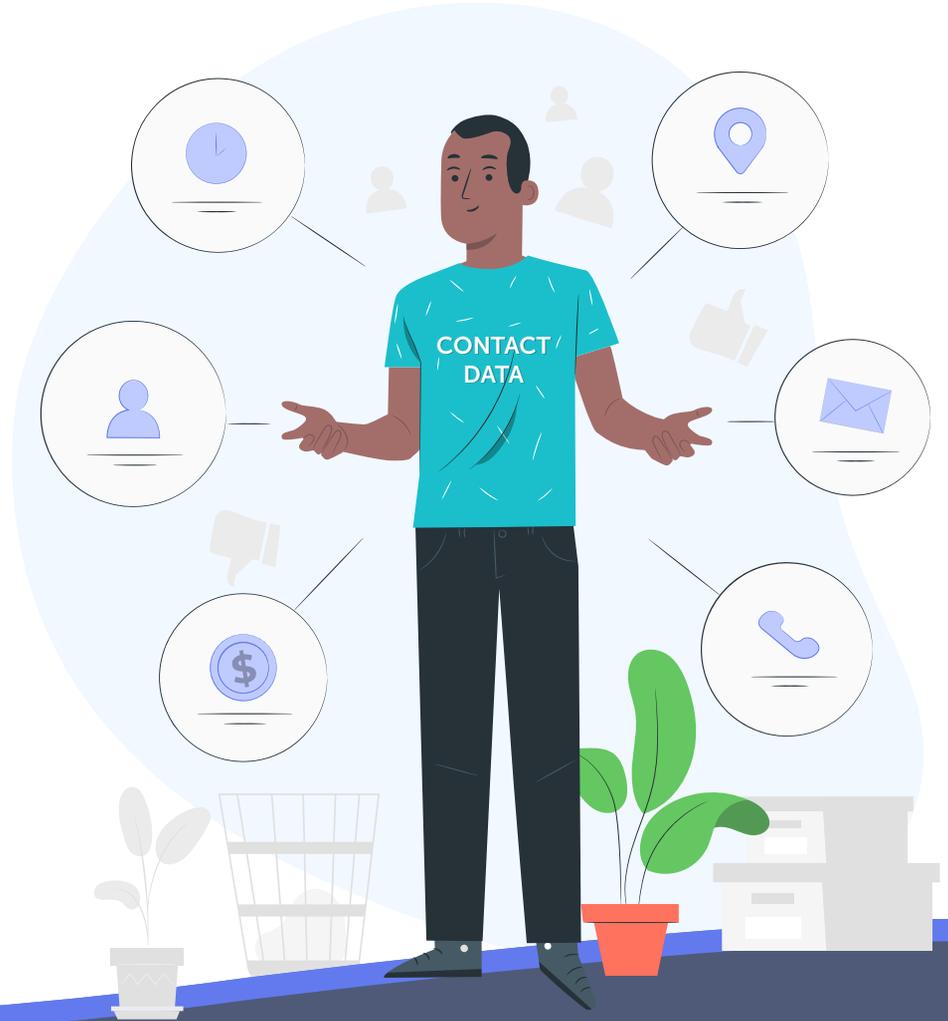


An Insider's Guide to the B2B Data Industry

How and Where to Find the Best B2B Data



Introduction

Welcome to the world of B2B data. Sales intelligence. Market intelligence. Lead intelligence. Prospecting tools. Call it what you like but the fact remains that data forms the core of modern revenue operations - sales & marketing. The companies that integrate and use good data in their processes far outpace the ones that don't.

GTM, ABM, and Omnichannel are only fancy names if not fueled by appropriate data on the backend. But when companies go out to buy data for their sales and marketing engine, they have little idea what kind of data they need, how much it costs, or who the trusted vendors are.

The following sections will help you navigate the process of buying B2B

data by introducing key considerations, the types of B2B data, including their vendors, and the pitfalls you should avoid. By the end, you will be an informed buyer who can confidently find the right solution and negotiate the best deal for yourself.





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So let's get started:

The first thing is to go to the drawing board and clearly define your purpose of purchasing data, your priorities, and the type of data sets you need. For instance, some companies purchase data to simply build a database, others are looking to improve their connection rates, and yet others want to execute a specific sales/marketing strategy. There will be, of course, numerous use cases, but you must define your core interest.

Similarly, you should define your priorities as well - how much you are willing to spend, what compromises you can make, and what's the ideal solution you are looking for.

