



Audience Segmentation

1.2 | Capturing Data

| Introduction

Audience segmentation plays a vital role in any marketing strategy and now more than ever customers are demanding vendors meet their exact preferences. This not only refers to the product or service in question, but the marketing information they receive pertaining to the prospective purchase. Data-driven segmentation allows marketers to gain the insight to be able to deploy effective demand-generation tactics.

In essence, segmentation is the categorization of a target market into subgroups according to predetermined factors. Homogeneous segments are **identified** and **analyzed** in order to deliver **relevant and timely communications**. With so much data available these days, marketers have to play a strategic game in deciding exactly how to segment and target their audience and achieve the best return on investment.

The current trend leans towards the ever-growing demand from customers for **personalization** and the **best user experience**. This shift in power requires marketers to ensure they deliver accurate campaign messages and if done well, can produce successful results and avoid unnecessary waste in resources.

In this white paper we will explore ideas and examples of how to best capture customer or prospect data, which will be used later to drive results. Remember this should only be done once your audiences are segmented (1.1).

| Access to Data

Any company, emerging or established, will, at varying levels, have access to data for their target audience. Start-up companies can purchase lists according to their defined categories, while more established companies who have traded and interacted with customers over a period of time, will have their own data. It's irrelevant **how much** data you have, but **how you manage and monitor** that data, to ensure it is kept up-to-date, relevant and of value according to your agreed terms of segmentation. **Quality wins over quantity.**

There are so many touchpoints between a company and a customer and if handled in the right way, those touchpoints can produce the necessary data to help identify marketing opportunities. These include both outbound and inbound channels, as well as the aspirational 'conversation' marketing of one-to-one personalized interactions.

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| Outbound

The traditional outbound options will serve to produce the basic segmentation categories. Direct communications via outbound channels include email, telemarketing, direct mail and mobile messaging. All methods should carry the implicit **'call-to-action'** with a view to invoking a response and capturing some vitals details.

Customers are now used to completing forms in order to make a purchase order or inquiry. Tests have shown that only the **essential basics should be requested at the first stage of interaction**. And only after further interaction and expression of interest from the customer, does it really allow marketing to request more specialized information and for the customer to feel comfortable imparting those details.

| Inbound

Through the various multi-media channels offered these days, customers don't have to wait to receive information from a company in order to start the interaction. They now have the power to approach companies and thereby availing companies to brand new prospective data. Websites and social communities play a vital new role for marketing to capture new sources of information. Social media sharing buttons can be found on most corporate websites nowadays, with a view to peer recommendations expanding the user base and consequently becoming a list growth tactic.

'Refer-a-friend/colleague' is a similar tactic to the social media sharing buttons and plays on the peer-to-peer influences, in order to widen the audience and grow the database. A recent report by ITSMA emphasizes the importance of the peer channel, explaining that **peers are now the top influencer in B2B purchase decisions**. Marketers therefore need to include peers when segmenting messages and information.

Call-in centers offer another huge opportunity to gather prospective data or follow-up details from existing customers.

'First-time inquiries must be captured and later inbound interactions represent many opportunities to gain intelligence on prospects and present them with tailored offers that progress them down your marketing pipeline.'

Note: Although search is a common touchpoint, the data it produces won't provide you with specific customer information, but it can provide you with insights into what your customers are looking for and what their pain points might be.

| The Conversation

Once interaction is identified through inbound and outbound channels, this should be the ultimate opportunity to take the communications to the **next level** and **create ‘conversations’ with target segments**. It's all about how marketing can monitor customers' response and then react accordingly, to make the messages and delivery become ever more personalized and relevant. Dynamic content — the offering of specific information in specific instances — is a great example of this, and is led by the customer, so that the marketing conversation is more pull than push.

There are many methods to engage customers, which in turn can help companies get closer to meeting their exact requirements. Offering value-added information such as white papers and webinars, or even ‘tips of the trade’ or ‘how-tos’ pertinent to their expressed interest, will position you as an expert in the field and hopefully give the customer the option to respond or comment with their thoughts and opinions. Surveys are another obvious way to collate thoughts and opinions and capture key data on preferences. Combining the two can be even more effective. A report by Marketing Sherpa² explains how a company called Vericept, found that 50% of webinar attendees completed a short survey on the webinar topic and even gave details on their own budget and goals.

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| Summary

Capturing the appropriate data is critical to your marketing success. However, doing so in a progressive manner is important to ensure you do not turn your prospect away. Calls-to-action, interactions and ‘conversation’ can give both your target segments and you what you need. Then you can begin to analyze your data in order to make better marketing decisions.

*See the next in our series of **Audience Segmentation** white papers (1.3) to understand how to analyze your data and what to leverage to get the results you need.*

Sources:

1. Marketing Sherpa, *Email Summit Wrap-up Report*
2. Marketing Sherpa, *How to Refine Your Database*

| About StratMarketing Group (StratMG)

With 95%+ in customer satisfaction ratings and 100s of projects, our proven methodology has successfully generated more than \$100M+ in sales for our industrial manufacturing customers. We help build deep and meaningful relationships with their prospects and customers which in turn is a catalyst to organic sales growth.

We consistently exceed objectives by leveraging complex technologies and analytic methodologies to deliver simplified sales, faster. Our methodology breaks the process into three main categories:

- ▶ Make Customers
- ▶ Manage Customers
- ▶ Monetize Customers

| Specialties

Demand Generation | Marketing Automation | Go-to-Market Strategy | Marketing Operations
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