Part of a new e-book series:
Digital Skills Acceleration

Understanding Intent Data

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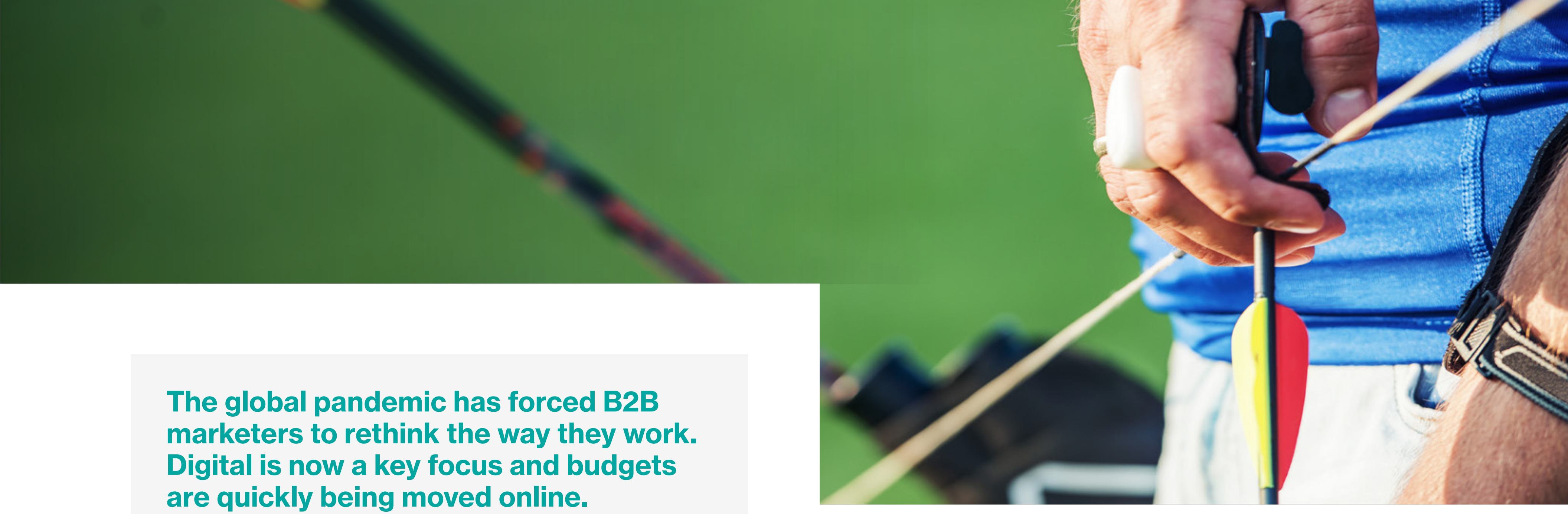
TechTarget



The global pandemic has forced B2B marketers to rethink the way they work. Digital is now a key focus and budgets are quickly being moved online.

