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Is your data holiday-ready?

The holiday season shopping craze can ring up as much as a third of a retailers' annual sales,[1] meaning for some, end-of-year sales can be the lynchpin of success for the entire year. That presents a sizeable opportunity—and homework to match. With 1:1 experiences on the minds of shoppers this season, it's time to get your data in shape. We're here to help you get started.

1. Clean your existing data.

Messy, incomplete customer data is like walking a tightrope: unpredictable and you certainly don't want to trip. Organizations report nearly one-third of customer data is inaccurate[2], which can not only stunt your growth, but bad information can also cost your bottom line. The foundation for any successful holiday season starts with accurate contact data for your existing customers.

If you collected customer information without verifying it last year (or even further back), start with a one-time batch cleanse. This is a clean sweep of your email, address, and phone data to verify that your messages about sales and savings end up in the right mailbox, inbox, app, and more.

2. Collect accurate customer data as part of an ongoing process.

While seasonal sales make up a good chunk of your revenue, access to contact data you can trust for your email marketing campaigns, delivery orders, or loyalty programs is important all year round. Consider leveraging real-time verification software, both in-store and online, for a win-win for both you and your customer.

Intuitive type-down address verification features can reduce the number of keystrokes by up to 80 percent, ultimately speeding up your checkout process and removing friction from the digital or mobile experience. Can you say happy customers?

3. Gain additional insights.

Once you have the accurate information on who your customers are and how to reach them, get to know them even more with data enrichment. Data enrichment allows you to append additional attributes to your existing information—everything from household size and discretionary income to whether consumers are coffee drinkers.

Let's say you want to simplify your loyalty program sign-up process to enroll more shoppers without adding friction to their experience. In this case, you could offer a text-to-enroll option and then automatically append key attributes to your customer profiles (like an email address and mailing address) so you work smarter, not harder this holiday season.

4. Personalize your marketing.

In the year of zero-party data, data that customers own and willingly give to brands[2], it's more important than ever to get personalization right. To really stand out in today's competitive retail space, it is not enough to merely segment your database; now you must deliver 1:1 marketing campaigns, and to do so, you need a single customer view (SCV).

SCV is a 360-degree picture of your customers—which can comprise demographic information, psychographic information, and behavioral data, including past purchases—that you can act on. Step one is consolidating

your customer databases so you can vet inaccuracies and duplicate information so you can then correct and standardize data. This can be quite the task so consider leveraging data quality software to expedite results—did we mention we can help with that?

5. Forecast with confidence.
Accurately forecasting your sales for the holiday season is essential to managing your inventory so you have the right quantities and assortment of goods in your stores and fulfillment centers. Because you've already cleansed your data in step one, you can now assess historical and current data to inform your season projections. Now you can be confident reliable data is informing your decisions.

Data drives retail success throughout the year, but it is especially important for gaining a leg up on the competition as you prepare for the holiday season. The sooner you look at your data needs and get your information in order, the better you can plan for the season to come.

We are here to help you get to know your customers. Interested in using trustworthy data to optimize your customer's retail experience?

Learn more

¹"Winter Holiday FAQ's." National Retail Federation.
²"2019 Global data management research." Experian.

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