

# The Cost of Bad Contact Data: How to Define and Present the Problem.

A Workbook to Help You Build the Business Case for Contact Data Verification.



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## Introduction

# Understanding the Costs of Bad Contact Data.



# Understanding the Costs of Bad Contact Data.

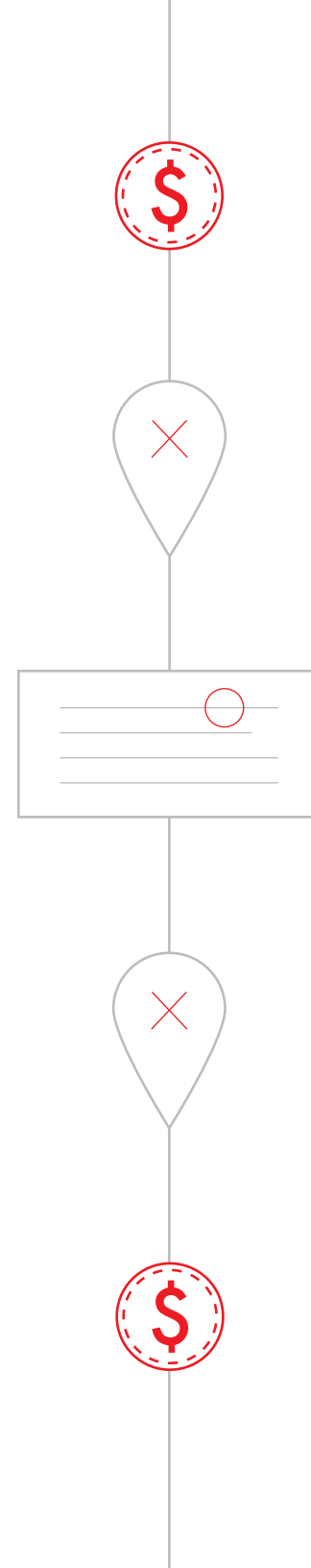
**If you care about customer experience then you need to care about the state of your customer contact data. Whether you're in B2B or B2C, if your contact data is out of date or inaccurate, your customers won't receive your products, your salespeople won't reach the right people, and customer service can't be sure they're solving the right issues.**

Contact data verification is the process of verifying the accuracy of the data you rely on for contacting people. The 'contact' part isn't only the name and phone number attached to an account in Salesforce, for example—it includes any data that you might use to contact customers, including postal addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers.

It might seem obvious that accurate contact data is better than inaccurate contact data, but the all-pervasive nature of data means the full effect of its quality across the business can be difficult to comprehend. Simply put, having accurate contact data means, first, you can be sure you're not wasting time and risking reputational damage by having to correct the basics—names, addresses, phone numbers, and so on. Second, it allows you to create a personalized, meaningful customer experience that's easy to scale.

Standing in the way of this competitive vision is dirty, inaccurate data. If you don't verify its accuracy at the point of entry and then verify it on a regular basis (or get someone to do that for you), it will inevitably become not just a task, but a problem that requires everyone's attention.

**The only thing growing as quickly as this problem is the cost of not dealing with it now.**



# Understanding the Costs of Bad Contact Data.

**Acknowledging the problem is easy—addressing it is trickier. Although 92 percent of marketing leaders rate valid contact data as “very important” to their success<sup>1</sup>, not every business leader in your organization may understand the current state of your data and the value of improving it. But having every leader’s support is vital. It’s the only way to ensure this becomes and remains a business-wide initiative.**

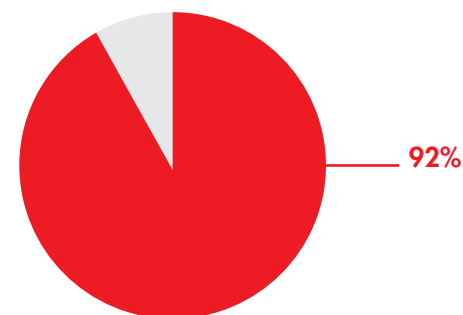
In order to get everyone on the same page, you need to foster the following conditions, company-wide:

- Acceptance of the problem.
- Acknowledgement of the costs of inaction.
- Awareness of the benefits of the solution.

This workbook addresses those three points in turn so you can gather your facts and present to your company leaders the true cost of bad contact data—and the value of fixing it. Three chapters tackle the three main elements of contact data—postal addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers—with an exercise at the end of each to help you assign a dollar value to the cost of inaction.

The results of the exercises may not surprise you—after all, if you’re reading this you probably know already that your data isn’t up to scratch. The purpose of the exercises is to distill this complex problem into a handful of headline figures for you to take away and use as the basis of the case that you can present to your business leaders.