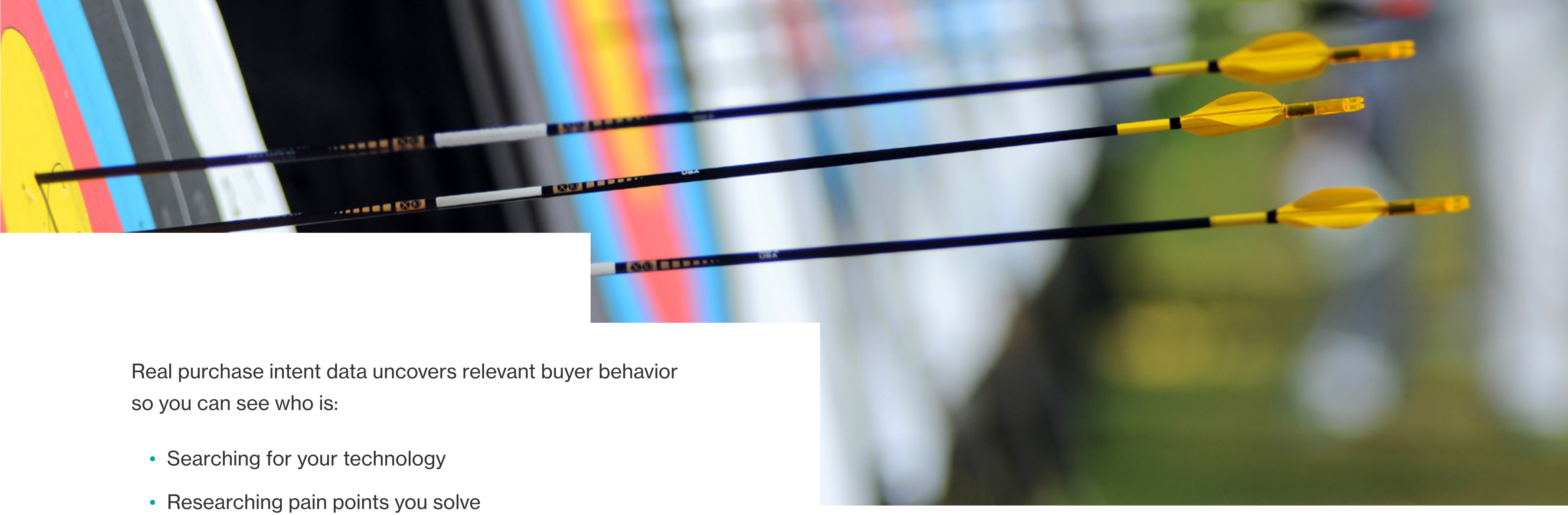
In this e-book we will help you **understand the basics of intent data** by breaking down what it is and why you should be using it. We will also look at the different types of data available, before focusing on **second-party data** and the benefits it can bring to your marketing.

To help you get started, we have also included sample emails and call scripts, along with a set of questions you should ask potential second-party data providers, so you can hit the ground running.

How do you define intent data?

Real purchase intent data is relevant and accurate behavioral information that provides actionable insights for sales and marketing. It is data that should deliver reliable, scalable increases in pipeline opportunity creation.

Intent data goes beyond capturing contact information or working with lookalike lists. It's about focusing on a set of accounts and being able to understand exactly who you should be targeting at each one. It will show you who is researching, what they are researching and how often, their main sources of information, their patterns of behaviors and their tendencies.



Real purchase intent data uncovers relevant buyer behavior so you can see who is:

- Searching for your technology
- Researching pain points you solve
- Evaluating your competitors
- Learning how to buy your products
- Visiting your website
- Downloading your content
- Clicking on your ads

At TechTarget we believe that activity matters, and intent data helps you uncover the activity that matters most. It is not enough to know that Employee X works at Company Y. To successfully complete a sale, you need to know exactly what Employee X cares about.

