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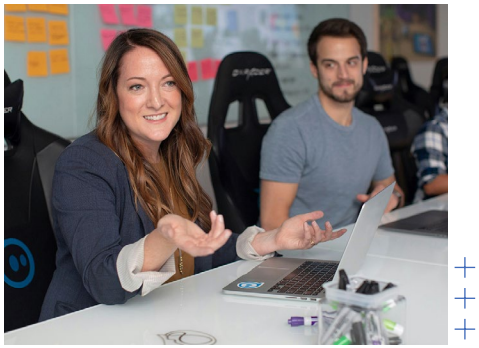
Ebook

The GTM guide to data quality

Introduction

With the digitization of everything, our virtual footprints are now everywhere. For B2B professionals responsible for growth or GTM programs, this opens up a whole new world of opportunities and approaches for better understanding and engaging with customers and prospects. Your company has likely invested heavily in revenue technology systems, like a customer relationship management (CRM) and a marketing automation platform (MAP), to help you collect, analyze, and use this data. But as you go from planning to execution, you're quickly realizing that you don't have the technical, operational, or strategic data quality to do anything meaningful or advanced with the information.



Data quality is frustrating and elusive

The frustrating reality of RevTech is that the advanced solutions that are meant to do everything from predictive lead scoring and account-based marketing (ABM) to content personalization can't really do any of it without clean and accurate data. In many cases, these same solutions create additional complexity and fragmentation, further exacerbating the problem.

Stop blaming your tech

Too often, it's the tech or tool and not the bad, dirty, incomplete,or irrelevant data causing it to underperform that gets the blame. Without fixing the underlying issue, swapping the tool just recreates the problem in a new location.

The three-tier data quality model

To put it simply, good data quality is the foundation for greater GTM productivity and profitability.

1. Technical data quality

It starts at the most basic level with technical data quality, which means your data is complete, formatted correctly, accurate, and up-to-date.

2. Operational data quality

It's the minimal requirement before moving on to making your data operationally sound. Here, the benchmark is operational quality, which boils down to the data having the requisite business and persona characteristics, such as industry designation, job function, geographical info, etc., to link, score, qualify, and route it.

3. Strategic data quality

Technical and operational data quality are table stakes. Winning the hand requires strategic quality. Here the bar is higher and more difficult to clear. Data that is strategiclly sound has the relevance, context, and intent attributes needed to extract the actionable insights that makes you more efficient, win deals, and help you grow the business.

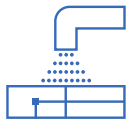
Who should read this guide?

Any data-driven professional who's looking to get the most out of their RevTech investments by building a first-rate database.

Are we simply talking about lead data?

No, data goes well beyond leads. It covers all related data, spanning the entire funnel, including leads, contacts, accounts, engagements, opportunities, campaigns, and much more.

Making your data GTM ready



Step 1

Clean your data

Step 2

Normalize and standardize your data

Step 3

Enrich your data

Step 4

Deduplicate your data

Anyone familiar with the data onboarding process understands the complexity of creating and sustaining data quality. Fortunately, you don't need to be an engineer or data scientist to lead, or be part of, a data quality initiative. However, it does help to have a solid understanding of the steps, challenges, and tools before diving in. Additionally, too many companies think of data quality as something that happens once, or even once a year, rather than as an ongoing process. But data is being added to your database every day. Waiting a quarter or a year to get that cleaned up only leads to lost opportunities and ineffective processes.

Let's start at the beginning with your raw data and how to format it for your RevTech systems.

1 Clean your data

Data is the fuel that powers your growth engine. To keep this engine running at maximum efficiency, you need to remove any impurities before they enter the system. Regardless of the technology or solution you use, data cleansing typically requires two things: rules and connectors.

Rules are the bots or algorithms that do the heavy lifting of searching out, filtering, and fixing the problems. Connectors allow you to automatically extract data from its source, clean it, and then send it back or on to another destination like a CRM, reporting system, or cloud storage. As with any fuel, there are an almost infinite number of ways for your data to be contaminated, making detection and remediation all the more difficult. See the graphic to the right for some examples that illustrate the challenges.

