

The Lists

The most important lists are those of the **customers**. Loyalty strategies have been used for the customers. In this article, however, we are going to talk about lists of non-customers, who can be defined as **leads** and, once transformed into **prospects**, then become customers.

Basically, we are talking about "external / cold" lists to be used along with strategies of direct marketing for actions of acquisition.

The definition of a lead of a list is wide: from an e-mail address of an unknown person, who clicked to participate in a competition, to an address that has been carefully collected and where the needs and desires of the individual are also known. Instead, the prospect is already a person who is interested to buy or at least to learn more about the offer, which can be deduced from the fact that they have already searched for and requested information.

Why are external lists so important?

- To acquire new customers.
- To compensate customers who are physiologically lost.
- Because without them the following media could not be activated, for example: Postal Mailing, Telemarketing or DEM.

The more a list is targeted, the more the right people are contacted, and communication is not wasted on those who are not interested.

The more a list is targeted, the more products, which match the taste and expectations of the recipients, are offered.

The more a list is targeted, updated and accurate, the more sense it makes to use personalisation strategies and effective creative messages.

In conclusion, it is important to use a targeted list, but it is not easy to know how to choose one because the lists market is complex.

The targeted lists depend on the type of product and service offered, for example, for those in remote sales, lists of people who already use this purchase channel regularly can be used. Therefore, each company has its own particular needs of targeting and lists to find. This aspect is not always clear, for example, for those selling garden accessories, is it more convenient to use a list of swimming pool owners or a list of distance buyers of bulbs? For this reason, plain lists are made and tests are carried out in order to find out what and how to "target".

In addition to targeting, another important aspect in choosing a list is to verify that the data is accurate, or at least reliable and up to date.

The lists of distance buyers are owned by the companies that sell offline or online.

Other lists are owned by companies that provide services such as comparison sites for flights, sports news, and so on. It must also be clear by whom, how and when the information has been found, and in the case of "mutualised" lists, it is still important to know the partners that contribute to the formation of the database.

Given this complexity, this is how the idea arose of creating a market to make the lists monitored, and accessible in perfect assurance and security.

As a result, the role of the list broker, who organises, regulates transactions and checks the results, is important.

The lists are rented and not bought, are destroyed once the action has been performed, and have a market value that depends on the update of the names, on what these customers have bought, and other variables of segmentation: age, profession, payment method, date of last action, and so on. The status of standardisation, the speed of processing totals and orders, the accuracy of information, the pace of the updates and new entries, the policy of the use and frequency of lists (especially in the case of DEM), and so on, also have to be considered.

In any case, the market value is decided by the data owner.

It is important to ensure that, at the time of data collection, the privacy policy has been communicated, and that people have given their informed consent to receive communications from a third party (a special chapter is devoted to data protection).

The selection of sources becomes fundamental in order to use up-to-date lists that are standardised and targeted well, and in which the information given by the owner of the list corresponds to the truth. Unfortunately, we see that the focus in the market is on other points, one of which is low price, which shifts attention from the quality of the data and, as a result, generates a low yield of Direct Marketing actions.

Abroad, lists are more expensive than in Italy both because the price variable is not a priority and because lists in countries like Germany / France are usually much more organised, updated, enhanced with other data (from external data banks) or free of those who do not want to receive advertising.

All this results in a higher cost of list rental.

Having said this, we can get to the point: **what is the difference between a serious supplier of lists, and a serious list broker, and those who are not professional? The difference is made clear by the datacard, which is a presentation form of the list.**

The mature customer will not be pleased to know that the list comes from a publisher who, however jealous of their portals, will not reveal their source; the mature customer will not be pleased to know that the addresses come from a mega database, where the sources are mixed and the origin of data does not matter because a mysterious statistical hand has created some profiles. The mature customer will want to know the data owner's name and surname, as well as to see the site or the collection voucher, especially in order to verify the information, and will assess the adequacy between visibility / awareness of the source and the information given (some sites, such as www.urlm.it, indicate the popularity of a site and then, using the number of daily visitors, the size of the list can be estimated).

The datacard, presented along with a list, must include this information:

- Cardholder's name.
- Data sources.
- The possible choices.
- The update.
- The available information.
- The description of what channels the list comes from.
- A glimpse of the socio-demographic profile.
- The single use rental prices.
- The fixed costs.
- The conditions.

- The success stories of the list.
- The assurance for standardisation and duplicate checks.

If this information is missing while trading lists of addresses, then the negotiation is treated as non-mature, that is, not following the standards of what happens in Europe and in mature markets.

What is the difference between a serious supplier of lists and a serious list broker?

It is that the former will try in every way to sell you their list, while the list broker will open up a world of possibilities, a variety of lists to choose from.

In cases of plain lists, the list broker will also save you time, because they will provide you with tens of different sources in "only one briefing". Even for a simple case where, for example, a list of "dentists" is required, the question is asked anyway whether to choose from a chamber source, or a telephone source, or a list made by the representatives of medical science. Then, with this target in mind, should e-mail marketing be used or perhaps is classic mailing a more serious option?

The list broker will also ensure that you do not run into lists that have been named in different ways by different suppliers and have a high percentage of overlap.

Among the criteria that increase the value of a list, there are also the following:

- 1) if the mailing address has been collected through the opt-in option.
- 2) if the e-mail address has been collected through the double opt-in option.
- 3) if there have been competitions or gifts that have "doped" the number of responses.
- 4) in the case of lists of distance buyers, it is crucial to know the value of the average receipt of purchase. We refer you to other chapters of the White Paper: tests and list management.