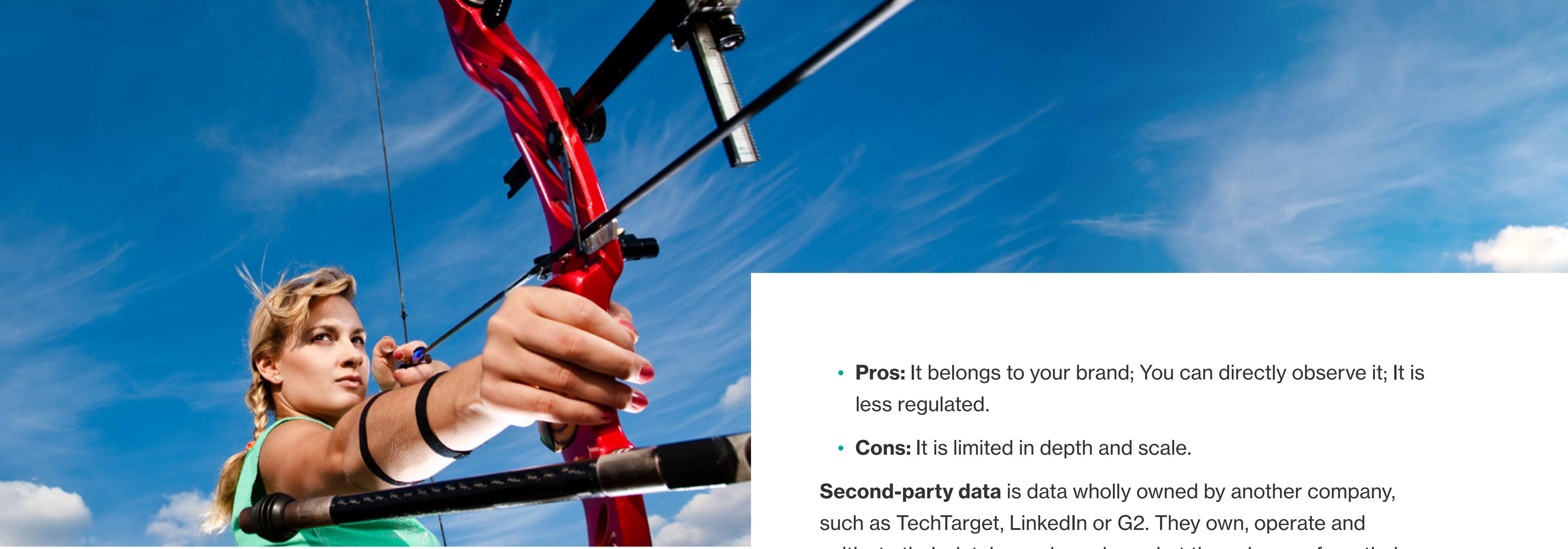
1 Sources: Operatix Call Conversion test results comparing cold contacts vs. TechTarget Active Prospects; TechTarget call and email tests (over 6,000 dials and 1 million emails; Internal TechTarget study of over 6.5M content marketing emails sent to cold vs active prospects)

Why intent data?

The data signals are accurate, allowing you to judge the recency, frequency and relevance of the activity and act accordingly. You can use the data to define your marketing messaging, ensuring you are supplying your prospects with the right content at the right time.

We know from our research[1] that active prospects are more likely to engage. They are:

- **12x** more likely to respond to your emails
- **75%** more likely to accept meetings
- **2x** more likely to turn into an opportunity



As well as allowing you to dig deeper into your existing target accounts, using intent data is also a great way of identifying and understanding additional accounts you should be targeting but maybe haven't yet focused on.

What's the difference between first-party, second-party and third-party intent data?

Data can be categorized into three buckets.

First-party data is the data which you own. It's the information you hold within your CRM or automation tool which you are currently messaging against.

- **Pros:** It belongs to your brand; You can directly observe it; It is less regulated.
- **Cons:** It is limited in depth and scale.

Second-party data is data wholly owned by another company, such as TechTarget, LinkedIn or G2. They own, operate and cultivate their databases based on what they observe from their user behaviour.

- **Pros:** It's reliable and directly observed; It adds depth and further meaning to your existing first-party data.
- **Cons:** There are potential integration issues; There's limited availability.

Third-party data is data sourced by an aggregator that does not own the information, such as data.com or BlueKai.

- **Pros:** It's readily available; It's wide-reaching.
- **Cons:** The quality can vary widely; It can be costly; There is a much higher risk of breaching data regulations.

The B2B sales and marketing landscape

Underneath this is another layer, which shows us what kind of data is available to us. The B2B marketing and sales intelligence landscape can be broken down into 3 areas: Intent, Predictive and Contacts.

Intent data shows you which accounts are in market right now and may have the propensity to buy from you. This is “surge” identification based on web/keyword scraping and IP lookups. The results are account-based only.

Predictive data shows you which accounts you should be prioritizing based on whether they might be ready to make a purchase. It scours internal customer databases and ranks accounts by probability, “fit” or Ideal Customer Profile (ICP). This kind of data only organizes current customer data—it doesn’t yield new prospects or leads.

Contact data shows you which contacts you should be targeting or engaging with at an account. It delivers “phone book” contacts and org structures or provides programmatic ad targeting. No information is provided on the contact’s project interests, research involvement or timelines.

