



WHITE PAPER

Intent Data

The game changer in B2B sales

The practical guide from Dun & Bradstreet



Content

A glimpse into the future.....	5
What is buyer intent?.....	6
Intent data: What types are there?.....	7
Five ways to accelerate growth with intent data.....	11
Intent data in practice: How the company search works in D&B Hoovers.....	12
Case study: Office furniture.....	13
Intent Data for Bombora.....	18
Try D&B Hoovers for free.....	18



A glimpse into the future

Imagine you had a crystal ball that showed you all of the companies currently actively researching your products or services. This may sound like fantasy, but is actually not as far away as you might think.

Intent data is the key here.

This information allows the focus to be shifted to low hanging fruit – which is what every sales director dreams of if they are being honest. It is all about investing your energy into leads that are ready to make a purchase or focusing on those customers who are looking for an alternative solution online and are considering cancelling their present contract.

But is intent data really the saviour for all Marketing and Sales departments?

Intent data has now established itself in the B2B arena. When used correctly, intent data allows massive potential to be tapped for marketing and sales purposes. It adds a key central component to all sales activities and campaigns: the dimension of timing. Is a company ready to make a purchase? Is there currently a requirement?

Sales organisations that manage this information in their CRM system are always one step ahead of their competition. They are capable of contacting the right companies with the right story at the right time – before their competitors have a chance to do the same.

68%

of all buyers are keen to research products and services themselves online

–FORRESTER, 2019

70 %

of the Buyer's Journey is already behind them when they have their first contact with a salesperson

–CSO INSIGHTS, 2018

→ Yet intent data is definitely not a crystal ball

We can compare intent data to an uncut diamond. Although precious, it is still important to invest time and have the ability to bring out its true value. Just like a talented jeweller cuts and polishes diamonds, innovative B2B sales teams analyse intent data and thereby maximise efficiency in terms of both sales and ROI.

How to get the most out of intent data



In this guide, we present the various types of intent data in detail, as well as showing how it is collected and the important role it plays in the sales process.

Do you work in the Sales or Marketing department? Have you already heard chatter about intent data at your company? If you would like to know in detail exactly what this is all about and how you can gain an advantage over your competition, this is the perfect guide for you.



What is buyer intent?

The spray and pray approach has long since outlived its usefulness as a method for establishing profitable business relations. As such, simply casting a net in your target market with the hope that a fish might bite is never going to be an effective strategy. Instead, you should focus your efforts on addressing precisely those companies that are already interested in your products or services.

Buyer intent has indeed put an end to the so-called «spray and pray» approach. Buyer intent is defined as the interest of a buyer or a purchasing team at a company to acquire a certain product or service.

Buyer intent shows itself in the tracks that companies leave behind when researching specific solutions or products online. When this data is analysed over time, it provides an image of the kind of content that the target companies are looking for, consuming or seeking to address online.

Intent data provides sales organisations with insight into the behaviour of companies in the market and how they react to the respective products. You not only gain these insights on your own website, but also those of third parties. Without intent data, this information would simply remain hidden.

Intent data: What types are there?

Even if you are new to the topic of intent data, there is a good chance that your company is already using it. In fact, they have likely been using it on a daily basis, often without even realising it. For example, do you contact visitors to your website? Do you offer content for downloading on your website or a subscription to a newsletter? Yes? Then you are already using intent data.

Or to be more precise, you are using first-party intent data. This revolves around information that you collect yourself and evaluate via channels such as your website, social media

presences, etc. Do not make the mistake of ignoring it or failing to use it on a consistent basis. After all, a shoe seller would never turn their back on a customer who has just walked into their shop. So do not turn away from potential customers who are standing right in front of you and indicating their interest.

In addition to first-party intent data, there is also third-party intent data. The difference: You generate first-party intent data yourself in your own channels, whereas you obtain third-party intent data from providers.

I. First-Party Intent Data

You collect first-party intent data via your own online channels, primarily via a form on your website. Your website visitors identify themselves and provide you with data such as their name, the company they work for, their job description, etc. The marketing automation and lead qualification systems then come into play, determining the interests of a potential buyer and how likely they are to sign up for your products/services.

