How to Order Data

The data world does not accurately represent the real world. Roughly 40% of companies are unobtainable via data sources as they've elected to not be included in any listings.

On top of this there is the question of categorisation. For example, do M&S list themselves as furniture retailers or supermarkets? How a company lists itself (if at all!) will make the difference between it coming up on a search or not.

This is important to remember when ordering data. It may also surprise you to know that less than 5% of UK based companies have more than 50 employees as most have ten or under.

The Criteria Used

A good data company will help you compile a data list as per your requirements to give optimum benefit. You will use three sets of criteria to decide what data you want to compile:

a. **Geography** – You can elect to choose from a radius of a postcode or town, select by postcode areas or even counties. Be careful though – radius are as the crow flies so 25 mile radius can easily become 40 or even 50 road miles.
b. **Size of Company** – we usually talk about employees numbers as this is more readily available and this is banded 1-4, 5-9, 10-19, 20 -49-50-99,100 – 249, 250 – 500, 501+. You can decide to ask for size by turnover also if this seems more relevant.
c. **Industry Sector** – SIC codings (Standard Industry Classifications) are normally what's used but again a good data provider will talk plain English with you. If you have a good client base you can use the client company as a base to buy in more of the same by identifying it's SIC coding and asking the data provider for more of the same.

The Process

Once the criteria has been agreed the first data count is raised. This is a document that shows how many companies match the criteria selected. Our data provider (as do most) only deal in minimums of 1,000 upwards so if the count comes back with too many then some editing is requiring. If, on the other-hand, there are too few records then the search needs expanding by any or all of the criteria to reach 1,000.

When the data comes back it needs to be manipulated appropriately (dealt with separately) and all columns should be retained at this stage. The 'decision maker' column is often NOT the person we need but it is a start. Don't worry about this at this stage as we'll go through how to deal with tis on the phone.

Data Sources

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