Each type of data is valuable, but the true value can be seen only when all three are in play. Unfortunately, it can be difficult to source this data from multiple providers because they’re not all talking to each other. If the contact provider isn’t in lockstep with the predictive provider and the intent provider then the system falls down.

This is what makes TechTarget unique as we offer an end-to-end solution. **Priority Engine™ gives our customers access to intent, predictive and contact data all in one place,** and all sourced from our network, which is **the web’s #1 source of purchase intent data.**


What are the primary use cases for intent data?

TechTarget's Priority Engine™ offers many practical benefits for marketing and sales teams. Here are twenty simple use cases as a starting point:

For Direct Marketing & Demand Gen teams:

- Build content marketing lists to generate marketing-qualified leads (MQLs)
- Nurture prospects downloading your content
- Segment by firmographic filters and purchase intent
- Target accounts engaging with competitor content
- Conquest using competitive product install data

For Marketing Operations teams:

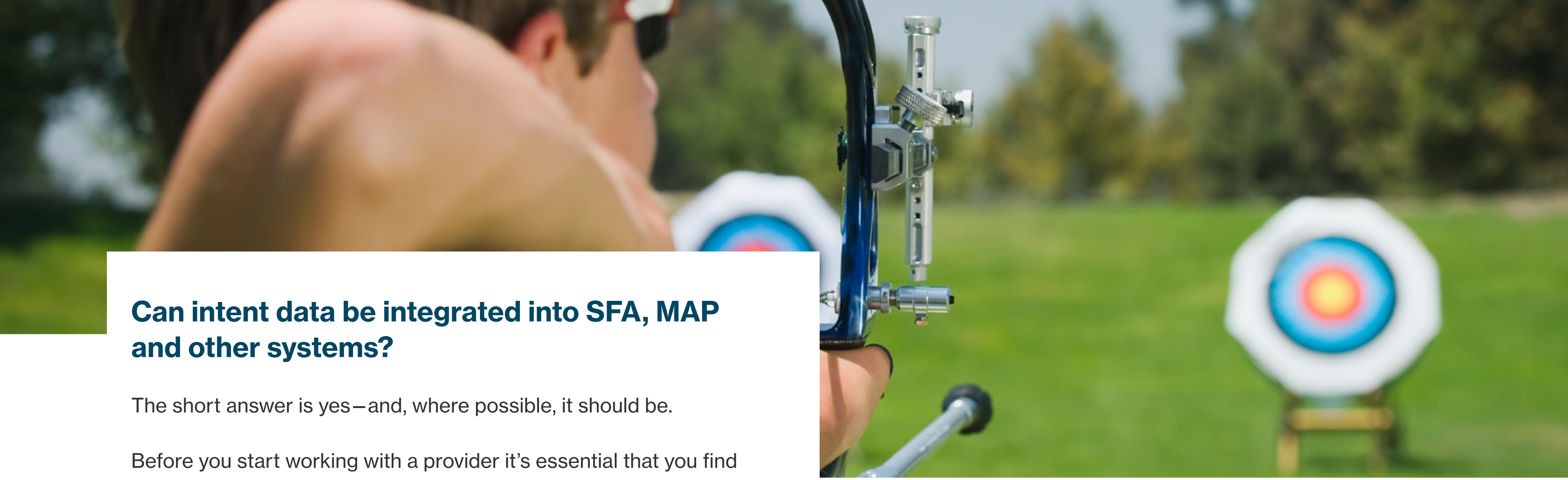
- Use purchase intent data to improve lead scores
- Create and expand programmatic account pools
- Identify contacts from accounts visiting your site
- Feed automation lists with direct prospects exports
- Discover contacts from predictive ABM lists

For Sales and Business Development teams:

- Prioritize call lists for Sales and BDR territories
- Reactivate "closed-lost" deals and reduce customer churn
- Discover new prospects within rep territories
- Identify active prospects from named accounts
- Cross-sell customers based on behavioral data

For Field Marketing & Channel teams:

- Recruit new prospects for regional events
- Prioritize event leads by purchase intent
- Generate regional content marketing lists
- Prioritize ABM targets for the channel
- Enable channel partners with regional lead lists



Can intent data be integrated into SFA, MAP and other systems?