Challenges

with data cleansing

1. Starting with the ocean

Popular solutions like MDM, EDW, lakehouses and others require all your data, not a specific set strategic to your business or project

2. Junk values

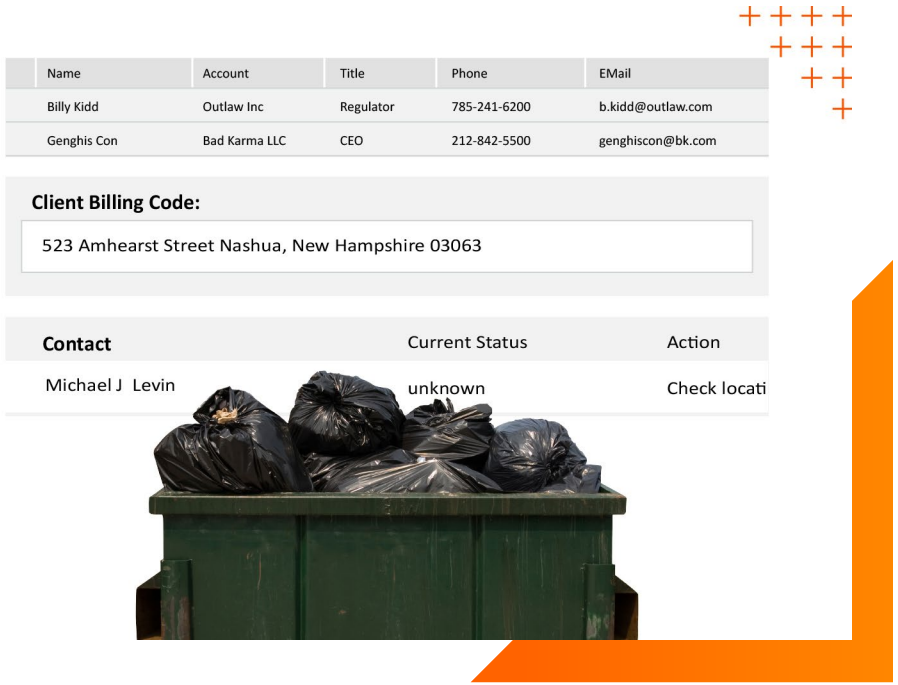
Bogus names, titles, and companies, among other fields

3. Invalid values

Data is entered in the wrong field (e.g., shipping address entered into billing) or violates a rule (e.g., invalid sales territory or subscription plan)

4. Stale values

Value is out of date (e.g., contact or account owner left the company, or competitive vendor is no longer active)



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2 Standardize and normalize your data and fields

With the expansion of MarTech, there are now literally thousands of vendors, or data sources, that capture and prepare data for your systems' consumption. While the data values may be equivalent, each source typically has its own way of formatting the data field, which may be very different from other sources and from your destination systems. For example, your data sources may have multiple ways to format the state field. One may use the full state name, while another uses the two-character ISO alpha abbreviation, a third uses some other variation (e.g. Cal, or Calif.), and so on. These are all accurate and common, but when you try to run a report like sales by state, you can end up with six separate data points that should be merged into one. Before you can use the data for process automation, you'll need to standardize the field values to one common convention. While simple in theory, standardization can be very challenging in practice, as the graphic to the right illustrates.

Challenges

with data standardization

1. **Field type**
   Source and destination are different field types
2. **Field length**
   Source character length exceeds destination limits
3. **Data parts**
   Multipart data fields are incompatible
4. **Allowable values**
   Source value is invalid
5. **International data**
   Data standards are incompatible (e.g., UTF32 vs. UTF16), or includes diacritics (e.g., Quebec vs. Québec) multiple languages (e.g., Verkaufsleiter vs. Sales Manager)
6. **Distributed ownership**
   Data ownership and systems are distributed across departments, each with their own requirements, formats, and definitions

