

As Nature Inspires Art, Data Inspires Customer Relationships:
Using Data to Nurture Your Best Leads

dun & bradstreet

GROWING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH DATA

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Getting Started

Focus on the Painting,
Not the Paintbrush

How can you use data to have the biggest possible impact on your business?

Data can be used to create a dynamic, accurate representation of both customers and prospects. Michelangelo once said, "Every block of stone has a statue inside it and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it." Marketing's job is to discover the relationship inside every prospect and set it free. Like a sculptor with a chisel, marketers can use data to uncover the full potential of a lead. And once you understand the possibilities, you can continue to use data to nurture that lead into a long-term, loyal customer relationship.

This e-book is the second in a series designed to show how data can inspire a new art of marketing among today's practitioners. But the art of modern marketing isn't in the data itself—it is in what you do with the data. What happens when you understand which data is most important, how to make sense of it and how to apply it to solve marketing challenges? You're able to develop leads smartly and build better relationships. In this book, we'll explore how data can help you turn prospects into relationships, and use those relationships to drive revenue.

Your Job Isn't to Make Data—It's to Make an Impression

"Once you've got a digital trail, you've got data. Once you've got data, you have the basis for insight."
– Martin Hayward, former director of strategy and futures, dunnhumby

"Nobody counts the number of ads you run; they just remember the impression you make."
– Bill Bernbach, advertising pioneer and founder of DDB

?

Can You Answer These Questions?

- Which leads represent the greatest opportunity?
- Where should I focus my marketing time, energy and budget?
- What can I do to move the best prospects through the funnel?
- How can I maximize the revenue potential of every relationship?

2



Information is Worthless Unless You Know How to Use It

As marketers, our job used to be simple: create awareness and generate interest.

The business of building a relationship didn't begin until prospects got in front of the sales team, but today's online-savvy customers already know what they're looking for and have done a lot of research before they ever want to engage with sales. So the challenge has become finding creative ways to keep your message in front of potential customers. More so than just keeping your message front and center, marketing has to find a way to start building a relationship intelligently to facilitate and enable sales conversations when they eventually happen. That's why we invest a lot of money in lead development programs designed to:

- Capture and sustain interest with relevant content
- Move captured leads toward purchase
- Generate high-quality, qualified leads for the sales team

To develop leads, we have to know something about customers. What do they want? What are they thinking about? This insight is fundamental to moving prospects through the funnel. We capture more data about our customers and prospects than at any point in the history of business. So we should have more insight than ever, right?

82% 82% of CMOs feel unprepared to deal with the data explosion.[1]

On average, organizations use 36 different data-gathering systems and vendors for marketing efforts.[2] **36**

When asked "what do customers think?" marketers frequently turn to research to gather data and draw insight. But this can be both expensive and time consuming, and it doesn't always yield the results they really need. Besides, the challenge that most marketing organizations face is not the lack of data—it's that they don't do a good job of putting data to use.

There are two reasons for this:

1. The data captured isn't always available when and where marketers need it to draw insight.
2. Marketers frequently struggle to ask the right questions of the data.

[1] "Stepping up to the challenge: CMO insights from the Global C-suite Study" IBM Institute for Business Value, 2014
[2] Forbes Insights: "Customers For Life—Technology Strategies for Attracting and Keeping Customers," 2014

Finding Inspiration in What's Nearby

Capturing leads is a data-gathering exercise. So why do we think of leads differently from research data? Every contact with prospects and customers provides data you can use to make your marketing better. Each interaction has the potential to deliver powerful customer insights—if you're capturing the right information.

This doesn't necessarily mean you have to ask a lot of additional questions on lead forms. Quite the contrary. Best practices tell us that you need to keep your questions brief. The solution is to enhance the information that they provide with information gathered elsewhere. Data companies (like Dun & Bradstreet) can enrich basic B2B response data with robust corporate and executive contact information. You can also capture behavioral data and associate it with your new prospects.

The key is to figure out which data is going to be most valuable to your organization and find creative ways to capture and make use of it. But simply having data doesn't create insight any more than having a paintbrush creates art. You have to know how to apply each to do something remarkable.

The Art of "Why"

> *"To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old problems from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advance in science."*
> – Albert Einstein

Remember when you were a kid and you used to ask "why" about everything? If you have children of your own, you may be reliving that with a renewed appreciation for your parents. Children approach the world with an inherent curiosity that too many of us lose as we get older. "Why" was critically important to how we understood the world around us. We can learn a lot from that.

