ORACLE
MARKETING CLOUD

Targeting

(That's on target)

A How-To Guide for transforming your database to support effective segmentation and persona-driven communication and engagement.

ORACLE

Are you in the market for a chicken coop? WAIT! That's not you.*

Unreliable targeting can end a conversation from the get-go.

Dear [FORCE-FIT BUYER DESCRIPTION]...STOP! That doesn't work either.
Even if your contact database and net-new leads are being segmented by personas, if you can't accurately target your prospects, how can you fine-tune your message for them and deliver it via the channels they use?

Relevance + Meaningful Engagement = Revenue.
It's simple to state, but much more complex to actually execute. In this How-To Guide, we'll explore strategies actual Oracle Eloqua customers are using to generate some amazing results. They've proven that sound data practices can help you reach a narrowly-defined target at the exact moment your information has the most value.

Piqued your interest? Then you're the right target. Read on.

"The benefit of this in many ways is immeasurable; because we know what a contact is interested in, our Database Marketing team is able to serve up emails that are catered to our contacts and encourage them to engage with us to the sale."
—National Instruments. Inc.

Customers who use Eloqua's targeting and segmentation technology create 7X more inquiries and 4X more leads than those who do not.

*eloqua.com/conversation
Marketing Automation:
Start the Conversation

THE BIG PICTURE: Your targeting efforts are driven by powerful, persona-driven marketing and sales processes.

Hold on! Persona what? Trust us, it's all tied together.
Before we delve into the nuts and bolts of targeting and segmentation, it's wise to get a glimpse of where you can go: the Promised Land, marketing nirvana, or whatever you want to call it.

Well-understood personas are the basis for amazingly effective lead routing, scoring, and nurturing efforts.
We call this new, enlightened approach to engaging with audiences in ways that clearly demonstrate value *Modern Marketing.* It demands that you not only understand the nuances of who your buyers are and what they want to accomplish, but also which overt and covert pains are driving their actions, how they approach learning about and solving those problems, when they reach a buying decision, and why they buy. This is their journey, and broader knowledge leads to:

- **Alignment with Buying Dynamics:** Since you more-fully understand where a contact is in their buying journey, you reduce the risk of over- or under-engaging some person who simply responded to an email or is already far along the consideration path. This is key, since buyers can sense if you have the right appreciation for their struggles and goals.
- **Syncing to Digital Behavior:** We call it Digital Body Language. Every person who gets online to work, play, or learn, displays unique habits and social behaviors over their keyboard, tablet, and smart phone. Those activities can be detected and used to fine-tune the delivery and tone of messaging. This helps your become a smarter marketer—one who also can facilitate more meaningful sales discussions.
- **Speaking the Right Way:** It's not enough to simply act like you're in the club. Your communications must go beyond establishing a polite rapport. They must speak personally to your buyers. It's also critical to have systems in place to present clear pictures of where and how your contacts interact. This helps ensure that your messaging not only addresses their need, but also where they are in the buyer journey.
- **Failsafe Campaigns:** How many times has your team fallen victim to a batch and blast nightmare, possibly alienating a segment of potential customers because your message wasn't on point? Take hit or miss marketing and turn it into the right content, at the right time…to the RIGHT person.

"Cleaner data can earn you bigger money!"
—McAfee

- **Failsafe Nurturing:** To stay true to your promise of providing valuable engagements that your prospects will ideally thank you for, it's imperative to broaden your view of buying processes and stages to multiple scenarios, each united to well-defined segment paths that your teams have agreed upon and defined.

But it all starts with your database…

The Nitty-Gritty of Targeting

Poor data quality leads to non-targeted blast campaigns and increased opt-outs and database inactivity.

"Without some method for data and process governance, it was virtually impossible to create data-driven marketing programs…or demonstrate contribution and value."
—2013 Markie Award Entrant

You have to have a solid, dependable foundation before you can build any program or campaign. In the next several pages, you will see steps taken by some of our most successful customers to clean their database slates and empower more intuitive marketing efforts. Look for the highlighted Customer Hints for some extra insight on how your peers solved their targeting challenges.

"Our active list sizes were growing smaller daily, and our marketing teams were questioning the value of email marketing."
—Another 2013 Markie Award Entrant

DB should stand for database, not "data beast."

"List segmentation has been elevated to a new level with the availability of data from Marketing (Digital Body Language), Sales (opportunities and pipeline), and Finance (historic billings by product group) all in one place."
—Stone Mountain, Inc.