**Let’s get started.**



**of marketing leaders rate valid contact data as “very important” to their success.**

Part 1

# Postal Address Verification.



# The Situation Right Now.

**Despite plenty of predictions to the contrary, direct mail remains a popular and effective marketing channel. Between 1990 and 2014, its share of total mail volume in the United States increased by 43 percent.<sup>2</sup> Reflecting a continuation of this trend, in 2016, postal addresses are the most useful slice of contact data for one in five sales and marketing professionals.<sup>3</sup>**

But none of this changes the fact that direct mail is a comparatively expensive channel. So instead of being replaced by cheaper channels, its use has been adapted—for example, by running highly targeted campaigns over smaller geographic areas. This means marketers have never needed accurate postal address data more than they do now.

The challenge for marketers is that the accuracy of that data is in constant flux.

## The Cost of Getting It Wrong

Marketers in search of accurate postal address data—in fact, any department in your organization that still uses mail—are up against two problems: the rate of change and degradation, and the fact that people so frequently mistype even their own addresses.

Here's the scale of the problem.

- Every day in the United States:
  - 706 businesses move premises.<sup>4</sup>
  - 128,000 homes and businesses register change of address requests<sup>5</sup>—93 percent of those requests require corrections.
- Postal addresses degrade at a rate of 20 percent every year.<sup>6</sup>
- Customers make errors in 4.7 percent of the e-commerce forms they fill out.<sup>7</sup>

- The rough cost of this to a retailer shipping a million packages a year is around \$250,000 in lost profits.<sup>8</sup>
- In the United States, the national cost of poorly targeted mailings and staff overheads is around \$611 billion.<sup>9</sup>

The following case studies offer two examples of how we've helped other companies tackle the problem of inaccurate postal address data. The first concerns real-time verification of address information. The second is a more comprehensive application of several Informatica products, designed to transform the way one company uses its data.

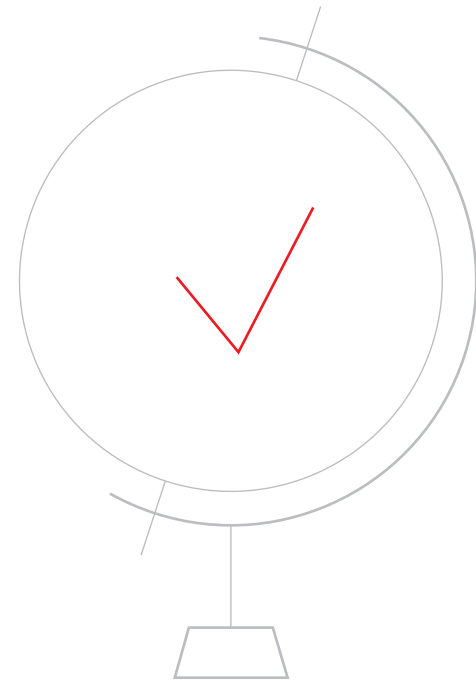
Need to quickly find, visualize, fix, and monitor your application (Salesforce, Marketo, etc.) data? [Sign up](#) for a free trial of Informatica Cloud Data Quality Radar.

## **1&1 Internet – Real-Time Address Verification.**

**1&1 Internet is a German web hosting company with more than 7.7 million customer contacts. In order to complete a web order, customers must first enter their contact and address information. Without a system in place to inform customers of any mistakes or omissions, the result was incorrect, incomplete, or missing customer data.**

1&1 Internet uses Informatica Address Verification, powered by AddressDoctor, to verify address data at the point when customers enter their data on online forms. Address Verification automatically provides correction suggestions for addresses in 240 countries and territories.

**[Read the full customer success story here.](#)**





## JLL – Becoming a Data-Driven Innovator and Market Leader.

As a global commercial real-estate service provider, JLL has a managed property portfolio of 3.4 billion square feet. It wanted to transition to offering proactive, data-driven customer service and move away from reactive data delivery. To do this it needed to speed up the delivery of robust, insightful property data to its sales people and customers.

