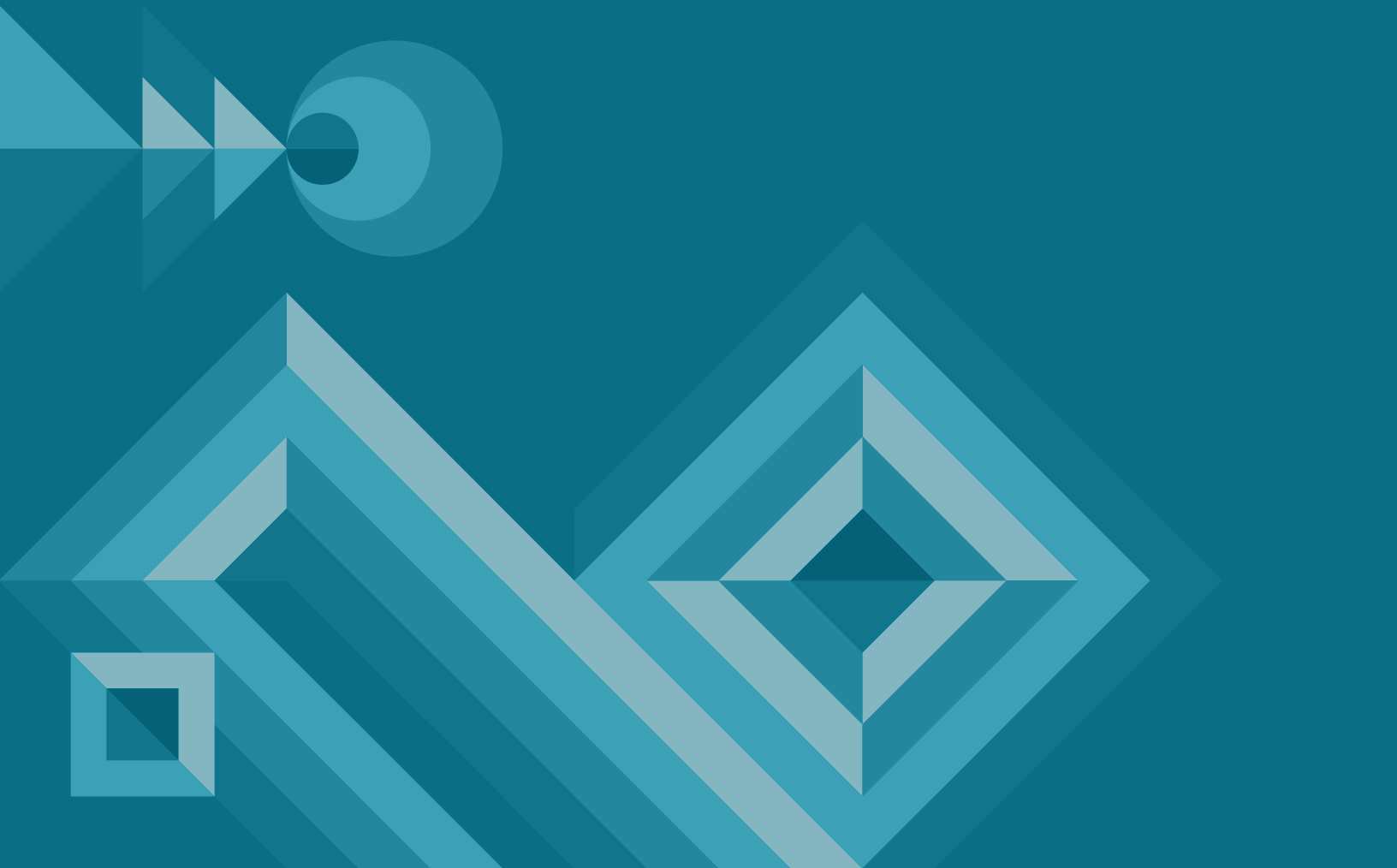




People Data Labs

The Ultimate B2B Database Guide

Our world is becoming increasingly data-driven and B2B businesses are no exception. In a world powered by data, the data assets your business owns and controls are critical to your success.



