leveraging automated cleansing and developing a smart archiving strategy to retain only relevant data. Investing in high-quality third-party reference data sources is vital for validation and enrichment, helping to fill gaps and correct inaccuracies. Continuous monitoring, regular data profiling and cross-departmental collaboration ensure a holistic approach to data quality. Ongoing user training and detailed documentation of cleansing processes further support these efforts.







## Ensuring All Departments Can Access & Action Data

With multiple data streams identified, the next step is to integrate multiple data sources. Marketing and sales teams face the challenge of not just collecting data but making it actionable and accessible, and Sarah Sehgal, Director of Growth Marketing for [FullStory](#), highlighted how transformative these sources are when harnessed effectively.

"Most sales teams are being thrown disparate intent data from marketing's new tools, and most marketers are scrambling, trying to figure out how to justify the spend on these intent platforms," said Sehgal. "The issue is no longer access to data, but rather how to consolidate, interpret and action it effectively."

As data consolidation becomes a priority, the focus shifts to leveraging these insights for strategic targeting and prioritization. Chirakal pointed out that connecting and analyzing this unified data helps teams focus on buyers who are ready to engage, taking a more deliberate approach to account prioritization — reminiscent of traditional lead scoring methods.

"It helps marketing and sales folks be a lot more focused and prioritize their efforts," said Chirakal. "Similar to the old days of lead scoring, we want to identify who the right buyers are — the ones most likely to engage with our content, to want a conversation with sales and so forth. Data is one of those key inputs that can help marketers and sales folks be much more focused in terms of prioritization of who and what accounts they're targeting to try and engage in authority in the purchasing journey."

With clear prioritization, the next step is ensuring data consistency and accessibility across all marketing channels, which requires robust data infrastructure. As [Steve Armenti](#), a B2B marketing expert explained, this infrastructure is essential for not only streamlined reporting but also for unlocking the potential for predictive insights and personalized marketing efforts.

"All of those signals are stored somewhere — hopefully in a database, but they're probably siloed in those apps — so we need to get them out," said Armenti, at the B2B Marketing Exchange. "The way to do that is investing in data infrastructure, which usually becomes some sort of customer data platform powered by a data warehouse. We've got the push and pull of these signals in and out of these systems, and why that's important: One, for reporting. It allows a complete single source of truth for your reporting, but it also unlocks what I think is an unimaginable opportunity to create more predictive marketing, the personalization."



## Enabling Practitioners To Become Data Masterminds

As Chirakal previously mentioned, practitioners need to understand the type of data needed and, from there, identify who needs access to that data in what system and in what format. Following up on these claims was Armenti, who explained that marketers are good at asking for data — but don't understand how to action it.

"In some of my roles at Google, I noticed that my team would just pepper the data scientists with question after question," said Armenti. "They'd say, 'I need this data because I want to do X, Y and Z,' and then when they got the data, they'd follow up with another question, and it created this perpetual cycle of questioning. We need to learn how to interpret data. Sure, asking for data is important, but we need to interpret it, make sense of it and drive action from it."

Armenti continued that looking at historical CRM data offers even greater depth for practitioners, as it enables them to draw conclusions about upcoming deals and lookalike accounts. Specifically, he noted that he analyzes key accounts and opportunities closed in the last six to 12 months to provide a foundation for mapping out what has worked well in past interactions.





## Conclusion

Database quality is the backbone of effective engagement: By actively managing data integrity and preventing decay, organizations can ensure their insights remain sharp and relevant, paving the way for targeted outreach and personalized interactions. A strategic approach to data — from identifying crucial data types to unifying first- and third-party signals — enables teams to gain a more complete understanding of their target accounts. This enriched data ecosystem, supported by accessible infrastructure and cross-departmental collaboration, empowers practitioners to make informed decisions and drive impactful engagement.





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