Convertr

Content Syndication Isn't Dead, But Your Data Processes Might Be.

It's a New (Lead) Generation...

Like direct mail, bank tellers and gas-powered cars, Content Syndication has been facing the rumor that it was soon to be no more – phased out by newer and better technology...a memory that you would relay to your kids as you told them about landlines and telephone books.

Luckily, the tech rumor mill was wrong on this one, as Content Syndication is as vital as ever to implementing a successful marketing strategy. So why are some brands and advertisers, having evolved their strategy and renewed their focus on lead quality and volume, still struggling to deliver valid leads into their sales pipeline?

Don't Call It a Comeback

As LL Cool J would say, "Don't call it a comeback, I've been here for years..." While Content Syndication is not the new kid on the media technology block by any means, it is also not an old, outdated, ghost of the past.

In fact, if managed properly, it can save your company from becoming the latter – by increasing the three things companies always need more of – *time, resources, and revenue*.

> Content syndication is clearly on the rise again, a result of both new capabilities and unfortunate circumstances. Its ability to provide much needed fuel to B2B funnels is clear. But those marketers who put some time and effort into building a solid content marketing framework will see much greater return on their syndication investment than those who don't.
>
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The Game, The Rules, The Players

What exactly *is* Content Syndication? Content syndication involves placing your content on third-party sites specifically chosen to appeal to your target audience. This allows you to reach a larger audience with your content than you would through organic marketing efforts (like SEO) or marketing to your existing audience through email and social media.

There are two main goals when using Content Syndication — to increase awareness and web traffic which is generally run by content teams, or, to generate leads which falls under demand gen. While both goals can ultimately lead to increased revenue and leads, the strategy, media buy and deliverables may be very different.

Who should be using Content Syndication for lead gen? The most common job titles are Marketing, Growth, ABM and Demand Gen Manager, but anyone whose job responsibilities center on generating leads, whether it be managing the overall strategy or executing campaigns, should be including Content Syndication in their marketing blueprint.

Why Manually Processing Leads Is Costing More Than You Think

The evolution of digital marketing means that Content Syndication is a whole other animal than it was even a few years ago. Companies that revised their marketing strategy, but failed to change *the way* they receive and manage lead data are experiencing some troublesome pain points, which can lead to reduced revenue and/or market share.

Using manual processes that rely on spreadsheets can mean campaign requirements and lead files need to be communicated and tracked with each vendor *separately*. And complex requirements can be found both on the contract/fulfilment side and on the lead validation side for *every single vendor* and *every single campaign*.

Processing all of this manually can be not only difficult to manage, but *very expensive* in terms of time and resources.

Another big risk with manual processing? Human error. One transposed number or letter can turn a highly viable lead into an invalid one. Mistakes can be made when reviewing, formatting, or uploading leads, and as content syndication lead volumes grow, so do errors.

These errors can not only cost you money in terms of lost revenue and productivity, but in costly fines if the error is found to cause a compliance issue.

Example One

Managing different lead quotas and CPL across vendors:

- Vendor A contracted for 500 leads at $50 CPL
- Vendor B contracted for 750 leads at $45 CPL
- Vendor C contracted for 450 US leads at $40 CPL and 350 UK leads at $65 CPL

Example Two

Managing different campaign requirements across vendors:

- Vendor A leads need to fit a certain persona (job title and seniority)
- Vendor B leads need to fit a certain persona and answer 3 qualifying questions
- Vendor C leads need to fit a certain persona and work at a specific company (ABM lists)

And with content syndication, if publishers have contracted to specific requirements and bad leads are missed, a great deal of the budget can be wasted. For example, if we look at a 15% lead invalidation rate*, the resulting wasted spend can go from distressing to astronomical.

Invalidation Rate	CPL	Leads Per Month	Bad Leads	Lost Budget Per Month	Lost Budget Per Year
15%	$50	500	75	$3,750	$45,000
15%	$50	1,000	150	$7,500	$90,000
15%	$50	2,500	375	$18,750	$225,000
15%	$50	5,000	750	$37,500	$450,000
15%	$50	10,000	1,500	$75,000	$900,000
15%	$50	25,000	3,750	$187,500	$2,250,000

*Invalidation rate compares the number of valid to invalid leads on a campaign. For this illustration, for every 100 leads, 15 would be invalid and 85 would be valid.

