



How Businesses Use Consumer Data For Customer Acquisition

Description

By James Schulze

This article discusses the many uses of consumer data â?? from telephone, texting, email, direct mail, and digital marketing campaigns to generating leads and more â?? and how companies use it to segment and target their desired audience. It also encourages companies to track key metrics throughout the customer acquisition process and be willing to make data-supported changes to their target audience and approach when needed.

Businesses spend billions of dollars every year trying to answer one fundamental marketing question: **Who should we market to?** Consumer data can help answer this question. Instead of marketing indiscriminately to everyone within a market, businesses can use consumer data to identify audiences based on geography, age, estimated income, homeownership, household characteristics, and hundreds of other available attributes.

That ability can make consumer data a powerful tool for customer acquisition. At The Leads Warehouse, we offer consumer data with over 360 filterable criteria. We have ready-made audiences, and we can use AI to create a lookalike audience from customer data. We also offer data validation and appending services to enhance client audiences (read our [blog](#), â??What Is Consumer Data? A Guide For Marketersâ?•).

But data by itself doesnâ??t create customers. The value comes from combining the right consumer audience with the right offer, marketing channel, technology, and sales process.

Consumer data starts with the audience

Traditional mass marketing begins with a large audience and sends a message to everyone. Consumer data allows marketers to more directly target specific consumers. The business can first define the type of consumer it wants to target and then build an audience around those characteristics. At The Leads

Warehouse, we have a data dictionary that we provide to a client with every attribute available. Any company buying data from a provider should insist on reviewing the data dictionary to ensure complete audience building is possible.

A home services company might want homeowners in selected zip codes. An insurance organization may want consumers within particular age ranges. A financial services company might use estimated income, age, geography, and other available attributes to build its target audience.

The objective is not necessarily to create the largest possible list. It is to create the most *relevant* audience for the campaign. Custom targeting can combine demographic information, consumer trends, and geography to find the audience. Or, our preset audiences can be used for quick start-up with minimal research needed.

Consumer data provides deeper targeting

A traditional consumer lead usually contains a relatively small number of fields. A long-form lead might provide contact information plus answers to several qualification questions. Consumer databases can contain far more information.

At The Leads Warehouse, consumer data can be filtered using hundreds of consumer attributes. These attributes can cover almost every aspect of a consumer's life, from financial trends to family size to interests. Additionally, with the ability to select criteria across a wide range of attributes, consumer data is ideal for [A/B testing](#).

That allows marketers to layer criteria when creating audiences. Instead of targeting everyone in a zip code, a marketer might select homeowners within that zip code who fall into a particular age and estimated income range. Those additional filters reduce the size of the audience but can substantially increase its relevance.

Using consumer data for direct mail

Direct mail remains one of the most straightforward applications of consumer data. The business defines its desired audience and purchases mailing information for consumers matching the target criteria. That can dramatically improve the efficiency of a campaign compared with simply mailing to every household within a market.

This is increasingly important because direct mail has meaningful downstream costs. Printing, creative development, postage, and fulfillment all cost money. Better targeting means those dollars can be concentrated on households that more closely match the company's desired customer.

Better targeting also includes deliverability. Direct mail should be scrubbed against National Change of Address (NCOA) and Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) data. Proper data cleansing allows for increased deliverability of mail. At The Leads Warehouse, our standard is **99%** deliverability for direct mail campaigns.

Consumer data becomes the foundation of a direct mail campaign before the first piece is even printed.

Using consumer data for digital marketing

Consumer data can also support digital customer acquisition. Businesses can use appropriate first- and third-party data strategies to build or refine audiences for online marketing. Rather than relying entirely on a digital advertising platform to determine who should see an advertisement, marketers can begin with information about the types of consumers they want to reach. Platforms such as Meta allow a custom audience to be uploaded so a marketer can reach the right audience for its product.

Consumer data can support audience matching, remarketing strategies, audience modeling, and other digital applications depending on the platform and permissible use of the information. The advertising campaign can then create the consumer action that turns the audience into an actual lead. In this sense, consumer data can become the raw material for lead generation.

Turning consumer data into leads

The distinction between consumer data and leads is important. They are not the same thing. A consumer data record does not necessarily represent someone who recently requested information about a company's products or services. The marketer still needs to create that interest. For example, a business can build a highly targeted consumer audience and use direct mail or digital advertising to reach it. Consumers who respond to that marketing can then become opt-in leads. Instead of purchasing the finished lead from another marketer, the business is using consumer data to help build its own lead generation funnel.

Using consumer data for outbound campaigns

Consumer data can also support outbound marketing where appropriate. Cold call lists are almost as old as the telephone itself, and can still be effective. A business may build an audience and use telephone or email outreach as part of its acquisition strategy, and when consumer opt-in leads are not available for a niche industry, a cold call list can be the best practice to reach consumers.

