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# Don't Drop the Lead: Understanding the Pitfalls of Content Syndication

Make the unpredictable predictable.



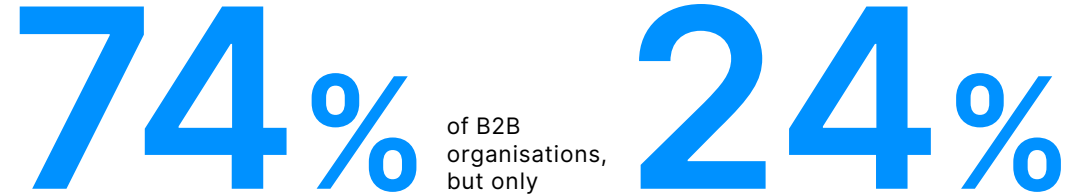
# The Pitfalls of Poor Strategy

Content syndication has become a priority investment for B2B marketers. In fact, the 2022 State of Demand Generation Report showed an increased investment in content syndication more than any other tactic out of a list of 14. While a strong content syndication strategy can effectively generate pipeline for your business, every worthy investment carries associated risks. In the case of content syndication, the biggest risk is underperformance resulting from common pitfalls such as:

- Poor segmentation
- Misaligned goals
- Poor data quality
- Duplicative leads
- Lack of nurturing

In this eBook, we will examine each of these potential pitfalls and share strategies for avoiding them to ensure a high-performing content syndication program.

Content is the #1 source of leads for



of organisations are happy with the quality of these leads.

Source: TCRS

64%

of marketing leaders aren't sure how to improve lead quality from their content going into next year.

Source: TCRS

# Get Your Segmentation Right

One of the most common reasons your content syndication may be underperforming is imprecise account targeting. A good segmentation strategy should follow these four rules:

1. **Practical:** Segments should be relevant to sales, marketing, and product.
2. **Homogenous:** Companies within a segment may differ in many areas but should be similar in terms of their offering needs.
3. **Identifiable:** Accounts are objectively classified based on accessible criteria and available data.
4. **Exclusive:** Strong segmentation allows buyers to fit in one segment only and covers the most important segments.

Beyond that, you should consider the market, company, and buyer to arrive at precise targeting for your content syndication program.

- **Market:** At the highest level, identify clusters of companies by region, industry, and organisation size.
- **Company:** Segment each company internally based on which part of the business you support, what offerings you are bringing to market, and any specific use cases you will want to message about.
- **Buyer:** Identify exact personas, purchasing roles, and buying groups that make or influence the decision to buy.

Put these together to focus on the decision makers at ideal customer profile (ICP) accounts and offer relevant content for each segment.



“Having a strong ICP to target can help reverse engineer the necessary content for a program. Which product are you selling to the ICP? Have a case study for that product. What is a specific problem that product solves? Write a guide based on solving that problem. What would you like the prospect to see before that guide? Make an infographic or video. One of our goals is to establish clear content trajectories from awareness through to decision relative to our ICPs.”



**Zach Diamond**  
Demand Generation Manager at Social Solutions

# Set Clear Content Syndication Goals

To be effective, all marketing programs and tactics should be aligned to measurable goals. When it comes to setting content syndication goals, establishing start and end dates, target costs per lead (CPLs), and lead volume goals are simple enough. But where many programs fall short is through a lack of alignment with broader marketing or business goals.

Ask yourself:

- Does your business have specific pipeline and revenue goals?  
For example, are goals set by:
  - Business unit(s)
  - Products/solution offerings
  - Use cases
  - Specific company segments
- Does your marketing team have specific goals for each quarter? Such as:
  - Revenue funnel targets: quarterly inquiry, MQL, SAL, and opportunity targets
  - Pipeline coverage by sales segments
  - Growth goals such as company size, geographic region, or industries you are supporting

Instead of treating content syndication as a generic tactic, think about how to utilise content syndication with greater precision to support strategic business outcomes. Instead of running a massive “always-on” program, you can set up and run specific content syndication programs with precise targeting and lead goals to support a diverse range of marketing targets and business goals.

Clear goal setting elevates content syndication to a strategic component of your marketing programs. As you consider your tactic mix, evaluate the cost per lead, lead volume, and pacing you need for each content syndication program to meet your quarterly goals.



42%

of B2Bmarketing teams operating at the highest level of marketing maturity create marketing goals based on business goals.

Source: Heinz Marketing



51%

of marketers say their biggest challenge to moving towards a more personalised and relevant approach is a disconnect between how teams build and execute their strategies.

Source: DGR

## Watch Out for Poor Leads

So now you are approaching your content syndication programs strategically and the leads are rolling in. But if those leads are low quality and your conversion rate drops, all your hard work is gone. Bad data reduces the effectiveness of your nurture efforts and can damage your relationship with sales.