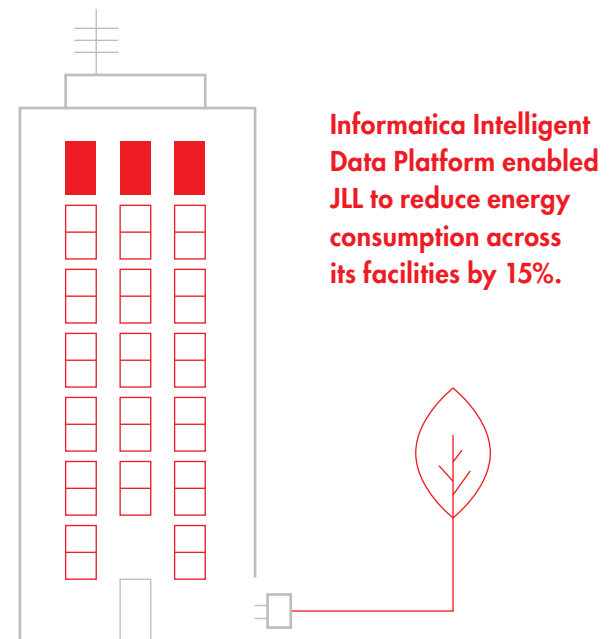
JLL adopted Informatica's Intelligent Data Platform, which includes Informatica Data as a Service, Master Data Management, and Data Quality solutions. This suite of software enabled JLL to unify disparate sources of data and ensure the information was clean, safe, and connected.

The result has been transformative:

- Easier access to rich, consistent data has helped to power smarter, greener buildings with savings on energy consumption of approximately 15 percent.

- Deeper and more insightful market intelligence, including self-service tools for employees and customers, has increased satisfaction.
- Faster access to a single data store means real-time business intelligence.
- Better data management principles and governance across the enterprise means more consistent and accurate data.

[Read the full customer success story here.](#)



“Data is the fuel of our organization and our differentiator in the marketplace. Informatica is the glue that binds our data-centric operations.”

**Andy Crow**, JLL’s Technology Development and Delivery Director

# Building the Case: Exercise 1.

This workbook contains three exercises, all of which contribute to the business case by identifying one potential cost of inaccurate data. Focusing on a single example in this way makes it easier to visualize the problem and arrive at a realistic cost of inaction. However, it's important to bear in mind that the real cost of the problem will be spread further and deeper throughout your organization.

Exercise 1 will help you build an estimated rolling monthly cost of not having verified postal address data. Make a note of your answers and we'll revisit them at the end.

**Q1. Find out the approximate number of postal records in your customer databases:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
addresses in customer databases, including CRM, finance systems, etc.

Postal addresses degrade by 20 percent every year, so note down 20 percent of Q1(a):

b. \_\_\_\_\_  
potentially mislabeled items of mail per year.

**Q2. Find out how much it costs to re-ship a package Q2(a) and multiply it by Q1(b) to give you Q2(b):**

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
cost to re-ship a package (if this figure isn't available, assume \$5 as an average for light mail. If you ship heavier items, such as mechanical parts, your average will be much higher).

b. \_\_\_\_\_  
potential annual cost of inaccurate postal address information.

**Q3. Divide Q2(b) by 12 to give you a rolling monthly cost of inaction.**

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
potential monthly cost of inaction.



Part 2

# Email Verification.



# The Situation Right Now.

**Email addresses are by far the most valuable and essential piece of information for sales and marketing success.<sup>10</sup> It's not hard to see why—email beats all other channels hands down when it comes to identity recognition; it drives more conversions than any other marketing channel<sup>11</sup>, and has an ROI of 3800 percent.<sup>12</sup>**

## The Cost of Getting It Wrong

Email addresses change at a rate of 30 percent annually<sup>13</sup>, so it's not surprising that a quarter of all emails don't reach the inbox.<sup>14</sup> Whatever the size of your organization and its primary activity, this is a difficult rate of change to keep pace with.

There are two important costs associated with not regularly verifying your email contact data: loss of sender reputation, and blacklisting. Unchecked, the first is almost guaranteed to lead to the second.

## Three Ways to Damage Your Sender Reputation

The cost of inaccurate email data doesn't stop at deliverability. Unless you regularly verify your data, ideally both batch and in real-time, you will eventually develop a poor sender reputation.

Your reputation as a sender is most affected by these three things:

- Emailing addresses no longer in use — 80 percent of email delivery problems are caused by this.<sup>15</sup>
- Emailing addresses created specifically to catch spammers ('spam traps').
- Your emails being marked as spam by recipients.

The most likely immediate effect of poor sender reputation is your emails ending up in junk folders. However, the problem doesn't end there.

## Blacklisting

A poor reputation can lead to your IP address or domain being blacklisted. The unregulated practice of blacklisting is the single greatest reason to use contact data verification for your email addresses.

While anybody can create a blacklist, the practice is regulated by a powerful few who've become the go-to list providers for most ISPs. Some of them blacklist domains, others blacklist IP addresses. According to Marketing Land there are approximately 13 main lists, of which the most widely used is the Spamhaus Block List. Other major players include SpamCop, Sender Score, and URIBL.<sup>16</sup>

Primarily blacklists are out to catch deliberate spammers and protect all our inboxes from real junk. The issue for marketers is that poor quality data can give a legitimate email marketing campaign all the characteristics of a spam operation. Consequences are guaranteed, and range from extremely irritating to painfully onerous.