Based on these considerations, put any potential solution to these three tests:

- [1. Quality](#)
- [2. Coverage](#)
- [3. Category](#)





1. Quality

Quality is an abstract term. It's no brainer that the more quality, the better. But when you are out purchasing data, how exactly do you measure quality? For all practical purposes, it includes three factors:

I. Accuracy

Most buyers consider quality and accuracy to be the same, but in fact, data accuracy is only a contributing factor to the overall quality. As a general rule of thumb, anything below 80% accuracy is not worth the trouble. Between 80% - 95% are viable solutions for different use cases. If anyone promises accuracy of 96% or above, know that they are setting unrealistic expectations. Different data vendors achieve varying degrees of accuracy based on their method of data processing and

verification, something that will be discussed later in length.

II. Precision

Have you ever been in a position where you dialed a prospect, but the call was received by a family member? Well, [it happens](#) more often than you'd believe. In such cases, the contact information is accurate but lacks precision. A data vendor usually has 4-5 numbers/emails of

the same person, and no AI engine can tell which one is the most relevant. A human researcher has to verify those contacts by calling and emailing. So if a data provider only talks about AI and no human-verification, you should double-check their ability to deliver precision.

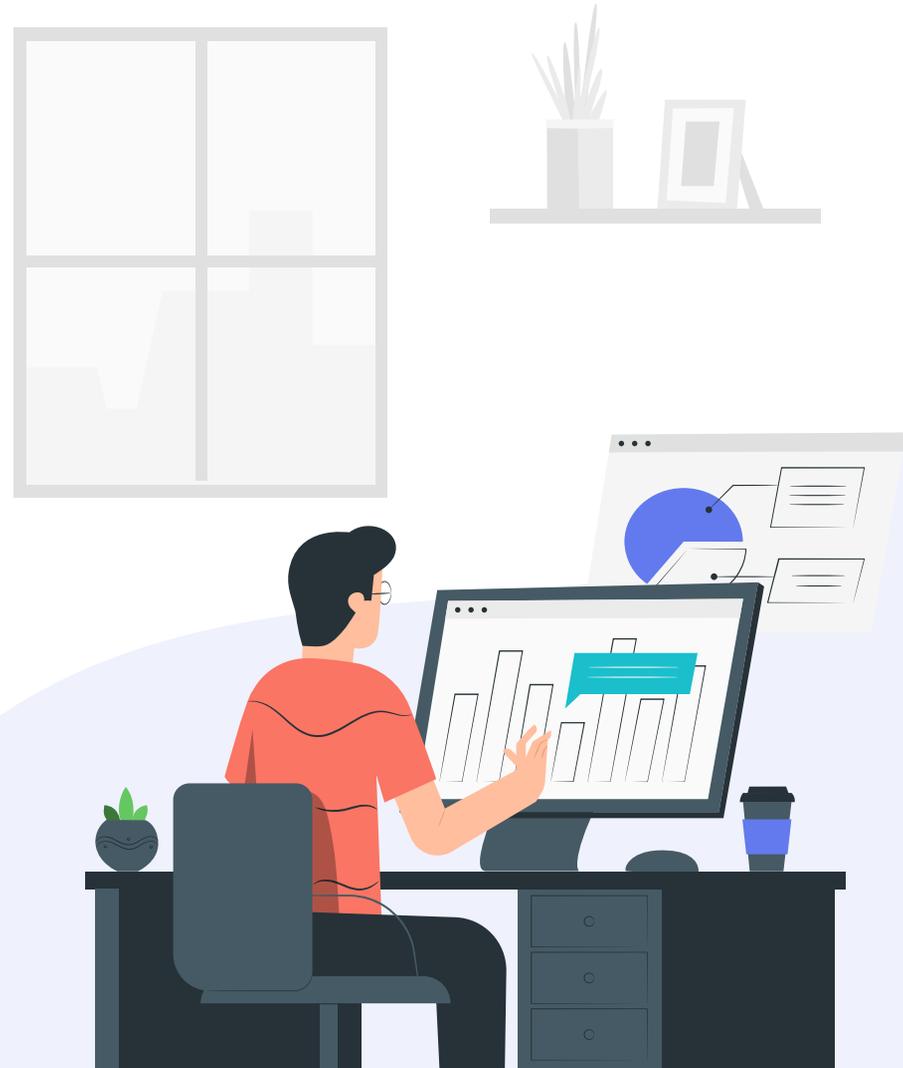
III. Updated

Data isn't eternal. Even if a data set is



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accurate and precise at one point, it won't be the case next month. People change jobs/titles, companies downsize/upsized, etc. which causes a constant decay to be overcome only by aggressively updating the records. A generally accepted rule is that at least 30% of data goes sour each year. Ask how frequently they update their data to predict its accuracy down the line.