The short answer is yes—and, where possible, it should be.

Before you start working with a provider it's essential that you find out how the data will be delivered to you and whether you can integrate it into your own system. Will they be able to seamlessly push the data directly into your marketing automation/stack, or will they just be sending you a spreadsheet?

It's also worth bearing in mind that intent data isn't just about providing new records and new contacts. It gives you the opportunity to update the records you hold on existing accounts. Frequently adding new data points will help you make better decisions about how to market to them. Does your provider have the ability to update your existing records?

Integration is also important when it comes to tracking attribution. It allows you to look at your data set holistically and see which channels drove a sale from meeting to opportunity to close. This is essential for marketers as you need to ensure that you are focusing your efforts in the right areas.

At TechTarget we find that successful customers implement these foundational pillars to get the most actionable data from Priority Engine:

1. **Integrate.** Integrate to quickly export prospect and account information into your existing stack using your format and mapping.
2. **Accept updated data.** One of Priority Engine's most powerful capabilities is to provide updated data on accounts' interest as they move through the buying process and/or change their focus.
3. **Track attribution.** Tracking attribution is essential for you, and performing regular health checks ensures you see maximum ROI.

How are you measuring success?

Defining what success looks like at the start of your campaign will help you keep on track. Here is a simple checklist of measures which you should consider tracking:

Early Stage

- Contact volume
- Net new accounts
- Engagement rate (opens/clicks)

