



INTENTSIFY™

Activate the Power of Intent

ACTIVATING INTENT

How B2B Organizations Are Maximizing Intent
Data's Value (Survey Report & Guide)

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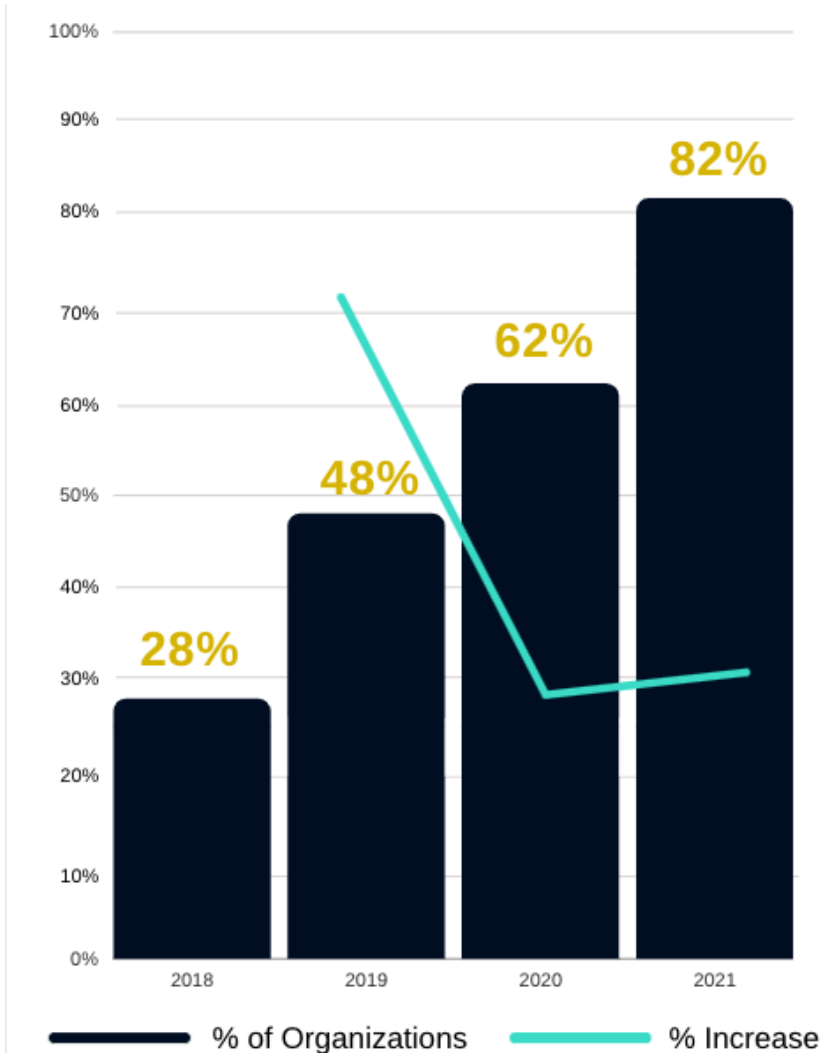
Reference Works

Section 1:

The Current State of Intent Data Use Among B2B Organizations

The use of intent data among B2B marketing and sales organizations is booming. According to a soon-to-be-released survey from Ascend2 and Intentsify, **82% of B2B organizations are already using intent data or rolling out a plan for its use.** That's up from 62% of B2B organizations in 2020, 48% in 2019, and 28% in 2018.