2. Coverage

No database can ever be truly complete, but some have better coverage than others. Beside absolute numbers, take these three factors into account when assessing coverage:

I. Industry/Size

The coverage of some data providers is skewed towards specific industries. For instance, they might have good coverage of the IT industry but lag in the hospitality space that isn't good for businesses selling across the board. Similarly, coverage might also be skewed towards the size of companies. That is, they might have extensive data of enterprises but not properly cover SMBs.

II. In-house mix

Ideally, the contact data for each company should include a mix of both high-level executives and mid or low-level employees. Having only one or the other limits what campaigns you are capable of running.

III. Contingency

As mentioned above, no database is ever truly complete. So what if you don't find the contacts you are looking for? Ask the vendor if they provide custom research to

fill those gaps. After all, if you don't find the data you need, what's the point of purchasing data in the first place?

The best way to test the quality and coverage of any data provider is to ask for specific samples of your target industries and personas.



3. Category

To run an effective sales and marketing campaign, a company needs various kinds of data to identify, score, and reach out to their most qualified prospects. Though exact requirements may vary, here are 5 must-have data categories and services along with their top vendors to help you make the right choice:

a. Contact Data

Smaller companies that do not run extensive campaigns need only one kind of data - contacts. They know who they want to target and simply need the emails/phone numbers of those specific prospects. For that purpose, three of the most viable solutions include:

I. Lead411

It is one of the most commonly used data vendors that provide contact data at quite low prices but reviews note a lack of coverage and accuracy for phone numbers.

Starting at \$50 per User/Month, it offers 150 email exports but no direct dials.

II. LeadIQ

LeadIQ is another commonly used contact data vendor that has better quality and coverage but lacks strong phone number support.

Starting at \$75 per User/Month, it provides 250 verified work emails and 25 work mobile numbers.



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III. RevDriver

RevDriver is a free tool powered by SalesIntel that sources its data from the SalesIntel portal. RevDriver has the largest number of direct dials in the industry and guarantees 95% accuracy for its human-verified contacts.

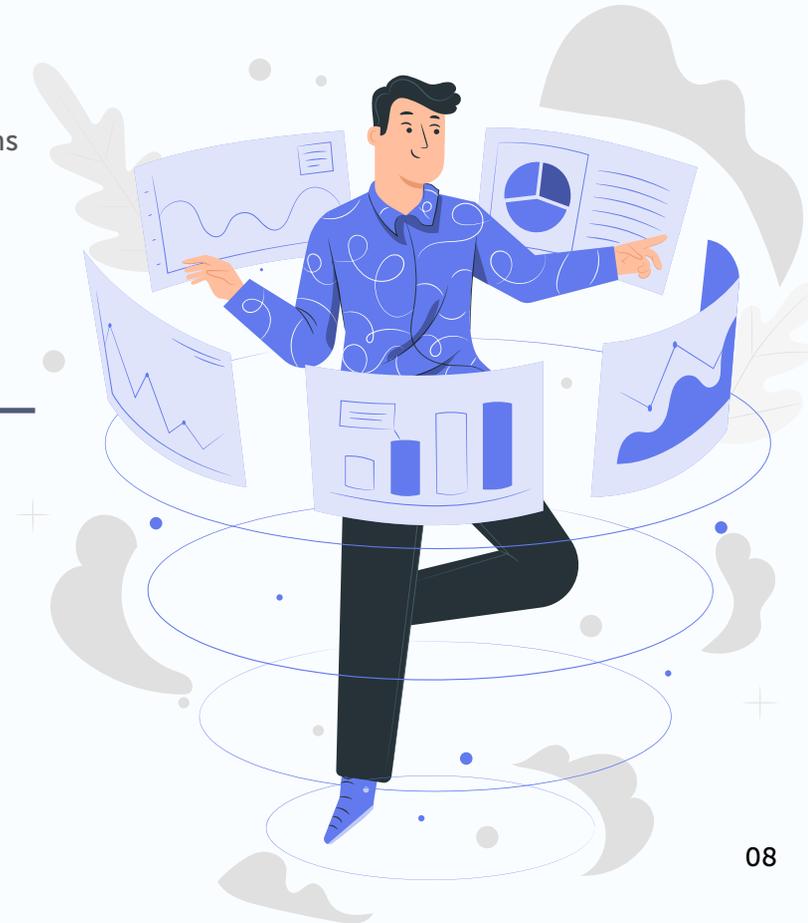
It provides 25 credits for free every month. Beyond that, it requires a SalesIntel paid license.

