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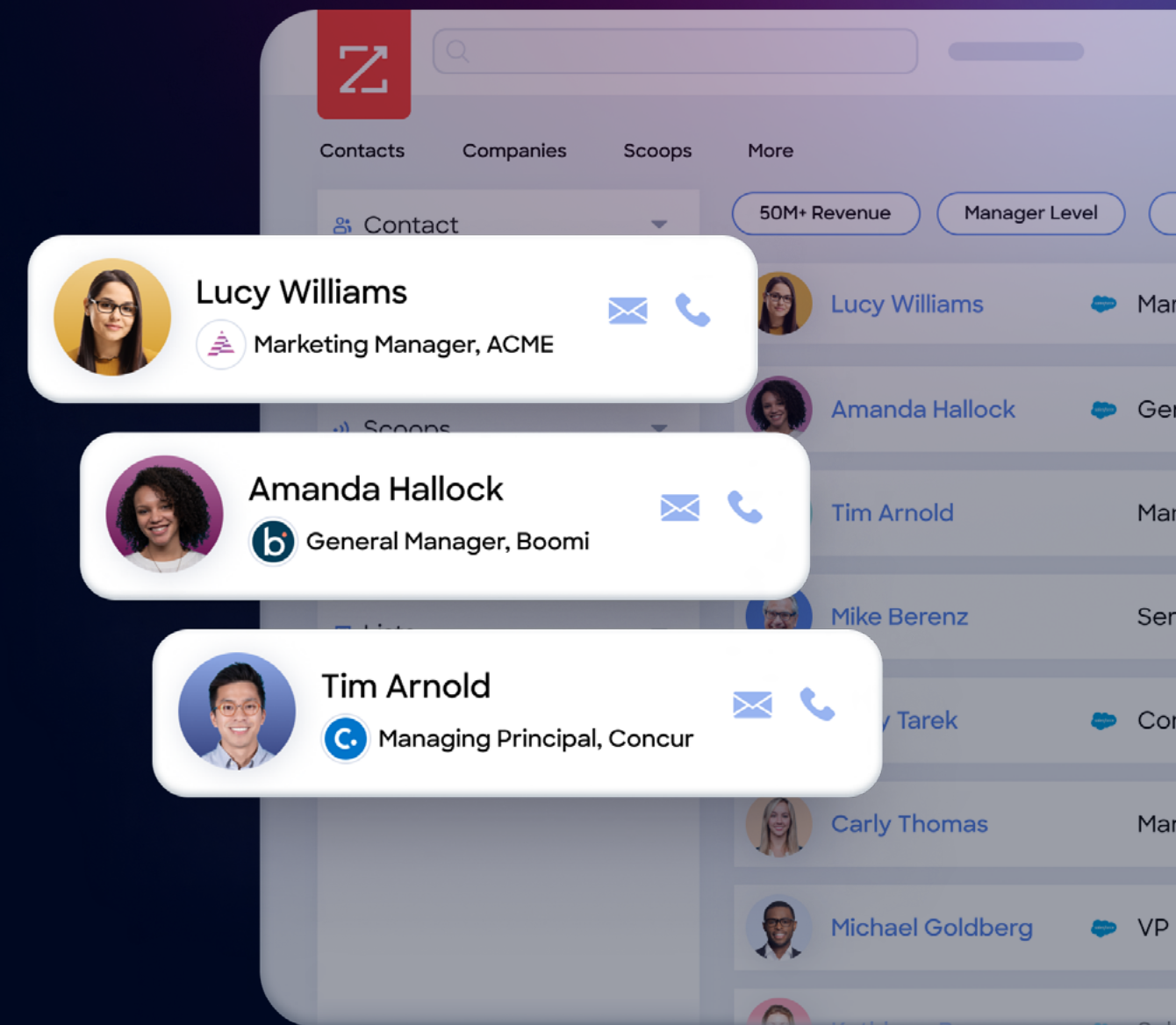
B2B Guide

Understanding Data Reliability

How to Evaluate and Measure the Quality of Your Data

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Introduction

How good is your data? For today's data teams, the concern is no longer about having enough data or merely labeling it "good or bad." The focus is on measuring and evaluating the quality of data, with the goal of understanding how strongly you can rely on that data to drive your business decisions.

When you take a closer look at what determines if data is trustworthy, you arrive at the qualitative factors of data. They center around two dimensions: completeness and accuracy. Completeness represents how extensively your information covers a desired area or subject matter (versus how much might be missing). Accuracy signifies how correct (current, up-to-date, factual) the information is.

A majority of organizations (80%) struggle with data quality as a main challenge in their go-to-market strategy. They also struggle with how to test and measure the specific elements that impact data quality.

Understanding and evaluating the quality of master data means asking questions like:

- How confident are you that the information filled into any given field is actually correct?

- How sure are you that account records from various sources have been matched together properly?

- How certain are you that you're seeing the complete picture of any given market, segment, or account list?

- How recent was all this information updated and with what collection methods?