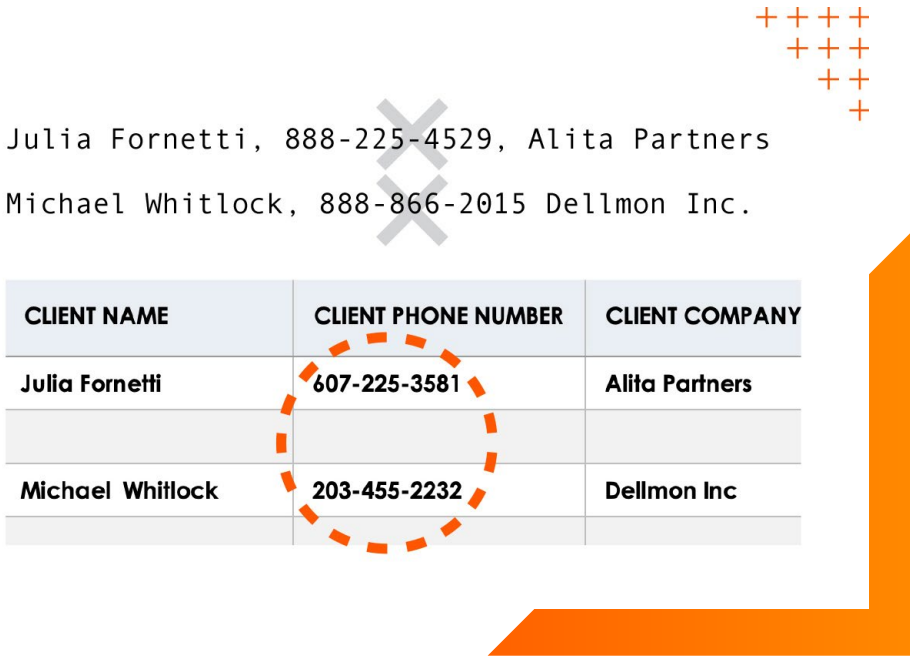
3 Enrich your data

Once your basic data set is clean and relatively error-free, the next step is enriching or appending it—filling in records that may be incomplete to provide a more complete profile of each lead, contact, and account. Enrichment is a ciritical component of making your data operationally and strategically sound. While the enrichment step typically requires the services of a third-party data vendor or solution, the complexities involved can make it just as challenging, sometimes even more so, than the other steps. See the graphic to the right for some common challenges you may encounter when enriching your data.

Challenges

with enrichment

1. **Vendor limitations**
   Being dependent on only one vendor. Vendors specialize in regions, different business sizes, or firmographics vs. person data. There is no one-size-fits-all or one-stop shopping for data
2. **Mulitple vendor contracts**
   Having to deal with numerous vendor contracts and the procurement issues that accompany them
3. **Cleaning and standardizing your new data**
   Reformatting the enriched data to match your new cleaning and normalization requirements
4. **Prioritizing your data**
   Determining which data takes priority so that you end up with the highest quality data from all of your sources
5. **Current data**
   Keeping data up-to-date when companies grow or merge or when people are promoted or change companies



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4 Deduplicate your data

Duplication is one of the most common issues with B2B data. Data deduplication is a core part of the data quality process and, in a best-case scenario, is completed before the data enters your system of record. But B2B GTM teams rarely exist in a best-case world, and the reality is that 10% to 30% of the typical B2B database is corrupted by duplicate records.

Because of its vast scope and scale, and the cost of getting it wrong, most GTM teams put off solving systemic duplication issues, which only compounds the problem. If you're serious about data quality and getting your database clean and in order, a complete and ongoing deduplication process has to be a priority. While simple in concept, deduplication can be quite complex in execution, especially when dealing with records distributed across multiple systems.

While it may seem counterintuitive to enrich before you deduplicate, the added data from enrichment will help you provide more information on which to base your deduplication. If you deduplicate first, you'll most likely have to repeat the step for the new fields added by enrichment.

Challenges

with deduplication

1. **Governance and standards**
   Creating and documenting a clear standard to use for comparison
2. **Managing multiple duplicate scenarios**
   The need for multiple duplicate criteria, such as email only OR first name, last name, company, and country
3. **Sophisticated matching**
   Being able to do both exact and fuzzy matching
4. **Picking the winner**
   Determining which records are the base on which you will build
5. **Exception handlng**
   Accommodating exceptions, such as using the oldest created record as the base, but the most recent updated value for lead status

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Getting started

Data quality technology, solutions, and best practices

Now that we've defined what clean, accurate, and deduplicated data looks like, let's take a look at the technology, solutions, and best practices for delivering it.

