Case study: digitalbox

Scalable, accurate and real time email address validation brings digitalbox
back to Experian Data Quality — boosting reputation, revenue and ROI

Background

'digitalbox' is one of the UK's leading and fastest growing performance marketing operations, generating profitable consumer data through a mix of performance marketing solutions. digitalbox delivers results for partners such as Visa, O2, Mini and P&O to name but a few. After a brief leave of absence, the company has come back to work with Experian Data Quality as the only provider capable of providing high quality email validation to its clients, building its reputation and maximising bottom line returns.

Situation

digitalbox captures email addresses as consumers sign up for online competitions and special offers, users then complete sponsored surveys in partnership with leading UK brands. The challenge here is to gain accurate email and other contact information in around 30 seconds, before they lose a customer's attention. With such a small window of opportunity, digitalbox needs to encourage addressing accuracy — highlighting and helping customers to correct errors that may be caused by a typing mistake or a more deliberate attempt to withhold information.

This accuracy is critical: digitalbox's clients need to know that their messages get to valid addresses; and the company's 'cost per lead' business model means they simply don't get paid for incorrect addresses, true performance marketing. The company initially used email validation, but a desire to drive cost efficiencies led them away from 'best in breed' to a 'best of the rest' vendor. Despite promising services that were as good as Experian Data Quality, digitalbox's new supplier couldn't keep up, with around 30 per cent of validations failing because the vendor couldn't cope with traffic. As volumes rocketed from 50,000 unique

addresses per month to 250,000, address accuracy plummeted and revenues remained flat. The company was in a paradoxical situation where business was growing, but with poor quality data validation, revenues remained flat. It represented a huge risk to services, profitability and reputation.

Solution

digitalbox joint CEO, Alex Attinger, said, "Using an apparently cheaper vendor proved to be a false economy. It refocused our understanding that high quality data is at the heart of our business and is something you can't compromise on. We returned to Experian because they never compromise."

digitalbox approached Experian Data Quality to pick up where they left off — providing scalable and highly accurate email address validation in real time. With its plug and play functionality, it took just one hour to set up and re-implement the email validation solution.

Email validation allows digitalbox to identify incorrect addresses almost instantaneously. As the customer enters an address; formatting is assessed; typing errors picked up; deliberate errors highlighted; and

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with Experian Data Quality working with ISPs, addresses are sent a request via a web service to ensure validity. All of this takes place in around one second, with a polite message generated asking the consumer to check their address. As a hosted, external web based service, it's also completely seamless with no need to redirect consumers to another site.

Backed up by industry leading data sources, Experian Data Quality can also take meteoric growth in its stride — easily coping with digitalbox's five-fold increase in volumes in as many months. As Alex said, "Many validation companies make promises on 'real time', 'scalability' and 'accuracy', but our experience shows very clearly it's only Experian Data Quality that can deliver on them."

Results

Now using email validation once again, digitalbox has seen virtually instantaneous improvement to its services. One of the company's biggest clients — unaware of the change in validation provider — spontaneously reported a marked improvement in data quality just two weeks after the return to Experian QAS. Alex said, "That's the kind of client feedback that makes us very happy indeed."

As well as building reputation, the solution is boosting the bottom line and securing previously lost revenues. Taking the former vendor's 30% failure rate and factoring that each lead generated by digitalbox costs circa £1 in marketing expenditure and is worth over £5 in life time value terms; The Experian QAS solution has the potential to save £75,000 in wasted marketing spend and add £375,000 in life time value.

digitalbox is also using its partnership with Experian Data Quality to drive new 'big data' opportunities and existing business. With highly accurate email lists and the ability to measure the value of its services in granular detail, the company is more valuable to its clients — helping to attract, retain and secure lucrative customer contracts.

"digitalbox lives and dies by its reputation, with accuracy essential to our clients, their customers and email ISPs. Experian Data Quality protects and adds value to this precious asset — it's a partnership that we use to attract both new clients and investors. It works because it brings peace of mind and demonstrable bottom line returns. Once you've worked with Experian Data Quality, nothing else compares."

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