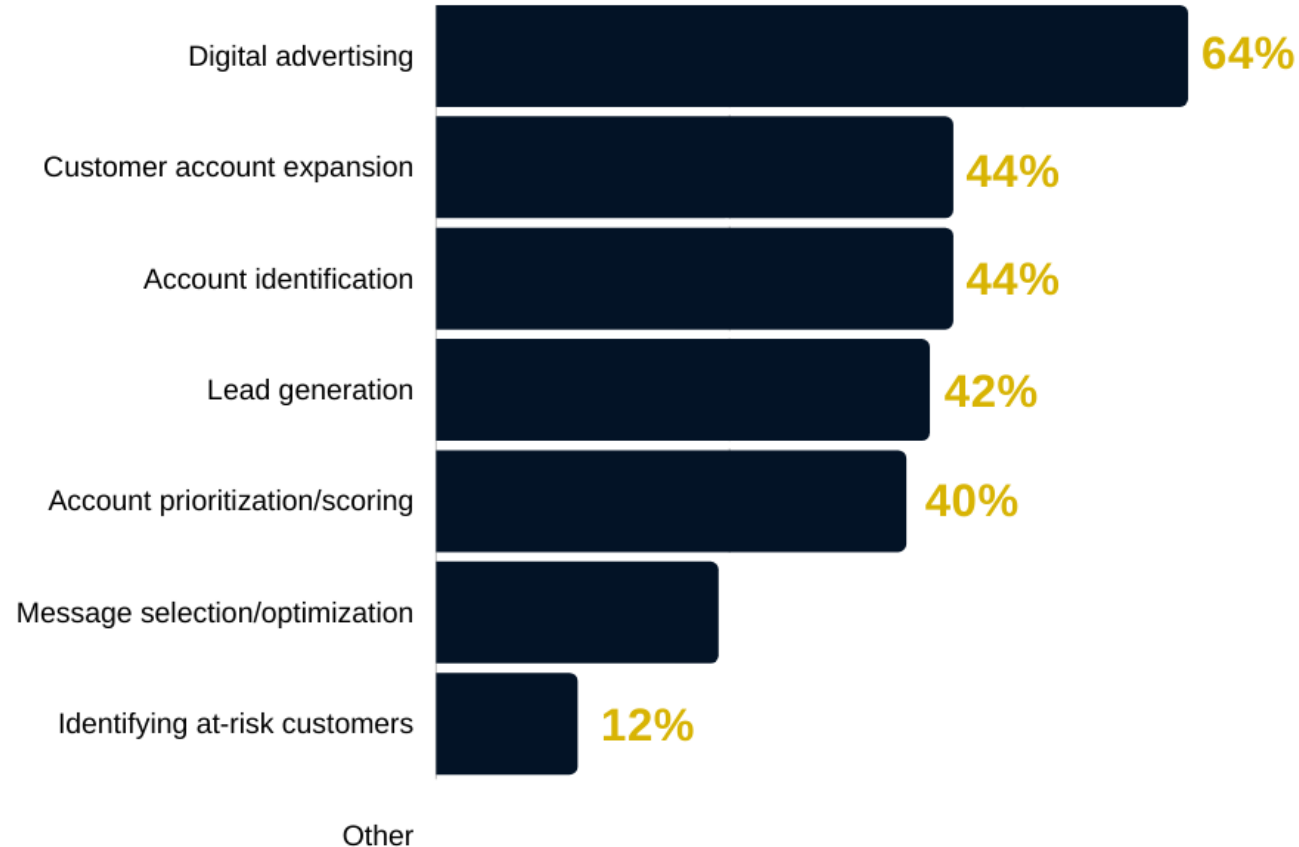
This rapid increase in intent data adoption is easily understood when you consider its wide range of use cases alongside marketers' and sellers' reported satisfaction with it.



Ascend2/Intentsify, The B2B Outlook on Intent Data (working title); forthcoming in May, 2021.

THE **USE** OF
INTENT DATA
AMONG B2B
ORGANIZATIONS

THE **MOST IMPACTFUL USES** OF INTENT DATA FOR A DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY (Select up to 3)



Ascend2/Intentsify, The B2B Outlook on Intent Data (working title); forthcoming in May, 2021.