We led with 15% to make the math easy, but as you can see from the chart below, most industries struggle with a much higher invalidation rate.

27.5% Average Invalidation Rate Across Top Industries

Hospitality	Automotive	Banking, Financial & Insurance	Tech	Business Services & Consulting	Consumer Goods & Services	Education & Training	Telecom	Manufacturing, Engineering, Construction
11.0%	18.6%	21.3%	26.4%	26.4%	29.0%	30.3%	30.7%	44.6%

*Average invalidation rate by advertiser industry as reported by Convertr, January 1-December 31 2020.

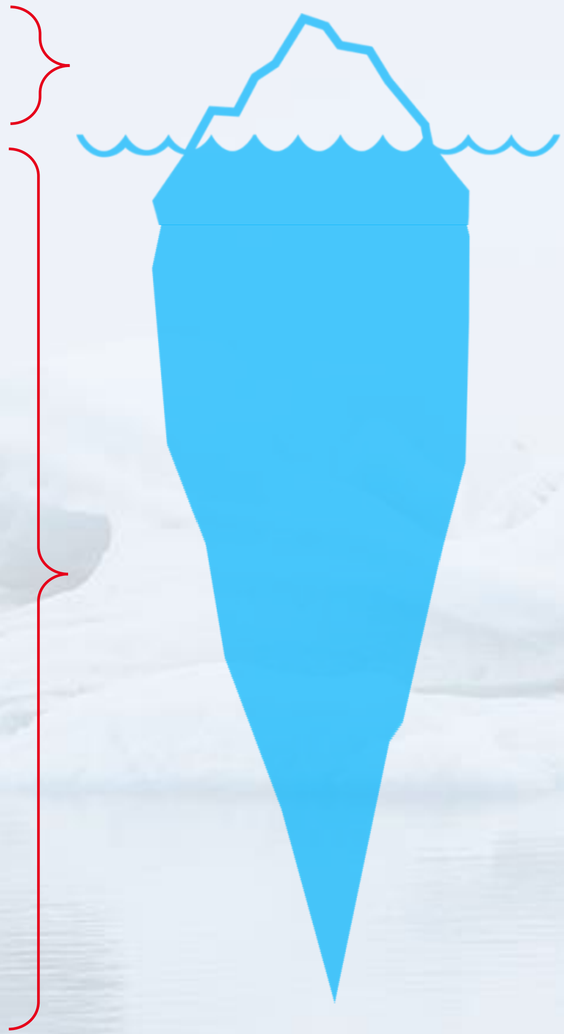
As if the wasted spend on invalid leads was not enough to make you see the light (or the dark side) in terms of manual processing, that is only the tip of the iceberg. As the graphic illustrates, there are many negatives to manually processing your leads. And while those negatives may not all be immediately evident or equal in their damaging effects, they are all interconnected – so there is no experiencing one without the others.

The formula for factoring the cost of manually processing data is more complex than String Theory and Dark Matter put together.

The formula starts with taking the number of employees working on or impacted by the manual process, multiply that number times their hourly pay rate, then multiply that times the number of hours it takes each of them to complete their assigned tasks, then take that sum and square it to find the cost of paying for invalid leads caused (or missed) by human error, add in the revenue lost from competitors connecting with your leads first…

It's not a valid equation of course, but you get the picture.

- **Wasted budget** when publishers deliver on lead volume but not campaign requirements.
- **Lost revenue** when leads lose interest before they're processed.
- **Lost productivity** when campaign managers are managing data vs optimizing campaigns.
- **Sales & Marketing disconnect** on lead volumes and lead quality.
- **Increased tech costs** when bad leads raise lead volumes in marketing automation or CRMs.
- **Incompatible data** that doesn't meet CRM or routing rules.
- **Unnecessary resources** are needed to manually clean or process lead files.



Improve the Health of Your Lead Generation

Need further proof that manually processing your lead data is slowly killing your marketing efforts, your sales pipeline and your company profits? Let's dive into the vortex of invalid leads to find out why they fail.

What Are the Most Common Reasons Leads Fail?

We analyzed 10.9 million QA jobs to find out.

