Better data, better leads:

How to conquer data quality once and for all

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Why data quality is a necessity

Data is the lifeblood of any business. It informs everything from defining your target market to identifying inefficiencies and continuously improving your operations to remain competitive.

Therefore, data quality is everything. It's the difference between thriving, surviving or nose-diving. And let's face it, there's already enough pressure on marketers to demonstrate their impact on the bottom line. So, we need to make quality data our greatest ally. Why? Because with accurate and actionable marketing data you can PROVE the effectiveness of your campaigns and the impact they have on achieving your overarching business objectives.

But we have a problem.

▶ **60% of marketers**
don't trust the health of their data.

Bad data. Bad decisions. Bad juju.

Bad data acquired via marketing efforts throws the reputation of marketing under the bus. It calls into dispute the trustworthiness of strategic decision–making, threatens to derail operational efficacy and corrodes stakeholder cooperation.

In essence, it's the kryptonite that can leave the fate of your marketing programmes (and budget) teetering precariously close to the cliff edge.

Therefore if **77% of marketers** don't feel they can rely on their CRM data to make decisions, we urgently need to address how marketers are acquiring their data and what lessons we can all learn to help pave the way for better practice.

The prime suspect of Bad Marketing Data

One of the main sources of marketing data is through lead generation programmes. While programmes such as content syndication are highly effective at capturing relevant leads at crucial times in the buyer journey, if executed without thorough data validation and robust governance practices, they can be a major contributor of bad data.

Let's explore 5 common forms of bad data and how they can seep into your operations via lead generation activities.

5 bad data habits of lead generation

1. Irrelevant data

A prime perpetrator of irrelevant lead data is poor audience targeting criteria. This may mean having criteria that is too broad or that poorly reflects your **Ideal Customer Profile (ICP)**. This results in achieving volumes of leads that are not the right fit, not the right decision makers
or not in-market, and therefore unlikely to convert.

▶ **Red flag: Low lead to MQL qualification rate**

2. Inaccurate data

Validating every lead can be time-intensive especially if you've generated a high volume of leads. However, skipping this step can open the floodgates to bad data unless you're using a supplier that has a thorough lead verification process, including checking each contact against their LinkedIn profile.

▶ **Red flag: Low lead contact rate**

3. Stagnating data

Leads don't stay warm for long so when you have their attention you need to move fast. If you can't control the pace at which your leads are generated or the speed in which you receive your lead report updates, your data quality can rapidly deteriorate while waiting to be followed up.

▶ **Red flag: Low MQL to SQL conversion rate**

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4. Duplicate data

If you're running a lead generation campaign on a CPL basis you don't want to waste money on leads who are already in your CRM. Failing to provide lead generation partners with exclusion lists can be a contributing factor to duplicate data and therefore an unnecessary drain on your budget.

▶ **Red flag: Duplicate contacts**

5. Non–compliant data

With data comes great responsibility...

In year 1 of GDPR alone, there were 200,000 reported data breach cases, with fines of over €56m, according to the **European Data Protection Board (EDPB)**.

While your own company may adhere to the strict regulations around data protection, it's paramount that you select data partners who also adopt robust data security procedures. Failure to pay due diligence when it comes to data protection can leave you vulnerable to financial, legal and reputational damage.

▶ **Red flag: Data protection complaints**

Simply put, importing volumes of MQLs that are inaccurate, incomplete or inadequate into your CRM or marketing automation platform is the equivalent to filling your petrol car with diesel. You're going to cause some serious mayhem.

This is because bad data goes further than clogging up your CRM and makes a shambles out of your sales efforts by passing on inaccurate contact details.

The threat of bad data

Advancements in MarTech are soaring, especially with the integration of machine learning and AI predictive capabilities. These technologies are fuelled by data-driven strategies and are revolutionising the way marketers identify, intercept and build profitable relationships with high value customers.