Primary intent data use cases:

- Account identification (e.g., target-account list expansion)
- Digital advertising
- Account prioritization/scoring
- Lead generation
- Message selection/customization/optimization
- Customer account expansion (i.e., upsell and cross-sell efforts)
- Identifying at-risk customers

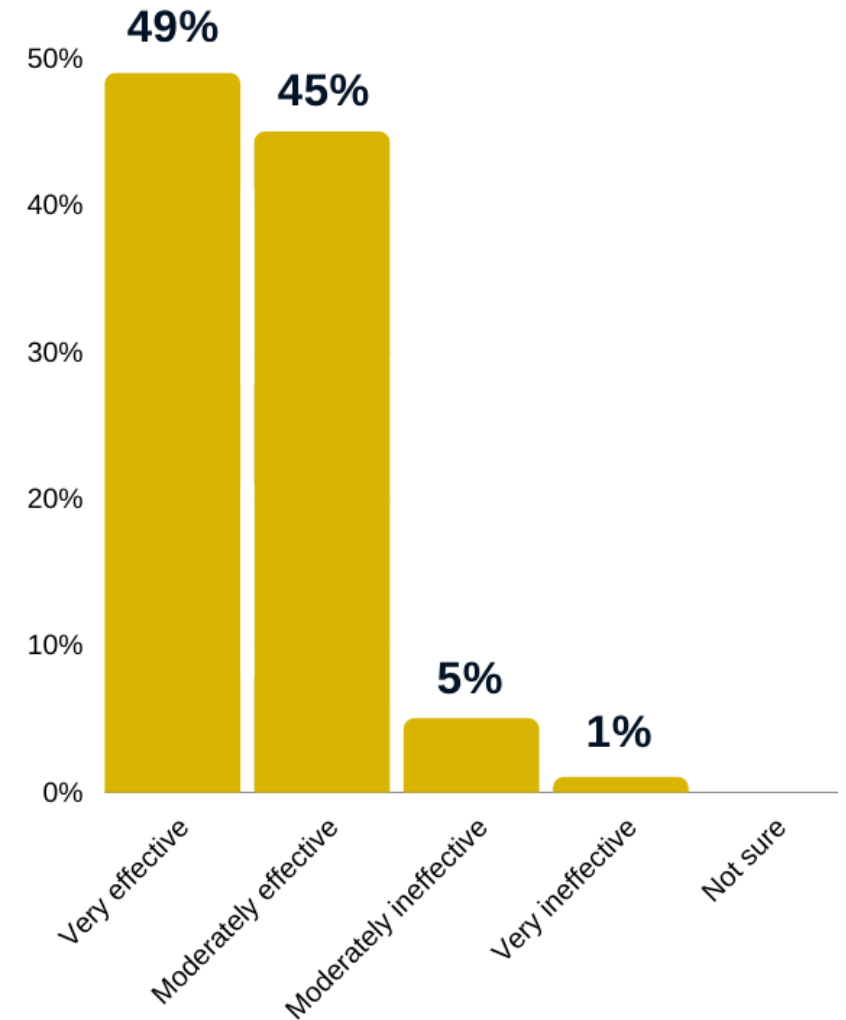
Moreover, intent data users perceive their overall B2B marketing strategy to be more successful than survey respondents who aren't yet using intent data. **A 70% majority of intent data users rate their strategy as "very successful" at achieving their goals compared to only 33% of those who do not use intent data.**

This strong satisfaction with intent data is leading B2B organizations to invest in additional sources of intent. According to TOPO,

“Enterprise companies have an insatiable appetite for data, specifically the data that indicates prospect interest. We’ve seen companies buy all the intent data they can from multiple sources.”

The findings of the 2021 Ascend2/Intentsify survey substantiate this: 88% of intent data users are now leveraging multiple sources of intent—and many are using more than two sources.

97%
of B2B marketers report intent data is **effective** at supporting its most impactful uses