In this document, you'll find:

- The best way to evaluate and measure the quality of data

- Steps you can take to increase data completeness and accuracy

- Use cases for how better data quality leads to improved business outcomes

First, let's make sure we have a clear picture of what data quality is all about.

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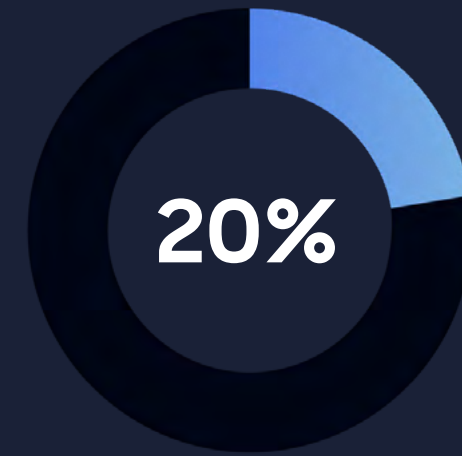
Businesses lose as much as 20% of revenue due to poor data quality.

80%
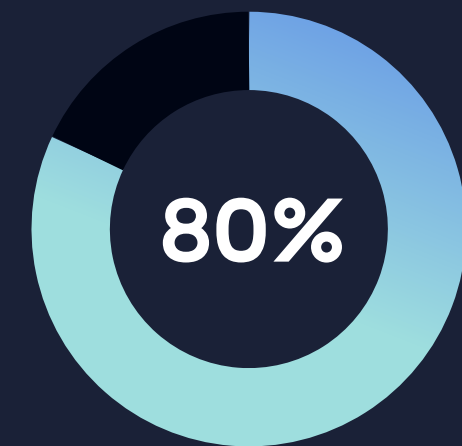
Nearly 80% of organizations struggle with data quality as a main challenge in their go-to-market strategy.

Understanding Data Quality

Data quality is a measure of how reliable the data is for its intended use or purpose. In other words, how strongly can you count on your data to represent the truth?

Knowing if you have the most current information possible impacts everything you do, including critical go-to-market functions like predictive modeling, account prioritization, territory planning, and sales development.

When you evaluate data quality, there are two main dimensions to consider:

Data Completeness

- o How complete is your data?
- o Are there any missing records?
- o Do you have every field possible?
- o Is there anything excluded or misaligned?

Data Accuracy

- o How accurate is your data?
- o How certain are you that the records are matched correctly?
- o What level of confidence do you feel in trusting the data?
- o Are there concerns about what information was filled in?

The level of these data quality factors can vary greatly, based on the method of data collection and cleansing being used, the size of the businesses you care about, and which firmographics or advanced insights you need.

Figure: The Two Dimensions of Data Quality: Completeness and Accuracy

Data Quality

Data Completeness

Data Accuracy

Why Data Quality is Important for Business Leaders

According to McKinsey & Company, data-driven organizations are **23 times more likely** to acquire customers. They're also **six times as likely** to retain customers and **19 times more likely** to be profitable than their competitors.

Data is a major factor for go-to-market (GTM) success. It fuels a variety of high-priority GTM activities, including strategic planning, account prioritization, opportunity identification, outreach, and customer experience management.

Yet, actual data tests reveal that **30-50%** of CRM and ERP data is inaccurate.

What Happens When Data Quality is Poor?

Poor data quality impacts nearly every department within a company. On average, businesses lose 15–25% of revenue due to poor data quality. This is simply unacceptable.

Such revenue loss comes as a result of common problems that arise when organizations use poor-quality data, including:

- Erroneous, false, or wrong information
- Missing records or fields
- Fewer advanced insights
- More conflicts to resolve
- Missed opportunities
- Customer service issues

Note: For teams seeking small and medium business (SMB) data, the above challenges are heightened due to the small digital footprint and limited information available.

Revenue

On average, businesses lose 15–25% of revenue due to poor data quality.

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Signs Your Data Quality Might Need a Check Up

When a field is empty, it's pretty clear there is something wrong.

But what happens when the field is filled, but incorrect? How do you identify when data is out of date or associated with the wrong record? The key is to have a method for sourcing high quality data.

The signs of bad data are not always straightforward.

Here are some signs your data quality is low:

- Difficulty reaching target markets
- Lead routing errors
- Prolonged lead-to-revenue timeline
- Customer service problems
- Duplicate or missing records
- Ongoing list of errors to resolve

If your team is experiencing any of the above challenges, it's probably time to check your data quality. The key is to have a method for sourcing high-quality data.

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Data Quality and Data Reliability

How to Evaluate Data Quality

Data quality is based on the percentage of records in your database that are correctly matched (Match Rate) and how many of the available fields have been filled in (Fill Rate).

The four core components of data quality are:

1. Match Rate (%)
2. Fill Rate (%)
3. Match Confidence (#)
4. Fill Confidence (#)

Both Match and Fill Rates represent how "complete" the data is. From there, a confidence score is applied to each of those Rates. This confidence score indicates how strongly you feel the match rate and fill rate are correct. Both Confidence Scores are the factors that represent how "accurate" the data is.