Best practices for your data quality initiative

1. Survey your data and define your standards

Like most business processes, data quality needs to follow a linear progression. You can't clean what you can't see, so your first step has to include a comprehensive audit and cataloging of all your data sources and their formats and types. Once you know what you have, you can start defining the standards you'll use across your entire database. When doing so, it's always best to plan for not just what will work today but three years from today—your successors will thank you.

2. Document and define your values for data cleansing

It's not enough to make decisions about your data values; you need to document them, too. This will save you time and effort when colleagues, members of other teams, and new employees question why things are the way they are. It will also save you the trouble of digging into your past emails, meeting notes, or recordings to remember what decisions were made and why. Also, when you get promoted, whoever replaces you in your role will have a history of what happened before. Future-proof your organization now.

3. Use multiple vendors for your enrichment

In an ideal world, you'd have a single enrichment vendor that could provide you with all the latest people, firmographic, technographic, device, intent, and sentiment data you need to build out the robust data set you want. That's not the reality, as most vendors typically specialize in one or two areas, so if you want to enrich your data across multiple dimensions, you're going to have to contract with multiple vendors or work with a platform that provides a ready-made blend from multiple data vendors.

4. Document, test, and automate multiple deduplication criteria

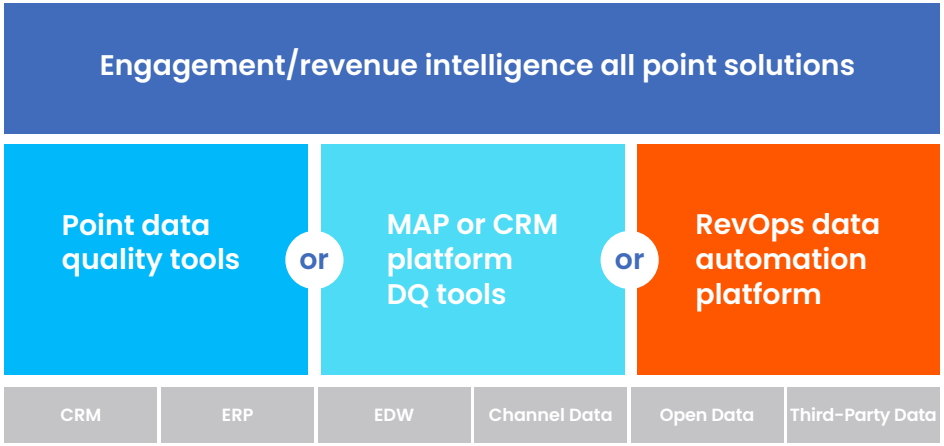
Your deduplication logic or criteria that determine which records you keep and which you discard will be unique to your business and will take some iteration before you get it perfected. Consider all the possibilities and then document the criteria you've devised to deal with them. This will be your first benchmark. Before pushing live, always try to test in a safe environment outside your systems of record or with only a few test records for each use case. Once you've tested, you can check the results and adjust the criteria as needed. As flexibility is key, try and avoid black box systems that don't provide the required visibility.

Technology and solutions

At a high level, the approach should be to:

1. **Stop the bleeding first** - find ways to remedy the places where inaccurate or erroneous data is being introduced
2. **Clean up each system of record** - for systems that are integrated, you may be able to do this in one system and have it sync back to the other
3. **Standardize across systems** - create a governance committee that will determine allowable values and rules of engagement, as well as ownership, so that a cross-functional team are in agreement on both the current state and any future changes

If you're ready to invest in a new technology solution, you'll have the challenge of determining which solution is best for you. Here are primary types of market solutions available and some key things to consider when evaluating them.



Selection of technology should match the scope, from simply fixing existing tools to completely rationalizing your RevOps data automation across your RevTech stack.

MAP or CRM (using built-in functionality)

All leading MAP and CRM platforms have some built-in functionality that you can use to perform data processing, but as these rules are designed primarily for process automation, they're often ill-suited for processing large amounts of data. Also, if you run rules in each of those systems, they may overwrite each other, causing a ping-pong effect as each value updates the same record repeatedly, or you may end up doing twice the work as you try to maintain each system.

Single-point or general purpose data quality tools

There is no shortage of quality tools; however, most of them perform only one or two tasks, such as deduplication or cleansing, but not both. Only a few are general purpose tools that can perform many or all of the tasks in the data quality process. Determine what your data processing needs are before you decide which tools are best for you. Single-purpose tools usually take less configuration and can be easier to use, but you will have to purchase, deploy, integrate, and maintain multiple tools. A comprehensive data platform provides the simplicity of an all-in-one solution, but will require more effort up front.