However, access to a phone number or email address does not automatically mean every type of outreach is permitted. Marketers need to consider Do Not Call requirements, applicable federal and state laws, communication methods, consent requirements where applicable, and the technology being used (read our [blog](#), "Why Is It So Hard To Connect With Prospects Today?"). The audience and the outreach method should therefore be planned together.

Consumer data is especially popular for political and not-for-profit campaigns. Political and not-for-profit callers are not subject to the same TCPA rules as a business calling B2C. Cold call lists are especially attractive to use for parties exempted from TCPA rules, as the cold call list built on consumer data can be highly targeted.

Email marketing remains an effective and popular means to reach target audiences. An email list that is properly compiled and used with CAN-SPAM laws is a time-proven method of building audiences. Email lists can be A/B tested more effectively than almost any other type of outbound campaign. When buying consumer data for an email list, businesses must keep in mind that domain strength affects deliverability, and that many email filters will flag spam words.

A valuable database is one the company can actually use effectively for its intended marketing strategy.

Customer acquisition isn't always about new data

Many businesses already possess valuable consumer information. Years of customer relationships, inquiries, purchases, website activity, and marketing can create large first-party databases.

The problem is that those databases are often incomplete. A company might have a customer's name and address but lack a current phone number. Another might have an email and telephone number but lack demographic information that would allow better segmentation. Consumer data can help enhance those existing records through [appending and validation services](#). This can make existing company data more useful for future customer acquisition and remarketing.

Better segmentation can reduce waste

One of the biggest economic advantages of consumer data is not necessarily generating more prospects; it can be generating less waste.

Consider a business whose ideal customers represent only a portion of the population within its geographic market. Mass marketing reaches everyone, including consumers who are poor fits for the offer. Consumer data allows the business to narrow the audience before spending money on advertising. The resulting list may be smaller, but the company can concentrate its budget on the people it actually wants to reach. This is important because the data itself is usually only one component of acquisition cost. Advertising, postage, creative development, technology, call center labor, and sales follow-up can all cost considerably more. For more information on consumer data pricing, read our [blog](#), "Consumer Data List Prices In 2026 - What Does Consumer Data Cost?"

Data accuracy affects customer acquisition

Targeting works only if the underlying information is accurate enough to be useful. Consumers move. Phone numbers change. Email addresses become inactive. Household circumstances change. So, consumer databases need to be maintained, updated, appended, and validated to successfully reach and convert consumers.

Bad data creates costs throughout the acquisition funnel. Mail gets returned. Emails bounce. Telephone numbers fail. Salespeople spend time working with inaccurate records.

The cheapest data can quickly become expensive when the rest of the marketing operation is built on unreliable information. Companies buying consumer data need to understand how the data is created and updated. At The Leads Warehouse, our consumer data is updated based on various reporting agencies and public information. Our consumer data is updated in real-time as an individual data point is updated by the reporting agency. If a specific reporting party updates new home sales on a monthly basis, then the homeowner data could be up to 30 days old. It is imperative that buyers of consumer data understand how often the data updates to understand the level of accuracy.

Measure performance across the entire acquisition process

Consumer data campaigns should ultimately be evaluated the same way as other marketing investments. The business should track what happens after the data is purchased, including:

- How many consumers were marketed to?
- How many responded?
- How many became leads?
- How many leads became sales?
- What did each acquired customer ultimately cost?

Those numbers allow marketers to compare different audiences and refine future targeting. A company may discover that one demographic segment costs slightly more to reach but produces substantially better customers. That intelligence can then be used to build the next data campaign.

Conclusion

Consumer data gives businesses something every marketer wants: greater control over who receives their marketing message. It can support direct mail, digital advertising, outbound campaigns, audience development, lead generation, database enhancement, and other customer acquisition strategies. But the objective isn't simply accumulating millions of consumer records. The objective is to use available information to identify the consumers most likely to fit the company's offer and then build an effective marketing campaign around them.

For businesses with the technology and sales infrastructure to turn audiences into opportunities, consumer data can provide a scalable foundation for customer acquisition while reducing the money spent marketing to the wrong people. Are you ready to talk about how you can use consumer data to grow your sales pipeline?

About the author

James Schulze is the President and CEO of The Leads Warehouse, a marketing data company with over 20 years of experience in bringing lead generation solutions to companies selling into the home, automotive, financial, insurance, health and life, and legal sectors. He works directly with clients to optimize conversion strategies and ROI across multiple verticals.

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If you are serious about growing your business, high-quality [consumer data](#) is important. Our team works with agencies to maximize their ROI on consumer data. Call **1-800-884-8371** or visit [The Leads Warehouse](#) to get started.

Date Created

2026/09/15

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