RELATED RESOURCE: [Examine the Engineering Differences Between a Search and a Match](#)

Data Quality

Core Components:

COMPLETENESS | The portion (%) of records matched and fields filled in.

1. Match Rate (%)
2. Fill Rate (%)

ACCURACY | The level of certainty that the match or fill is, in fact, correct.

3. Match Confidence (#)
4. Fill Confidence (#)

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The Difference Between Data Quality and Data Reliability

When you multiply the characteristics of data quality together, you calculate data reliability.

Data Quality

- o The group of data metrics required to achieve a degree of excellence.
- o Data quality is the group of qualitative factors that impact data reliability.
- o The factors that make up data quality are: match rate, fill rate, and the corresponding level of confidence in each.

Data Reliability

- o Data reliability is data that has the quality of being trustworthy or performing consistently well.
- o Data reliability is the expression, typically in numerical form, of data quality.
- o When you measure the level of quality in a dataset, you arrive at its data reliability.

In other words, data quality is something you have or possess. Data reliability is the resulting way of describing or evaluating data quality.

Figure: The Four Factors Included In Data Completeness and Data Accuracy

Data Quality

Data Completeness

Data Accuracy

Match Rate

Fill Rate

Match Confidence

Fill Confidence

Total Range = 0 – 100%

Total Range = 1 – 5

Data Reliability: The Proven Formula to Measure Data Quality

Data reliability answers the question: "How good is my data?"

ZoomInfo has developed a method to objectively measure a dataset's quality. The ZoomInfo framework quantifies the quality of data based on scores for coverage and accuracy.

ZoomInfo's data has been proven to be better than even the closest competitor, through extensive data quality tests using real data samples. In particular, most data providers can only match and fill 30–50%, whereas ZoomInfo consistently matches and fills 99%+ of records.

Since you can't fill what you don't match, organizations are potentially missing data on 80–90% of account records they care about.

For example, imagine there are 15 million total possible accounts in an organization's total addressable marketing (TAM). If only 30% get matched together, that returns 4.5 million records. If those matched records get filled at a rate of 30%, the result is only 1.35 million records.

If only 1.35 million out of 15 million are matched AND filled properly that covers a mere 9% of the total addressable market, leaving 90%+ missed.

Figure: The Formula to Calculate Data Reliability

Data Quality Characteristics

$$\text{Data Reliability} = \text{Match Rate} \times \text{Fill Rate} \times \text{Accuracy (Confidence)}$$

Most data providers can only match and fill 30–50%, whereas ZoomInfo consistently matches and fills 99%+ of core firmographics.

99%+

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30–50%

Other Data Providers

Use Case: Why Data Quality Matters in the Shipping Industry

For a leading global shipping provider, data quality was a big concern because without proper and precise location information, significant business disruption can occur.

The company engaged the ZoomInfo Business Data Specialists to evaluate how reliable their business data was, particularly with small businesses and remote office locations.

Using a sample of approximately 10,000 records from their own database, ZoomInfo uncovered that nearly 70% of accounts were missed by the shipping company's former data provider.

ZoomInfo was able to match 99% of their account records, then fill in 98% of those account fields, specifying confidence levels for each. This gave the shipping provider a far more complete and reliable set of business data from which to operate.

Without proper and precise location information, significant business disruption can occur.

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Conclusion

Modern teams rely on data and analytics to drive nearly every aspect of business. That's why the negative impacts of bad data seep into every corner of an organization.

Experts look to evaluate the quality of data and measure its reliability. This means evaluating how complete and accurate data is, monitoring not only the percentage of information covered, but also how confident you feel that the information provided is, in fact, correct.

High-performing teams regularly evaluate the quality of their data to determine how strongly they can rely on that data to fuel business outcomes.

See What's Missing from Your Data

Experience the difference of having reliable data from ZoomInfo. Visit www.zoominfo.com/our-data.

	ZoomInfo	Legacy Data Providers
Match Rate	99+%	30–50%
Fill Rate	99+%	30–50%
Accuracy	99+%	< 30%

Comparison of ZoomInfo Data Quality vs. Legacy Providers

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About ZoomInfo

ZoomInfo (NASDAQ: ZI) is a leader in modern go-to-market software, data, and intelligence for more than 20,000 companies worldwide. The ZoomInfo platform empowers business-to-business sales, marketing, and recruiting professionals to hit their number by pairing best-in-class technology with unrivaled data coverage, accuracy, and depth of company and contact information. With integrations embedded into workflows and technology stacks, including the leading CRM, Sales Engagement, Marketing Automation, and Talent Management applications, ZoomInfo drives more predictable, accelerated, and sustainable growth for its customers. ZoomInfo emphasizes GDPR and CCPA compliance. In addition to creating the industry's first proactive notice program, the company is a registered data broker with the states of California and Vermont. Read about ZoomInfo's commitment to compliance, privacy, and security. For more information about our leading go-to-market software, data, and intelligence, and how they help sales, marketing, and recruiting professionals, please visit www.zoominfo.com.

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