

INTERMARK MEDIA

INTERMARK MEDIA SLASHES RETURNED LEAD COSTS, IMPROVES AFFILIATE RELATIONS

Marketing Company Fights Costs Of Wasted Leads

Intermark Media, a full-service marketing agency, represents some of the largest debt consolidation and mortgage lenders in the country. Every month, the company delivers about 35,000 leads generated through online consumer applications for debt, mortgage and foreclosure protection.

One of the keys to Intermark Media's business model is ensuring that it delivers actionable leads to its clients, especially those in its affiliate network. Intermark Media established a lead validation plan to check the formatting of the phone numbers and addresses that consumers entered. It used a data provider to check that area codes and states matched up with ZIP codes. But even if the leads were valid, too often they were still not correct.

The Problem

Online marketing company's clients were returning too many leads as invalid

The Solution

TARGUSinfo On-Demand Lead Verification

The Result

Client rate of lead return reduced by more than 70%; affiliate and publisher relations improved



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— Intermark Media CEO
Michael Krongel

“We were finding that this validation process was giving us valid information, but valid information that people could usually fake,” Intermark Media CEO Michael Krongel said.

“So our return rates for our clients were upward of 20%.

“We lost some affiliates because of the return issues and we had to make an improvement in that area to save our affiliate relationships.”

Lack of Clear Answers Strained Relationships

Intermark Media’s return policy allows clients to send back leads within seven calendar days. Some of the company’s customers may have been abusing the policy and giving bogus reasons for returning leads they had actually contacted but failed to convert. Intermark Media had no way of knowing if the returns were for fair cause.

This became a point of contention surrounding the small percentage of Intermark Media’s leads that it buys from publishers instead of generating on its own.

“We gave our clients the benefit of the doubt, so it really pushed back to our publishers,” Krongel said. “There was definitely a sense of tension on our publishers’ side because they were getting returns that they would then validate on their own and had concerns about what we were returning.”

Enlisting ‘Most Accurate Resources’

Intermark Media considered several means of improving the accuracy of its leads and set the goal of cutting its rate of returned leads from 11% to 5%. The company decided that the most effective solution for reducing that rate would involve verifying leads, not just validating them.

Unlike validation, lead verification doesn’t just make sure that a lead’s address is mail deliverable and correlates to the given area code.

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Verification also ensures that the phone number and address belong to the submitted consumer name. The TARGUSinfo On-Demand Lead VerificationSM solution also determines the connectivity of phones and identifies the phone type (such as consumer, business or cell phone).

“I thought that verifying our data would help us achieve our goal of providing better quality leads to our clients,” Krongel said, “so it just sounded like a perfect fit for what we needed.

“Knowing the name and history of TARGUSinfo and how large of a company it is, we figured it had probably the most accurate resources for us to verify our data,” Krongel said. Intermark Media started using TARGUSinfo services to instantly verify the contact information submitted by consumers. Verified information goes straight to Intermark Media’s database and errant data draws a prompt asking the consumer to correct the information.

Verification Instantly Shrinks Return Rate

TARGUSinfo immediately delivered results beyond Intermark Media’s goal of shrinking its proportion of leads returned for bad contact information.


“TARGUSinfo has helped us reduce our bad leads due to incorrect contact information from 11% to roughly 3.2%,” Krongel said.

The company is also regaining manpower previously drained by manual lead checking, a task that was eating up 20 hours a month. “Less of our time is spent on the validity of leads and we can now focus on generating leads and the quality of leads for our clients,” Krongel said.

Enhancing Affiliate And Publisher Relationships

TARGUSinfo has also improved the relationships between Intermark Media, its clients and publishers. If a client returns a lead that has been verified by TARGUSinfo, Intermark Media rejects the return. Publishers no longer need to wonder if leads are being returned for genuine faults.

‘A lot of our affiliates are much happier with the return rates that they have,’ Krongel said. ‘And we’re in the process now of trying to go back and reestablish relationships that were lost due to return rates. We’re going to utilize the TARGUSinfo history as a means to recoup some of the affiliates that were lost due to return rates.’



“So we’re looking out for the better interests of our affiliates,” Krongel said, “and also keeping our clients honest and making sure that the leads that they’re providing back to us are actually invalid for the reasons that they’re stating.”

Beside removing this doubt and giving Intermark Media a new value proposition for its marketing, TARGUSinfo is also providing the company with a new push for winning back some of its former affiliates.

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Generating Extra Value For Leads

The automated speed of TARGUSinfo On-Demand Lead Verification also benefits Intermark Media because the company does some live distribution of leads to its clients. In the competitive markets for debt consolidation and mortgages, reaching a fresh lead within hours can make the difference between

gaining a customer or seeing the business go to another company that doesn’t need days or longer to respond.

Instead of blocking clients from buying leads while their unmet interest cools, On-Demand Lead Verification enables Intermark Media to sell accurate leads without a second of delay.

After some of its clients showed interest through a survey, Intermark Media also began using TARGUSinfo On-Demand DataSM to append demographics to one category of leads. This kind of added service has the company considering the premium it places upon its leads and their raised market value.

“We probably will, down the road, start to increase the value of our leads based on the demographics and the verification,” Krongel said.

Intermark Media is looking for even more ways to maximize its return on TARGUSinfo’s solutions. “I’m trying to think of other things we can do together in terms of helping us clean up our data and get more out of our existing data,” Krongel said.