The Markie Awards honor excellence in marketing. Open to any Oracle Modern Marketer, the competition has generated thousands of entries for the coveted trophies. Check it out at **markies.eloqua.com**

PROJECT A: Where You Start

STEP 1: PULL YOUR PEOPLE TOGETHER

- **Drum Up Support from the Top:** Executive approval and support secures the change management from a top-down perspective. This requires buy in and commitment, two scary terms. Effective data management happens every day, not at random intervals.
- **Drum Up Support from the Bottom:** Those most affected by the changes (and the workload) need to be brought into the fold as quickly as possible. Effectively executed strategies are driven by governance and day-to-day management. Databases need nurturing, too. Don't go it alone.
- **Gain and Maintain Alignment:** Stakeholders must meet regularly to ensure alignment between sales and marketing and between global and regional teams with respect to data and the associated processes.

CUSTOMER HINT:
Superimposing the map of current infrastructure to the sales follow-up process along with field/online campaign process exposed the bottlenecks, gaps in lead flow management, plus gave pointers on critical elements for the new data structure design to accurately target the best prospects.

STEP 2: DO YOUR DATA DILIGENCE

- **Determine What's Critical to Your Personas:** Analyze all data field options from all sources (CRM, MRM, etc.) and commit to the most vital elements. Draw up your personas based on those key attributes across the industries and/or verticals you're targeting.
- **Nail Down Critical Resources:** Here's a fun exercise: ask a roomful of your cross-functional team, "Who owns data?" You will either end up with an argument over everyone claiming they do, or the blank look of a kindergarten class being asked who stole the tray of cookies. Without a clear definition of ownership, how can you possibly know what resources exist and how to manage end-to-end? The reality is that everyone shares the responsibility (and the pains of siloed efforts), and you need to identify data stewards across the systems and practices in question so that the actions of one do not impact those of many, or if they do, they do so in a way that's productive to the organization.

  If you find there are skills and process gaps, seek out a partner or vendor thatcan bring some strong best practice guidance across the three pillars of **People, Process, and Technology**. You should walk away with a clear plan that includes ongoing operational governance, and not a onetime cleanse.

CUSTOMER HINT:
To aid in segmentation and reporting, pick list values for fields like lead source, industry, number of employees, revenue, and campaign focus. Establish naming conventions for campaigns that clearly identify the time period, region, offer type, and campaign type being executed. Identify internal data stewards from regional teams to secure data quality for that region.

CUSTOMER HINT:
Digital marketing is always evolving. Your data must constantly be refreshed and your gathering refocused to really target the best prospects.

- **Determine Success Metrics:** If you can't measure them, you're not maximizing the value of your initiatives. Define and schedule metrics results reviews with your constituents. Make data part of your conversations.

  If you are worried about how to start the targeting conversation with sales (and want to avoid that glazed look in their eyes) just mutter one word: Reach. After they perk up, turn the reach conversation into identifying marketable contacts. Measure your engagement, active and inactive contacts in the database, and decide how to improve their ability to get to the right contact at the right time.

- **Don't Forget These Other Areas:** Add to reporting: net new contacts, active/inactive contacts, percent change, and contact profile data completeness.

CUSTOMER HINT:
It was well communicated that the success of this effort not only relied on an optimal technical solution but also on the universal adoption of data policies coupled with behavioral changes toward data handling in general.

PROJECT B: Data Done Right

STEP 1: BACK TO THE BASICS

- **Data Field Cleanup:**
  Standardize and Sync Across System Fields. Consider country/region and pick list values for previously identified fields, such as industry, lead source original, lead source most recent, lead status, key demographics, campaign focus, etc.

  Mandate 100% Data Population on Key Fields. This should be expanded to existing web forms, CRM lead page, and list uploads templates. Do not be afraid to ask media partners for the data. More complete data increases your velocity through the journey. If they cannot provide those key fields, have a backup plan to enrich your contacts.

- **Contact Clean-up/Enrichment:**
  The goal here is to get obsolete and unrequired contacts deleted from the database, such as removing Hard Bounced Contacts. The second step is to remove the camouflage your prospects are hiding behind. If you know where they go, who they are, and what their motivations are, you can augment important profile data for contacts that are deemed relevant to targeting and segmentation efforts for the marketing/sales process.

  Junk Contacts. It would be fun if mickey@mouse.com were an actual address. But let's be real: fake data is alive and thriving. Employ a name analyzer program or database scripts to identify junk content and records in the database. When possible, add this to your data normalization and validation efforts at the intake to ensure they don't get there in the first place. Set a periodic review for new creative entries; if for nothing else, it will serve as a source of entertainment for your next staff meeting.