Mid Stage

- MQL conversion rate
- MQL to SQL acceptance rate
- SQL meeting rate

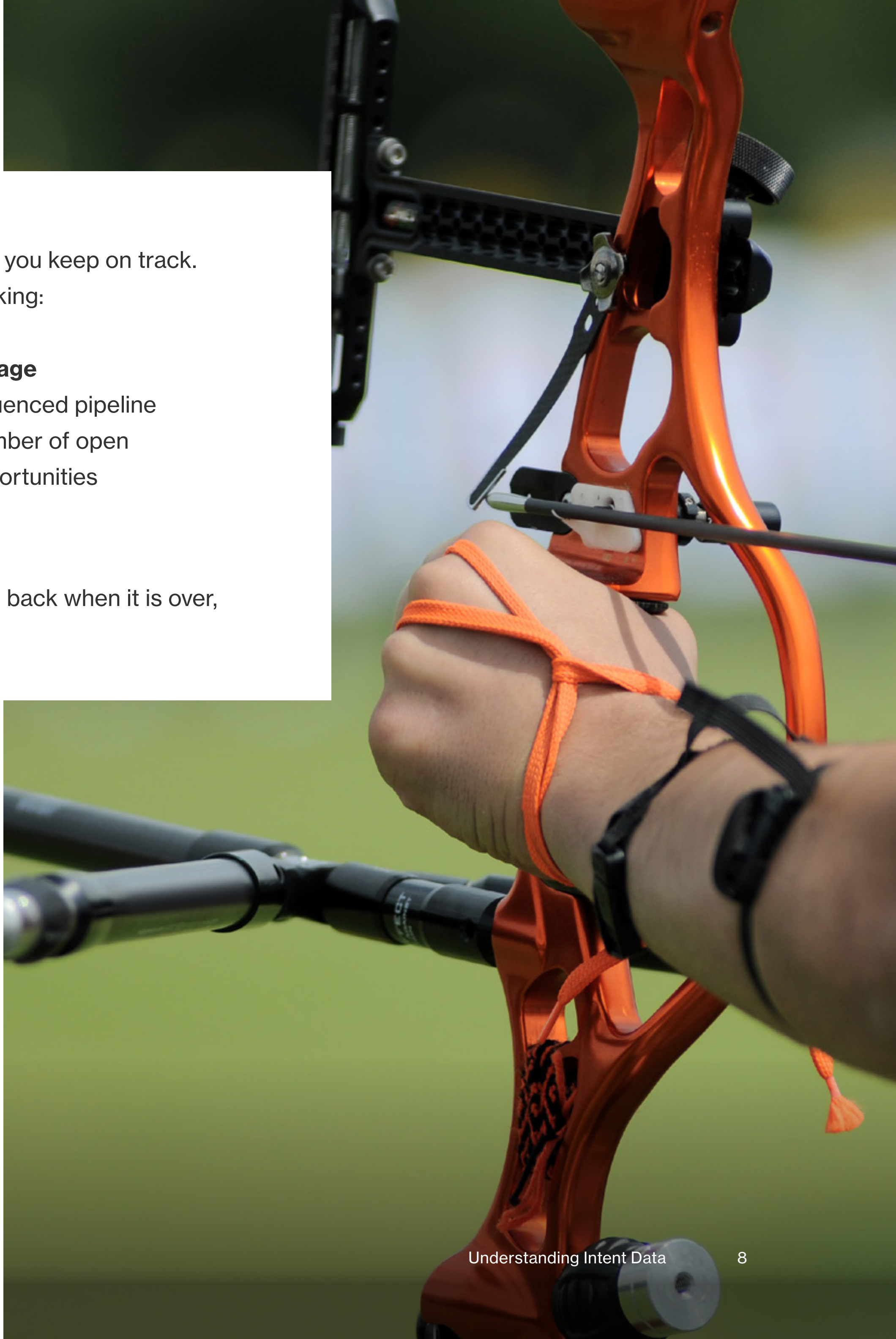
Late Stage

- Influenced pipeline
- Number of open opportunities

Measuring continuously throughout your campaign, rather than looking back when it is over, allows you to adjust as you minimizing waste and maximizing ROI.

The types of report we recommend building are:

- Reporting on contact import
- Email performance reporting by source
- Conversion to MQL
- Tracking MQL to opportunity
- Closed/Won or Opportunity Reports



How can intent data be worked into call scripts and email templates?

The best way to engage a prospect is to address something that is pertinent to the research they are doing right now. Intent data allows you to do this, making your cold call or cold email warmer and more enticing.

Think of it from a B2C perspective. You are preparing to run your first marathon and you are looking for new running shoes. You receive email communications from three brands. The first sends you a broad selection of running shoes, the second sends you a selection of shoes that are good for marathons and the third sends you a selection of running shoes that are good for marathons and have the specific kind of cushioning you have been researching. Which email do you open? Which brand looks like it understands you the most? Email 3 will always get the higher engagement because they have done the hard work for you and demonstrated a clear understanding of what you need. The same principle applies in B2B technology purchasing.

How to leverage the intelligence – by email

Here is a sample email which highlights how you can use intent data to warm up that initial contact with a prospect.

Subject line: [Vendor Installed] vs **[Your Company]**: Moving on from legacy solutions

Main Body:
Hi **[Prospect First Name]**,

My name is ______, your local **[Your Company]** account manager.

Over the course of the next few weeks, we're giving **[Segment]** presentations sharing how other organizations in the **[Industry]** sector are using **[Your Solution Type]** to achieve:

- **[Topic Interest 1]**
- **[Topic Interest 2]**
- **[Topic Interest 3]**

We'll also be sharing how we compare with other vendors in the space like **[Vendor Interest 1]** and **[Vendor Interest 2]**. The idea is that we would meet with you, share information and give you some ideas so if you ever have a project around **[Segment]** you know what is available and out there for you.

[Prospect First Name], do you have any time on your calendar the week of ______ for a 45-minute presentation?

Kind Regards

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The email is short and to the point but demonstrates to the prospect that you understand them and understand what they need.

Things to note when building out an email template

- The subject line should make them curious and flush out people with current projects
- The only call to action should be to reply. If you include links to your products and services, you reduce the likelihood of a direct response.
- Mention the prospect's first name wherever it feels natural to do so.
- Sending a second email—which includes the first email and references it—reinforces the idea that this is from a real person

Potential subject lines

- Frustrated with **[Topic Interest 1]**?
- **[First Name]**, these 3 things driving you nuts?
- Are **[Topic Interest 1]** and **[Topic Interest 2]** unsolvable problems?
- **[Segment]** meeting
- **[Your Company Name]** vs. **[Vendor Interest 1]**: See how we stack up

How to leverage the intelligence – by phone

Using intent data within your call scripts will open up the conversation faster and create a connection between the sales representative and the prospect. Your call will appear as though it's by chance, but you'll be subtly tailoring your pitch to their interests.