## Why You Never, Ever Want to be Blacklisted.

**In September 2016, the head of customer experience at an Australian drinks retailer described being blacklisted as “the worst moment of his career.”<sup>17</sup> Why? Here are three good reasons:**

- Being blacklisted is guaranteed to affect email deliverability. It’s been known to cause a dip of nearly 60 percent for Gmail.<sup>18</sup>
- Blacklists are not required to identify the issue that caused your listing.
- Blacklists are not required to remove you from one of their lists even if you provide proof that you’ve fixed the issue that triggered the listing.

Simply put, the best way to fix a blacklist issue is to make sure it never happens. The easiest way to do that is to use a verification solution and follow email marketing best practices.

But the right verification solution will do more than mitigate risk. Accurate email addresses also mean greater customer engagement.

### **Here's a real world example:**

RingCentral is a cloud-based provider of innovative call management, phone number, and online conferencing services.

As part of its strategy to strengthen timely customer engagement from initial outreach through to purchase, the company needed to be able to rely on the accuracy of its email data in order to run effective campaigns without the risk of blacklisting.

Using Informatica Data as a Service Email Verification Plus Hygiene, RingCentral increased its sender score to 96 and reduced the risk of blacklisting. Email address data was improved by passing all net-new lead sources first through

RingCentral’s Marketo marketing automation platform, and second, through a single gateway that syncs leads to the company’s Salesforce CRM.

Informatica also provided RingCentral with the ability to capture valid email addresses in real-time—at the point of acquisition—which dramatically improved the company's proficiency among peers in effectively reaching prospects and customers.

**[Read the full customer success story here.](#)**



“Email verification is a must-have.  
The cost of not doing it is just too high.”

**Jessica Kao**, Marketo Champion

[Watch the 2 minute video.](#)

# Building the Case: Exercise 2.

This exercise will help you calculate the potential cost of being blacklisted. As we mentioned earlier, the practice is unregulated so there's considerable variation in the penalties issued. But it's still possible to get an idea of your organization's level of exposure. With that established, question 2 will help you work out the potential cost of ignoring that risk. Make a note of your answers and we'll revisit them at the end.

**Q1. Find out the approximate number of email addresses in your customer databases:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
email addresses stored in your systems —including CRM, marketing automation, customer databases.

Work out 30 percent of Q1(a) as that's the annual rate of email address degradation:

b. \_\_\_\_\_  
potential number of inaccurate email addresses across all systems.

Take a look in your marketing automation system to find your organization's overall bounce rate and make a note of it here:

c. \_\_\_\_\_  
current bounce rate as a percentage of total send volume.

Industry standards suggest your bounce rate should be below five percent of your total email volume. A bounce rate of more than five percent doesn't guarantee blacklisting by any means, but it does make blocking or delaying of sends by ISPs more likely.





# Building the Case: Exercise 2.

**Q2. Ask your IT department if you've ever been blacklisted before. If you have, note down the time it took to resolve and the cost, if applicable.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Q3. If it's never happened to your organization, it's worth calculating the potential costs. The unregulated nature of the blacklisters means no two experiences will be the same, but with some sensible assumptions and statistical averages<sup>20</sup> we can develop a realistic approximation of the potential cost.**

Find the following metrics in your marketing automation system and note them below:

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
average number of conversions (opportunities identified) per email marketing campaign.

b. \_\_\_\_\_  
average net value of a conversion.

Multiply Q3(a) by Q3(b) to give you Q3(c):

c. \_\_\_\_\_  
potential cost of blacklisting in terms of lost revenue per campaign.

**Q4. Estimate the following metrics and note them below:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
no. of people likely to be involved in negotiating your removal from a blacklist.

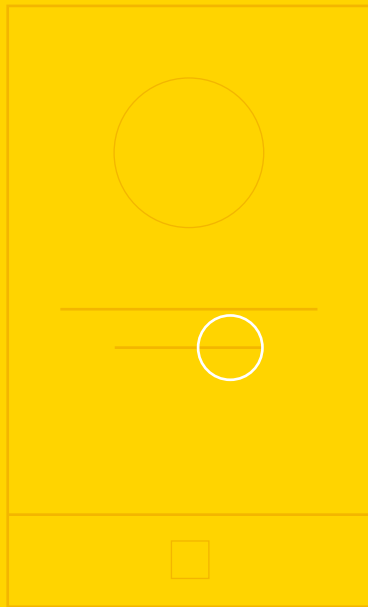
b. \_\_\_\_\_  
length of time spent on blacklist removal per person (in hours).\*

\*Blacklisting can last for up to six days for 68 percent of businesses (48 hours assuming an eight hour work day)

Multiply Q4(a) by Q4(b) to give you Q4(c):

c. \_\_\_\_\_  
potential cost of blacklisting in terms of lost time (in hours).

