



## Duplicate Leads Are A Clear Indicator Of Intent

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One of my favourite questions to marketing professionals when I am discussing their lead management process, or their [marketing automation platform](#), is “what do you do with a duplicate lead?” Why? Because it gives me guidance on their level of maturity in doing B2B marketing.

A duplicate lead is when you identify a new contact who seems to be interested in their website/service/product, but it belongs to a company that has already been registered as a lead (or it is even the same contact coming back to the website). The answer I hear the most is “we delete the lead from our system because we have already collected a contact form the company”. Often, they add “we would not pass it on to Sales because they would complain that we already gave them that lead”.

Almost every marketing automation system still forces marketers to collect and process leads at a contact level – a singular person, and the first one from a company to be noted. BUT, in B2B it is hardly ever a single person who is going to buy a product or service. B2B buying is invariably in teams – in fact the size of these buying teams has exploded in the last years. The average number of people involved in a B2B buying decision nowadays is around 12.

So that raises two issues:

- The count of people from one company that are researching or investigating your solution is not being recorded but would be an important piece of information.
- Who even knows if the first person that your system had recorded is of any importance at all within that group of 12? In fact, I know of a case where that person was in procurement, so the marketers were excited to pass it on but the procurement person was only collected data about them to fill out his internal compliance form with another “alternative vendor” to the one already chosen.

Of course, many B2B marketers are now well on the way to adopting [Account-Based Marketing](#) (ABM), which means that they think about their sales process at a company (account) level not the contact level. They collaborate with Sales to agree and focus upon a certain list of target accounts that are qualified to an agree “Ideal Customer Profile”. And they deploy tools that monitor web behaviour to detect whether, and how much, people from certain accounts are researching their topic.

Indeed, the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the process. Many rules of business and marketing have been re-written overnight and many companies are re-building their marketing mix to include account-based strategies on a more efficient scale. Being committed to ABM would mean that marketers will treat duplicate leads very differently. The count of contacts coming from one account will provide valuable buying team data to the sales team as well as providing an important indicator how strong is the intent to



buy for that account. That means, the number of contacts should become a factor for lead-, or better still, account-, scoring.

ABM introduces two new terms to B2B marketers:

**“In market”**. This is used to discuss whether a target account is actively investigating and researching about products and services you offer. Realistically, even if your addressable market has, say 500, companies, the chances are that only around 10% of them will be actively researching/buying stuff at any point in time. So, it is really useful to know about which companies are in that 10% this quarter. Now, that does not mean you should not market to the other 90% anymore, it means that you are marketing to them is DIFFERENT, more educational and more branding based than promotional.

**“Intent”**. ABM systems will also able to help you calibrate the probability that a certain account wants to buy the products and services you offer. It is possible to differentiate whether the account is just starting their research or actually now about to place an order. Of course, it doesn't help you much if you discover a lead at this late stage. You will have little chance of competing with vendors who had discovered the target account when they were just starting their project – just becoming “in market”.

Always keeping you informed!

Peter