CUSTOMER HINT:
Oracle offers a great built-in feature that keeps track of hard bounced email addresses even when the contact is deleted from the database.

Email Address Validation. Augmenting your process with external services to validate email addresses will help speed this process. Dead or defunct addresses can wreak havoc on your efforts. Using validation saves time, reduces risk by identifying known spam traps, and helps keep your sender score and reputation strong. Many of these providers will provide you with a deliverability score per address, which will allow you to determine the correct course of action.

Contact Relevance and Validation. Consider all these practices continuous improvement efforts, especially here. Always review and standardize your processes around critical profile fields. Whether these are title, demographic, or areas such as job role or job function translations, you need to understand the percentage of your database that is both relevant and marketable, and take the necessary steps to improve both. Whether you are creating your own table of roles and functions, or bringing data in through enhancement efforts, contacts need to continuously be validated against buyer personas.

CUSTOMER HINT:
In collaboration with sales, a list of accounts was compiled and categorized as "must have" and "nice to have". IT related contacts with manager and above job roles were sourced against this contact list from contact discovery vendors.

Data Enrichment. Determine and prioritize critical contact profile fields for completeness and map out a plan or approach to improve how you're messaging to these audiences. You can do this by augmenting information with an external data source, or by monitoring your progressive profiling and standard form requirements.

- **Master Suppressions and Contact Subscriptions:** Remember, earlier we mentioned shared responsibilities? Here is a great way to minimize the risk of complaints from your targets. Work with your data stewards to determine suppression and subscription rules that align with your go to market strategies. Be specific and give your prospects better options than all-or-nothing suppression such as an opt-in to specific types of communication like a newsletter.
- **Counter Competitors:** While this is a tough one to do, let's not make it easy for them to stay on top of your latest and greatest. There are many who thrive on being a fast follower, and would love to let you blaze the trails and tag along for the ride. Imitation is not always flattering; sometimes it's just downright annoying. Define a list of competitor domains to ensure that they are removed from any communications and do not make it into your lead queue.
- **Country Level Suppression:** Create and enforce a list of embargoed countries and other targeted risky countries as per company policy.
- **Internal Employees/Vendors:** Every marketing and sales resource wants to know which types of communication their prospects and customers are receiving. However, this does present overhead in managing them out of the process if allowed to go through. Instead, share your campaign and communication plans, and add employees and partners to the suppression list to avoid unnecessary metrics and confusion.

CUSTOMER HINT:
Whether you use the capabilities within a tool or system or do this as part of a larger corporate datamart that helps to feed segmentation, the results can be the same. Standardize your key fields, and look for patterns in the data. Areas such as job titles are a big one. Think of all the "Master of This" or "Grand Poobah of That" that enter via form submissions. Building a list of standard titles to help simplify and normalize will make your segmentation significantly easier. Go a step further and derive an organization or functional role by key words to help enhance your segmentation and targeting efforts. Want to automate cleanup? Look at dates of inactivity, and automate an "add to re-engagement campaign" to try and revitalize. If no action, deactivate and archive after your specified criteria.

STEP 2: BEYOND THE BASICS

- **Web Forms:** Create an audit process to review all active forms and landing pages. Use auto and or pre-population to all entry forms. This accomplishes most of what "fast find" data is needed to route your prospect to the proper resource. This can either happen by auto-populating from the existing database info, or using a third party on the form to do an auto-lookup and population. Why only on the intake forms? This will allow you to then use progressive profiling in subsequent touches, gathering critical persona information not found in standard data sources. This will also help add consistency to the form entries by leveraging existing and standardized data sets.

- **List Imports:** We like standards. Standards eliminate bad surprises. Define and distribute a standard template for list uploads to your constituents. Ensure that the list is submitted to you with in the proper layout, with as much of the standard fields completed as possible. This will speed up your ability to upload and communicate with the list, and reduce or eliminate errors.

- **Automating Data Clean-up and Standardization:** We live and love automation. It's what we do. And it's how we, and other Modern Marketers, eliminate the mundane, standardized, repeatable tasks so we can focus on higher-value work. The way to understand this is to look for patterns, and then build processes, as well as seek solutions that can automate those patterns. Data standardization and clean-up are prime areas to prove significant wins for your organization.

STEP 3: POWER IN THE RIGHT HANDS

A fancy, high-performance motor that sits on a stand in a garage doesn't do anyone any good. You need to ensure that the delivery of your precious leads occurs in an efficient manner. When was the last time you looked at the input of leads into your CRM? If you aren't sure and can't state your process guidelines, then read on.