The most common data quality issues with content syndication leads are:

- **Non-ICP leads:** If you have segmented appropriately, you should be able to determine if your leads match your ideal customer profile. You want to target the right accounts, with the right buyers.
- **Incomplete leads:** Make sure your leads are not missing key data fields and that they have fully opted-in for company communication and follow up.
- **Invalid phone numbers, emails, addresses:** Verify that phone numbers are active, emails are deliverable, and addresses match associated companies.
- **Unstandardised lead data:** Formatting issues (e.g., Acme Incorporated vs. Acme Inc.) and unstandardised column headers (e.g., business phone vs. phone number), can compromise your lead scoring and routing or fail to even upload into your systems correctly.

Always check your lead data from content syndication programs carefully to ensure that it matches your ICP criteria and is compliant, valid, complete, and standardised before uploading leads into your systems. Reject any bad leads and ask your lead provider to replace them.

# 364,000

*failed leads*

An analysis of filtered content syndication leads found that 10% of 3.64 million leads failed validation of email, address, or phone number.

Source: Integrate

# 50%

of SDR/BDR teams report that bad lead data resulting in a lead not being contactable was the #1 reason an MQL was disqualified during the lead qualification process

Source: Activate

## Prevent Budget Waste

While having quality data is good for your marketing programs, having redundant data is too much of a good thing. Duplicate leads happen when you receive the same buyer's information from multiple lead providers — meaning you are essentially paying twice for the same lead and draining your syndication budget.

### Don't waste your budget:

- **On targeting the wrong accounts.** Some content syndication providers use target account lists (TAL); some don't. Using providers that enable account-based targeting is the best way to ensure you get ICP leads. You can also safeguard your campaign by giving your lead provider an exclusion list of existing customer or competitor accounts, and any accounts already at sales stages.
- **On acquiring existing leads.** Consider giving your lead provider an email suppression list of opted-in ICP buyers already in your database.
- **On overlapping targeting.** A common mistake is giving multiple lead providers the same targeting criteria. To reduce duplicate leads, split your targeting across providers.

# 1,201,200

*duplicative leads*

An analysis of filtered content syndication lead data showed that 33% of 3.64 million leads generated through content syndication were duplicate leads.

Source: Integrate



# Nurture Your Content Syndication Leads

The most common complaint about content syndication leads is that marketers say they don't convert. In other words, as soon as a B2B marketing team gets some content syndication leads, they hand them off to their sales or tele-qualification teams to book an immediate demo or meeting. This typically doesn't happen as content syndication leads represent an early buying signal – not a late-stage opportunity.

If you want your content syndication program to influence opportunities, you must nurture leads before sending them to sales. Due to two significant changes in buyer behaviour, failing to nurture content syndication leads will destroy the performance of your programs.

- 1. B2B Buyers Need More Touchpoints.** According to Forrester, the average buyer's journey consisted of 17 buying interactions in 2019. In 2021 that number jumped to an average of 27 touchpoints before they are ready to make a purchase decision. Content syndication is one of many touchpoints in a typical B2B buying journey.
- 2. Buyers Spend Little Time with Sales.** When today's buyers engage with your sales team, they're looking to make sense of information consumed during hours of self-led research. There's a small window of opportunity for your sales team to engage with these buyers, which makes nurturing your leads essential to conversion success.

It's important to note that a content syndication lead is simply a single buying signal – not a marketing qualified lead (MQL.) Buyers who've expressed an interest in your content need to be engaged further to increase their lead score before calling them an MQL. Consider using email nurtures, digital display advertising, and personalised content to further engage buyers.

# 5-17%

B2B buyers spend just 5% of their purchase process engaging with sales. When considering a single vendor, they spend only 17% of their journey with sales.

Source: Gartner

# 72%

of SDR/BDR teams report that the most frequent reason they disqualify a lead is that the lead was reached but had no interest and was not a qualified individual.

Source: Activate

# Commvault Increases Deal Size and Revenue with Content Syndication and Digital Display Advertising

"We needed to extend our hard work beyond our website. Paying attention to other sites and treating them like our own — thoughtful of the content we put on them, what they were doing, and how they are performing — is key to our strategy's success."

— Dawn Colossi

Sr. Director of Worldwide Digital Marketing, CommVault

**27%** Marketing-attributed closed deals increased from **6%** to **27%**.

**23%** Cut digital budget by **23%** while delivering greater results.

**20%** Increased average selling price by **20%** with digitally engaged accounts.

**30%** Close rate jumped from **15%** to **30%**.





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# Scale Your Marketing with Precision

BOOK A DEMO

Let our team of experts help you connect with your buyers on their terms. We offer a world-class content syndication solution, the Integrate Marketplace, with which experienced campaign strategists align with global media partners to produce turn-key demand programs that deliver quality, compliant, marketable leads.

The Integrate Marketplace is a scalable solution for B2B marketers. In today's resource-strapped and data-driven environment, Marketplace helps you:

1. Extend the reach of ABM content
2. Respond to purchase intent signals
3. Fill buying groups gaps in your database
4. Identify active buying groups for sales

Join thousands of marketing professionals who precisely target in-market buyers and activate campaigns with the Integrate Marketplace.

Make the unpredictable predictable.

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