

"A single source of truth"

"The golden record"

"A 360 customer view"

Call it what you like, it always means the same thing: a definition of who your customer is, what they want and how to effectively sell to them.

To get it, you need a clean, accurate, reliable source of customer data: one that can be accessed by every stakeholder and every department to turn your golden record into a golden opportunity for your business.

Here, we talk you through the process, from getting the information you need to making the right decisions with data.



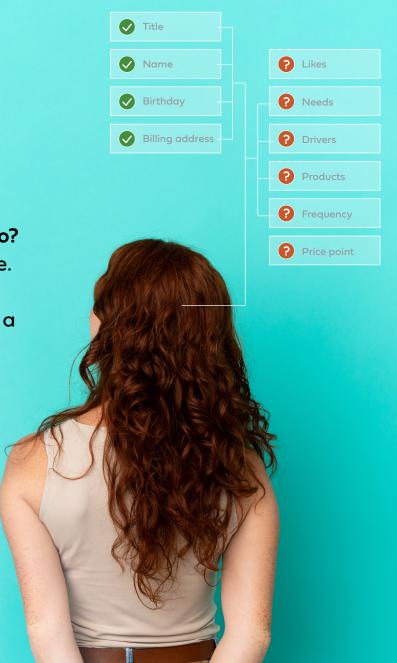
Who is your customer?

What data makes up each individual that you are selling to? There's the obvious. Name. Title. Birthday. Billing address. But that isn't a complete picture of a person...

Who are they really? What do they like? What do they need? Why are they buying from you? What products? How often? For how much?

To define your customer, you need to be able to look beyond basic personal data, drawing on different aspects of their digital footprint within your business.

To do this successfully, you need to identify the attributes that make up a single customer and centre your key data rules around them.





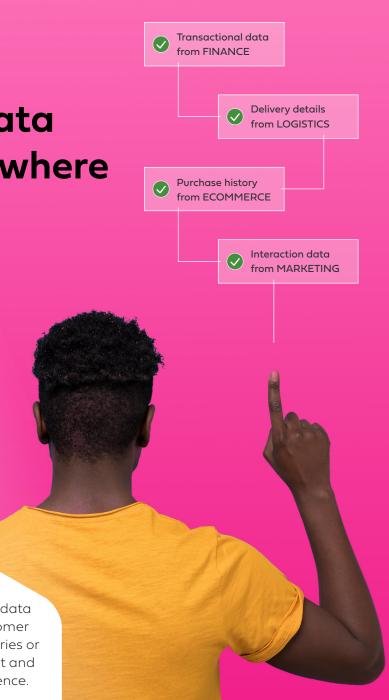
What customer data do you need, and where can you get it?

To get a full 360 view of your customer, you need to be able to collate data from across the business, analysing both customer and non-customer master data to reach more accurate conclusions about individuals.

Alone, each data set gives a narrow view of any one individual. Together, they start to build a complex, detailed portrait of the person you are selling to: a portrait that enables you to create tailored experiences.

Incorporating external data

Sometimes you may need to access external data sources to fully validate the quality of a customer record: for instance, access to business directories or public address systems. Make sure you budget and plan this in advance, and carry out due diligence.





What can you do with a golden record?

Once you've gathered the right data and defined your 'golden record', you open the door to a whole host of data-driven possibilities. With detailed customer information, you can...



Track broader spending habits and create your own, more detailed demographics.



Engage with your customers at a deeper, more personal level.



Target your customers with relevant promotions, marketing and services.



Create bespoke experiences to enhance brand loyalty.



Discover hierarchies and links to present the right information to the right individuals.



What should you do with a golden record?

Just because you can, doesn't always mean you should.

When starting any new data initiative based on personal customer information, take a moment to ask yourself: is this right for our business, our commercial goals, and for our customers?

Remember, customer data represents real people, who are entrusting your brand with their data. Not only do you need to be mindful of GDPR and other legal data policies, you need to consider your corporate responsibility and consumer trust.

As we push the possibilities of what we can achieve with customer information, data quality, governance and effective management tools like MDM become more important than ever.

They are there to ensure that the data you use is reliable, secure and only being used in the way that it's owner – your customer – intended.





Breaking down silos

Are departments working together towards data goals – or hoarding and prioritising their own data objectives?

To maintain your golden record, you need to be able to break down data siloes and remove conflict between departments.

For example, Logistics vs Marketing. When it comes to address data, Logistics prioritises 'Postcodes'. It's what they need to get any order from A to B.



Marketing, meanwhile, might want to know 'Address Type': is this an order for work, or home? It's what they need to send the right marketing message to the customer.

By working in siloes, Logistics could be holding information that's valuable to the business – and blocking access to vital customer insight.

If you want to get your hands on that elusive golden record, it's going to take collaboration from every department. That means communicating business objectives and ensuring that data practices across the board are working towards them.



Writing the rulebook

The key to getting an accurate 360 customer view isn't technology. It's not the amount of data you can collate. It's not omni-channel analytics. It's not data lakes, or data warehouses, or Master Data Management (although that is useful).

It's data governance.

Whether you want to tighten up your marketing emails or start implementing facial recognition at point of sale, you need a robust data governance strategy to make it work.

Data governance allows you to write the rulebook on data: from uploading and collating to editing and using. It helps you to define the data sets that will, in turn, define your customers, and create practices that ensure that information is always clean, reliable and up-to-date.