B2C companies are far more likely to be blacklisted around the holiday season because that's when retailers tend to be more aggressive in their campaigns.<sup>22</sup> If you can find out the expected uplift of your next seasonal campaign you can get an idea of the cost of being blacklisted before a temporal campaign.



Part 3

# Phone Validation.



# The Situation Right Now.

**Just over a third of sales and marketing influencers view the phone number as the item of data most essential to their success.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, just over half say that being unable to reach prospects because of inaccurate numbers is the most detrimental effect of bad contact data.<sup>24</sup>**

**In fact, the phone number is more often missing from contact data than an email or postal address.<sup>25</sup> Inaccurate or missing phone numbers have a number of negative effects.**

## **The Cost of Getting It Wrong**

The most obvious problem of inaccurate phone numbers is that you can't contact your customers and prospects.<sup>26</sup> Factor in the time taken to find the right number, correct the mistake in your CRM and then finally make the call you wanted to make say, five to ten minutes ago, and then consider the number of employees in your organization for whom this is a regular scenario and you begin to build a picture of how much of a resource drain this simple problem can be.

There's also a flipside to the internal annoyance of not having the right digits at your fingertips, and that's the customer experience: 45 percent of sales and marketing influencers identified it as being most detrimentally affected by inaccurate or missing phone numbers.<sup>27</sup>

Being unable to call a prospect or a customer because your number for them is out of date isn't just irritating—it's also the absence of any customer experience. The best explanation for that 45 percent statistic is the fact that, in spite of email, live web chats, and social media, being able to call customer service is still everyone's favored method of getting help.<sup>28</sup>

To complete the picture, consider that a massive 83 percent of online shoppers need some form of support to complete a purchase and if they don't receive it within five minutes, they'll give up.<sup>29</sup>

The phone is therefore a vital channel when it comes to delivering a successful customer experience and central to the success of that deliverability is the accuracy of their phone number in your CRM. Having verified phone numbers means when customers call you, your customer service representatives know who they are before they speak. And simplest of all, when the problem requires further resolution, you're able to call them back.

All of this has to be considered in the wider context of the competitive landscape and shifting customer expectations. From Walker's "Customer 2020" report:

**"To be relevant in 2020, companies must focus on leveraging big data to create a single source of truth and making customer intelligence accessible throughout the enterprise [...] [Those] stuck in a historical view of customer experience management will fall behind if they don't react soon."<sup>30</sup>**

# The Situation Right Now.

## Stop Calling Me

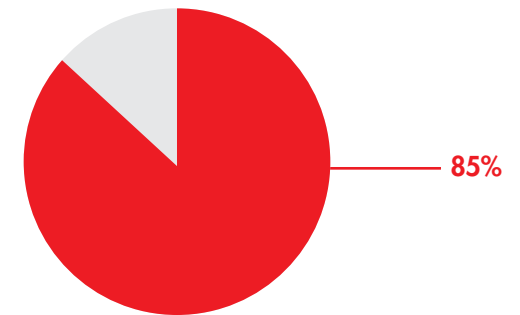
Then there's the issue of compliance—or rather, non-compliance. There are 222 million U.S. household landlines or cell phone numbers on the Do Not Call register.<sup>31</sup> You have 31 days from the time somebody registers their number to take the necessary preventative measures, after which it's a federal offense to make an unsolicited call to them. Most European countries have equivalent initiatives with similarly high rates of subscription. In the United Kingdom, 85 percent of landline numbers are registered with the Telephone Preference Service, with a maximum per-call fine of £5,000<sup>32</sup>, while German legislation allows fines for unsolicited marketing calls to reach €300,000.

## Seriously, Stop Calling Me

So the cost of non-compliance and the risk of damage is high.<sup>33</sup> But for just how high it can be, consider the three related Utah companies that, in May 2016, were found to have made in excess of 99 million calls to numbers on the U.S. DNC register. By the usual legislative calculations—a per-call fine of \$11,000-16,000—the potential damages were in the region of \$1 trillion.<sup>34</sup>

In short, it isn't worth the risk. The financial and reputational damage is potentially huge, and yet so easily avoided.

As part of our Data as a Service offering, Informatica's [Do Not Call List Verification](#) automatically ensures every number is safe to call. It allows you to eliminate the need to keep track of the various regulations across different Do Not Call list laws and helps you to avoid complaints and fines.



