



Customer Data Management

An InfoBlueprint Service

Also available: Supplier Data Management, Employee Data Management, Intermediary Data Management, Party Data Management and Product Data Management.

In today's competitive environment, smart companies have realised that effective relationships with their existing customers are more important than ever. These companies know that good relationships lead to loyal customers, cross and up-sell opportunities, and better business. However, good relationships and effective marketing depends on good information. In most organisations, however, information about customers is spread across multiple computer systems, spreadsheets and databases, typically in different formats and with varying degrees of accuracy and duplication. To compound these problems, customer data is usually stored and orientated around account numbers or other product or service identifiers, making it difficult to discover useful links, hierarchies or dependencies between customers. Unreliable customer data leads to a "competitive disadvantage", because it is impossible to deliver good customer service using bad customer data. The message is clear: organisations have to start taking more control over capturing, storing and using customer data.

Why is Customer Data Important?

CRM and Contact Management: Over recent years, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has received a lot of attention, but the focus has primarily been on the systems and technologies required to implement CRM programmes. Unfortunately, many companies expect the CRM system itself to solve existing problems and inadequacies with customer data, only to find that it ultimately highlights the need for better management of customer data in the first place. The goals of any CRM implementation cannot be met without reliable and up to date customer information, which typically, are not captured and maintained in the CRM system, but elsewhere in the organisation.

Customer Centricity and Marketing: The increasing demands on becoming "customer centric" (as opposed to "account centric") and enabling sophisticated marketing segmentation initiatives along, for example, demographic lines, puts even more pressure on those charged with managing customer information. Sadly, during customer acquisition activities, most companies collect the bare minimum of information about their new customers, making it very difficult to later execute more effective and targeted sales and marketing campaigns. Indeed, many organisations have multiple accounts with one customer, but have no easy way to identify and exploit this simple fact.

Compliance, Sanctions and PEP Screening: There are a number of regulatory compliance requirements around information on all parties that companies do business with, including initiatives that have been put into place to help minimise the possibility of criminal activity, such as money laundering, fraud and terrorism. All of these rely on information about people, organisations and other legal entities, and the ability to quickly match customer data to Politically Exposed Persons (PEP) reference databases is becoming increasingly important.

MDM and BI: As a result of many of the above business drivers, Master Data Management (MDM) is now receiving increased attention. As with CRM, it is becoming well understood that the success of an MDM programme is directly dependent on the (sustained) quality of the data underpinning it. Also, many organisations have made huge investments in Business Intelligence (BI) infrastructure in order to support the ever-increasing demands for performance management and analytics, but have found that the very success of BI is dependent on the data driving it, a core component of which, in most instances, is customer data.

What's Needed to Improve Customer Data - Permanently?

In order to ensure that the above issues are addressed, many organisations approach the problem by initiating a "database clean-up" – this is a task easier said than done, as many have come to realise. In order to clean a database, *and keep it clean*, there are 4 critical elements to success:

- The ability to understand and objectively quantify the extent of data problems, and hence the expected effort and costs involved
- Effective and productive automation of data cleansing
- Reliable reference data to validate against and to use for enrichment of your own data
- A structured methodology, or roadmap, to guide the execution of the data clean-up, and that helps to identify the cause and effect chain of data problems in order to prevent them from re-occurring and hence re-contamination your customer data

Most organisations have none of these in place, and resort to time-consuming manual methods often based on MS Excel, MS Access or SQL coding to try to fix data problems. Whilst these are effective tools designed for their specific purpose, they are unsuited to data cleansing exercises: these methods are error prone, unproductive and difficult to control, as most clean-ups require many iterations and a solid review process. Unfortunately, by the time such projects have finished, it's often time to start a new clean-up, with many of the repairs already out of date!

The Solution

InfoBlueprint has developed a unique Customer Data Management service for South African companies, to help them to rapidly achieve, and then sustain, high quality and reliable customer information to support all the business drivers and to build a highly effective competitive advantage. We have addressed all four required elements as follows:

- Data Quality Scorecards: **InfoBlueprint** has developed efficient methods to assess and present the state of customer information, via meaningful Data Quality Metrics and Dashboards that can help quantify data problems, establish objective and factual baseline measures, and monitor improvements and customer data quality levels on an ongoing basis.
- Automation: **InfoBlueprint** has partnered with leading data quality software vendors, and negotiated innovative rental schemes for tools that automate data scrubbing and facilitate well-managed and consistent data cleansing, validation and enrichment processes. Importantly, these tools also allow for the implementation of proper review processes and data quality controls.
- Reference Data: **InfoBlueprint** has access to valuable South African reference data for both consumer (individual) level data as well as business entity data (companies, CC's etc). This allows us to perform reliable validation of this type of data against trusted reference sets, as well as useful enrichment to, for example, augment your customer data with powerful marketing information. We also have access to international PEP screening lists, for use with rapid matching software allowing for rapid screening at the point of capture.
- Methodology: **InfoBlueprint** has developed an effective and proven methodology which not only guides and assists any customer data clean-up exercise, but also ensures that once the data clean-up is complete, it never has to be repeated, because of the ongoing preventive measures that we help you to put into place.

The combination of these four elements of Customer Data Management into a single, one-stop solution delivered by highly skilled and experienced professionals, makes for a unique and powerful data quality service designed to rapidly elevate your company's competitive advantage using one of your most powerful assets - customer data.

Let **InfoBlueprint** help you to take control of your customer data, through our effective Customer Data Management programmes. Contact us at info@infoblueprint.co.za or on telephone number 021 551 2410.