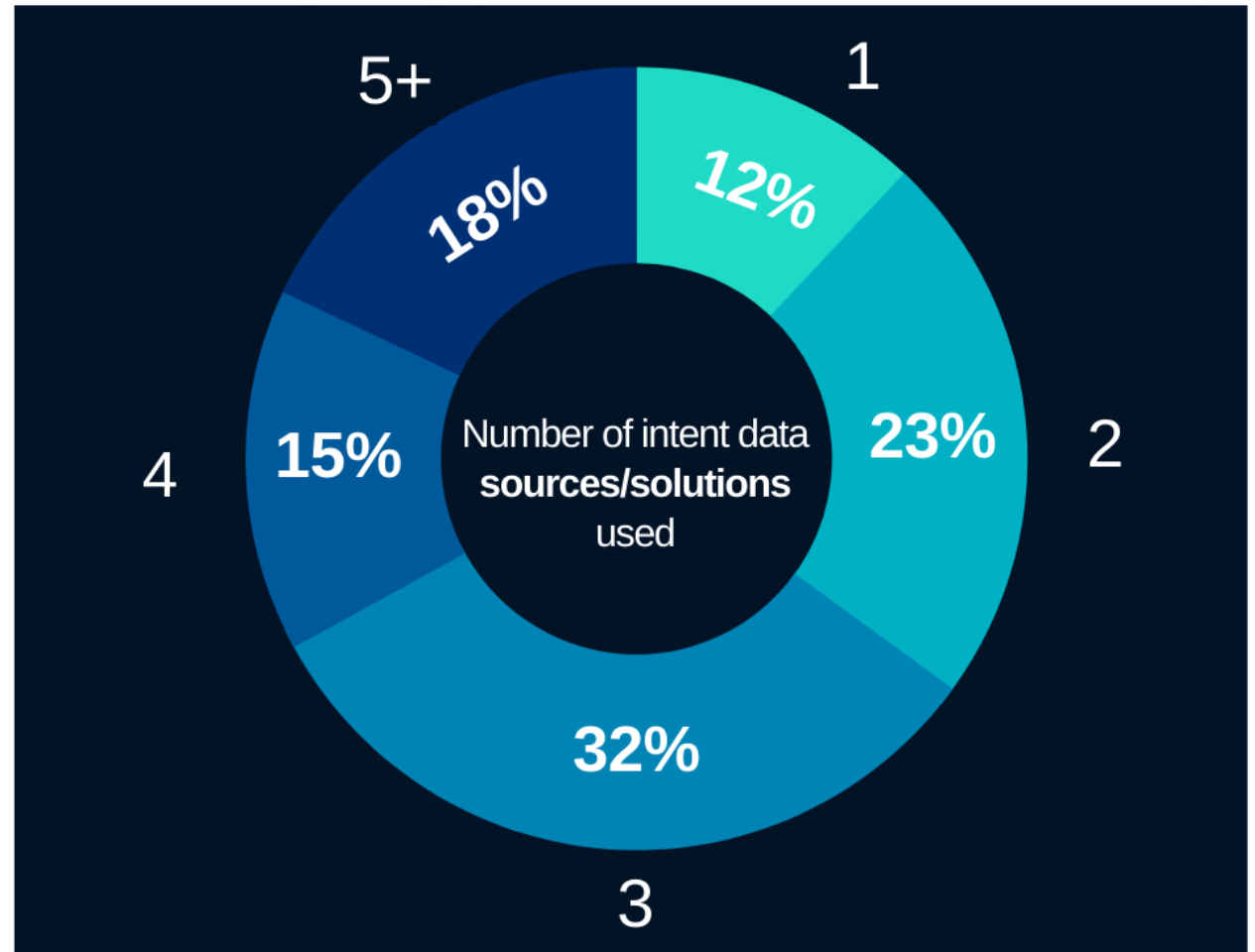
Ascend2/Intentsify, *The B2B Outlook on Intent Data* (working title); forthcoming in May, 2021.

Section 2:

Why B2B Organizations Are Using Multiple Intent Data Sources

There's a clear reason for investing in additional intent data sources: no one source (or type) of intent data can provide the coverage B2B teams require. Across a range of intent data derivation methods, intent signals show users what target accounts are currently researching and to what extent.

Yet, because data providers typically specialize in deriving intent data from specific types of online sources—including programmatic ad exchanges, media company/publisher web properties, social media activity, website co-operatives, peer-review sites, and more—**no one provider can provide the breadth of coverage most marketing and sales teams require to fully understand target-account needs and intentions.**



Ascend2/Intentsify, The B2B Outlook on Intent Data (working title); forthcoming in May, 2021.