**85%**  
of landline numbers in the U.K. are registered with the Telephone Preference Service.

# Building the Case: Exercise 3.

This exercise will help you build a picture of the potential impact of incorrect phone numbers on your organization, both in terms of time wasted and the risk of non-compliance. Make a note of your answers and we'll revisit them at the end.

**Q1. Find out the approximate number of phone numbers in your customer database:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
phone numbers.

Work out 18 percent of Q1(a) since that's the annual rate of phone number degradation:

b. \_\_\_\_\_  
potential number of calls made per year to incorrect numbers (assuming wrong numbers aren't called repeatedly, which they could be).

**Q2. Estimate the time taken (in minutes) to research a new number:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
minutes to call a wrong number, realize, find the right number and record it in Salesforce/Marketo.

**Q3. Multiply Q1(b) by Q2(a) and divide by 60 to give you:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
person-hours wasted every year, across the organization, trying to find correct numbers.

**Q4. To give you an idea of where those hours are being wasted, make a note of the number of departments that use phone numbers for customer, prospect, vendor, and/or partner outreach:**

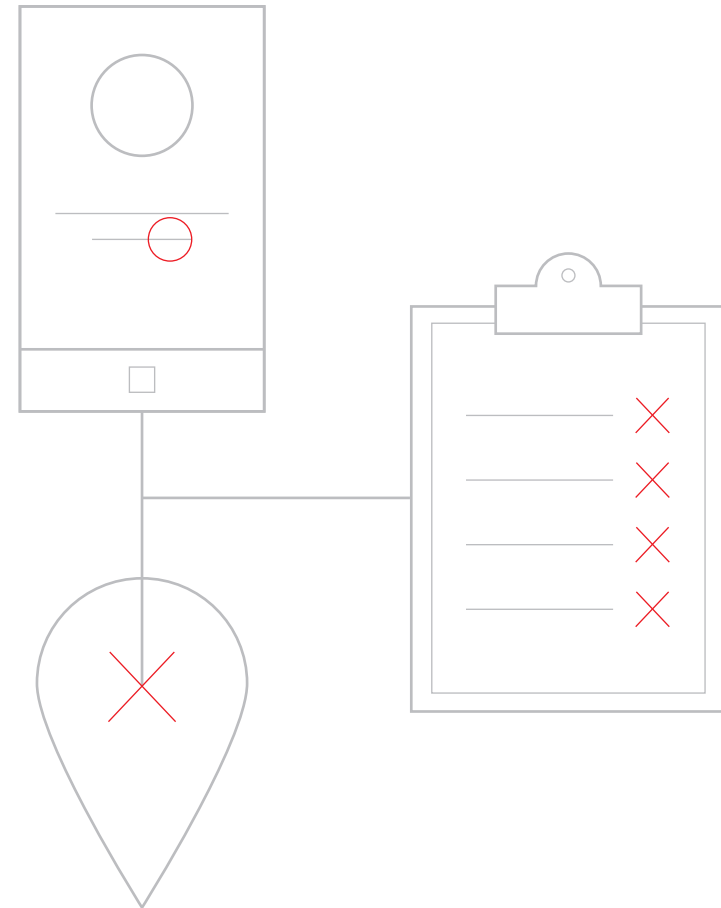
a. \_\_\_\_\_  
departments collectively wasting Q3(a) person-hours researching correct phone numbers.

# Building the Case: Exercise 3.

**Q5.** For an idea of the potential costs of non-compliance, there are 222 million active registrations on the Do Not Call register; that's 70 percent of the U.S. population. Without a solution regularly checking the DNC for the mostly recently added numbers, up to 70 percent of the degraded numbers in your CRM could be ones that you mustn't call. (Bear in mind that the register doesn't cover business numbers so this only applies if you call household landlines and/or cell phone numbers.)

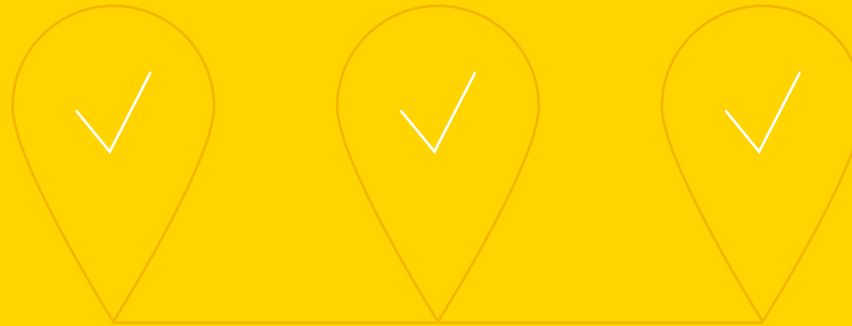
Work out how many of Q1(a) are US numbers and multiply it by \$16,000:

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
maximum potential fine incurred by calling numbers added to DNC.