Reason	Example
Failed Against a Validation or Suppression List	• Must be on an ABM list. • Cannot be on a current customer list.
Doesn't Meet a Simple Condition	• Country must equal US or UK. • Title cannot contain Intern, Consultant or Coordinator.
Lead Provided by Multiple Publishers	• Only accept the first lead provided on a campaign. Duplicates are rejected.
Processed Data Doesn't Meet Requirements	• US, USA, & U.S.A. are updated to United States and accepted. USofA wasn't fixed and failed.
Incorrect Date Format	• Requires MM-DD-YYYY. Fail if formatted YYYY-MM-DD.
Contains Non-standard Characters	• Fail if name contains: !@:#$%^&*()
Contains the word 'Test'	• Fail if Name, Company or Title contains 'test'.
Invalid Phone Number	• Fail if third-party vendor returned phone status 'Invalid'.
Duplicate Lead Flagged based on Multiple Criteria	• Fail if email is different, but Name, Company and Title match.
Phone number Formatting is Incorrect	• Requires ###-###-####. Fail if formatted (###) ###-####.

Lead quality issues generally fall into one of the following categories:

1. **Basic Quality Issues**
   Common errors that always indicate a bad lead, such as an invalid email or phone number, test leads, or the first name is clearly fictional, like 1234 or asdf.

2. **Incomplete or Incorrectly Formatted Data**
   This addresses leads that don't fully meet your company data standards. For example, you may require an email for your marketing automation platform, or a country, phone or date field needs to be a certain format for your CRM. These data standards often apply to all campaigns and channels. They can occur on highly desirable leads, and if these types of errors aren't caught, the lead may not reach the right marketing program or rep.

3. **Does Not Meet Specific Campaign Rules**
   If the lead does not meet a specific campaign requirement, it can be deemed an invalid lead. These types of rules often vary by campaign, for example, a Paid Media Strategist lead may fail on a campaign targeting Event Managers (and vice versus). Or an ABM campaign may require leads to work at specific companies, whereas a non-ABM campaign may set rules around company size and industry.

Can automating your lead validation process protect you from 100% of these issues? Not quite, however, it can significantly reduce most of the issues and all but eliminate the rest.

Still not convinced switching from a manual process to an automated one will be worth it to your company? Review the list below and check a box for every item your current manual process supports. (Hint: Even if you print this out, you probably don't need a pen...)

- ☐ Setup and track campaign rules for multiple campaigns in a **repeatable, scalable way**.
- ☐ **Automatically validate** leads based on campaign rules.
- ☐ Standardize fields (like country or phone number format) when **each publisher provides them in different formats**.
- ☐ **Automatically communicate lead rejections** back to publishers for resolution.
- ☐ Connect external platforms and map data fields to **automatically deliver valid leads**.
- ☐ **Analyze performance** by publisher, campaign or channel and generate customized reports based on pre-set metrics.
- ☐ Deliver valid leads **quickly** (we're talking minutes).
- ☐ **Reduce the resources** need for complex or large campaigns, giving valuable time back to the marketing team for other projects.

A study performed by the Content Marketing Institute in July of 2020 showed that B2B Marketers attribute only 26% of their organization's lack of content marketing success in the past 12 months to pandemic-related issues. Content distribution challenges, content measurement challenges, and Internal cost-cutting measures, all of which can be improved by switching to an automatic process, added up to a whopping 72%.

The Bottom Line: A Penny Earned is a Penny Saved.

This universal axiom applies to the business world as well, only on a *much larger* scale. In this case, we are talking about anywhere from billions to a googol of pennies. Whether a company chooses to manually process their leads in a clunky, fragmented and overly complicated system of spreadsheets, or with an easy automated process, can mean the difference between saving hundreds of hours and possibly thousands of dollars, or continuing to struggle to scale programs and demonstrate their impact to the business.

It's a new (lead) generation, and only the companies that adopt better, faster, and cost-saving methods for managing their lead data will be able to keep up with the dramatic evolution that is occurring within Digital Marketing and Content Syndication. Will your company be one of them?

About Convertr

Convertr is an API-first, data routing, integration, and optimization platform. We provide an **automated** process to capture, enhance, and route **accurate** and **actionable** prospect data. We **empower** our customers to create **customized** lead generation campaigns and create opportunities for data-driven decisions that **maximize** results and performance.

For more information, go to convertr.io or request a free custom demo at sales@convertr.io.

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