Now add to these variables the vast range of ways individuals conduct research based on their own preferences—white papers, podcasts, blog posts, webinars, product review sites, analyst reports, case studies, etc.—each catering to specific departments, if not specific roles. The result is a ton of differing intent signals. Accessing only a small percentage of them through a single intent data feed can skew insights in an unhelpful way.

Reaping the full benefits of intent data requires aggregating multiple types and sources to provide broad online coverage and verify the strongest signals. To be clear, each intent data type holds complementary values to one another. Accessing multiple intent data sources is the best way to expand coverage of businesses' buying-research activities. But just as important, by layering and comparing the signals from various intent sources, marketers and sellers can identify the stronger intent signals—those shared across multiple intent sources. Consequently, B2B organizations benefit from both greater target-account activity coverage and intent signal accuracy.

These ideas are further substantiated by the 2021 Ascend2/Intentsify survey which found that those respondents who viewed their B2B strategies as “very successful” are more likely to be using multiple intent data sources.



Ascend2/Intentsify, The B2B Outlook on Intent Data (working title); forthcoming in May, 2021.

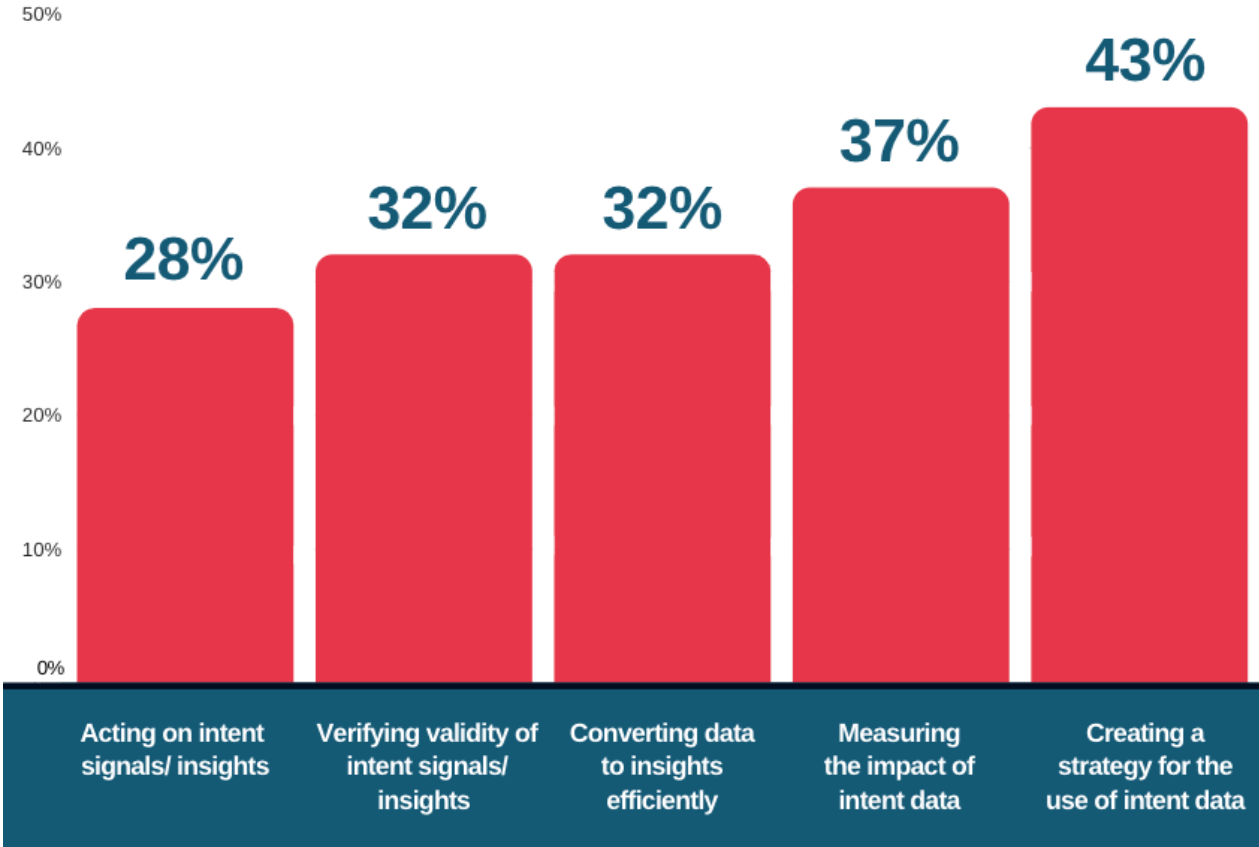
Section 3:

Challenges of Activating Multiple Intent Data Sources

While B2B organizations leveraging multiple sources of intent data are benefiting greatly, there remains much room to further maximize its value. Aggregating, digesting, and acting on all this new information is creating new challenges for marketing, sales, and customer success teams.

According to a 2020 TOPO report, the **No. 1 challenge marketers face with their intent data investments is “Making intent data actionable.”** The 2021 Ascend2/Intentsify survey shows similar issues. Of the 11 intent data challenges surveyed, three of the top five concerned data actionability: converting data to insights (32%), verifying signal validity (32%), and acting on intent signals (28%).

TOP 5 INTENT DATA CHALLENGES



Ascend2/Intentsify, *The B2B Outlook on Intent Data* (working title); forthcoming in May, 2021.

Why is this? Managing disparate sources of intent data hinders its actionability.

All the various sources and types of intent data remain largely fragmented.

They provide B2B marketers with quick snap shots of prospective buyers' research activities, but their respective siloes prevent the full view of the market landscape.

Because each data source monitors intent signals captured across differing web properties using differing methodologies, each source is only capable of providing information from a very specific angle. In the words of Kathy Macchi, VP of Consulting Services at Inverta:



Many marketers aren't using intent data as well as they could, and the **activation piece is the biggest need**. But the data and insights are often kept in siloes—so there's no cohesive picture. When this is the case, it's hard to make cogent inferences around intent data and know what to do with them.