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// SECTION ONE

B2B Database 101

The simplest way to think of a database is as a collection of records.

A B2B database is a collection of all the information that your business has been able to gather through its sales and marketing efforts about both existing clients and prospects.

Your business type will determine the type of information that's most useful but a typical B2B database will contain information about the people you might potentially contact in order to establish business relationships as well as about the businesses they represent.



SECTION ONE

What Should Be in Your B2B Database

Every B2B database is different, depending on the industry vertical and the types of products or services you offer. However, a typical B2B database will contain two basic types of data.

Firmographic Data

Also referred to as company data, is information about all the companies that you currently do business and companies that you could potentially do business with in the future. This information could include details like the size of these businesses, their location, the range of products and services they offer, their market segment, and the makeup of their employee base.

Demographic Data

Demographic data is data about the people that make up the companies in your database. A typical B2B database starts life as a contact list containing information on how to reach key decision makers within target companies. This can include contact data like phone numbers and email addresses as well as additional information about their needs, preferences, and previous roles that can help to inform the way you sell or market to them.

What are the Main Sources of B2B Data?

There are a few ways that companies in the B2B space can populate their B2B database. The first is through the direct efforts of sales and marketing teams. Marketing teams use a variety of tactics to acquire leads in the form of contact information for potential and prospective customers. These efforts can include content programs, advertising, events and trade shows, as well as direct organic from interested clients through an inbound channel. All of this contact information becomes part of a company's B2B database. As sales teams develop these leads through direct outreach, additional information can be fed back into the database to flesh out individual prospect, customer, and company records.

While effective, developing B2B data directly through the hands-on efforts of sales and marketing teams can be painstaking and labor intensive. For this reason, many fast-growing B2B businesses may choose to partner with a data provider who can help to expand their database and provide additional data that can be used to enrich inbound leads. Data vendors like People Data Labs gather public B2B data from across the open web and combine it with proprietary data sourced from a range of trusted data partners. We then standardize the data to make it easy to access and use. This data can then be queried to locate new prospects or added to an existing database of records to enhance the limited information accessible through in-bound leads.

Who Uses a B2B Database?

A B2B database benefits every aspect of a business, but it is typically used and maintained by members of a business' sales and marketing teams. These groups, sometimes collectively referred to as the revenue function within an organization, have the most direct contact with customers and prospects. As a result, they are also best positioned to build, expand, and utilize a B2B database. Sales teams may use the B2B database to learn more about prospects or to identify potential look-alike customers. Likewise, a robust B2B database can be used by marketing groups for direct outreach, email marketing, ad targeting, and look-alike modeling all of which can be used to generate new business and new leads.

// SECTION TWO

How to Evaluate the Quality of a B2B Database



SECTION TWO

Data Hygiene

Ultimately, gathering data to populate your B2B database is only half the battle. Over time, errors can creep in, making a B2B database less useful. Data management and maintenance are critical to preserving data quality. Data hygiene refers to the group of practices that businesses can use to maintain and incrementally improve the quality of their data. By regularly performing maintenance on records to make sure that data is current and accurate, and to weed out duplicate records, the overall health of a B2B database is preserved, thereby producing better results for data-driven sales and marketing programs with less waste effort.

Duplicate Records

When drawing data from multiple sources, the creation of duplicate records is likely. While some of this can be corrected for by maintaining strict data collection policies, human error and normal variations in data supply can still produce duplication. There's no way to control for a client who fills out a form as Robert, but in another dataset goes by Bob. Comparing records and combining definite and likely duplicates can help to minimize waste and reduce duplication.