"Why" should always be your first question when you consider your data. Why did one campaign outperform another? Why did a piece of content that worked so well for three months suddenly fall flat? Why do certain types of clients respond to certain types of content and not others? There are other questions you can ask, of course.* Explore the "who," "what," "where" and "when" in your data. Even the simplest question can drive insight. But remember … the more intelligent your data questions are, the more useful the insight will be.

*To learn more about asking questions of your data, read Dun & Bradstreet's "Are You Asking Your Data the Right Questions?"

Insight Inspires Artful Marketing

When you know more about a prospect, customer or company, you can use that information—along with behavioral insight—to communicate in ways that are most relevant to them. The more relevant the content, the more likely they are to remain engaged. For example, TNT Express enriched 60% to 80% of its business data from the current worldwide customer database with third-party appended data. The additional insight gave them more "golden leads," allowing them to work more intelligently and efficiently. The result was 10 times higher conversion from suspects to prospects to customers.[3]

Putting Theory Into Practice

- ☐ **Understand what you're working with.** What data is being captured about prospects? What is currently being done with it? Who owns it? Find all of the sources of information that you currently have.
- ☐ **Identify what's missing.** Do you have accurate firmographic data for every prospect? Industry data? Executive contact information? Are you capturing behavioral data? Put together a wish list of things you'd like to know about your prospects. Odds are good that the marketing automation or lead-capture tools you're already using can accommodate more data fields.
- ☐ **Put together a plan to fill the gaps.** In many cases, data may already exist within your organization. If it doesn't, look for third-party partners who can supplement what you already know.
- ☐ **Ask a lot of questions.** Start with "why," but always stay curious about the information you're capturing. Remember … insight-driven marketing isn't a destination—it is a never-ending journey.

Are you ready to start using insight to nurture prospects and build relationships? Before you do, make sure you're focused on the right ones! Continue reading to learn how.

[3] Dun & Bradstreet, "TNT - More insight and golden leads thanks to Market Insight"

3



Brushes, Paint and Canvas
Do Not Make the Artist

The Sculptor's Role is To Set the Art Free From the Stone



It's a process that begins with being able to see potential. The same is true for your prospects. From the moment a potential customer initially engages with your business, there is an opportunity to develop a relationship. But do you understand the potential of that relationship?

Sculptors examine a block of stone before beginning, because the sooner they can identify the characteristics of the stone, the better they'll be able to figure out what to do with it. While some stones have characteristics that limit what can be done with them, the best sculptors can still find ways to work around them, and with them, to extract a work of art. Similarly, prospects and customers aren't all the same—some have more value than others. The sooner you can categorize and prioritize prospects appropriately, the smarter you can be about how you communicate with them, and how much time and energy to spend on them. That's where data comes in.

Just because your business has invested in tools to nurture client relationships does not automatically mean that those tools are being used well. Each day, businesses spend millions of dollars in the effort to find, cultivate and retain new prospects that may or may not grow into strong customer relationships. How can you make sure you're cultivating the relationships that really matter? How can you make sure you're actually moving them through the funnel?

Use What You Already Know

Smart marketers can use what they already know about existing customers to predict what should, or could, happen with similar prospects. Every interaction is a source of information. Behavioral and interaction data from existing customers, combined with data from your CRM and marketing automation systems, provide a source of continuous feedback on how to initiate and develop new or prospective relationships. The more complete and integrated the customer data is across the customer lifecycle, the more useful it is, because it provides a holistic view of both customers and prospects. Remember … your most valuable prospects are simply customers who haven't bought yet. Once you've got that holistic view, you can segment your audience into groups with shared needs and interests.

More effective segmenting allows you to personalize nurture content for your most valuable segments. And that will likely result in more funnel movement. Start with your existing customer base. What do customers with the most potential look like? In some cases, customers with the most potential are those who generate the most revenue. In other cases, it may be customers that are buying the full portfolio versus an individual product or products. The bottom line is, figure out what makes your most valuable customers valuable, and then look for similar prospects.

Is it Possible to Over-Segment?

With today's marketing automation platforms, micro-targeting has become pretty easy. But are you getting value from your efforts? And are your customers getting value from your communications? Consider consolidating segments when you aren't seeing value—and focusing on the segments that are performing.