However, these technologies are only as good as the data you feed into them. Feed them bad data and you're going to get bad results such as:
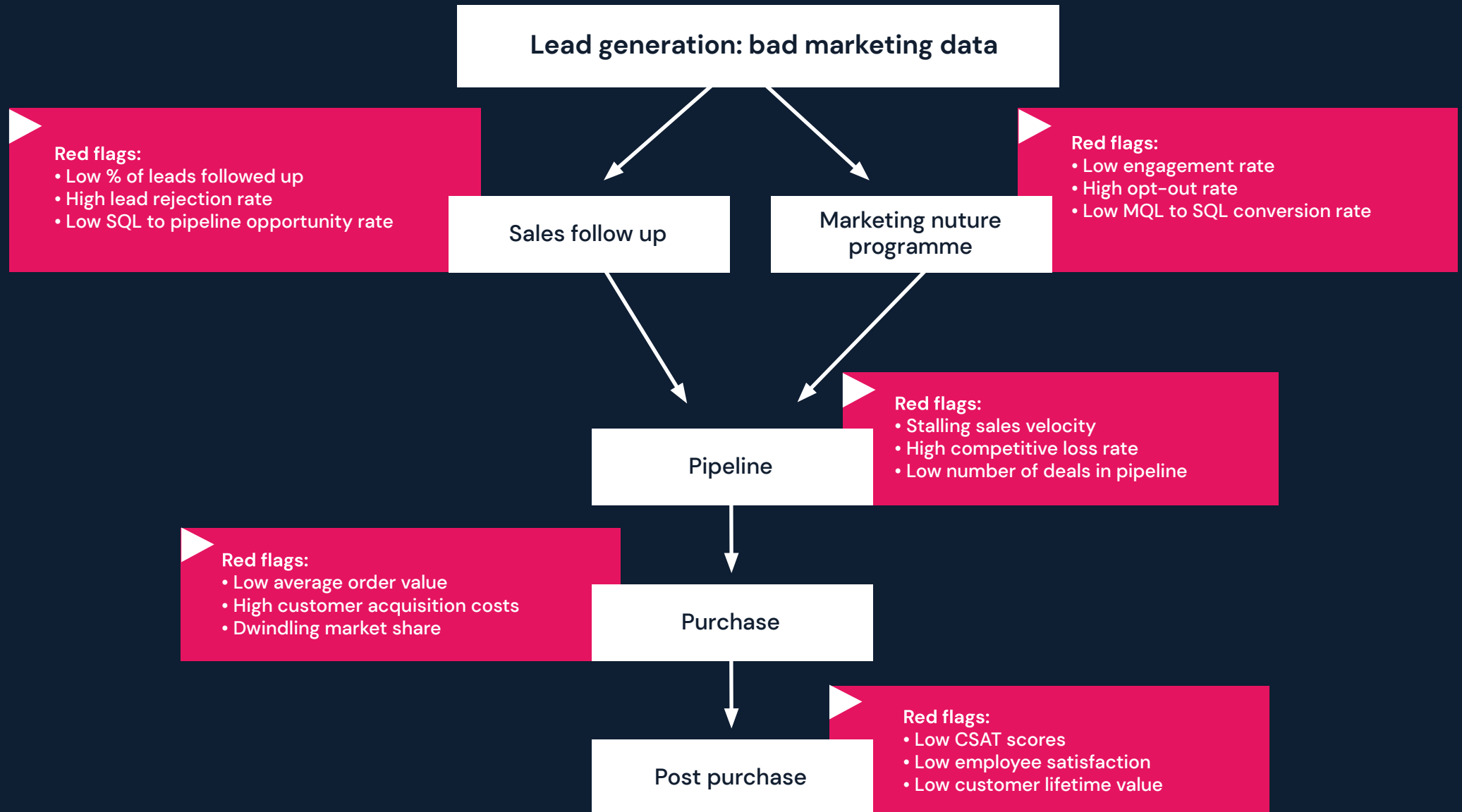
- **Inaccurate predictive models**
- **Poorly targeted campaigns**
- **Inaccurate analytics**
- **Loss of competitive edge**
- **Poor ROI**

To top it off, bad marketing data doesn't just affect the success of your marketing efforts – it puts your whole business in jeopardy.

Let's take a look at how the detrimental effect of bad marketing data can cascade all the way down to your bottom line.

The bad data escalation
Buckle your seatbelts, you're in for a ride...

Lead generation: bad marketing data

Red flags:
• Low % of leads followed up
• High lead rejection rate
• Low SQL to pipeline opportunity rate

Sales follow up

Marketing nuture programme

Red flags:
• Low engagement rate
• High opt-out rate
• Low MQL to SQL conversion rate

Pipeline

Red flags:
• Stalling sales velocity
• High competitive loss rate
• Low number of deals in pipeline

Red flags:
• Low average order value
• High customer acquisition costs
• Dwindling market share

Purchase

Post purchase

Red flags:
• Low CSAT scores
• Low employee satisfaction
• Low customer lifetime value

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Marketing nurture programmes

Marketing nurture programmes build relationships with leads earlier in their buyer journey by delivering value at multiple touchpoints. If your data is inaccurate, you face undermining your nurture strategy by triggering the wrong messages at the wrong time to the wrong people.