## Part 4

# Three Game-Changing Benefits of Reliable Contact Data.



# Accurate, Trustworthy, and Enriched.

**Now that we've investigated and estimated some of the costs and damages potentially inflicted by inaccurate contact data, let's explore the upsides of remediation. What does the successful implementation of contact data verification look like?**

**In an ideal world, data would do nothing more than facilitate successful interactions with your customers and prospects. Here's what that means in practice.**

## **1. You have trustworthy data to drive better decisions**

Every time someone in your organization acts on the basis of data—whether making a phone call or building a Salesforce dashboard—they know the result will be accurate. If the contact doesn't answer, it's not because you're dialing a wrong number—they're just busy, or they left their phone in the car. If the dashboard says your marketing campaign didn't fly as you hoped it might, then it really didn't fly, but at least you know you don't need to kill a campaign that was far more effective than it looked.

Being able to trust your data means everybody in your organization spends more time working on things that will make a difference rather than trying to figure out what those things are. In concrete terms this means you'll:

- Increase ROI on marketing spend.
- Ensure operational efficiency and compliance.
- Save time, effort, and resources otherwise spent investigating and cleaning problems with your data.

## **2. You've covered both ends of the customer experience**

While it's true that accurate contact data allows you to compete on customer experience by creating highly personalized journeys and resolving problems quickly, that's only half the story.

None of the well-documented horror stories about mismanaged customer data relates to levels of personalization. Instead, all of them are examples of companies getting the basics wrong: accidentally divulging sensitive information, getting names and addresses wrong, and calling hundreds of people who are protected from being contacted by law.

A contact data verification solution ensures both ends of the customer data spectrum are covered: the absolute basics that everybody expects, right through to a seamless and competitive customer service experience.

You can read more about how data management facilitates a great customer experience in our eBook, "[The Seven Imperatives for Great Customer Data Management](#)".



# Accurate, Trustworthy and Enriched.

### 3. Once it's verified, you can enrich your data

Data enrichment services are already widely used—45 percent of sales and marketing influencers have more than half of all their contact data enriched or appended.<sup>35</sup> But there's no point enriching your data unless it's already been verified, otherwise you're just piling more weight onto a crumbling foundation.

Think of enrichment as the final stage of a fully fledged verification process. Once an address has been through field mapping, formatting and other correction analyses, multiple pieces of additional information can be added to the record.

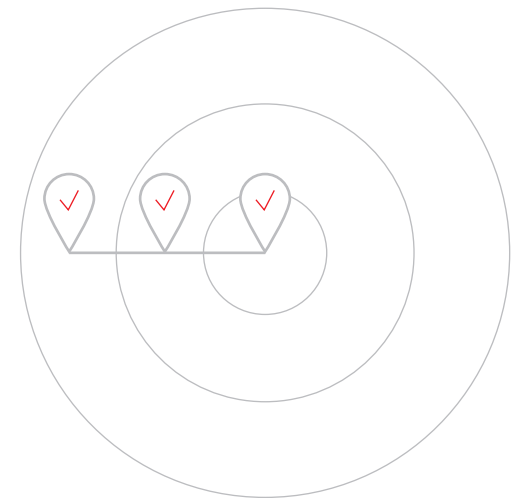
Here are three ways in which your data can be enriched:

- Geocoding assigns unique coordinates to street addresses, which enables B2B and B2C companies to do route planning, distance evaluation, and risk assessments.

- A consumer data enrichment service allows you to target your customers with highly relevant and personalized messaging using either information about the types of consumers that live in an area, or data on their age, marital status, income, children, property location, and so on.
- A business data enrichment service, powered by suppliers such as Dun & Bradstreet, can provide company firmographic data, corporate hierarchies and unique identifiers to ensure positive corporate identity resolution. These services can be cloud based and easily integrated into other popular software such as master data management.

The net effect of verified and enriched data on your organization is, first, more successful customer interactions, and second, more long-term, profitable relationships with customers and prospects, partners and suppliers.

While we're here, note down any of the above examples of data enrichment, or any others you can think of, that would benefit the different teams in your organization.



# Risk, Waste, and Cost of Inaction.

Now let's revisit and bring together the three most painful potential costs from the three exercises.

**Exercise 1 (page 11)**

**Q3 (a)** \_\_\_\_\_

monthly cost of doing nothing about the inaccuracy of your postal address data.

**Exercise 2 (page 17)**

**Q3 (c)** \_\_\_\_\_

potential cost of blacklisting in terms of lost revenue per email campaign.