- **Established Service Level Agreements (SLAs):** This isn't just for contacting within a specified timeframe. It's end-to-end. You can hardly expect sales to meet a first contact SLA of one hour if it takes two to move the lead into your CRM. Make sure that your process can support and encourage sales reps to take action.

- **Prioritize Your Processes:** Not every action needs instantaneous reaction. Make sure your process can deliver when needed, and don't let poor data quality or inconsistent accuracy stand in the way. If you don't solve it, the acceptance and utilization of the CRM and associated systems and processes will suffer. Nothing is worse than hearing sad tales of reps with spreadsheets instead of following up on the valuable MQLs you brought to the table.

- **Lead Scoring:** While this is technically part of prioritization, it is far more than that. Lead scoring allows you to base the passage of leads on demonstrated interest and fit to the buyer persona. Delivering 1,000 leads to a rep where only a fraction convert wastes their time. You want them closing deals. It's marketing's role to bring the prospects ready to enter the sales cycle to the table, and ensure high value conversations for both parties. Lead scoring—like all other methodologies—is a journey. When done correctly, expect to see shorter cycle times, higher conversions, and enhanced follow up by sales.

STEP 4: EVEN MORE BEYOND THE BASICS

We've mentioned these topics already, but here's how they will help you move beyond the basics of data management and targeting.

- **Re-engagement Campaign:** Having a million records with a 50% active rate is nothing to be proud of. If you have contacts that have not engaged in over 12 months, try to re-engage by offering some new content hot off the presses, and be sure to ask them to confirm their preferences. We've seen some crafty techniques for wooing prospects back into engagement, such as offering a prize for a subscription update.

- **Preference Update Campaign:** Time to time, its just good practice to ensure that you are delivering relevant content tied to your target's specific interests. If you learn something new about your buyer persona this is the perfect opportunity to ask for an update to their profile. You simultaneously get a heads-up to what interests them while driving further engagement.

- **Create Welcome Campaigns:** To nurture contact relations through a soft introduction to marketing efforts, as well as to profile their interests prior to marketing communications, create dynamic welcome campaigns based on contact source such as various website registrations, events, and product areas.

CUSTOMER HINT:
We created a campaign to engage our active contacts to profile their interests so that we could provide them with targeted content. Through this campaign, we profiled 87% of our database to Level 1 and 13% of our database to Level 2. In future campaign efforts, Level 2 has reached nearly 50%.

CUSTOMER HINT:
Our campaign welcomes the contact and asks them to choose their area of interest. Contacts are dynamically fed into these campaigns from website registrations (via a double form post) and from the CRM.

PROJECT C: The Follow-Through

Data cleansing and standardization is not a one-time activity. Proper checks and balances must be established to ensure that the data doesn't become stale with time.

Here are key things to consider to maintain consistent and clean data in your marketing database:

- **Documentation and Training:** Document and list all data processes in a centralized location for the organization so that they are easily accessible when needed. This single source of truth establishes exactly how to acquire and load new data. It's not enough to have it stored on a shelf (the dust mites don't care about marketing). Build out your plan for how you determine the level of implementation. Make it part of onboarding and regular operational reviews.

- **Appoint a Data Steward:** Empower the marketing operations team to act as a data steward to set overall data policies and processes, and to ensure that all teams are in compliance with the defined data policies. Make it responsible for reporting overall data health and communicating relevant data information (new rules, changes in policy) to the broader marketing organization. Where marketing data relies on input from other functions (sales, service, finance, web), the data steward can act as an ambassador, ensuring marketing needs are considered while gathering feedback. Data becomes more valuable with a point person to surface use cases and applications.
- **Schedule Database Audits:** Conduct periodic database audits for inconsistencies and non-standardized values for important data fields. If inconsistency is found, identify the data source that is responsible and review and correct.
- **Get Feedback:** Encourage feedback from your constituents, and most importantly, from your prospects and targets. The more they are willing to disclose about their preferences, the stronger your targeting can be.

Finally….Be your own best friend.

As a famous President said, "Trust, But Verify." Don't forget to do surprise checks yourself. Dive into the data and results. Double check that your practices match your personas. Make sure that your procedures are enabling sales, not just delivering data.

About Oracle Marketing Cloud

Modern Marketers choose Oracle Marketing Cloud to build customer obsessed cultures, create and manage ideal customers, and power revenue performance. They use award-winning technology and expertise to transform marketing by truly knowing the customer, engaging with cross-channel marketing, and achieving data driven accountability. Integrated information from cross-channel, content, and social marketing with data management and dozens of AppCloud apps enables these businesses to target, engage, convert, analyze, and use marketing technology to deliver personalized customer experiences.

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