If you're running retargeting ads this can have costly implications and as for personalisation, if you're storing incorrect data against your leads you can end up damaging your reputation as well as your relationships.

▶ **Red flags:**
- **Low engagement rate**
- **High opt-out rate**
- **Low MQL to SQL conversion rate**

Sales follow-up

Marketing data often comes under heavy scrutiny at the point at which it's passed over to your GTM teams. Due to the resources required to follow up a lead, sales rely on quality data to prioritise their lead follow-up based on how likely a lead is to convert. They also require relevant and accurate information to inform their approach and ensure they tailor their communications to resonate effectively.

Incomplete, irrelevant, or inaccurate lead data therefore makes this process highly inefficient and as a result can incite mistrust and frustration between sales and marketing teams.

For instance, **research published by DiscoverOrg** reveals sales and marketing departments lose approximately 550 hours and $32,000 per sales rep from using bad data.

► **Red flags:**
  - **Low % of leads followed up**
  - **High lead rejection rate**
  - **Low SQL to pipeline opportunity rate**

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Pipeline

If your salespeople are having to make the best out of bad data to hit their quotas, it's likely your sales velocity is slipping. Without the right marketing data to determine purchase authority, likeness to convert and company fit, your pipeline is probably littered with tire kickers that, if by some miracle you win, turn into high-effort, very low-reward customers.

You may also end up tailoring a multitude of value propositions that deviate from your overarching vision and target market demand. This can weaken your position leaving you vulnerable to competitive displacement and stunted market growth.

▶ **Red flags:**
- **Stalling sales velocity**
- **High competitive loss rate**
- **Low number of deals in pipeline**

Purchase

When you convert customers that are not a good fit, they can end up eating away at your profit margin. This is because you have to pull more resource in to serving their needs and delivering on your purchase agreement. In the long run, this can restrict future product development plans and lead to missed opportunities where you don't evolve your offering to competitively fulfil shifting market demand

▶ **Red flags:**
- **Low average order value**
- **High customer acquisition costs**
- **Dwindling market share**

Post purchase

If you've had to bend your internal capabilities to meet the needs of unsuitable customers, your customer service and operational teams are likely to feel the strain first-hand. This may result in inconsistent customer experiences, lengthy response times and poor product performance.

While frustrations and low morale brew internally, your customers may take to airing their grievances via social media and review sites, all of which can damage your reputation, impacting your ability to retain and attract new customers.

▶ **Red flags:**
  - **Low CSAT Scores**
  - **Low employee satisfaction**
  - **Low customer lifetime value**

The bottom line

If your marketing efforts are failing to build profitable relationships or drive sustainable growth, the future of your business is at risk (aka you are doomed).

Gartner found that organisations believe poor data quality is responsible for an average loss of $15 million a year, while **research from IBM** discovered the average financial impact of poor data on businesses is $9.7 Million.

▶ **Red flags:**
  - **Low customer retention**
  - **Missed revenue targets**
  - **High operational costs**

So there you have it.
Bad marketing data is perhaps more dangerous than you ever imagined.

**The question is:
are you ready to do something about it?**

5 good lead generation data habits (to reverse the effects of bad data)

Great news, the bad data escalation is easily avoided by simply nipping the root cause in the bud.

The key is to build and nurture a data-driven culture that adopts the following 5 good data habits:

1. Relevant data

Spending time evaluating and updating accurate ICP criteria promotes good data habits. This involves collaborating with key internal stakeholders such as sales and accounts to gather data about your best and most valuable customers to understand what's considered to be a good fit.

As well as using data to find your best-fit leads, it's crucial to have an intent data strategy that will inform how you target the leads most likely to purchase.

This is where predictive analytics and AI-powered lead scoring come into their own. If you don't have this capability internally, seek a lead generation partner with their own proprietary AI platform such as **Pelago**.

When it comes to safekeeping the quality of your marketing data, make sure your campaign qualification criteria align with your objectives and lead follow-up capabilities.

2. Accurate data

Cross-checking every lead to confirm their job title, role and place of work are accurate and up to date is vital to safeguarding your operations from bad data. It's also crucial that contact details such as email addresses are checked to avoid frustrating your sales team.

