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REGISTRATION DATA DECAY & NEW DATA SOURCES

By

JOHN M. COE

VP Business Development & Marketing Strategy

Registration List Data Decay:

This is an ongoing problem for all organizers, and it's surprising just **how fast the lists of prior attendees changes from year to year or in other words – decays**. When we say “decays” we mean, something has changed in the individual's job description, company and/or contact information from year to year or to say it another way – in the last 12 months. These changes include individuals who change companies and others who change job responsibilities within their current firm.

A number of studies have been published on the rate of B2B data decay, and while the percentages vary they all are surprisingly high. **From a low of 30-40%** (ZoomInfo) **to as much as 60-70%** (Harte Hanks and B2BMarketing), it's an obvious issue that organizers need to face before launching marketing campaigns to drive registration.

One element of good news is that individuals who change firms may “self-surface” in their new job, as they know the show, and if their job still is in the industry they will want to attend and most likely register. That's good, but does not correct the old data and the money spent on marketing to them at the prior job or identify who has taken their place. If your campaigns include mail, then the cost of old data is even higher as the mailings will not reach them, even though they may reach the new person holding their position.

Clearly this impacts trade show organizers, partner and other lists from a variety of sources as they all have a degree of inaccurate data or data decay. The most important lists are the prior year registration lists, as they are by far the best lists to drive future registration and seminar attendance. **While no definitive study of the data decay in trade show registrations lists has been done, it's obvious that they, like other B2B lists, become less accurate over time.**

As any B2B list becomes less accurate, response rates logically decline as well. In fact, some lists are so inaccurate that a **3% response rate might actually be 6%** if the list is only 50% accurate and/or deliverable – an all too frequent occurrence in B2B.



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The three issues for organizers are:

- The **recognition that registration lists have most likely decayed** more than realized. The reading and distribution of this blog will increase awareness of this problem and we recommend it strongly.
- **Initiation of a data hygiene processes** to keep prior year registration lists as accurate as possible.
- **Finding new data sources** to supplement current lists

These last two issues are tackled head-on in the rest of this whitepaper.

4 Time Tested Data Hygiene Procedures

Here are 4 well accepted data hygiene approaches for organizers to consider:

1. **Don't wait** to update the registration list, as data hygiene should be an ongoing process. The data hygiene process should be initiated several months prior to show date, as it will take more time to complete than anticipated.
2. For mailing lists, **CASS certify the list to insure that postal standards are met** before updating, as the mailing address is the primary field used for matching and updating. This is called CASS certification (Coding Accuracy Support System). As registration lists are, at times, self- inputted by attendees input errors can also be high. Here are the most common self-input errors or inaccuracies starting with the most frequent ones first:
 - Different address/same company – at times the home address is listed
 - Characters inverted during data entry – all fields
 - Company spellings vs. divisions vs. abbreviations – e.g. IBM
 - No company name, but address is a company location or vice versa
 - Incorrect or incomplete zip code (9-digit zip is often not known by individuals)
3. **CASS certification is followed by NCOA** (National Change of Address) to pick up any company moves. Yes, a forwarding procedure is in place at the US Postal Service, but not only is there a chance of an expired address change (NOCA lasts only 18 months), but it also takes time to forward the mailing to the new location, and delivery speed might be important as the date of the trade show approaches.
4. The next issue is **to insure the e-mail addresses are updated**, as much of your marketing effort is e-mail. In addition, to the logical data input errors some individuals do not list



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their company email for a variety of reasons. Here are several tips to update and/or obtain the right email addresses:

- The most logical first step is to “ping” the new email address to see if it is still deliverable. Hard bounces are either a result of an individual no longer being with the company or an incorrect input. While this “pinging” catches most changes, not always does a lack of a hard bounce indicate the individual is still with the company, as not all companies clean their internal email file frequently and emails therefore will not show a hard bounce.

Recently I sent two emails to individuals at the same organizer from the Gold 100 list. One bounced and the other didn't. Upon phone verification it was discovered that both had left the company more than 6 months ago. Go figure!

- To add email addresses to contact records and/or to update them there are a number of data services that might help.
 - First, there are the traditional data compilers such as D&B, InfoGroup and multi-data compilers like Virtual DBS <https://www.virtualdbs.com> who will match files based on company demographic data and update contact level data.
 - Second, there are firms who specialize in updating and verifying email addresses such as Outward Media (www.outwardmedia.com)
 - Third, firms such as ZoomInfo <https://www.zoominfo.com> who continually update email addresses from scrapping them off websites. Unfortunately, not many firms list email addresses of individuals on their websites these days which limits this approach.
 - Finally, are those firms who will undertake a contact level data cleanup for a fee and may use telemarketing to update registration list. The extra benefit here is that additional names could be gathered as well. An example of this type of firm is Lead Genius <https://www.leadgenius.com>

Regardless of which one is selected, a test of their capabilities should precede sending the entire list for updating. Results can vary greatly.