KATHY MACCHI, VP OF CONSULTING SERVICES,
INVERTA

**Greatest costs
associated with intent
data challenges**

65%

**Wasted resources
and staff time**

50%

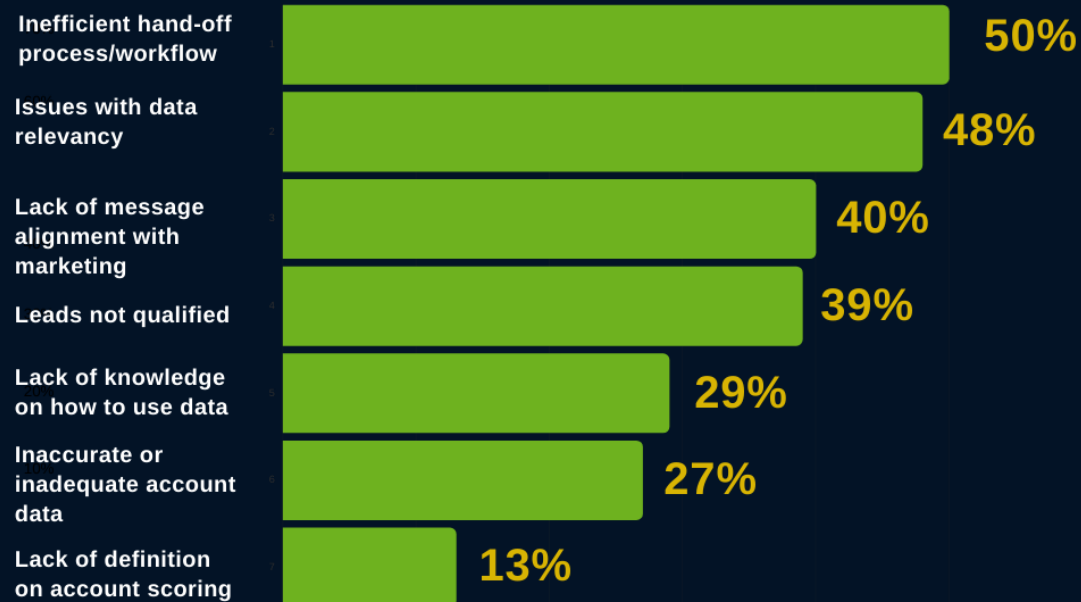
**Wasted
budget**

59%

**Missed
opportunities
for revenue**

*Ascend2/Intentsify, The B2B Outlook on Intent Data
(working title); forthcoming in May, 2021.*

BIGGEST COMPLAINTS FROM SALES/ BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TEAMS REGARDING USE OF INTENT DATA



Ascend2/Intentsify, *The B2B Outlook on Intent Data* (working title); forthcoming in May, 2021.

More than just hamstringing B2B marketers' ability to easily gather and act on the data, **the siloed nature of intent data solutions prevents users from confirming signal accuracy.** To be sure, validating intent signals is critical—and a key reason to adopt multiple intent sources.

It's like the difference between having one or several key witnesses in a criminal trial; if two or more intent sources highlight the same signals, it's a substantially stronger indication of a target-account's interest and buying intent. That's why **32% of surveyed marketers feel that verifying intent signals is a "Top 3" intent data challenge.**

Unfortunately, as the survey results show, many B2B marketing and sales teams struggle to adequately layer, digest, and act on a large volume of intent signals in a timely and efficient manner. And that's why Intentsify is pioneering [Intent Activation™ Software and Solutions](#). But aside from investing in Intentsify's solutions, there are a few things you can do to boost the effectiveness of your current intent data investments.

Section 4:

Steps to Maximize Intent Data's Impact

1. Start With Just One or Two Use Cases

It's easy to want to go big and fast with intent data. Its numerous use cases support the entire customer lifecycle—from top-funnel advertising to mid-funnel account prioritization to post-sale customer expansion. The possibilities are enticing, but it's a good idea, initially at least, to focus on one or two use cases that will drive quick results.

Most marketing and sales teams first focus on account prioritization. This allows your business-development reps (BDRs) to allocate their time and efforts to the accounts currently researching your products and services, and thus most likely to buy.

Another great use case for B2B marketers to start with is intent-activated demand generation/content syndication. This lets you acquire intent-qualified leads from target-account decision-makers who have requested to download your branded content.



Ascend2/Intentsify, The B2B Outlook on Intent Data (working title); forthcoming in May, 2021.

Both of these use cases are easy to get up and running quickly without the need to integrate numerous systems or revise any existing processes. When your initial pilot use case succeeds, move on to the next, following the same guidelines outlined below.

2. Ensure All Involved Teams Are ‘Bought-in’ and Understand Goals, Strategies, and Tactics

Marketing commonly invests in intent data for the initial use case of account prioritization—only to discover later that sales isn’t using it effectively. For example, sellers often neglect to use data signals to inform the messages they use when following up with intent-prioritized accounts. This wastes half the value intent data offers for that specific use case.

Not only should department leaders be convinced of intent data’s value, each user should fully understand how to leverage it in their daily activities—as well as how it will benefit them. Be sure to develop the steps needed to educate anyone who will be using the data. Any good intent data provider should be able to facilitate this process via content and/or direct guidance.

3. Understand and Document Your Typical Buyer’s Journey

Identifying a common research path among your target audience—i.e., trends and correlations that exist among specific search terms, research “watering holes,” content subjects, asset types, product/feature interests, etc.—can help you select the right intent topics and customized keywords for specific use cases throughout the funnel.

There are various ways to accomplish this. Gathering first-party data from your CRM, marketing automation, and customer-data platforms is a good first step. (Intent data should always be used in tandem with your first-party data anyway.) Customer interviews can further provide useful context regarding the typical buyer’s journey.