First Party Intent Data are typically the following:



This involves behavioural data, as well as the interactions and interests left by someone in online channels, such as websites, apps, social media presences, etc.



Data that you collect in your CRM system



Sign-ups that you generate



Data that you collect via social media presences



Surveys, questionnaires, forms, etc.



Anonymous first-party intent data, which is collected by tracking the IP address of visitors, represents another type of intent data. Although far from all potential customers identify themselves and fill out a form or download content, it is still possible to de-anonymise them and present them with personalised and relevant content/offers.

II. Third-Party Intent Data

So what about all those people who are looking for solutions and products like the ones you offer and perform lots of online research, but never visit your website? These are precisely the companies you would seek out and target if you had a crystal ball. However, you require third-party intent data in order to identify and establish contact with them. You can get this from special providers who collect and aggregate this information in a targeted way on the Internet and then sell it on.

You should certainly not expect third-party intent data to find customers for you. However, this data definitely helps you gain a better understanding of the behaviour of both individuals and organisations, as well as to know who is searching for which solutions and products in what way online. Once you know this, you can successfully identify those target companies which would otherwise have remained hidden to you. You are then also capable of creating targeted and personalised advertising or content and attracting the right kind of attention.

For Intent Data applies



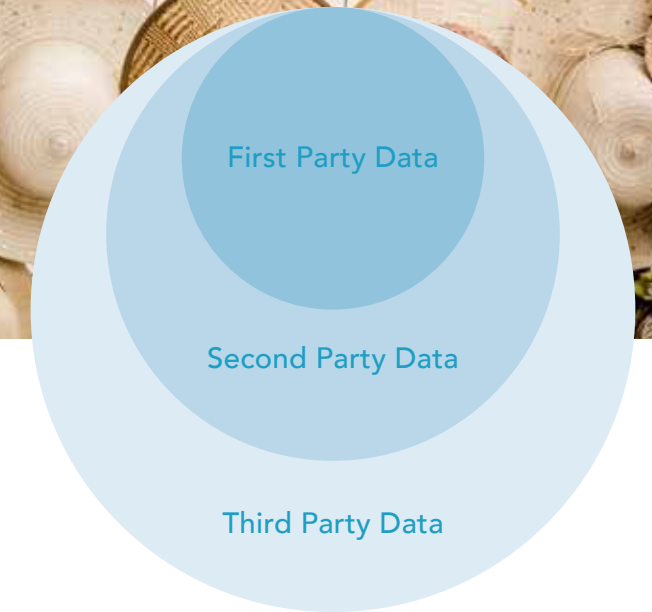
Information that is put together from a large number of external websites on specific topics



Large and aggregated data sets that are sold by third-party providers



Cover a broad spectrum of activities on a large scale



→ A solid and reliable source is important. Trust decreases if there is no transparency about the origin and collection of the data and if data protection regulations are not respected.

What you can glean from third-party intent data

- Which companies are visiting the websites of your competition, as well as precisely which websites these are.
- Which companies visit and read information on review sites.
- Companies that look for specific keywords and find the results somewhere else.



What intent data can do for you

Many companies today are no longer capable of identifying their target customers accurately. They analyse their website visitors, contact potential customers who have submitted an online form and answer questions using online chat systems. But what about all those buyers who never visit their website?

Five ways to accelerate growth with intent data

Are you wondering how exactly to use intent data? Perhaps you are still uncertain of its potential influence on the efficiency of marketing and sales operations? If so, we have five ways that you can use intent data in practice and precisely control the process of getting in touch with prospects.



1. YOU ARE FASTER AT IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL BUYERS

Intent data helps you identify companies that are actively looking for your products or services online, but which have not yet been identified as leads.



2. YOU INCREASE YOUR CONVERSION RATE

Intent data enables more precise segmentation, and thereby also personalised addressing on the basis of what these companies are researching online.



3. YOU SHORTEN YOUR SALES CYCLES

Intent data helps you rate your leads and accounts, as well as prioritise sales activities.



4. YOU PROMOTE RENEWALS AND UPSELLING

Intent data identifies customers who are looking for new solutions and checking out what your competitors have to offer.