Best Choice

RevDriver. Along with human-verified data, it provides direct dials and mobile numbers that others don't. Plus, if you have 2-3 sales

reps, you can get the same amount of data for free.

Mid-sized and large companies having decently-sized sales and marketing teams need data in bulk along with a wealth of other features. The options for them are discussed in a later section - One-stop Data Platform.





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b. Technographic Data

This is particularly helpful for businesses that sell products and services that integrate with or work best with any specific set of technology. Also, if you are an IT product/services provider, it is important to know the current tech stack of your target accounts, how much they spend on tech purchases, and more. For that kind of data, two of the best vendors are:

I. Datanyze

A subsidiary of ZoomInfo, Datanyze is one of the most popular vendors of technographic data that offers a full suite of solutions including technology tracing,

predictive analysis, job posting, among others.

Its price starts at around \$1000 for 750 credits. Each credit can be used to find an email address, access a company's social page, or export a company or person to your CRM.

II. HG Insights

It also provides roughly the same types of data and features as Datanyze but is more popular in the mid-market and enterprises.

The price of HG Insights varies depending on specific needs, but a mid-sized company can expect to pay around \$10,000 annually.

Best Choice

The best choice depends on your use case. While they are almost the same in terms of data and features, the difference lies in their pricing models. Datanyze has credit-based pricing (around \$0.75 per credit) while HG Insights charges per company. If you are a small company that doesn't need much data, you can go with Datanyze while those more matured processes and large teams would see more value in HG Insights.



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c. Intent Data

While Intent data has long been used in the B2C space to understand general market interests and trends, its usage in the B2B space is a fairly new phenomenon. It is mostly used to identify active buyers and score leads. We highly recommend you go through this article to understand [everything you need to know about intent data](#).

I. BidStream

Now, Bidstream isn't really a data vendor but a method of collection of Intent data. But the reason we are listing it here is because most of the vendors use the same

method and so have the same data quality. Reviews consider it to be unreliable, and it has privacy concerns.

Its price depends on specific data vendors but is on the cheaper side.

II. Bombora

It is the leading Intent data provider that co-ops with publishers and content syndicates to collect its data. You can read about [Bombora vs. Bidstream data](#) here.

Its price starts at around \$17,500 plus integration fees.

Best Choice

Bombora. Though more expensive, It provides more accurate and reliable data points.



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d. Enrichment

The moment you export data in your CRM, it starts to decay. The average employee turnover rate across all industries is around 17-18%. On top of it, if you add all the in-house shuffles - changes in job titles, locations, etc., the figure usually hits a minimum of around 30% and can go as high as 70%.

I. RingLead

RingLead is one of the most popular names for data enrichment that offers a ton of features including hourly enrichment, lead routing, etc.

The cost is based on the database size and

the number of users, but a mid-sized firm can expect to pay around \$12,000 annually.

II. SalesIntel Enrichment

As the name suggests, it is a dedicated enrichment service from SalesIntel. Though it has fewer features than RingLead, its benefit lies in its human-verified records.

Best Choice

Once again, the best choice depends on your needs. If you want more features and are willing to pay for it, RingLead would be a better choice. If you only want to enrich your records with the best data possible, SalesIntel Enrichment would be the smarter choice.





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e. Company Insights

Company insights include firmographic and financial data including news alerts, funding, etc., and enable sales and marketing professionals to sort and filter companies based on their ICP and track the activities of companies on their target list.

Two of the best vendors for such data include:

I. Crunchbase

Besides usual company profiles, the key features of Crunchbase include web traffic information, funding history, etc.

Its paid plan starts at \$29 per user per month, but many of the useful features are available only in enterprise edition which is available on request.