When researching lead generation partners, be sure to quiz them on their verification processes. Partners that use both human-verification and machine-verification processes should have significantly higher accuracy rates and be a more reliable source for quality marketing data.

3. Timely data

Acting on new marketing data in a timely manner is essential to maintaining data quality. Matching the pacing of your campaign to your follow-up capabilities will help you optimise response times, ensuring engaged leads are kept warm. As is ensuring your lead updates are delivered at the right frequency.

When new leads hit your system, it's important all members of your GTM teams are aware of their own roles and responsibilities for nurturing or following up. This will prevent leads from stagnating in your system.

Having a lead prioritisation process in place is also recommended so resources are focused on the most valuable opportunities coming through.

4. Unique data

Data is expensive so you don't want to drain resource on leads that are already in your system. Creating exclusion lists is an easy way to prevent duplicate leads and boost ROI.

Good housekeeping is essential to preserving the quality and uniqueness of your marketing data. This includes systematically removing duplicates and updating any contact details on a regular basis. When it comes to nurture emails this will help the health of your send score by reducing bounce rates and improving engagement rates.

5. Compliant Data

A fail-proof method for ensuring all lead data is fully compliant is to leverage a first party data company who own, control and verify their data in accordance to GDPR and CCPA compliance. This ensures your marketing practices remain squeaky clean and your reputation untarnished.

Becoming the guardians of data quality

It's clear that better data truly leads to better leads. We've explored how conquering data quality can transform our marketing efforts, making our campaigns more effective and our results more impressive. By focusing on data accuracy, consistency, and relevance, we can ensure that our marketing strategies are built on a solid foundation.

Think of data quality as the backbone of your marketing initiatives. When we prioritise clean, reliable data, we not only improve our lead generation but also enhance our customer relationships and boost the bottom line. Accurate data helps us understand our audience better, tailor our messages more precisely, and ultimately, drive higher engagement and conversions.

So, let's make a commitment to better data practices. Regular audits, proper segmentation, and integration across platforms are just a few steps we can take to maintain top–notch data quality. By doing so, we set ourselves up for success, turning data into a powerful tool that fuels our growth and keeps us ahead in the competitive marketing landscape.
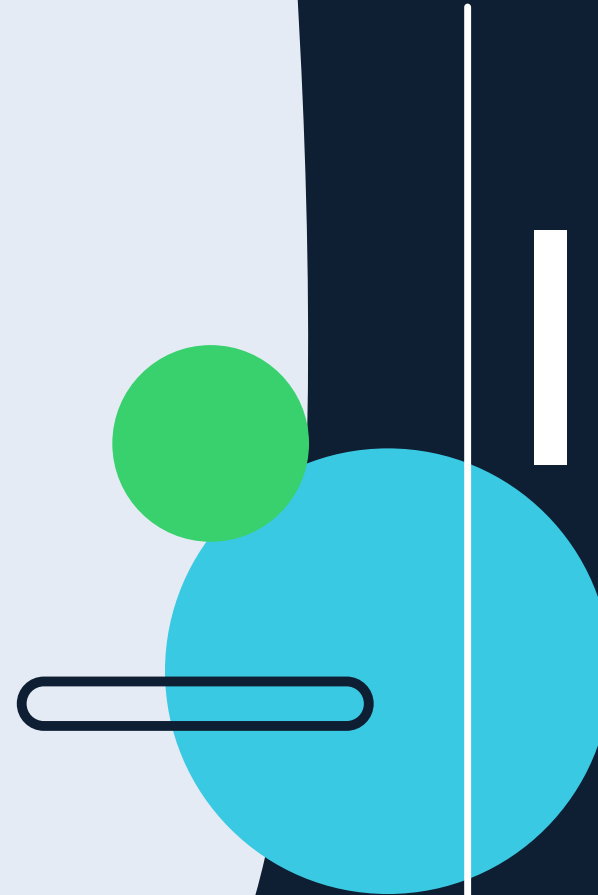
About Mixology Digital

At Mixology Digital, we believe people are the most important part of every B2B interaction. With a focus on understanding your unique needs, we tailor our strategies to ensure your message resonates and engages.

Our team is passionate about helping you create impactful campaigns that foster meaningful connections. We prioritise personalised approaches, ensuring your marketing efforts are not just effective but also genuine.

With 95%+ data accuracy and our custom-built AI tool, discover how we go above and beyond to help you build powerful relationships with your target market. We're here to support you every step of the way, turning your vision into reality with a human touch.

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