The research company B2B International suggests a four-question test for segmentation:[4]

1. Are they truly different in a meaningful way?
2. Are the segments significant enough—do they represent a big enough sales opportunity either in total potential volume or in size of individual deals?
3. Do companies fall clearly into one of the segments?
4. Can each company be easily identified as belonging to a specific segment?

[4] B2B International, "The Importance of B2B Segmentation"

B2B segmentation is particularly difficult. This is in large part due to the greater complexity of the buying cycle. There are typically several decision makers involved, and the buying cycle takes more time. But those challenges simply make the benefits of proper segmentation more significant:

- Differentiate your company
- Build long-term relationships
- Get leads warmed up for an eventual sales meeting

Introspection Drives Insight

So you know you want to segment. But *how* should you segment? While there is no single answer for all B2B organizations, there are some common things that every business should be thinking about. Start by interrogating your customer data.

- What kinds of companies are buying? Are they large or small?
- Do certain geographies perform better than others?
- Which industries/segments are already saturated? Which represent the largest or best opportunities?
- What are your customers actually buying?
- Does offering premium packages or products to customers who have had negative experiences with that same product result in sales?
- Or would you be more successful by recommending an entirely different product?

Next, define functional roles you need to reach. Who's involved and what do they need to be convinced? For instance, if your business is trying to reach CIOs, what materials and messaging will be most relevant? Are the functional roles the same for all of your industries, regions or their purchase behaviors?

Then, understand and define the outcomes you want. Where do prospects begin and where do you want to lead them? But be sure you're not missing the big picture. If you're leading a CIO to a product sale when what they really need is an end-to-end solution, you may be leaving revenue on the table.

Finally, build customer journey maps.* Remember that customer journeys are not always going to be linear, but if you understand how a relationship typically progresses you'll be able to market more intelligently.

By constantly capturing and analyzing customer data, you can make every future interaction smarter, more relevant and more likely to make a positive impression. Using that data to nurture prospect relationships and guide them to the best place for them helps to ensure that your marketing time and dollars are spent wisely.

A word of caution: Make sure you distinguish between customer behavior and prospect behavior. Many companies make the mistake of sending the same newsletter or sharing the same online content with prospects and customers. Make it a point to compare and contrast existing customer and prospect behavior to better understand where they differ. Remember, even when you think you know your customers well, there is always new insight in data.

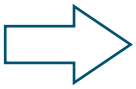
*To learn more about building customer journey maps, read this quick guide from the BigDoor Blog.

Putting Theory Into Practice

Don't try to do everything all at once! Keep in mind that using data-inspired nurturing to gently guide prospects helps to ensure that your time and marketing dollars are not spent in vain. Choose the areas where you have the most useful data and build out from there. Remember, you're going to gain valuable insight even if you start out small. Look for commonalities that you can take advantage of across different variables. Here are some factors to consider when you explore better segmentation:

- ☐ **Firmographics.** Do companies that share certain characteristics buy in similar patterns?
  - Size
  - Location
  - Industry
  - Revenue
  - Number of employees
  - Satellite offices
- ☐ **Roles and functions of individuals.** Do certain titles and channels respond better to certain types of content—even across firmographic segments?
  - Content consumption
  - Online behavior
  - Response to messaging
- ☐ **Interaction history.** Do interactions with sales, customer service, in person and on social media share any similarities?
- ☐ **Specific needs.** Do companies that are exploring particular functionality behave similarly?

Once you've identified your segments and where they are in their journey, it'll be much easier to provide them with more relevant content. You'll know where to focus your efforts, and how to make sure you're saying the right thing to the right customer at the right time. As a result, your marketing automation platform will deliver more value than ever.



Once prospects become customers, how do you maximize the value of the customer relationship? Read on to find out.

4



To Paint a Stunning Portrait, Know Your Subject Well

"The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance."
– Aristotle

So far, we've talked a lot about: 1) how more complete behavioral data can provide a better understanding of prospects; 2) how using existing—and the best—customer data can help to focus efforts; and 3) how data generates valuable information and insights to inform better marketing. But what happens to that insight when the prospect becomes a sales lead?

In far too many marketing organizations (maybe including yours?), the accumulated learning from the nurture process is abandoned when the lead moves from marketing to sales. But if the information gathered in the marketing process is valuable to marketers, shouldn't it stand to reason that it would be valuable for sales as well?