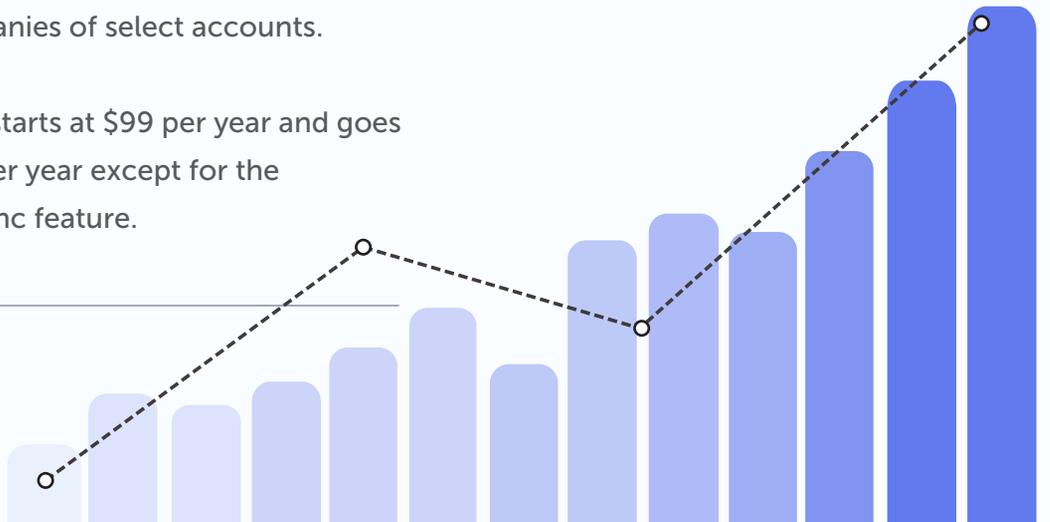
II. Owler

On top of the usual data, Owler's key strength is its competitive data set that provides the data of competitors and similar companies of select accounts.

Its paid plan starts at \$99 per year and goes up to \$420 per year except for the Salesforce sync feature.

Best Choice

It depends on your team size. Since Owler doesn't limit the number of users even with its higher price, it is suited for large teams. Crunchbase is suited for small teams as the cost will match their team size.





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f. One-stop Data Platform

The contact data vendors mentioned in earlier sections are suited only for small businesses that need at most a few hundred to a few thousand contacts. Mid-sized companies and large enterprises, with dozens to hundreds of sales reps, need tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of contacts to feed their massive sales and marketing efforts and run extensive campaigns.

Moreover, adding 5-6 data platforms (mentioned above) to their sales and marketing stack drastically increases complexity and significantly increases the cost. If we do a simple back of the envelope calculation where each

contact data, technographic, intent, and enrichment costs \$0.5, the aggregate cost of each enriched contact would be around \$2. Even a decently-sized company can expect to use around 50,000 contacts every year, costing it around \$100,000 annually which is infeasible.

That is why companies prefer a one-stop data platform where they can get all the data they need for a lower price. In that category, three of the most popular vendors are:

ZoomInfo

ZoomInfo is the largest B2B data company that provides the full spectrum of B2B data sets and has one of the widest coverage.

There are, however, two notable problems - first, it provides primarily machine-processed data, and second, it may raise red flags for you. Both of these issues are explained later in detail. Its technographic data is from Datanyze and Intent data from Bidstream.

Its basic package starts at around \$5000 for 5000 credits, but it doesn't include many key data sets like intent data or mobile numbers.

SalesIntel

SalesIntel provides a full suite of datasets and has the largest coverage of direct dials and mobile numbers in the industry. Its core selling point is its human-verified



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contact data, and it provides other data sets from top vendors listed above. For instance, the technographic data is sourced from HG Insights, Intent data from Bombora, and company insights from Owler.

Its exact price is available on [request](#), but it is competitively priced and tends to be competitive with ZoomInfo for similar plans.

D&B Hoovers

D&B Hoovers is another popular B2B data provider that mostly targets the enterprise space. The company is known in reviews to

have issues with its data quality dipping below 80% accuracy and coverage with significant gaps in SMBs.

The price is available only on request but generally falls between ZoomInfo and SalesIntel.

Best Choice

SalesIntel. If you are thinking, no, we aren't arbitrarily putting our product ahead of the others. And of course, don't just take our word for it.

Below is a detailed comparison of all three platforms on various benchmarks based on verified customer reviews from G2. Also, if you like, you can check out the head-to-head comparison of [SalesIntel vs. ZoomInfo](#).