5. YOUR ROI IS HIGHER

Intent data allows you to focus your money and resources on leads that have already been identified as potential customers. This improves the efficiency of your marketing and sales activities.

Intent data in practice

How the company search works in D&B Hoovers

You've learned exactly what intent data is. Now you're no doubt eager to see how it's used in practice. Intent data from Bombora, the best on the market, is available as an add-on for the D&B Hoovers Sales Intelligence Platform. In this chapter, we use a specific example to show you how it is used when selecting potential buyers.



Case study: Office furniture

Imagine you are an office furniture supplier and are looking for potential buyers in your market. The question is, who exactly is your market? It can easily be defined geographically, and by using company size or other criteria. But a selection made on this basis provides too many results – it's impossible to develop a suitable sales strategy here that can be implemented with limited resources.

The logical next step is to further narrow the selection using the industry code. But what is 'the industry'? It can be schools, hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, software developers, and many others. Most companies and institutions sit in offices and require furniture.

As such, a different approach is needed – that's where intent data comes in. D&B Hoovers integrates intent data in the selection process and provides those companies as a result that are actively looking for your products on the internet. Let's not get ahead of ourselves though.

- Definition of the relevant target market
- Lead qualification with intent data



Definition of the relevant target market

Let's take a look at our practical example. To do this, we use D&B Hoovers, the sales and marketing intelligence platform from Dun & Bradstreet with access to the largest database of companies in the world.

The first step is to apply the initial selection criteria, in our example the geographic region and company size by number of employees.

SEARCH CRITERIA

- Country/Region: United Kingdom
- Employees: More than 50

The screenshot shows the 'SEARCH Companies' interface with 7,104,052 results. The search criteria are as follows:

- Location:** City (input field), State or Province (Subdivision 1) (input field)
- Country/Region:** United Kingdom (selected with 'x' icon), Exclude (checkbox), Enter Country/Region (input field)
- Postal/Zip Code:** Enter Postal/Zip Code(s) (input field), Add (button), Upload a List of Postal Codes (500 Max) (link)

The selection of the geographical region in D&B Hoovers

The screenshot shows the 'Company Size' filter section with 64,988 results. The search criteria are as follows:

- Employees:** More than 50 (selected with 'x' icon), From (input field), To (input field), Add (button)
- Sales:** USD (dropdown), From (input field), To (input field), Add (button)
- Single Site:** Single Site (selected with radio button), Total (radio button), Domestic Ultimate Total (radio button), Global Ultimate Total (radio button)
- Include results where the value is not available or unknown:** (checkbox)

The selection according to company size on the basis of the number of employees in D&B Hoovers.

→ D&B Hoovers delivers over 64,000 companies that meet these criteria. This number of potential buyers doesn't allow for a targeted approach.

As an office furniture supplier, I ask myself who my target accounts are and where I should focus, that is to say which type of company is the relevant target group for me.

However, solving this question with the industry codes is difficult if not impossible. My potential buyers are schools, hospitals, construction companies and so on. The relevant market is very vague and difficult to pin down. Refining the selection using the industry code is not useful, as I would have to take virtually all of them into account.



Lead qualification with intent data

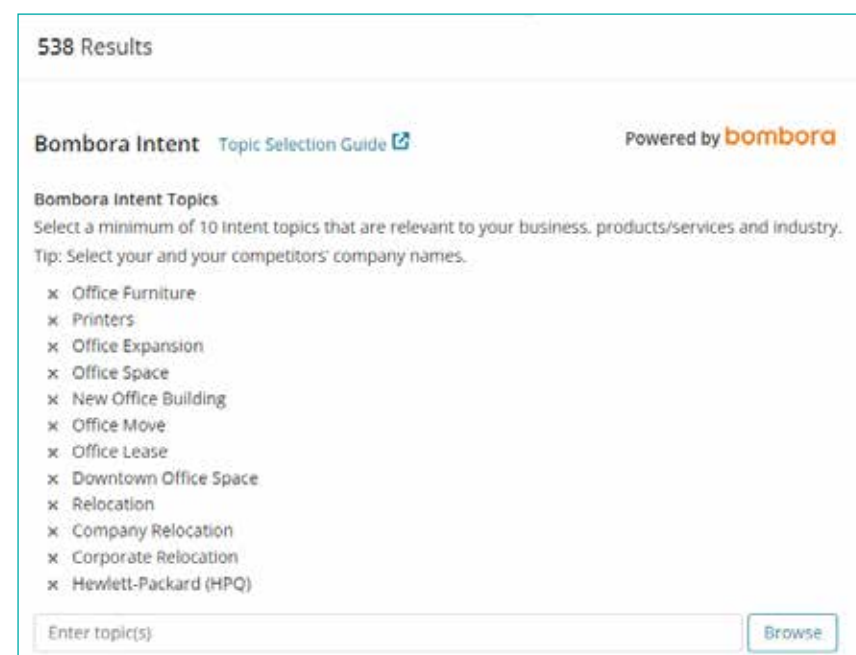
However, we can get further by bringing intent data into the picture. We use it to narrow down the search for customers to companies who have recently looked online for topics related to office furniture.