**Exercise 3 (page 22)**

**Q5 (a)** \_\_\_\_\_

maximum potential fine incurred by calling numbers added to the Do Not Call register.

These figures are the foundation of your business case and your strongest arguments for change.

As an additional exercise, you may want to find out when, if ever, your contact database was last verified. Taking the annual degradation figures of 18, 20, and 30 percent for phone numbers, postal addresses, and email addresses respectively, see if you want to adjust your degradation figures for every year your database has gone unverified.



## Conclusion

Great Data:  
The Foundation of  
Customer Experience.



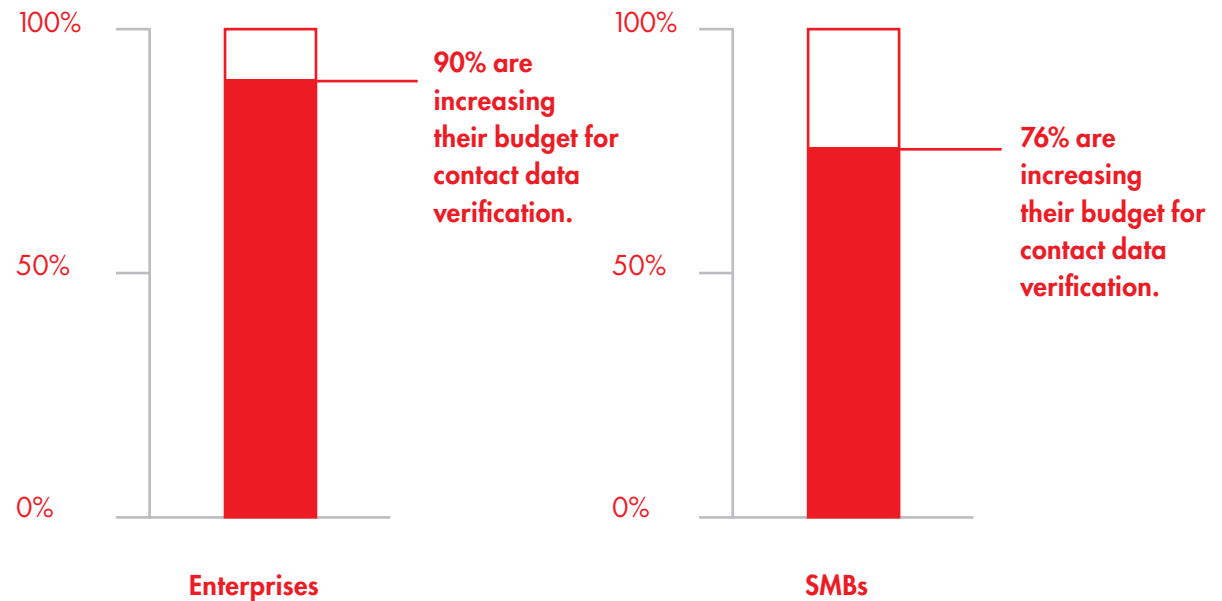
## Conclusion

# Great Data: The Foundation of Customer Experience.

**The biggest challenge with contact data is that it doesn't stand still. Its accuracy is in constant flux; the only thing it knows how to do is get worse. The equal and opposite upside is that implementing the right solution—one that cleans your pre-existing Salesforce or Marketo data as well as verifying data entered in forms in real-time—will have an immediate and dramatic impact.**

Budgets for contact data verification are rising in 90 percent of enterprises and 76 percent of SMBs.<sup>36</sup> This makes sense when you consider the extent of the problem, both in terms of size and the rate at which it's getting worse. Sales and marketing professionals consider more than 30 percent of their records to be incorrect in some way and that figure has increased 17 percent year-on-year.<sup>37</sup>

The answers to the questions in this workbook will give you the building blocks of a relevant business case to obtain C-level support for contact data verification. In the meantime, if there's anything else you need to know before we get started, we'd be happy to help.



# Getting More Value from Your Customer Information.

For an overview of the benefits and key features of Informatica's Contact Data Verification, see our data sheet.

[Read it now.](#)

# About Informatica.

Informatica is 100 percent focused on data because the world runs on data. Organizations need business solutions around data for the cloud, big data, real-time and streaming. Informatica is the world's No. 1 provider of data management solutions, in the cloud, on-premise or in a hybrid environment. More than 7,000 organizations around the world turn to Informatica for data solutions that power their businesses.

[Contact us.](#)



Worldwide Headquarters, 2100 Seaport Blvd, Redwood City, CA 94063, USA Phone: 650.385.5000 Fax: 650.385.5500  
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