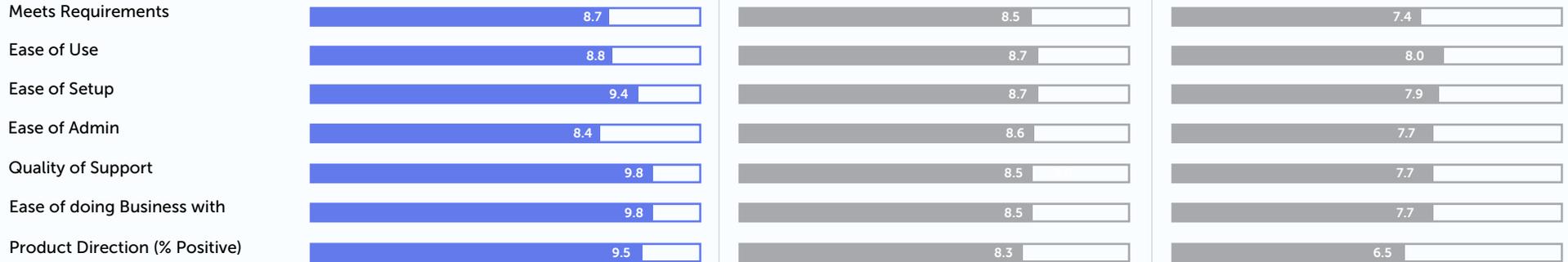
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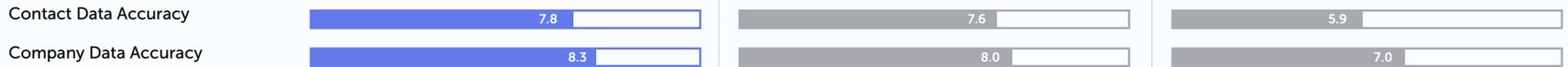
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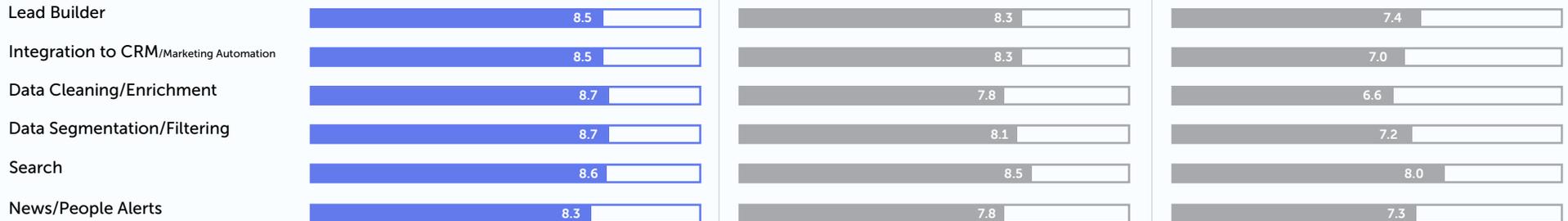
Ratings



Data Accuracy



Features





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g. The Red Flags

After you have evaluated all the available options and shortlisted the most suitable solutions, it's time to vet them against a few common pitfalls. While most of these may not have a direct bearing on their product quality, they will determine your overall experience with your data provider.

Fineprint

Everybody knows that nobody reads a license agreement before signing and this has enabled some data providers to adopt predatory practices to lock-in customers and build in hidden costs. Once you get into a shady contract with a data partner, it will be hard to get out without losing

significant value. Here are some of those questionable clauses you look out for and avoid:

I. Advance auto-renewals

We all understand and are quite comfortable with auto-renewals. Your subscription is auto-renewed the day it is about to expire to avoid any service disruptions. It's convenient, and in case you don't want to renew it, you can cancel up until the last hour.

Some data providers take this common understanding and add an extra clause of advance notice to lock-in their customers early. For example, one data provider currently has a 2-month advance auto-renewal clause. Purchase an annual

license in January this year it would be auto-renewed in November the same year. And even if you asked them to cancel your license in December, well, you are out of luck. In short, [advance auto-renewals take away customer agency](#), and you should avoid them.

II. Annual uplift

Another common understanding people have about auto-renewals is that it would be renewed at the same price. If there are any changes in prices, they would be notified and asked to confirm their purchase. But some data providers sneak in an annual uplift clause in their contract where the price is automatically raised at each renewal.

