Why **Social Data** and **Email Verification** are the Peanut Butter & Jelly of **Marketing Database Cleansing**

@FreshAddress®
THE EMAIL ADDRESS EXPERTS

By Brian Hession, President of Oceanos

Having clean contact data is an essential component of any sales or marketing program. With more accurate and complete data, you improve segmentation, lead scoring, and content alignment. Bad data? It can not only cost you time and money, but key missed opportunities as well.

The tried and true way of ensuring your contact data is clean is by an email verification process. Whether it's through an API solution that runs MX and Syntax checks or in-house deployments, it's common practice to load up a campaign, deploy it, and then isolate the bad data by seeing which emails get bounced back.

Of course, the more in depth the screening, the better quality the results. While most email verification companies have three designations—valid, invalid or unknown—using a company such a FreshAddress, which offers 27 different screenings, can give unparalleled insights into the health and validity of your email contact list.

And these 27 different screenings are anything but overkill. Think about the ubiquitous issue of the catch-all box, which essentially acts as a black hole in which emails addressed to non-existent users (previously deleted users or misspelled user names, for example) are routed, never to be seen again? From the marketer's standpoint, if an email is

routed to a catch-all box, it's not bouncing, and by all estimations, it appears to be deliverable. Accordingly, if you're using basic 3-screen email verification, you wouldn't delete that record or flag it as bad because it didn't hard bounce. Add in another 24 screenings and your likelihood of illuminating this problem is monumentally better.

There's clearly a dollar savings a company realizes by removing this bad data, which can end up filtering into sales. If email verification doesn't catch it as bad data but that person's no longer employed at the company, sales may end up picking up the phone, calling that person and only then realizing that that person no longer works with the company. What's the cost of the salesperson's time to make that call? Now multiply that by endless bad contacts.

Adding social data is next-generation cleansing

So we see how crucial it is to have highly detailed screenings for email verification, but now imagine if you went even deeper and layered email verification with professional social data to granularly assess the cleanliness of your contacts? Think of it as more efficient and cost-effective alternative to outbound calling verification.

At Oceanos, if a client is routing their house data through a cleanse process in our cloud portal, we do a match back to over 100 million social profiles, and we essentially walk through the contact's work experience. The first step is finding the company name on the client's input record in the work experience section of their profile—and if it's not the current one, then we know they no longer work at that company.

Additionally, sometimes a contact has two companies on their profile, both with the date range saying "present." Because we also assess the dates, we can recognize when we're looking at past employers if there's a start date and a confirmed end date. If it's determined that the title is right and the person works at the company, the contact can be mapped into the right persona. And if the information isn't aligned, the contact is flagged as potentially bad data.

It's not just about weeding out the bad data, it's about maximizing the good

But it goes even deeper. By socially verifying the contacts, you not only exclude bad, inaccurate data, but in the process, you also get more strategic insight into the contacts. The end result is that they can be more properly nurtured, and potentially more responsive.

Here's an example. Let's say the job title on a third party contact record is flagged. On the input record, this person is listed as Chief Operating Officer, but by using social data, it's determined that in fact, this person is the Chief Sales Officer. This person indeed works at the same company, but it could have potentially been routed into the wrong persona or nurture track.

By miscommunicating to the person, there's a potential lost business opportunity. But if the person was mapped properly and routed into the most optimal communications, there's heightened potential for a response. Plus, the velocity through the funnel could be faster because you're communicating to them with messaging that resonates most strongly with their business objectives.

Ultimately, when it comes to contact data, it's about quality, not quantity. Using email verification to assess the validity of your contact data is a tried and true method of data cleansing, and can uniquely provide info on opt-outs, spam traps or do not email

files. But by adding carefully culled data from each of your contact's own social profiles, you may end up with less overall contacts, but the quality of those you have will be top-notch.

About Brian Hession

Brian is a thought leader and innovator helping companies improve their demand generation and drive revenue. He advises internal teams and clients, ensuring the optimal application of data and technology to produce results. Under his leadership, Oceanos has held a market leader position for a decade earning numerous accolades from business and industry sources.

Brian serves on the MOCCA Operations Board - the leading association for marketing operations professionals - in the role of Data and Information.

Visit oceanosinc.com for more information.

About FreshAddress

FreshAddress provides a comprehensive suite of industry-leading services to help companies and nonprofits build, clean, and update their email address lists. Founded in 1999 and based in Newton, Massachusetts, FreshAddress is the original developer and U.S. patent holder of email change of address (ECOA) technology. Other services include B2C email appending, B2B email appending, postal appending, email list audit services, real-time email address correction services, and email database consulting.

Oceanos
A TechTarget data solution