Here's an example script:

Hi **[Prospect First Name]**,

My name is ______ and I'm calling from **[Your Company]**. I don't believe we've spoken before, have we?

I'm calling because—and stop me if this isn't relevant to you—over the course of the next few weeks we're giving **[Segment]** presentations focusing on the benefits that **[Industry]** organizations like yours are gaining from addressing **[Topic Interest 1]**, **[Topic Interest 2]** and **[Topic Interest 3]**. We'll also be sharing how we compare with other vendors in the space like **[Vendor Interest 1]** and **[Vendor Interest 2]**.

The idea is that we would meet with you and share information about where you can potentially go with your company's **[Segment]** solution in the future so that if you ever have a project in this area you'll know what is available.

Does that sound interesting to you? Do you have any openings in your calendar the week of ______ for us to book the presentation?

Now—just to make sure we're tailoring the presentation to your own specific areas of interest.... **(insert your own qualifying questions)**

What questions should you ask potential intent data providers?

Any reputable provider of intent data should be happy to answer the following questions for you.

What is the source of the data?

- Are you directly observing the activity?
- If not, can you show me the sites and/or content where the activity signals are being collected?
- Are the activity signals being generated from buy-cycle content?

Do you have a direct relationship with the prospects?

- Are you able to share contact details for the actual people doing the research or is the intent data limited to account-level information?
- Have the prospects actively given their consent to be contacted? Is the data GDPR compliant?

Does your data integrate with the systems I currently use?

- With which platforms does it integrate?
- In addition to sharing the data, how can you help me influence active buyers at these accounts?
- Describe the type of marketing programs you can run on my behalf.

When evaluating intent data providers, we would strongly recommend leaning into those which freely offer up the above information and are willing to go even further.

Look for the providers like TechTarget who, in the spirit of partnership, seek to help you engage that these prospects and help you understand who else you could be engaging with.

B2B buyers have come to expect personalization at every touchpoint. 76% of buyers say they expect personalized attention from marketers and salespeople based on their specific needs.[2]

Intent data will help you prioritize accounts by capturing account activity and gauging the level of purchase interest. When you know which accounts are most receptive and in need of your solution you can better scale personalization efforts and amplify impact.

2 Source: Demand Gen Report, *B2B Buyer Behavior Study*

Taking it a step further, when you have this insight into your buyers, you can build out a personalized customer experience for each of your personas. This establishes a framework you can employ as you scale, saving time to focus on content.

By incorporating intent data into their marketing mix, marketers can both offer a more valuable experience for buyers and have a big impact on sales.

Activity matters. Learn how sales and marketing can thrive on real purchase intent. Watch the video

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About TechTarget

TechTarget (Nasdaq: TTGT) is the global leader in purchase intent-driven marketing and sales services that deliver business impact for enterprise technology companies. By creating abundant, high-quality editorial content across more than 140 highly targeted technology-specific websites, TechTarget attracts and nurtures communities of technology buyers researching their companies' information technology needs. By understanding these buyers' content consumption behaviors, TechTarget creates the purchase intent insights that fuel efficient and effective marketing and sales activities for clients around the world.

TechTarget has offices in Boston, London, Munich, Paris, San Francisco, Singapore and Sydney.

For more information, visit techtarget.com and follow us on Twitter @TechTarget.

About David Lane

David Lane, Senior Director of Customer Success in Asia Pacific, brings 10 years of B2B technology digital media and data experience to his consultations with TechTarget clients. He and his team of regional client consultants have helped hundreds of companies integrate intent data into their systems and processes. Based in Singapore, David has held several senior online operations and product marketing roles. He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Iona College.

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