Furthermore, sales professionals are continuing the dialogue. They're continuing to gather information about prospects—and later, about customers. The customer engagement process doesn't stop once a customer makes a purchase—and neither should your learning process. Customers will still be engaging with your brand and at that point it's even more critical to pay attention to them than to prospects. Who might be an upsell or cross-sell customer? Are the *right* customers engaging? Are the right titles within a customer organization engaging? How deeply are they engaging (registering, filling out inquiry forms, returning to your website, sharing content, becoming viable leads for new products)?

This is not to say that sales and marketing care about (or will use) the exact same data. The organizations are different and they'll focus on different aspects of the relationship. But let's be clear—they're both focused on the relationship!

Reveal the Source of Your Inspiration

Sales and marketing have often been at odds. There are many reasons cited for the divide, but it really comes down to one thing: Sales teams consistently complain about the quality of the leads they get from the marketing team. And in many cases, the complaints have been justified. The sales team aren't blameless—they've contributed to the rift. But marketers are in a unique position to heal the divide—and benefit from it in the process.

As marketers, we're doing a lot more to ensure that we're capturing quality prospects. We've already talked about ways that data can help you be more artful in how you market. We've explored ways to find insights that will help you say the right things to prospects at the right time. But if your marketing team is already using data, does your sales team know about it?

Ask yourself: Am I actually providing useful data to sales? Am I giving them what they need to be successful? No matter how good your lead generation process is, the data that you capture could probably be enriched in some way. The sales team may say that they have enough information, but is that really true? On the flip side, are you giving them "too much" information—i.e., irrelevant data? Consider ways to package the information you give sales for quicker consumption and ease of use.

In Chapter 2, we talked about making sure that you've identified what data matters to gather insight—and about the value of looking to third-party organizations to supplement and validate data where needed. This is where that incremental data can yield even more dividends. The same data that provides insights to you can give the sales team a competitive edge when they're calling on a prospect.

The next question is: Have you learned anything along the way that could benefit sales? Since the marketing team gets to observe prospect behavior before they engage with sales, you're in a unique position to gather market intelligence. Sharing key observations can go a long way—both about specific prospects and about the industry in general:

For specific prospects:

- What made them engage?
- What secondary and tertiary content did they consume?
- How many points of interaction have happened so far? How close in time did these interactions occur?
- Based on their behavior, what kind of customer do they look like?

For the market in general:

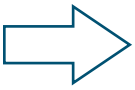
- What conversations are going on in the market? Package social listening data for sales so they've got their finger on the pulse of the market.
- What information of ours is resonating? Make sure that sales knows which topics garnered the most interest—as well as those that fell flat.
- Who else in the organization responded? Were certain titles more likely to engage than others? Who was the first to get involved?
- In what order did prospects consume data? Beyond individual data, are there trends that suggest valuable market approaches?

Talk to your sales leaders about the information that will help their teams. Engage them in the process and make them active participants. Then make sure they understand that you want to know what they've learned as well!

Putting Theory Into Practice

Ensure that both your marketing and sales teams understand the value they can offer each other.

- ☐ **Define and communicate a corporate philosophy for the customer relationship.** Every marketer and sales person should understand that the relationship extends across organizations.
- ☐ **Make shared behavior data mandatory.** In some organizations, the retention team is separate from the outbound marketing team. If those teams aren't in agreement regarding lead-related definitions and aren't actively sharing critical data with one another, you may be missing out on excellent opportunities.
- ☐ **Always keep marketing and sales involved after the sale.** Any good sales team should be continuing the conversation, and marketing needs to stay engaged with sales to learn as much as they can about how to extend the relationship. In most organizations, there is room for both sales and marketing to do more to nurture loyal relationships.



So your sales and marketing organizations are more integrated. Now what? Read on to make sure prospects become not only customers, but your best customers.

5



Nurturing Relationships With the Power of Data

"Art is never finished … only abandoned."
– Leonardo da Vinci

The same should be true for the customer relationship—you're never truly finished. Yes, sales and marketing need to work closely together. And in the best organizations, they probably do. But where else does the customer relationship manifest itself? How can we take advantage of that information and use it to our advantage?

Every point of interaction with your company is part of the relationship. Marketing, sales, finance, customer service and support—they're all involved in the relationship. And the journey that starts with a prospect should continue through purchase and repurchase. Ideally, it would include buying new products or services when it makes sense and organically developing brand advocacy.