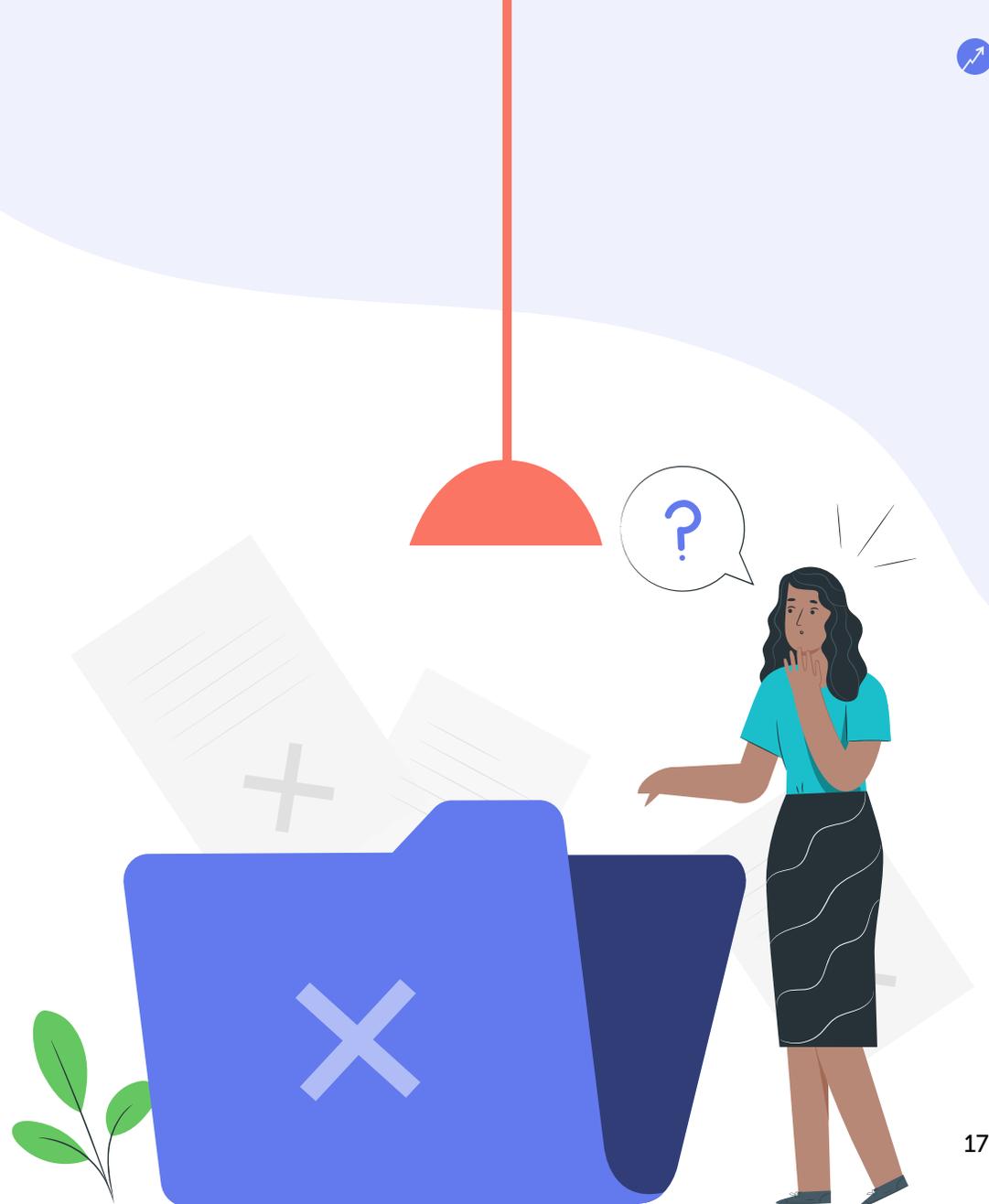


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There are many [cases](#) where customers want to opt-out only to find their contract is not only renewed but at even a higher price.

III. Data deletion

Some data providers have a clause where if you cancel your subscription, you'd have to delete all the data you have exported from them. This is meant as a pressure tactic to never let you cancel your license. The more time you spend with such data providers, the more pipeline you will build, and the more your fear will grow of losing that data. Choose platforms that let you [own the data in your CRM.](#)





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h. Customer service

The SaaS industry, in general, has poor customer service. When you face a problem with say Salesforce or Zoom the first instinct is to visit their forums and not contact customer support for the solution. Most of the time the forums help, so people generally don't mind. But the reason forums work is that those products have millions of customers, and thus the forums are robust and have common solutions.