Data Decay

Nothing is static. Every day thousands of people leave jobs, change careers, or move on to new companies. These changes aren't immediately reflected in data sources that power most B2B databases, leading to data decay. By some estimates, B2B data decays at a rate of 2.1% per month as a result of normal career moves and other personal choices. To keep data current and reverse that natural decay of B2B databases, look for data sources that refresh their data on a regular basis to update existing records as well as to ingest new ones.

Data Quality Metrics

Data is key to the success of any modern business, but you're only as good as the data you have on hand and volume isn't enough. To build a robust B2B database, businesses need more than the ability to gather large quantities of data. Success depends on the ability to assess, measure, and maintain quality. There are four key metrics that can be used to assess the quality of a B2B database.

Unique Entries

The size of your database may vary depending on the size of your addressable market, but a healthy supply of unique records is critical. Your data should be clean and deduplicated to avoid any redundant, incomplete or inaccurate records. Assuming that your database is clean and well maintained then the number of unique records it contains is a good indicator of health and quality. Your database should allow you to reach as many of the right types of contacts as possible and it's growth should roughly reflect your outreach efforts and the relative growth of the market.

Data Fields

Building a B2B database isn't a simple question of volume. Having the right data to fuel your business is more important than having a high volume of records. The more data fields your database contains, the more robust reach record is likely to be. A healthy customer record should contain as much contact information as possible so fields for email addresses, phone numbers, and social media profiles should be available along with fields containing information to help better inform customer outreach such as location, demographic information, and professional role.

Data Sources

A robust B2B database should draw from a number of high quality sources in order to ensure the highest possible volume of quality records and the most complete enrichment of existing records. While vendors may source data from the open web and from public platforms, it's also important to evaluate the quality of their data partners and the processes by which they clean and standardize partner data. A large number of quality sources is an indicator of quality records.

In-House Data Collection vs Data Vendors

It's imperative for businesses in every sector to think about their data strategy, but it's particularly important for B2B organizations which often don't have the same options for broad data collection available to consumer facing businesses. Broad-based marketing and advertising is unlikely to attract qualified leads to B2B brands and services in the way it can for consumer products. In fact, data is essential to powering the kind of targeted marketing and advertising campaigns that are most effective at growing audience and awareness for B2B brands. Some experts have presented a stark choice for B2B businesses between building an in-house data operation and outsourcing data needs to data vendors. Fortunately, the decision isn't black and white.

In-house data is all the information you already have about things like employee performance, retention rate, and the efficiency of your hiring process. It can also include data on the skills and qualities valued by your organization and factors that differentiate top performers from employees who struggle at your company. These are valuable insights to help you refine your recruiting activities to target top talent.

Most businesses will ultimately need to develop the skills and tools necessary to build and expand their B2B database under their own power. Collecting new data from sales and marketing outreach is a critical part of building a healthy data operation. However, even for large enterprise scale businesses, these efforts can be difficult to scale quickly. As a result, most B2B businesses will also benefit from investing in a data partner who can provide them with access to additional data sources to expand their database and enrich their existing records with new and more current data.

Data Vendor Challenges

You're probably familiar with the expression "you are what you eat." Just as a quality diet is critical to maintaining a healthy lifestyle, the quality of the data you ingest into your B2B database will determine how healthy and effective your data-driven sales, marketing, and CRM programs are. Unfortunately, while many data vendors offer fine dining, some are peddling the data version of fast food.

There are few downsides to relying on data vendors that you should be aware of as you build and expand your B2B database.

- 1. Incomplete or limited information:** All data is not created equal. Some vendors offer records with limited personal data that may not meet the needs of your business. If you're primarily reaching prospects via email campaigns, then records that contain only phone numbers may be of limited use to you. Providers often boast about the sheer number of records they can offer, but some of these records may be incomplete or may lack the information you need.
- 2. Data accuracy and freshness:** Maintaining a high quality B2B database requires accurate and up-to-date data. Every month, millions of people move, change jobs, get new phone numbers and open new email accounts, meaning that a perfectly accurate record today could become woefully out of date by tomorrow. Unfortunately, some vendors don't regularly verify and update their data meaning that a significant amount of the data you acquire may not be current or correct.
- 3. Price complexity:** Some vendors secure their most valuable data behind complicated paywalls or other tiered pricing programs making it difficult to know what it will actually cost to access the data you need. This type of complexity can limit the effectiveness of your data-driven programs and drive up their cost exponentially.