Most businesses today are aware that it's much more costly to acquire a new customer than it is retain the customers they already have. Yet each day, businesses spend millions more on acquisition than retention. According to a recent *Forbes* study[5] 94% of respondents said that keeping customers for life was a priority. But only 38% were actually focused on repeat customers for revenue growth. 47% of respondents didn't know what the lifetime value of their customers was.

Even when sales and marketing are sharing information and insight, they aren't necessarily using shared data. This is even more likely to be true when you extend to finance, shipping or customer service. If this is the case, how in the world are we supposed to be able to gain incremental value from customers? More importantly, how are we supposed to give them the kind of relationship experience that customers increasingly expect from their partners and vendors?

6%

"Just 6% of marketers say they have attained the single view of the customer that is necessary to support their cross-channel marketing goals."
– Signal[6]

[5] Forbes Insights: "Customers For Life—Technology Strategies for Attracting and Keeping Customers," 2014
[6] CMO.com study, "Just 6% Of Marketers Have A Single View Of The Customer"

Both Inspiration and Art Can Come From Anywhere

The strategies that we've proposed so far have ranged from fairly straightforward to increasingly complex. This is where things can get complicated. Marketing leaders have the opportunity to take the lead in redefining the customer relationship as an ongoing, organization-wide emphasis. That requires a shift in approach from every department. *Forbes* lays out some key recommendations.[7] Organizations must:

- Prioritize customer-for-life goals.
- Make regular use of lifetime value metrics.
- Take a whole-organization approach to strategy setting.
- Simplify and centralize the platforms that house customer information and manage communications.
- Use a 360-degree view of the customer to make communications both personal and relevant.

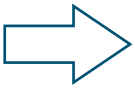
Why is this exercise so critical? Increasing customer retention rates by 5% serves to increase profits by 25% to 95%.[8]

Modern marketing artists understand how to interpret data that comes from anywhere in the enterprise and apply it to grow both relationships and business.

Putting Theory Into Practice

Initiating an organization-wide data integration project can be daunting—that's why so few companies have done it. But take heart: You don't have to do it all at once. And there are things that you can do organizationally to shift the view of the customer relationship.

- ☐ **Extend the analytics approach you use on prospects to customers.** Identify more "look-alike" customers within your own database and make sure you're marketing to them. Apply the same firmographic, geographic, behavioral and needs-based questioning methodology.
- ☐ **Gather data from everywhere.** Even if it isn't fully integrated, use what you learn to anticipate your customer's needs and wants before they are voiced.
- ☐ **Use smart filtering** to figure out which data is the leading indicator for the metric you want to focus on—sales, engagement, etc.
- ☐ **If you're building your approach to data, make sure that data is accurate and up to date.** Invest in data cleansing. Not just one time, but on an ongoing basis.
- ☐ **Stop talking about "handoffs" between marketing and sales.** If you are thinking about it as two separate relationships, it will probably feel like a disjointed relationship to your customer.



Remember … all the data in the world isn't helpful unless you give your customer communications a human voice. In order to get to know prospects, you need to let them get to know you and your brand.

[7] Forbes Insights: "Customers For Life—Technology Strategies for Attracting and Keeping Customers," 2014

[8] Retention Science, "Customer Retention Should Outweigh Customer Acquisition"

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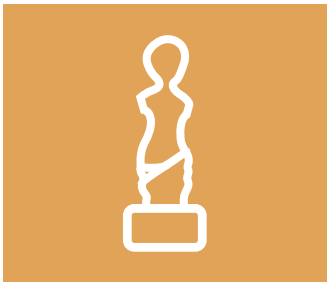


In Conclusion

It's All About People

We've spent a lot of time talking about using firmographics and behavior to prioritize prospects by their potential value. And we've also talked about "the customer" and "the customer relationship" in very abstract terms. It's easy to get lost in the technical details of nurture streams and how to reach a target audience. But the one thing that we—as marketers—cannot lose sight of is this: It's about people. Yes, the company is making the purchase. But the relationship is with a person.

The relationship starts at the moment of contact, whether via a visit to your website, a tweet from your business account, an advertisement or at an event. Nurturing that initial contact into a real relationship is the true art of using data-inspired customer intelligence. The new art of the marketer is building relationships with people, not just organizations and other businesses. Data intelligence enables that marketing artistry, and the artistry itself is in *how* that information is analyzed, applied and acted upon.