But no data provider has millions of customers. With them, if you hit a snag, customer support is your only hope. If a data provider has [poor customer support](#), it's better to stay clear from

them. The problem is most buyers come to know about it only after they have purchased a license and hit a snag. Even in those cases, you should [never settle for bad customer service](#). And if needed, find better alternatives as [switching data partners is easy](#).

For the record, if you closely looked at the above comparison, SalesIntel's quality of support is rated 9.8 out of 10, above any other data provider in the industry.

i. Machine processing

This one mostly applies to contact data. As briefly mentioned earlier, different providers deliver varying degrees of accuracy based on the data processing method they use. Most companies use machine processing which delivers roughly up to 80% accuracy. To achieve higher accuracy, they have to deploy human researchers to verify those records and weed out outdated and irrelevant data points. SalesIntel, because of its human-verification process, is able to guarantee at least 95% accuracy.

When you are evaluating any data provider, pay close attention to whether

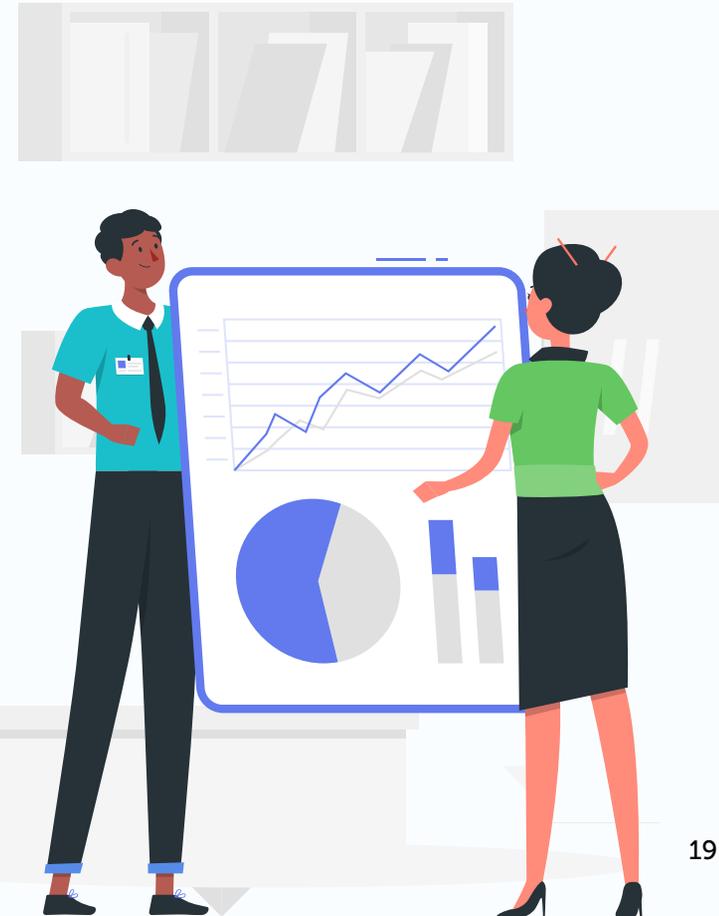
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they have human-verification in the process. Learn more about machine processing vs. human-verification [here](#).

j. The allure of brands

Brands, in general, signify reliability. If a person has to choose from two products of equal class and quality, they prefer to go with one from a more renowned brand. Some even compromise on a few things and are willing to pay extra dollars to go with the name brand. Don't make that mistake when purchasing a data platform.

The B2B data industry is still immature and is rapidly changing. [Ask those](#) who purchased a DiscoverOrg license (one of the leading platforms until last year) but have seen their choice disappear. The point is, make your choice based purely on what each provides. Compare their data sets, features, prices, and [leave the brand out of the equation](#).





At this point, you might be overwhelmed or even confused with all the options and considerations. But once you get a hold of the process, you'll always be able to make the right choice. We'll further boil down everything we have discussed in five simple steps for easy follow-up:

- Create a checklist of your data needs
- Request data samples (or attend demos) from all potential vendors
- Shortlist vendors based on data quality and your priorities
- Check if any of those selected vendors have any red flags
- Pick the one that ticks all your boxes and doesn't have any red flags

Now that you have the tools to navigate the B2B data space, what are you waiting for? Go find the right data partner for you.

While you are at it, why not start your buying journey with SalesIntel?

[Request a Free Trial](#)