RevOps data automation platform

RevOps data automation software (RDAS) does programmatic data processing based on configuration—whether it's cleansing, segmentation, or transformation. RDAS can perform enrichment as well, but it will require a reference database provided by you, the software vendor, or a third-party data service. RDAS and data services are complementary, but not mutually exclusive. Using an RDAS to clean and standardize your data before sending it to a data service can greatly improve matching accuracy. Once the data is enriched, you can use RDAS to further standardize, segment, and add context.

Technology considerations

Stack assessment and consolidation

Assess the functionality of your current tech stack. Find out who is using which platforms and if you're using the features provided. Also determine if these different tools come into conflict with each other. For example, an enrichment process that provides data after the leads have already been routed removes most of the value of the data that would enable them to be routed correctly the first time.

Determine both the cost of the tools and the effort for your team to maintain them. Look at ways to consolidate both your spend and your maintenance, so that you get the most bang for your buck.

Plan for tomorrow

While most teams know what they need today, they should also keep in mind the growth plan for their GTM efforts, team, and pipeline. Solutions that are "good enough" today, such as manually managing processes or reporting on spreadsheets, can quickly become burdensome when your company scales or additional markets are added to your GTM strategy.

Don't just think about what you'll need today or a quarter from now, but what you can do to automate manual work, make your team more efficient, and solve the tedious problems that you deal with day-to-day. Your future self will thank you.

Work across the RevOps team

Marketing and sales tend to be a bit siloed, but really they should be part of a RevOps team focused on bringing more business to your company. While it might be hard to work across teams to ensure the data works for everyone, find an ally and start working together to understand shared problems, places of disagreement, and ways to bridge the gaps. By thinking about your end-to-end revenue funnel, you'll be able to better show outcomes and a real ROI for your company tied to your data cleaning, standardization, deduplication, and enrichment efforts. When you can show a downstream return for your work, even something an executive might think of as trivial such as data standardization, then you can show the value of your team, your effort, and your processes

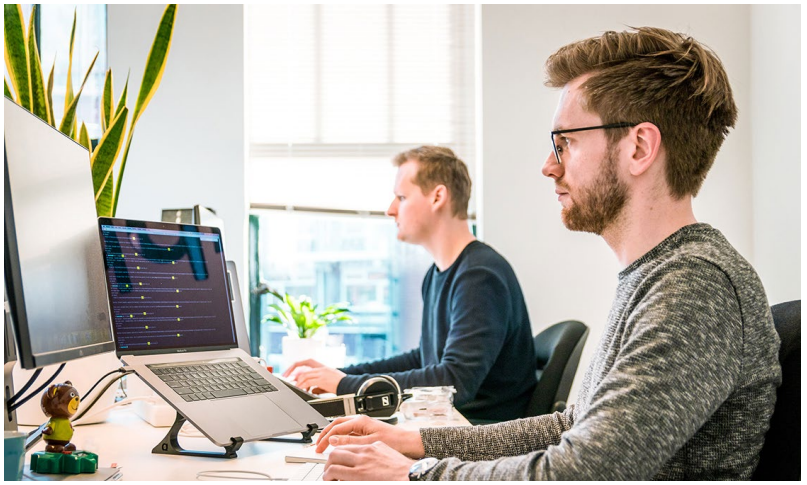
Ready to learn more about data quality and how to get started with your own project?

Schedule a consultation with a data quality expert today.

Go to: Request a demo

About Openprise

Openprise is a leader in revenue operations (RevOps) data automation, helping companies transform their data into action at scale. We pioneered the first end-to-end, no-code RevOps Data Automation Cloud purpose-built for non-programmers to integrate and unify siloed data and automate key go-to-market processes. Our single cloud platform aligns marketing, sales, and customer success teams and simplifies their technology to deliver fast and efficient revenue growth. Revenue leaders from Clari, Okta, Zendesk, and Zscaler depend on Openprise and our industry-leading partner ecosystem to drive competitive advantage. To learn more, visit www.openprisetech.com and follow us on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.



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