Automation doesn't have to feel cold and mechanical. A computer can be programmed to sculpt a statue or digitally paint a picture. But when that same piece of art is carefully crafted with a human touch, the end result resonates with a depth and impact that cannot be rivaled. The more you know about your audience, the more personal your communications can be. When data intelligence is applied smartly and correctly, contact with customers and new prospects moves beyond mere sales qualification and develops into long-lasting, loyal, human relationships.

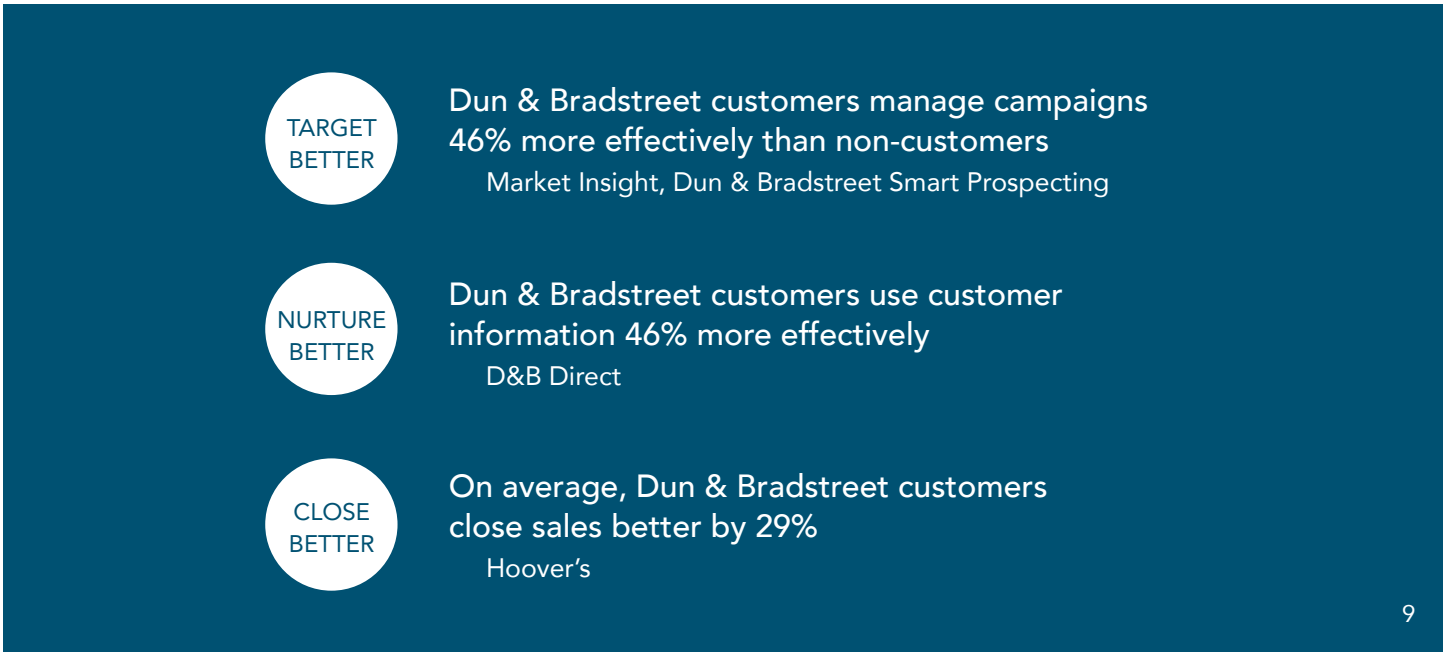
> *"Some painters transform the sun into a yellow spot, others transform a yellow spot into the sun."*
> – Pablo Picasso

7



About Dun & Bradstreet

About Dun & Bradstreet



Dun & Bradstreet (NYSE: DNB) grows the most valuable relationships in business. By uncovering truth and meaning from data, we connect customers with the prospects, suppliers, clients and partners that matter most, and have since 1841. Nearly ninety percent of the Fortune 500, and companies of every size around the world, rely on our data, insights and analytics. For more about Dun & Bradstreet, visit DNB.com. Want more perspectives on data and the new art of the marketer? Visit *Digital Marketing Optimization*, our *CMO Insights* destination and the *Connectors* blog for data-inspired B2B marketing executives.

[9] 2015 Dun & Bradstreet study with a major global technology analyst firm.

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