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Depending on time frame and budget, use one or more of the methods and sources to update your current list as the payback from an accurate list is great. This is particularly true for the prior year registration lists, as we all know they are the best lists to drive registration.

New Data Sources:

A number of new and improved B2B data sources are now in play. These are in addition to the traditional sources we all know well. One tip for those seeking to see all the lists available is to visit www.nextmark.com and input you key words or phrases. Up will pop all the lists that match your input. It's the Google for lists.

The following is a partial list of some of these new data sources that go "deep" into each company rather than having just the senior level executives. This can be very important in larger firms as likely the senior executives may not attend the show.

Here are five that have deep coverage in their database plus emails and direct phone numbers:

- **SalesIntel** <https://salesintel.io>
- **Synthio** <https://synthio.com>
- **ZoomInfo** <https://www.zoominfo.com>
- **DiscoverOrg** <https://discoverorg.com>
- **InsideView** <https://www.insideview.com>

I've had some recent experience with SalesIntel and can vouch for the depth of their contact data with emails and direct phone numbers. It's not perfect (no list is), but better than any other data provider I've recently experienced.

An Example:

For this whitepaper I contacted SalesIntel, and asked them to provide statistics on a well know market that has several large and important trade shows – the printing industry. We all know the printing industry. Here are the statistics from them on the printing industry and an important segment – commercial printers. We used the NAICS code. As you review these numbers realize that SalesIntel does not have data on all firms in the printing industry, but rather focuses on larger firms. The verified counts shown below are contacts that have been verified by phone or email within the last 90-days. The non-verified number is the total contacts in their database. In addition, they can segment by title level, and that's what's also shown. Here are the results:



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NAICS code 32:	Printing and Related Support Activities	
Companies	313	
	Verified	Non-Verified
Contacts	5,469	88,280
Contact Level:		
• Board Members	20	152
• C-Suite	475	5,825
• Vice Presidents	706	4,929
• Directors	890	9,836
• Managers	2,273	25,258
• Influencers	1,038	44,043

NAICS code 323111:	Commercial Printers	
Companies	263	
	Verified	Non-Verified
Contacts	4,766	60,121
Contact Level:		
• Board Members	19	119
• C-Suite	415	3,061
• Vice Presidents	594	3,306
• Directors	794	7,222
• Managers	1,968	18,196
• Influencers	976	30,539

They guarantee the accuracy of the verified contacts at a 95%+ rate.

Just one example of new data sources available to the organizer market.



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Do A Data Check:

As we have discovered over years in the B2B data world, what data providers claim vs. what they actually have may be two different things. So with any of these and other data sources you are considering, I strongly suggest the following these steps to determine which list best fits your target audience and needs:

- Determine how the data is compiled, verified and updated.
- Request a complete sample record to determine what data is available
- Ask for a percentage of completeness in the database on each data element
- Select 3-5 of your target accounts and request all the data that each provider has on these targets. Pay for it if needed.
- Check the sample records of 5-10 individual contacts for accuracy by manually calling or emailing them.
- Compare and evaluate which of the data sources fits your target audience best.

This process will help to determine which data vendor(s) are the most reliable.

To Sum Up:

We hope this white paper on B2B data decay and new list sources helps improve registration results. As always, we welcome questions, comments or inquiries as how Direct Hit Marketing can provide B2B data services for your needs.



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John M. Coe

VP Business Development & Marketing Strategy

John has partnered with Direct Hit Marketing to further the use of data-driven marketing and sales strategies in the trade show and event industry. John is also Founder and President of B2BMarketing.com, a consulting, education and training firm.

He has been on both sides of the trade show equation as an exhibitor and attendee. As an exhibitor John was engaged in show strategy and lead qualification at numerous shows such as Graph Expo, Business Marketing Association Annual and Comdex. As an attendee and speaker John has attended too many shows to mention. He also has lectured on trade show marketing to Graph Expo and ConAg/ConExpo exhibitors, and has also written articles and blogs on trade show marketing.

His other background includes experience in both sales and marketing. On the sales side, John was a field salesman, national sales manager and executive in charge of both sales and marketing for three major B2B firms. On the marketing side, he was president of a B2B direct marketing agency for 10 years, National Campaign Manager at IBM, Sr. VP of B2B at Rapp Collins Worldwide and President of Protocol B2B.

John is also the author of *The Fundamentals of Business-to-Business Sales & Marketing*, published by McGraw-Hill.

Direct Hit Marketing

Direct Hit Marketing (DHM) based in Lafayette, CO has been providing data analytics to the trade show industry for 27 years with its **360 Registration Data Analytics Program™**. This data service starts with the show's registration data and combines it with the targeted mail, email and phone communications that were used to drive registration, and returns to the organizer up to 35 reports of what worked and what did not. The cost savings in mailings alone typically more than offsets the data analytic fee plus provides insight in how to improve future marketing programs as well.