- 4. Duplicate data:** Many data vendors aggregate data from different sources but do a poor job of deduplicating records. This can lead them to make inflated claims about the amount of data they can offer and leave your B2B database filled with incomplete or redundant data.
- 5. Limited search capability:** Many data vendors do not standardize and index their data to make it easily searchable. This will make it difficult to integrate into your database and create additional demands on your in-house technical resources before you're able to access the records you need to power your programs.

Choosing a Data Provider

While it's true that a low quality data provider is just as likely to grow your headache as your B2B database, that doesn't mean that securing a data partner has to be painful. There are a number of high quality data vendors available to meet the needs of your business. The secret is to know how to identify them.

Here are a few things to look for:

- 1. High quality, transparent data sources:** The easiest way to know if a third-party vendor is offering quality data is to know where that data comes from. Reputable data partners should be willing and able to tell you how and where they source their data.
- 2. A robust data ingestion and QA process:** Building accurate data involves more than just plugging into quality sources. Accuracy is the result of a careful ingestion process from source selection, to aggregation, organization, standardization, and deduplication. A quality data provider should be able to walk you through their process for ensuring accuracy and consistency in their data and avoiding problems like duplicate records and data decay. You may also want to do some data verification by hand. Spot checking records can provide some insight into how well a vendor's QA process is working.
- 3. A plan to keep data fresh:** As the saying goes, life comes at you fast. Every day millions of people make changes in their life. New jobs, new addresses, new phone numbers and emails. These changes aren't going to be reflected in a vendor's data in real time, so records will fall out of date all the time. By some estimates, the average B2B database decays by 2.1% every month as a result of normal life changes. Your vendor should have procedures in place to regularly verify and update existing records to align with ingesting new data to ensure that their data maintains accuracy and value over time.

- 4. ALL of the data you need:** Even a high quality vendor may not have the data you need. If you're planning to run B2B email marketing campaigns, then the world's most high-quality list of mobile phone numbers is of little use to you. Think about your use case for data before you sign and ensure that the vendor in question has robust records containing the fields that you need. Not all records are complete, so ask your potential vendor to verify how many of their records contain the specific fields you require.
- 5. Real searchability:** If your vendor doesn't index their data for easy searchability, then integrating it into your B2B database could consume a ton of additional resources. Make sure the data is easy to query to find the records you need.
- 6. Transparent pricing:** Complex data pricing models can make it difficult to know how much you'll end up paying for the data you need. Some vendors place their highest value data behind additional paywalls or more expensive tiers and make it difficult to know in advance which data resides in which tier. A trusted vendor should be able to tell you how much it will cost to access the data you need so that you can more effectively plan the cost of your data-driven programs.

// WRAP UP

How to Acquire High-Quality Data

At People Data Labs, our focus is on building great data and working closely with our customers to provide the data they need. We're committed to transparency about our sources, our pricing, our APIs, and our quality assurance process.

We welcome questions and suggestions from our customers and believe there is always room for improvement. You might be overwhelmed with the nerdiness of our answers to your data questions, but you'll never be disappointed in our willingness to collaborate or our drive to provide compliant, accurate, up-to-date data to fuel your recruiting efforts.

It's easy to buy data from us — [just reach out to our team today.](#)

Someone from our team will contact you and work with you to get the data you need. Our data experts will make sure they understand the data you're looking for and how you intend to use it. Then they'll walk you through the rest of the process step-by-step, answering any questions you may have along the way.