Bombora is connected with these topics and helps to refine the selection. In order to select the right topics, we need to put ourselves in the position of the company and understand which solutions it is looking for and how it uses products.

We need to understand when companies need office furniture and which topics they research. Include your competitors in the query, too. Bombora recommends selecting around 10 out of over 8,000 topics. The browse function makes this very simple and intuitive.

→ BOMBORA INTENT TOPICS

- Office Furniture
- Printers
- Office Expansion
- Office Space
- New Office Building
- Office Move
- Office Lease
- Downtown Office Space
- Relocation
- Company Relocation
- Corporate Relocation
- Hewlett-Packard (HPQ)




The target group is reduced to around 530 companies when you apply the Bombora topics. These are the companies that are searching the internet for the defined topics now – and not six months ago. The list is therefore up to date and the leads qualified are highly relevant – and the number of leads allows targeted processing.

Sorting takes place according to the relevance of the search results measured according to the number of Bombora topics the company is interested in.

The list can be downloaded as a table if necessary and is therefore on hand when you wish to call or otherwise contact the companies. It is also possible to create a smart list with these criteria in D&B Hoovers. It's dynamic and updates automatically each week. If you want, it's possible to receive a notification for every change, that is to say every company that is added to the list. That way, you'll never miss out on a hot sales opportunity.

→ IMPORTANT:

The figure of 530 companies that this query has provided may seem small at first. However, these are the companies that are interested right now. They offer a much greater probability of making a sale than companies that fit a certain target group based on criteria. It's not about finding lots of companies, but finding the right ones – the ones that want to hear from you now.

 **D&B Hoovers with intent data is the right tool for presenting your offer to the right company at the right time.**

Intent Data for **bombora**

→ Now available as an add-on for D&B Hoovers

Bombora is considered the industry leader for intent data and has the largest network for data collection, as well as a patented method for identification of buyer intent.

Intent data from Bombora is available as an add-on for the D&B Hoovers Sales Intelligence Platform.

Why choose intent data from Bombora?

Bombora only works with partners who satisfy and implement the highest data protection standards. Some 70% of these partners corporate exclusively with Bombora. The intent data from Bombora therefore covers the majority of online behaviour in the B2B arena.

This makes intent data from Bombora unique in comparison with other providers in the market. The data originates from a large number of data cooperations, encompassing millions of websites.

Try for free: **D&B** Hoovers

Are you ready for a test? Do you want to get started right away and test D&B Hoovers and Bombora and see them live in action?

Don't hesitate and register for the free trial. Our experts will introduce you to all the features and solve the first use cases with you.

→ Sign up online for the free trial

<https://www.dnb.co.uk/products/marketing-sales/dnb-hoovers.html>





ABOUT DUN & BRADSTREET

Dun & Bradstreet, a leading global provider of data and analytics, enables companies around the world to improve decision-making and business performance. Dun & Bradstreet's Data Cloud fuels solutions and delivers insights that empower customers to accelerate revenue, lower cost, mitigate risk, and transform their businesses. Since 1841, companies of every size have relied on Dun & Bradstreet to help them manage risk and reveal opportunity.

[DNB.co.uk](https://www.dnb.co.uk)