4. Carefully Select The Intent Topics and Keywords You Monitor

Intent data usually works by monitoring specific topics and/or keywords to determine whether an account is “in-market” (i.e., looking to buy a product or service), where they are in their buyer’s journey, and what issues they care about. So, selecting the right topics and keywords to monitor is critical for the successful use of intent data.

Too often, however, B2B marketing and selling teams cursorily select topics/keywords, and then simply prioritize any account that spikes on a few of those terms. As mentioned earlier, this wastes one of intent data’s main value propositions: its ability to highlight where prospects are in their journey, so you can select the right combination of tactics and messages to use for each in-market account.

More general
to challenges



More specific to
solutions/vendors

Upsell: General to
challenges/solutions

Prevent Churn: Specific
to solutions/vendors

STAGE 1 — IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

Select based on:

- Prospect pain points, challenges
- Problems your solutions solve

STAGE 2 — DISCOVERING SOLUTIONS

Select based on:

- Your solutions’ values and benefits

STAGE 3 — RESEARCHING SOLUTION PROVIDERS

Select based on:

- Your specific products/features
- Your brand
- Competitors’ products and brands

STAGE 4 — DECIDING TO RENEW OR CHURN

Upsell—Select based on:

- Challenges related to your other solutions

Prevent Churn—Select based on:

- Competitor’s products and brands

In general, the topics and keywords you select for top-of-funnel efforts (e.g., account identification, content syndication, etc.) should relate to the pain points your prospective customers feel as well as the problems your products/services solve. Assume your target audience isn't aware of your solution, let alone your brand. Their research at this moment most likely consists of trying to better understand any issues they're having.

Regarding using intent for mid-funnel use cases (e.g., account/lead scoring), such accounts have likely identified why they're having problems. Now they're focused on finding solutions, so your topics and keywords should reflect, in general, the types of solutions your organization offers (e.g., solution category names and common features).

For bottom-funnel efforts (e.g., sales follow-up), keep in mind that these accounts should by now understand the solutions available to them. They're now trying to figure out whether investing in a solution is worth the cost, and if so, which vendor they should select. Here is the time to get specific with your topics and keywords. Selecting those related to your company's specific product names as well as your organization's brand name. Similarly, you'll want to track your competitors' brand and product names.

5. Create a Repository For All Your Intent Sources

There's no reason to do this one if you're using Intentsify's Intent Activation™ software, which automates the processes of layering, digesting, and acting on multiple sources of intent data. Otherwise, it's important to create a repository enabling the side-by-side analysis of the signals from your various intent sources. This will make it easier to cross-reference signals for accuracy, ensuring users are acting on the strongest insights.

It's also a good idea to use this repository to assign which signals will support specific use cases, allowing various users to easily access, absorb, and act on the information for their particular needs.

Importantly, this repository should be updated on a weekly basis, as intent signals have a short shelf-life, which is why they're typically updated on a weekly basis.

About Intentsify

Building on Intentsify's own proprietary intent data, our [*Intent Activation Software and Solutions*](#) make intent data more actionable and impactful for B2B marketers and sellers by:

- Layering multiple, complementary intent sources to verify intent-signal accuracy and highlight accounts showing the strongest buy-cycle activities—as well as the issues they're most concerned with; and
- Quickly converting the resulting intent insights into actions via turn-key [*intent-activation solutions*](#) for demand generation and programmatic advertising use cases.

Combined, Intentsify's software and solutions transform a once tedious workflow into an easy, effective way to quickly optimize account-based efforts according to changing buyer needs—boosting demand, pipeline velocity, and customer lifetime value.

"Intentsify's intent-activated demand gen solution is the best and easiest way to both get your branded content in front of targeted personas at intent-identified accounts and convert them into quality top-of-funnel leads."

John Phillips, Head of Demand Generation and Partnerships, Nerderly

"With Intentsify, we've seen a much higher MQL-to-opportunity rate as well as increased deal size, which is leading to some of the top pipeline within the channel. In fact, we're seeing a 10x pipeline-to-spend ratio. Plus, there's just an ease of working with Intentsify due to the immediate responses we receive from the team."

Casey Culler, Affiliate & Partner Marketing Manager, PagerDuty

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